Bonds of Belonging:

Slaving, Indigeneity, and Race in Amazonia (Maranhão, Brazil, 1688-1798)

by

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List of Abbreviations

Archives

AAM   Arquivo da Arquidiocese do Maranhão

AHU   Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino

ANTT   Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo

APEM   Arquivo Público do Estado do Maranhão

APEP   Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará

ATJMA   Arquivo do Tribunal de Justiça do Maranhão

ATCL   Arquivo do Tribunal de Contas de Lisboa

BNPT   Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal

BN   Biblioteca da Ajuda

CCC   Cartório Celso Coutinho

CTS   Cartório Tito Soares

Citations

CMSL   Câmara Municipal de São Luís

CU.   Conselho Ultramarino

Cx.   Caixa

Doc.   Documento

LRBFNSV   Livro de Registro de Batismo da Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória

LRCNSV   Livro de Registro de Casamento da Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória

f.   Folio

MA   Maranhão

PA   Pará

PBA   Coleção Pombalina

Introduction

In 1751, a few months after he arrived in Northern Brazil, the governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado offered his assessment of local settlers' reliance on Indigenous enslavement. He wrote that the colony would collapse if settlers saw themselves without the "people they call slaves." The work in the farms would suddenly stop without Indigenous labor. Because settlers relied on Indigenous workers for fishing and hunting, they would soon perish of hunger. The now free Indigenous people would flee to the interior or maybe form maroon communities. According to him, the colonial state did not have the power to force Indigenous people to keep working for their former enslavers or to suppress another settler revolt against the abolition of Indigenous slavery. In his view, the abolition of Indigenous enslavement in a region that for decades relied on the practice required caution.[1]

In the next few years, there was no settler revolt. Indigenous workers also did not flee en masse to the interior. In the next few years, the Portuguese crown enacted a new law abolishing Indigenous enslavement (June 6, 1755). The new legislation had more to do with the border disputes with Spain in South America rather than Indigenous workers in cities, farms, and ranches. In contrast to other attempts to abolish Indigenous enslavement in Northern Brazil, this

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[1] "*Todos esses homens, se de repente se vissem sem os que eles chamam escravos; as poucas lavouras que há paradas; os outros que não sabem pescar, nem caçar, mortos de fome, sem remédio humano; os índios, em virtude da sua liberdade, espalhados por estes sertões, ou talvez em mocambos para o que todos têm propensão, e tudo isto de repente; eu, sem meios de poder juntar os tais índios para os dar por criados àqueles de quem tinham sido escravos, é certo que poderiam progredir aqueles trabalhosos efeitos em que costumam romper muitas vezes as desesperações, e a Praça totalmente sem forças para poder conter aos moradores de passarem a alguma desordem.*" Marcos Carneiro de Mendonça, *A Amazônia na era pombalina* (Rio de Janeiro: IHGB) Tomo I, Pará, 30 de novembro de 1751, 84.

time, the Portuguese crown created the condition for the growth of the Transatlantic slave trade to appease settlers' constant complaints about labor shortages.

In 1758, another colonial official wrote to Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, commenting on the impact of the publication of the abolition law. According to him, it "was not a cause for worry, even more so when all settlers understood that there were no impediments for them to keep the Indigenous workers as 'servants,' the ones that formerly served them as 'slaves.'"[2] This colonial official was correct when he stressed that settlers had the chance to keep the people they enslaved in their services. Yet, he offered a rushed opinion. The transformation that Northern Brazil experienced in the enslavement of Indigenous and African peoples was anything but seamless.

Bonds of Belonging studies the social, cultural, and legal impacts of the persistence of Indigenous enslavement in Northern Brazil, particularly in Maranhão. This dissertation follows the transformation of Maranhão's landscape from a "frontier" society based on small-scale farming and cattle ranches worked by an Indigenous majority to the beginning of a "plantation" society of cotton and rice exploiting enslaved African labor. In this period, the region also witnessed the fall of the Transamazonic slave trade and the rise of the Transatlantic slave trade.

I develop two interrelated arguments. First, I study the process of racialization of slavery in Maranhão after the growth of the Transatlantic slave trade combined with the publication of the abolition law of 1755. Because the abolition law of 1755 declared the freedom of Indigenous

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[2] "*Sendo presente a S. Maj. a carta de V. Sa. de 23 de novembro do ano próximo passado, ficou o mesmo Senhor na certeza de que a Lei Declaratória da Liberdade dos Índios, não havia produzido efeito algum que pudesse causar o mais leve cuidado; e muito menos quando todos os moradores viram que não havia embaraço, para se lhes darem por criados os mesmos Índios, de que antecedentemente se serviam como escravos; observando-se a este respeito o Regimento dos Órfãos, reduzidos à praxe pelo seu mesmo juiz.*" Marcos Carneiro de Mendonça, *A Amazônia na era pombalina* (Rio de Janeiro: IHGB) Tomo III, 1 de agosto de 1758, 1185.

people and their maternal descendants, I argue that settlers used mixed-race classifications to reinforce practices of enslavement. As settlers stressed maternal black genealogies of the people they desired to keep enslaved and denied their Indigeneity, they blocked potential attempts to claim freedom based on Indigenous ancestry.

Claiming Indigenous ancestry in Maranhão meant activating the legal and political content of the "índio(a)" colonial category. The recognition of who was an índio(a) depended on the local community. Because colonial justice settled these disputes based on reputation or how other community members saw one person, local networks transmitted critical genealogical knowledge. The índio(a) status was then a combination of one's social network, genealogy, appearance, and labor. These local networks carried not only genealogical knowledge but also legal knowledge of how to use Portuguese law and courts.

My second argument builds on Indigenous workers' legal activism to propose a bottom-up process of Indigenous abolition or erosion of enslavement practices. Indigenous people carved out their spaces of autonomy within the colonial sphere as they learned how to use Portuguese law and courts. Working within the protection offered by the king over those categorized as índios(as) was only part of the process. Over time, the thousands of Indigenous enslaved people and their descendants forged communities in Maranhão. They became índios(as) in the colonial sphere by incorporating elements of Catholicism, such as the sacrament of baptism and marriage. They instrumentalized the índio(a) prerogative to work for wages and to be a mobile workforce. They built their own houses and tried to distance themselves from former enslavers.

Indigenous enslaved people and their personal stories are virtually unknown to us because Indigenous people tend to appear in historical narratives in "expected places:" either

religious missions or the interior (sertão).[3] The Indigenous people studied here came from the

interior and once belonged to autonomous groups, at least the first generation. But they did not

enter Indigenous villages and therefore cannot be considered "índios aldeados." Over time, they

settled in cities, farms, and ranches. They indeed interacted with Indigenous villages, but they

seem to remain distant. Historians have traditionally analyzed Indigenous people incorporated

into the colonial sphere and autonomous Indigenous groups in contrast.[4] One fruitful strand of

historiography deals with the frontiers and borderlands of European empires.[5] Another line of

inquiry delves into Indigenous people within the colonial sphere.[6]

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[3] Scholarship on Indigenous enslavement is growing, especially in the context of present-day United States. For works focused on women and kinship: James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Julianna Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2007). Indigenous enslavement as part of imperial geopolitics in the Southeast: Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Indigenous enslavement and French-Indigenous relations: Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012); The topic's expansion included areas beyond the Southeast and Southwest, such as New England: Margaret Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonialism and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015). The topic received the first general overview: Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016). The increasing interest on practices of Indigenous enslavement explain the recent translation of John Monteiro's book published in Brazil in the 1990s, John Monteiro, *Blacks of the Land: Indian Slavery and the Origins of Colonial São Paulo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[4] One recent exception is Heather F. Roller, *Contact Strategies: Histories of Native Autonomy in Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).

[5] Hal Langfur, *The Forbidden Lands: Colonial Identity, Frontier Violence, and the Persistence of Brazil's Eastern Indians, 1750-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Elisa Fruhauf Garcia, *As diversas formas de ser índio: políticas indígenas e políticas indigenistas no extremo sul da América portuguesa* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 2009).

[6] John Monteiro, *Blacks of the Land: Indian Slavery and the Origins of Colonial São Paulo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Maria Regina Celestino, *Metamorfoses indígenas: identidade e cultura nas aldeias coloniais do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2013). A sample of studies on Indigenous villages in Amazonia: Barbara A. Sommer, "Negotiated Settlements: Native Amazonians and Portuguese Policy in Pará, Brazil, 1758-1798," (Ph.D. Diss., Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2000); Angela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Lisboa: CNCDP, 2000); Mauro C. Coelho, "Do sertão para o mar: um estudo sobre a experiência portuguesa na América, a partir da colônia: O caso do Diretório dos índios (1751-1798)," (Ph.D. Diss., São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 2005); Almir Diniz de Carvalho, "Índios cristãos: a conversão dos índios na Amazônia portuguesa (1653-1769)," (Ph.D. Diss., Campinas: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2005); Patrícia Sampaio, *Espelhos partidos: etnia, legislação e desigualdade na colônia* (Manaus: EDUA, 2012); Heather F. Roller, *Amazonian Routes: Indigenous Mobility and Colonial Communities in Northern Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

Scholars wrote the history of slavery in Brazil almost exclusively as an African question, rendering Indigenous enslavement practices invisible or irrelevant.[7] The established narrative in the history of Brazil created what I call a "narrative of substitution." Scholars acknowledge the importance of Indigenous enslavement in the early moments of colonization, especially in the installation of colonial settlements. Still, the shift to an agrarian occupation made Indigenous enslavement obsolete in favor of African enslavement. This narrative of substitution contributes to Indigenous people's disappearance in historical processes. Indigenous people only reacted to European influence. European colonialism discarded Indigenous people once they were no longer useful.

Foundational works on the historical formation of Brazil in the 1930s and 1940s, such as Gilberto Freyre and Caio Prado Júnior, contributed to the narrative of substitution. They reflected the general understanding in the social sciences that Indigenous people were on the verge of extinction. Gilberto Freyre acknowledges the role of Indigenous people, especially Indigenous women, in the formation of the patriarchal family. Yet, the doom of Indigenous people would come with the growth of sugar plantations. For him, "sugar killed the Indian."[8] Caio Prado Júnior, in turn, made the traditional comparison between Spanish and Portuguese colonialism. While the first encountered sedentary Indigenous people with systems of labor extraction already in place, the second found sparse populations, almost useless to agricultural activities, according to him. The argument develops in this familiar image that Indigenous

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[7] Camila L. Dias, "Os índios, a Amazônia e os conceitos de escravidão e liberdade," *Estudos Avançados* 33 (2019): 235-252.

[8] Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime da economia patriarcal* (São Paulo: Global, 2006), 163, 229.

people's cultural background was incompatible with the labor required for a sedentary life. Indigenous people would then be only a barrier to colonial expansion.[9]

Later interpretations framed the process of Brazil's colonization as a system. This system operated within the expansion of capitalism and labor relations developed in its peripheries. There are two competing paradigms to understand the place of colonial Brazil in the world economy that emerged between the 1960s and the 1980s: one that emphasizes external forced ordering the division of labor, and the other stresses local conditions. Both reinforce the narrative of substitution.

The author that best exemplifies the systemic interpretation of Brazil's colonization is Fernando A. Novais. It is important to emphasize that Novais doubted that Indigenous labor was less efficient than African slavery since settlers exploited them whenever they had the chance.[10] The crucial point to understand the adoption of African slavery in Brazil rests on the structural dimension of the Transatlantic slave trade. The rise of African slavery in Brazil was directly related to Portuguese merchants' interests in the Transatlantic slave trade.[11]

Stuart Schwartz's influential work on the rise of Bahia's sugar economy developed local conditions rather than external forces to explain the substitution. For him, the local responses were more critical than European demands. The Portuguese tried to exploit Indigenous labor, but the results were not what they expected. Indigenous people's cultural background clashed with Portuguese projects. The social organization of coastal Tupi people responded well to Portuguese demand for seasonal labor of cutting wood and small-scale farming. Yet, the increasing demand

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[9] Caio Prado Júnior, *História econômica do Brasil* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983).

[10] Fernando A. Novais, *Portugal e Brasil na crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial (1777-1808)* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1981), 102-105.

[11] Several scholars criticized Novais's interpretation of slavery and the slave trade. For example, Ciro Cardoso and Jacob Gorender diminished the external factor for the adoption of African slavery in favor of explanations that emphasize the intense exploitation of Indigenous labor until it was not possible anymore.

for labor-intensive sugar production poisoned Indigenous-Portuguese relations. In Tupi societies, the gender division of labor was another point of contention since women were generally in charge of farming rather than men. Over time, Europeans perceived African workers as more productive than Indigenous ones, despite the higher prices of the first. For Europeans, investing in African enslaved people would be more lucrative, particularly after the installation of the first sugar mills and the seasonal use of Indigenous workers drafted from Indigenous villages. Finally, Schwartz argues that Portuguese slave expeditions in Northeastern Brazil became less profitable over time. Indigenous depopulation forced the Portuguese to move deep into the interior, and slave raids started to capture few people at a prohibitively high cost.[12]

More recently, the influential book of historian Luiz Felipe de Alencastro builds on a long-standing interpretation of Brazil that relies on the complementary relationship between Brazil and West Central Africa. The first would be the place of plantation development. The second would be the source of enslaved labor. The Portuguese colonial domination and exploitation in this region would come from the Transatlantic slave trade. In his view, Indigenous enslavement was "incompatible with the colonial system." He further explained: "It was hindered by the more dynamic sphere of merchant capital (invested in the African slave trade), by the Crown's fiscal networks (coupled to the African Atlantic trade), and by the Church doctrine (which privileged the evangelization of Amerindians and deterred their enslavement). Such circumstances rendered unviable a regular exchange system similar to the African slave trade."[13]

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[12] Stuart Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, Bahia, 1550-1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28-50.
[13] Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *The Trade in the Living: the Formation of Brazil in the South Atlantic, Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2018), 126.

The narrative of substitution was widely accepted. Historian Jean Hébrard, when

reviewing the vast scholarship on slavery in Brazil, wrote only a few sentences about Indigenous

enslavement and repeated similar arguments on the ephemeral nature of Indigenous enslavement,

the impacts of epidemics, and the role of the Catholic Church: "The first contingents of slaves

were drawn from the native populations, but this course rapidly revealed itself to be impractical.

The epidemic diseases brought from Europe decimated the indigenous populations even more

quickly when Indians were concentrated together to labor. And the Jesuit missionaries who

arrived alongside the first colonists had other projects in mind for the indigenous peoples: They

believed that conversion depended on a rejection of native culture, and that the latter would

result once the Indians had become wage-earning rural workers rather than slaves."[14]

These interpretations of Brazil tend to relegate Indigenous enslavement to the peripheries

of sugar plantation areas: São Paulo and Amazonia. The first scholarship on Indigenous labor

recruitment in Amazonia focused almost exclusively on Portuguese legislation. They worked on

the many laws and royal orders on how to interact with Indigenous people. Although these

historians offered an impressive review of Portuguese legislation, it was generally focused on

debates among colonial officials and missionaries and divorced from social life.[15]

Scholars in the 1970s devoted significant energy to delineating the broad contours of

Indigenous labor recruitment in Amazonia. These works displayed impressive archival research,

mostly exploring colonial archives in Portugal and, to a lesser extent, local collections in

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[14] Jean M. Hébrard, "Slavery in Brazil: Brazilian Scholars in the Key Interpretive Debates," *Translating the Americas* 1 (2013): 48.

[15] João Francisco Lisboa, *Crônica do Brasil colonial: apontamentos para a história do Maranhão* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1976), 406; Mathias Kiemen, *The Indian Policy of Portugal in the Amazon Region, 1614-1693* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1954); Georg Thomas, *Política indigenista dos portugueses no Brasil, 1500-1640* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1982); Beatriz Perrone-Moisés, "Índios livres e índios escravos: Os princípios da legislação indigenista do período colonial," in *História dos índios no Brasil*, ed. Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992).

Maranhão and Pará. Although they laid the foundation for future studies, they tended to overemphasize images of poverty and lawlessness in Amazonia. The labor recruitment system was inherently inefficient due to abuses and corruption by settlers and colonial officials. Because of this "counter-productive labor system," settlers' economic activities stalled, and labor shortage was rampant. Also problematic was their understanding of the lack of state presence in Amazonia before imperial reforms in the mid-eighteenth century. Some historians rely on images of barbarism versus civilization. These works emphasize a narrative that overestimates the impacts of the imperial reforms in the second half of the eighteenth century as though the region was abandoned before.[16]

What seems more problematic in these studies is the image of Indigenous people as marginalized victims of Portuguese colonialism. They were fragile disposable bodies. The recurrent argument on the impacts of epidemics is present in several works.

Recent studies built on the foundation laid by those critical works and improved our understanding of Indigenous labor recruitment. These studies overcame the vision that the Portuguese crown abandoned Amazonia before the imperial reforms. The colonial state participated intensely in possible solutions for the labor problem. The Portuguese crown desired

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[16] Colin Maclachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800," in *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil*, ed. Dauril Alden (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 199-230; David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640-1750," (Ph.D. Diss., Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974); Sue Gross, "Labor in Amazonia in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," *The Americas* 32 (1975): 211-21; Dauril Alden, "Indian Versus Black Slavery in the State of Maranhão during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century," in *Iberian Colonies, New World Societies: Essays in Memory of Charles Gibson,* ed. Richard Garner and William Taylor (University Park: R.L. Garner, 1985), 71-102; John Hemming, *The Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 409-426. The stark division between the pre and post imperial reforms and the rise of the Transatlantic slave trade: Manuel Nunes Dias, *Fomento e mercantilismo: a Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão*, 2v. (Belém: Universidade Federal do Pará, 1970); António Carreira, *A Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão. Volume I: O comércio monopolista: Portugal-África-Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (São Paulo: Editora Nacional, 1988), 52. Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: A formação do Brasil no Atlântico sul* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000), 142-143; Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: culture, identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25-60.

to defend the territories claimed in the large area drained by the Amazon River, and occupying the region with settlers was probably its best bet. Moreover, the Indigenous slave trade generated a vital source of income through taxation.[17]

These studies also honed our understanding of the different modes of labor conscription that coexisted in Amazonia, mainly the *descimentos*, *tropas de resgate*, and "just wars." Each one predominated in different periods depending on local and imperial power dynamics. Indigenous labor recruitment was now seen as vital to the various economic activities developed in Northern Brazil, from cocoa extraction and cultivation to cattle raising.[18] The role that epidemics played in labor recruitment also changed. Without denying the catastrophic consequences of epidemics on Indigenous populations, historical evidence suggests that after a major outbreak, settlers pressured the Portuguese crown even more for new slave expeditions. In other words, the high mortality rate did not diminish the exploitation of Indigenous labor. Historians recently published the first demographic estimate for this large-scale populational resettlement.[19]

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[17] Rafael Chambouleyron, "Indian Freedom and Indian Slavery in the Portuguese Amazon (1640-1755)," in *Building the Atlantic Empires: Unfree Labor and Imperial States in the Political Economy of Capitalism, ca. 1500-1914*, ed. John Donoghue and Evelyn P. Jennings (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 54-71.

[18] Rafael Chambouleyron and Karl Arenz, "Amazonian Atlantic: Cacao, Colonial Expansion and Indigenous Labour in the Portuguese Amazon Region (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 53 (2021): 221-244.

[19] Barbara A. Sommer, "Colony of the Sertão: Amazonian Expeditions and the Indian Slave Trade," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 401-428; Décio de Alencar Guzmán, "A colonização nas Amazônias: guerras, comércio e escravidão nos séculos XVII e XVIII," *Revista Estudos Amazônicos* 2 (2008): 103-139; Márcia Mello, *Fé e império: as Juntas das Missões nas conquistas portuguesas* (Manaus: EdUA, 2009), 304-318; Camila L. Dias and Fernanda A. Bombardi, "O que dizem as licenças? Flexibilização da legislação e recrutamento particular de trabalhadores indígenas no Estado do Maranhão (1680-1755)," *Revista de História* 175 (2016): 249-280; Camila L. Dias, "O comércio de escravos indígenas na Amazônia visto pelos regimentos de entradas e de tropas de resgate (séculos XVII e XVIII)," *Revista Territórios e Fronteiras* 10 (2017): 238-259; Camila L. Dias, Fernanda A. Bombardi, and Eliardo Costa, "Dimensão da população indígena incorporada ao Estado do Maranhão e Grão-Pará entre 1680 e 1750: uma ordem de grandeza," *Revista de História* 179 (2020): 1-31.

Most of these studies, however, stop their analysis in the 1750s. Because of that, they miss the critical transition that occurred after the publication of the abolition law of 1755 and the unprecedented growth of the Transatlantic slave trade. Besides, if some scholars correctly pointed out that different modes of labor recruitment were blurry in practice, the legal status of Indigenous workers was equally unclear when they entered settlers' households. Finally, the current scholarship still offers very little on the lives of Indigenous people under enslavement and their attempts to evade captivity.[20]

Chapter Outline

The first chapter, "São Luís: A City between the *Sertão* and the Atlantic," introduces Maranhão and São Luís, where Indigenous and African enslavement practices overlapped. The chapter places Maranhão within three distinct contexts in the broader Portuguese empire. The first was c.1610-1680, when the region's occupation responded to the Iberian crown's geostrategic plans during the global war against the Dutch. The second was c.1680-1755, when the Portuguese empire's center of gravity moved from Asia to the Atlantic. During those years, enslavement practices were at the core of imperial expansion in West Africa and Amazonia. Not coincidently, the Transamazonic slave trade peaked in the eighteenth century's first half. The final period was c.1755-1770 when imperial reforms transformed the landscape of enslavement

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[20] Some studies on Indigenous people fighting for their freedom, David Sweet, "Francisca: Indian Slave," in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, ed. David Sweet and Gary Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 274-291; Márcia Mello, "Desvendando outras Franciscas: mulheres cativas e as ações de liberdade na Amazônia colonial portuguesa," *Portuguese Studies Review* 13 (2005): 1-16; Fernanda A. Bombardi and Luma Prado, "As ações de liberdade de índias e índios escravizados no Estado do Maranhão e Grão-Pará primeira metade do século XVIII," *Brasiliana* 5 (2016): 174-199; André Ferreira, "Nas malhas das liberdades: o tribunal da Junta das Missões e o governo dos índios na capitania do Maranhão (1720-1757)," (MA Thesis, Belém: Universide Federal do Pará, 2017); Luma Prado, "Cativos litigantes: demandas indígenas por liberdade na Amazônia portuguesa, 1706-1759," (MA Thesis, São Paulo: Universidade de São Paulo, 2019).

in Maranhão with another attempt to abolish Indigenous enslavement (law of June 6, 1755) and the rise of the Transatlantic slave trade in Maranhão. Between the 1740s-1770s, Maranhão transitioned from a frontier economy to a plantation economy. First, settlers constantly raided Indigenous groups as they ventured into the Amazon River, searching for forest products to trade in the European market. Farms and ranches flourished with Indigenous labor close to São Luís. After the 1750s, the Portuguese monarchy tried to transform peripheries like Maranhão by expanding the African slave trade. São Luís became a bustling port, organizing the exportation of cotton and rice to places like Lisbon, Rouen, Hamburg, and London. The progressive incorporation of Maranhão into Atlantic commercial routes hardened the racial lines of slavery but failed to limit settlers' exploitation of Indigenous labor.

Chapter two, "The Rise and Fall of the Transamazonic Slave Trade," develops two interconnected ideas. First, the chapter builds on anthropological and archaeological work to reconstruct the broad social and cultural aspects of the people impacted by Portuguese slave expeditions in the Upper Rio Negro (Northwest Amazonia and thousands of miles from the coast). I frame the Transamazonic slave trade as a cross-cultural practice that operated within the Indigenous regional system of the Upper Rio Negro, a web of kinship relations and trading networks connecting Tukanoan, Arawakan, and Maku peoples. Portuguese military men adapted to Indigenous kinship codes, particularly exchanging women to seal alliances. The Portuguese also responded to the Indigenous chief's demands regarding the trading goods in exchange for enslaved workers. Successful slave expeditions had to arm large canoes with soldiers, rowers, and Indigenous guides. A substantial amount of foodstuff was also necessary to survive in the long-distance trade. More importantly, the Portuguese had to spend significant sums on iron tools, such as knives, axes, hooks, and scythes, and European textiles, the trading goods

demanded in the interior of Amazonia to acquire enslaved people. Contrary to old paradigms, Indigenous workers were not fragile and disposable bodies that would die within weeks once they reached settlers' households. Many Indigenous captives survived the journey down the Amazon River and rebuilt their lives within Portuguese settlements, bringing notions of kinship and labor.

Chapter three, "Indigenous and African Enslaved People in Baptismal Records," makes extensive use of Catholic baptismal records to document vernacular practices of freedom. Baptismal registers could prove one's legal status in colonial societies. Chapter three thus argues that these documents resulted from a negotiation between the Catholic priest producing the archive and the people involved in the ritual. Before the 1750s, Indigenous workers appeared overwhelmingly as "slaves." In other words, Indigenous enslavement did not engender a complex vocabulary for legal statuses in parish records before the formal abolition of Indigenous enslavement (1755) and when enslaved Africans were virtually absent from the community. As settlers raided Indigenous groups in Amazonia and included them in their households, they blurred the distinctions between the multiple forms of labor recruitment. After the 1750s, settlers hardened the racial lines of enslavement by associating it with blackness. Indigenous workers, in this later context, presented themselves as "servants," free(d), mobile, and wage-earner workers tied to specific households. Yet, Indigenous workers were in a precarious position because these legal statuses could easily slip into slavery again. The chapter ends with an analysis of fictional kinship ties forged in the baptism sacrament (*compadrio*). As enslaved Africans primarily forged horizontal relations (between enslaved people) in the ritual of baptism, Indigenous workers tended to create vertical connections (between people with different legal statuses). These vertical connections indicate that settlers used the Catholic sacrament to tie Indigenous workers

to their customary labor arrangements and that Indigenous workers broadened their social networks through the Catholic ritual.

Beyond Catholic baptisms, Indigenous Amazonians defined the boundaries of socio-racial classifications and legal statuses on the ground when they selected to marry a person with a similar background. In chapter four, "Marriage Choices of São Luís's Working People," I demonstrate how Indigenous and African workers could have hostile relations, but their lives could coexist in the workplace, in kinship-based relations, and even in the body of one individual of "mixed" heritage. As lineage, appearance, and geographical origin became crucial in defining who was an *índio(a)*, Indigenous workers in São Luís avoided marital arrangements with enslaved Africans, particularly recently arrived enslaved Africans. Indigenous workers living in the city of São Luís demonstrate that the strategic use of the colonial category *índio(a)* was not restricted to those who lived in Indigenous villages (*aldeamentos*).

Chapter five, "Paths to Freedom and Autonomy between Indigenous and African Slavery," closes the dissertation and discusses the relationship between the strategic use of the *índio* category and two mechanisms that allowed the perpetuation of forms of bondage: social dependencies within settlers' households and the use of socio-racial classifications.[21] Through selected short stories of Indigenous workers negotiating their position as mobile and wage laborers, I explore the bottom-up process of abolition. Based on serial analysis of manumission letters and the freedom suit of Rosa, an enslaved woman in the 1770s, who argued that she descended from an Indigenous woman and her enslaver defended that she was a *cafuza*, a descendant of an enslaved African, I discuss the limits of the use of the *índio* category, how the

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[21] A version of chapter five appears as Alexandre Pelegrino, "From Slaves to *Índios*: Empire, Slavery, and Race (Maranhão, Brazil, c. 1740-90)," *Law and History Review* 40 (2023): 789-815.

community defined who was an *índio* and who was not, and vernacular practices stressing the maternal black lineage of the enslaved population. I conclude that mixed-race classifications reinforced slavery rather than serve as an avenue for the social ascension of formerly enslaved people, as several scholars have argued for Afro-descendants in the Atlantic world.

Chapter 1: São Luís: A City between the *Sertão* and the Atlantic

Abstract

Maranhão was a mobile frontier society throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Settlers from the city of São Luís, Maranhão's capital, enslaved thousands of Indigenous people in the Transamazonic slave trade. Indigenous labor built farms, ranches, houses, and churches in the region. Indigenous people also worked as domestic servants and in many other activities in the city and on farms and ranches. The fall of the Transamazonic slave trade in the 1750s and the rise of the Transatlantic slave trade did not erase Indigenous workers' importance in that society. Indigenous and African workers coexisted. Based on notarial records, such as last wills, commercial transactions, and parish records, this chapter shows that slavery was already important in Maranhão before the rise of the Transatlantic slave trade. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part outlines three broad Portuguese imperial contexts to understand their initiatives to colonize Maranhão: c.1610-1680; c.1680-1750; c.1750-1770. The first moment responds to the foundation of the colonial government in the region. Then, the Portuguese experienced an important expansion in the Atlantic related to slaving, both in Africa and in Amazonia. The last period introduces the imperial reforms and the rise of a plantation economy in Maranhão. The second part of the chapter discusses Maranhão's population, social structure, urban environment, and rural economic activities. Between the 1740s and the 1770s, as Maranhão started to receive enslaved Africans more consistently, it progressively moved away from the interior of Amazonia. The expansion of cattle ranches and farms in Maranhão still enslaved Indigenous people, but the bulk of the enslaved workforce was African.

São Luís, and its surrounding farms and ranches, was a slave entrepot in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, where different forms of slavery and regimes of forced labor overlapped. Most historians associate the growth of slavery in Maranhão with the expansion of cotton and rice plantations and the rise of the Transatlantic slave trade in the second half of the eighteenth century, but the analysis of notarial records – last wills and commercial transactions – demonstrate that slavery was already entrenched in Maranhão's social fabric in earlier decades. Local settlers enslaved thousands of Native Americans from São Luís's inception in the first decades of the seventeenth century until at least the mid-eighteenth century.

From São Luís, settlers launched raids into two different frontiers of enslavement. First, the military expeditions that waged wars against autonomous Indigenous groups in the Maranhão's savanna. Second, the slave raids that navigated deep into the continent's heart through the Amazon River and its main tributaries, an immense geographical region commonly called the *sertão do Rio das Amazonas* or the *sertão do Pará* in colonial documents.[22]

Around the mid-eighteenth century and contrary to the previous decades, most enslaved people that arrived in Maranhão came from Africa. In the 1750s, in the context of imperial reforms and border demarcations with Spain, a new norm from Lisbon tried to abolish the enslavement of Indigenous peoples. In the same period, the monarchy created a trading company (*Companhia de Comércio do Grão-Pará e Maranhão*) responsible for the growth of the transatlantic slave trade.[23] The expansion of African slavery in Maranhão between the 1750s and

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[22] Pará was the captaincy west of Maranhão. It is difficult to translate the word sertão into English. Some authors use backlands, others prefer wilderness, and some prefer hinterlands. In short, sertão was an area beyond the formal control of colonial administration. For one discussion on the idea of "sertão," see Hal Langfur, "Frontier/Fronteira: A Transnational Reframing of Brazil's Inland Colonization," *History Compass* 12 (2014): 843-52.
[23] In this text, I will be referring to the Companhia de Comércio do Grão-Pará e Maranhão every time I use "trading company."

1770s happened concomitantly with the Portuguese crown measures to curtail settlers' exploitation of Indigenous enslaved labor, a practice deeply established in Maranhão's society.

Maranhão progressively severed its ties with the Amazonian interior, the principal area of enslavement until the mid-eighteenth century, and started its transformation into a plantation society more connected to the African coast. In three decades, from the 1740s to the 1770s, Maranhão transformed from a mobile frontier economy to a more static plantation economy. As Maranhão's society put down roots, the racial lines of slavery hardened.[24]

This chapter places Maranhão within three different moments of the Portuguese empire (c.1610-1680; c.1680-1750; c.1750-1770). I first introduce the city of São Luís and surrounding areas from the first decades of the seventeenth century until the last quarter of the seventeenth century, when the occupation of the region responded to geopolitical and strategic goals of the Iberian crowns and the global war against the Dutch. Second, from the last quarter of the seventeenth century until the mid-eighteenth century, the Portuguese empire experienced significant expansion in the Atlantic basin. In this period, the enslavement of African and Indigenous people increased dramatically. Finally, the chapter outlines the transformations that came in the context of imperial reforms, namely the publication of the abolition law of 1755 and the creation of the trading company responsible for the constant and unprecedented forced transportation of thousands of enslaved Africans throughout the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Maranhão's population experienced acute growth, and the enslaved workforce moved from an Indigenous predominance to a massive African majority. Other significant transformations not explored in this research were the

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[24] One influential interpretation of this transformation from frontier economies to plantations is Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: the Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 282-286.

progressive decrease of circulation of trading goods as currency, primarily cotton rolls, and the transformation of Maranhão's missions into Indigenous villages.[25] In parallel with the burgeoning cattle ranches that dotted the main rivers in Maranhão, settlers developed new commercial enterprises, such as the export economy of cotton and rice to European markets. Despite Maranhão's increasing integration into the Atlantic economy and the transformation in the Indigenous policies responding to broader imperial reforms, I demonstrate how Indigenous people and their labor persisted as an important force in settlers' households.

<div align="center">I</div>

The Government of the Empire and the Administration of Indigenous Labor (c.1610-1680):

In the first decades of the seventeenth century, from the perspective of the colonial administration, Northern Brazil was the State of Maranhão (*Estado do Maranhão*), or a separate unit from Brazil, with a governor subordinated directly to Lisbon. Two main Captaincies (*Capitanias*) composed the State of Maranhão: Pará, the central city was Belém, and Maranhão, the principal city was São Luís. The Portuguese crown also created several private Captaincies (*Capitanias Donatárias*) that would only be incorporated into the royal fold in the mid-eighteenth century.[26]

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[25] Alam José da Silva Lima, "Do 'dinheiro da terra' ao 'bom dinheiro': Moeda natural e moeda metálica na Amazônia colonial (1706-1750)" (MA thesis: Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2006). On the problem of money in the Portuguese empire: Pedro Puntoni, "Uma 'pax monetária' Impasses do sistema monetário português no tempo dos Filipes (1580-1640)," *Topoi* 21 (2020): 216-236. Although well-studied for the neighboring captaincy of Pará, the transformation of Maranhão's missions into Indigenous villages is still waiting in-depth historical analysis. One recent work on Indigenous villages in Maranhão: Soraia Sales Dornelles, "Registros de Fundações, Ereções e Posses de Vilas: um olhar sobre as vilas de índios do Maranhão," *Saeculum* 26 (2021): 308-327.

[26] Luso-Brazilian historiography has devoted significant energy to questions related to the imperial administration. On the governors and captains of the State of Maranhão: Fabiano Vilaça, "Política e administração na Amazônia colonial: Regimentos e instruções para o governo das capitanias do Pará e do Maranhão (séculos XVII e XVIII)," *Revista Territórios & Fronteiras* 11 (2018): 42-69; Fabiano Vilaça, "Os capitães-mores do Maranhão e a administração da capitania em tempo de governador ausente (c. 1673-1751)," *História* 40 (2021): 1-30. For an overview of the Portuguese administration particularly the transformations in the mid-eighteenth century, Fabiano Vilaça, *O governo das conquistas do norte: trajetórias administrativas no Estado do Grão-Pará e Maranhão (1751-1780)* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2011).

As some scholars have argued, the State of Maranhão was "another Brazil," but the distinct economic activities and socio-cultural variations between the State of Maranhão and the State of Brazil went beyond the administrative division of the empire.[27] The Portuguese decision to govern its South American possessions based on two administrative units respected the wind regimes of the Atlantic Ocean. It was relatively easy to travel from Rio de Janeiro to Luanda or from Salvador to the Bight of Benin.[28] On the contrary, a maritime journey from these ports to São Luís was arduous.[29] São Luís was more accessible from the Azores or even from Lisbon, not to mention the maritime routes to Portuguese ports on the coast of Upper Guinea.[30] Maranhão's relative isolation from Luso-Brazilian trading routes in the South Atlantic contributed to the divergences between Maranhão and Brazil. While the sugar industry in Brazil defined a more static society in Brazil, Maranhão developed a mobile riverine society, critically dependent on the commerce in the interior of the continent, both for trading goods and Indigenous slaves.[31]

The first Portuguese attempts to settle in Maranhão date back to the sixteenth century. The burgeoning sugar industry and cattle ranches led settlers on Northeastern Brazil's coast to present-day Ceará, where the colonial expansion stalled due to the region's poor soils. Military

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[27] Among many others, Patrícia Melo Sampaio and Mauro Cezar Coelho, "O Atlântico Equatorial: sociabilidade e poder nas fronteiras da América Portuguesa," *Revista de História* 168 (2013): 18-22.

[28] Some influential works that stressed these connections, Pierre Verger, *Flux et reflux de la traite des négres entre le Golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos, du XVIIe au XIXe siécle* (Paris: La Haye Mouton, 1968); Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: formação do Brasil no atlântico sul, séculos XVI e XVII* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000); Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[29] Charles R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695-1750; Growing Pains of a Colonial Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 273-74.

[30] Rafael Chambouleyron, "Escravos do Atlântico Equatorial: tráfico negreiro para o Estado do Maranhão e Pará (século XVII e início do século XVIII)," *Revista Brasileira de História* 26 (2006): 79-114.

[31] Rafael Chambouleyron defends the importance of the Portuguese crown's policies to occupy the region. Northern Brazil would be like São Paulo in its dependency on the sertão. The dichotomy between the interior and the coast has been explored by classic works in Brazilian historiography, such as Sergio Buarque de Holanda, *Monções* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014), 41-43. In Maranhão, however, there was not a dichotomy between the interior and the coast, Rafael Chambouleyron, *Povoamento, ocupação e agricultura na Amazônia colonial (1640-1706)* (Belém: Editora Açaí, 2010), 18-19.

men led some attempts to create Portuguese forts and trading posts in Maranhão that failed due to Indigenous resistance, despite the Portuguese knowledge of their potentially excellent lands for agriculture.[32]

Where the Portuguese military expeditions failed, French explorers and traders flourished. Since the late sixteenth century, Frenchmen had been developing alliances with Tupi groups on the coast of South America. In 1612, they founded a fort/trading post named São Luís.[33] Located on a big island on the Atlantic coast, the French cultivated friendly and promising relations with Tupi groups. Capuchin missionaries accompanied the expedition and started working on converting Native people to the Catholic religion. The Capuchin described large Tupi settlements on the island, and one of them described villages with more than twenty houses with thousands of people.

Despite the promising beginning, the French colony in Maranhão faced difficulties in international and local contexts. The Spanish and French crowns had just made alliances, and a new colony on the coast of South America would not be politically sound since it was the period of the Iberian Union (1580-1640).[34] Without the necessary financial support from the monarchy, the French colony faltered. The situation became further complicated in 1615 when the Portuguese launched from Pernambuco an expedition to expel the French. Jerônimo de Albuquerque led the attack, given his vast experience in local wars fighting alongside Indigenous

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[32] Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (ed.), *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, t.1, vol. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 2003), 220-221. Another traditional interpretation, João Francisco Lisboa, *Crônica do Brasil Colonial: Apontamentos para a história do Maranhão* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1976), 87-126

[33] The influential book by Patricia Seed incorrectly says that São Luís was at the mouth of the Amazon. It is more accurate to say that Belém was created to control the navigation in the Amazon River. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 41.

[34] Andrea Daher, *O Brasil Francês: as singularidades da França Equinocial, 1612-1615* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007) and Vasco Mariz and Lucien Provençal, *La Ravardiere e a França Equinocial: Os franceses no Maranhão (1612-1615)* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2007), 56.

warriors.[35] The French fort capitulated in 1615 to the Portuguese-Indigenous forces of Albuquerque, not even three years after its foundation.

Portuguese-Indigenous forces' conquest of São Luís and the later foundation of colonial government must be placed within the broader context of the Iberian Union (1580-1640). Economic reasons were not driving the colonial occupation, such as the existence of gold and silver mines or the prospects of plantation development. The imperial administration saw Maranhão as a strategic place because it was between three critical areas: the sugar industry in Northeastern Brazil; the Caribbean, a crucible of transimperial conflicts; and the silver mines of Peru, accessed from the Atlantic coast through the Amazon River.[36]

Immediately after the victory in São Luís, in 1616, the Portuguese sent an expedition to build another fortress up north - later the city of Belém - better positioned to control the navigation in the Amazon River.[37] These two Portuguese settlements - São Luís and Belém - would play a pivotal role in the expansion of Northern Brazil. Iberian crown's policies to develop the occupation of Maranhão favored the development of agriculture and animal husbandry activities aimed at defending the territory against other European colonial powers.[38]

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[35] Warfare in the colonial context was different because of Indigenous warriors' presence and tactics. Evaldo Cabral de Melo distinguished the "war of Flanders" and the "war of Brazil:" Evaldo Cabral de Melo, *Olinda Restaurada: guerra e açúcar no Nordeste, 1630-1654* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2007), 257-315.

[36] In 1637, Pedro de Teixeira led the first expedition that proved the connection between the Atlantic and the Andes. Teixeira left Belém and reached Quito through fluvial paths.

[37] For a very traditional narrative of those episodes inspired by the careers of military men: Lucinda Saragoça, *Da 'Feliz Lusitânia aos confins da Amazônia (1615-1662)* (Lisboa: Edições Cosmos, 2000). Other Europeans founded forts and trading posts in the first decades of the seventeenth century, including the Dutch, Irish, and English. Joyce Lorimer, *English and Irish Settlement on the River Amazon, 1550-1646* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1989). For recent research centered on the Tupi/Portuguese relations in the process of colonization, Pablo Ibáñez Bonillo, "La conquista portuguesa del estuario Amazónico: identidad, guerra, frontera (1612-1654)" (PhD Diss., Sevilla: Universidad Pablo de Olavide, 2015), 160-165.

[38] Helidacy M. M. Correa, "'Para aumento da conquista e bom governo dos moradores:' O papel da Câmara de São Luís na conquista, defesa e organização do território do Maranhão (1615-1668)" (PhD Diss. Niterói: Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2011), 49-64; Alírio Cardoso, "Maranhão na monarquia hispânica: intercâmbios, guerra e navegação nas fronteiras das Índias de Castela (1580-1655)" (PhD Diss. Salamanca: Universidade de Salamanca, 2012), 43-47.

In Maranhão, just as in other areas of the Americas, the first settlers rapidly engaged in raiding economies that resulted in the enslavement of thousands of Indigenous peoples.[39] Alliances with Indigenous groups forced Portuguese participation in interethnic warfare, and the captives from those violent encounters found use in Portuguese households and emerging farms and ranches. The monarchy rewarded important military men in the period of conquest with privileged access to Indigenous labor.[40] Initially, because Maranhão's settlers enslaved more Indigenous workers than they could absorb in their households, a regional slave trade flourished and reached nearby areas, such as Pernambuco, and more distant markets, like the Margarita Island in the Caribbean.[41] The situation would change in the following years with the growth of the local population and the incessant pleas from settlers to the king for official slave raids.

In the context of the Dutch-Portuguese global war, the Dutch attacked and occupied the city of São Luís for a brief period.[42] During the occupation of coastal Brazil (1630-1654), the Dutch tried to expand its dominions beyond the sugar-producing areas. In the same context, they invaded Portuguese forts on the coast of Africa to solve the labor shortage in Northeastern sugar

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[39] For a good overview of the situation in the early moments in the Brazilian Northeast, John Hemming, *Red Gold: the Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 24-44, 139-160; Alida Metcalf, "The Entradas of Bahia of the Sixteenth Century," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 373-400. Only a few examples of early Indigenous enslavement, Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: the Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016); 40-45; Carolyn M. Arena, "Indian Slaves from Caribana: Trade and Labor in the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean" (PhD. Diss. New York: Columbia University, 2017), 120-144; Erin Woodruff Stone, *Captives of Conquest: Slavery in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 118-19.

[40] Alírio Cardoso, "Maranhão na monarquia hispânica," 198; Rodrigo Ricupero, *A formação da elite colonial: Brasil, 1530-1630* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2009), 241-42.

[41] For Indigenous enslaved people from Maranhão in the Caribbean, see Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica*, vol. 2, part. 1, 325. A Dutch report informs that Indigenous enslaved people from Maranhão were common in Pernambuco sugar plantations, Adriaen van der Dussen, "Relatório sobre o Estado das Capitanias conquistadas no Brasil, apresentado pelo Senhor Adriaen van der Dussen ao Conselho dos XIX na Câmara de Amsterdã, em 4 de abril de 1640," in José António Consalves de Mello, *Fontes para a história do Brasil holandês: a economia açucareira* (Recife: CEPE, 2004), 186.

[42] Mario Meireles, *Holandeses no Maranhão: 1641-1644* (São Luís: EDUFMA, 1991), 75, 79, 87-92; Charles R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (London: Penguin Books, 1973), 98-100; Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 72; Gabriel Paquette, *The European Seaborne Empires: From the Thirty Years' War to the Age of Revolutions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 70-71.

plantations. The potential commercial opportunities in Amazonia circulated in Europeans'

imaginations, including forest goods, gold, and slaves.[43] Participating in the enslavement of

Native Americans is a more practical explanation for the Dutch expansion up north during the

labor crisis in their sugar-occupied areas in the Northeast. Regardless of the reason behind the

Dutch invasion, their experience in Maranhão did not last long.

The expulsion of the Dutch from Maranhão marked the end of the period of conquests

and consolidated the Portuguese hold in the area. In the following decades, an institutional

thickening characterized the Portuguese presence in the region by installing a bureaucracy to

administer justice, tax collection, and military affairs. The ecclesiastical administration would

accompany closely.[44]

In the second half of the seventeenth century, particularly in the 1670s, the Portuguese

crown implemented policies to develop Maranhão's economy. These were troubled years in the

region because of the perennial conflict between missionaries and settlers for the control of

Indigenous labor. Around 1640, by the end of the conquest period, the Portuguese shifted the

nature of Indigenous enslavement. The challenge for the crown was the organization of labor

recruitment and managing settlers' constant complaints about labor shortages.

Indigenous labor in Maranhão went well beyond slavery. The debates on the legalities of

Indigenous enslavement in the interior were undoubtedly noteworthy. Yet, a critical labor pool

was in the Indigenous villages (*aldeamentos*). Settlers, missionaries, and Indigenous people

frequently debated how to effectively distribute the services of those Indigenous workers and

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[43] Lodewijk Hulsman, "Swaerooch: o comércio holandês com índios no Amapá (1600-1615)" *Revista de Estudos Amazônicos* 6 (2011): 178-202; Michiel van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 8; Alírio Cardoso, "Beschrijving van Maranhão: a Amazônia nos relatórios holandeses na época da Guerra de Flandres (1621-1644)" *Topoi* 18 (2017): 406-428.
[44] One example of ecclesiastical administration, Pollyanna Mendonça Muniz, *Réus de batina: justiça eclesiástica e clero secular no bispado do Maranhão colonial* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2017).

recruit more Indigenous people for the aldeamentos or create new ones. In sum, settlers and missionaries, mainly the Jesuits, fought to control Indigenous workers' services from the aldeamentos.

Following the Portuguese legislation on Indigenous labor recruitment, it is possible to see two moments: one before 1688 and one after 1688, with moments when missionaries were stronger and moments when settlers had the upper hand. Starting in 1647, the Portuguese crown prohibited the "private administration" of Indigenous workers.[45] In the 1650s, under the close influence of the Jesuit António Vieira, there were the first efforts to systematize the slave expeditions (*tropas de resgate*) and regulate the labor drafts in the Indigenous villages, with the definition of payments and working periods.[46] These efforts to limit settlers' access to Indigenous labor led to a revolt in 1661 and the first expulsion of the Jesuits from the region. In the following years, the crown would reinforce the role of settlers in labor recruitment.[47]

The context of the 1680s demonstrated that the Portuguese crown did not have the necessary means to control settlers. On April 1, 1680, the king enacted an important abolition law that declared the unrestricted freedom of all Indigenous workers.[48] It did not take long for settlers to organize another revolt. In 1684 settlers from Maranhão menaced another expulsion of the Jesuits and demanded better terms for recruiting Indigenous labor. In 1686, a critical norm

[45] Anais da Biblioteca Nacional, vol. 66 (1948): 17-18, "Ley por que S. Mag.de mandou que os Índios do Maranhão sejão livres," Nov. 10, 1647.
[46] Anais da Biblioteca Nacional, vol. 66 (1948): 19-21, "Provisão sobre a liberdade e captiveiro do gentio do Maranhão," Oct. 17, 1653. Royal policies defining legitimate cases for Indigenous enslavement, Anais da Biblioteca Nacional, vol. 66 (1948): 25-28, "Ley que se passou pelo Secretario de Estado em 9 de abril de 655 sobre os Indios do Maranhão," Apr. 9, 1655. Carlos Zeron does the best work on the Jesuit role in colonial Brazil. Especifically about Viera's interpretation of Indigenous slavery, Carlos Zeron, "Vieira em movimento: subjacências da distinção entre tapuias, tupis e negros," *Estudos Avançados* 33 (2019): 171-192.
[47] Anais da Biblioteca Nacional, vol. 66 (1948): 29-31, "Provisão em forma de ley sobre a liberdade dos Indios do Maranhão e forma quem devem ser admenistrados no espiritual pellos Religiosos da Companhia e os das mais religiões de aquelle Estado," Sep. 12, 1663.
[48] Anais da Biblioteca Nacional, vol. 66 (1948): 57-59, "Ley sobre a liberdade do gentio do Maranhão," Apr. 1, 1680.

was enacted, the *Regimento das Missões*, regulating Indigenous work and placing Jesuits and Franciscans in a prominent position.[49] Finally, on April 28, 1688, the Portuguese crown promulgated one *alvará* that revoked the law of April 1, 1680, and defined cases of legitimate enslavement of Indigenous people, the key role of the Jesuits, and the distribution of slaves by the Municipal Council.[50]

After the systematization of tropas de resgate and descimentos in the 1680s, Maranhão experienced a few decades when the enslavement of Indigenous people enjoyed support from the Portuguese crown, despite settlers' insistence on labor shortages. Portuguese imperial policies between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century favored the Transamazonic slave trade, responsible for the large-scale displacement of Indigenous workers from the continent's interior to coastal settlements. The enslavement of Indigenous people in Amazonia went almost unchecked for decades until the mid-eighteenth century when in the context of imperial reforms, the Transamazonic slave trade found significantly less support in Lisbon.

II

The Portuguese Atlantic Empire and the Transamazonic Slave Trade (1688-1755)

The aftermath of the wars against the Dutch, the independence from the Spanish monarchy, and the later discovery of gold reserves in Brazil ushered in a new era in the Portuguese empire. The empire's center of gravity moved from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic.[51] The costly wars forced the new Bragança dynasty to make disadvantageous alliances

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[49] Marcia E. A. Mello, "O Regimento das Missões: poder e negociação na Amazônia Portuguesa" *Clio* 27 (2009): 46-75.
[50] Anais da Biblioteca Nacional, vol. 66 (1948): 97-101, "Alvará em forma de ley expedido pelo secretario de Estado que deroga as demais leys que se hão passado sobre os indios do Maranhão," Apr. 28, 1688.
[51] Gabriel Paquette, *The European Seaborne Empires*, 86-87.

with the English. In exchange for the support of the emerging powerful English monarchy, the Portuguese offered significant concessions, including the transference of desirable colonial posts.

If Luso-Brazilian forces could reclaim the Northeast of Brazil and Angola from the Dutch, the first the main sugar area in South America and the second the major slave region in West Central Africa, the same cannot be said about the Portuguese possessions in Asia. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Dutch imposed decisive military defeats against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean.[52] Except for Goa on the Western coast of India and Macau in the China Sea, the Dutch seized other important fortresses and trading posts previously controlled by the Portuguese, such as Malacca. The military disaster in Asia represented a significant blow to the Portuguese spicy and pepper trade.

The once-thriving sugar industry in coastal Brazil faced fierce competition in the last quarter of the seventeenth century as English colonies in the Caribbean absorbed a significant share of the international market.[53] As the prices of African slaves soared, sugar prices never reached the levels before the war against the Dutch. The acute economic crisis propelled the expansion in colonial areas, both in South America and Africa.

In the State of Maranhão, Portuguese imperial bureaucrats imagined the Amazonian forest's products as potential substitutes for the spices and pepper no longer abundantly available after the loss of trading posts in Asia.[54] In Brazil, colonists followed the major rivers and went

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[52] George Winius, *Studies on Portuguese Asia, 1495-1689* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 153-89.

[53] Among many other studies, Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

[54] Rafael Chambouleyron, "Como se hace en Indias de Castilla" El cacao entre la Amazonía portuguesa y las Indias de Castilla (siglos XVII y XVIII)" *Revista Complutense de Historia de America* 40 (2014): 23-43; Rafael Chambouleyron and Karl Arenz, "Amazonian Atlantic: Cacao, Colonial Expansion and Indigenous Labour in the Portuguese Amazon Region (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)" *Journal of Latin America Studies* 53 (2021): 221-244.

deep into the continent's interior, establishing numerous cattle ranches. This expanding cattle frontier posed inevitable clashes between the ranchers and autonomous Indigenous groups.[55] From the perspective of the colonial empire, territorial expansion was a solution to the economic crisis.

From the last quarter of the seventeenth century until the mid-eighteenth century, the Atlantic Portuguese empire grew significantly, both in South America and West Africa. Raiding and trading with non-Christian peoples were critical on both sides of the Atlantic.[56] Aggressive military campaigns in Angola placed the Portuguese in privileged positions in the slave trade in West Central Africa.[57] The discovery of gold in Brazil in the last decade of the seventeenth century offered further stimulus for the transatlantic slave trade.[58] The expansion of the Portuguese participation in the slave trade in West Central Africa mirrored their experience in Amazonia. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, Portuguese slavers operating in the Amazon region waged wars against Indigenous groups and forged alliances with others, placing them as the major players in the Transamazonic slave trade.

As another historian has argued, settlers achieved a more "flexible" legislation in favor of Indigenous labor recruitment in the first half of the eighteenth century.[59] Over time, the

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[55] Pedro Puntoni, *A guerra dos bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do sertão nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 2000); Ricardo Medeiros, "Povos indígenas nas guerras e conquista do sertão nordestino no período colonial," *Clio* 27 (2009): 331-61; Márcio Santos, *Rios e fronteiras: conquista e ocupação do sertão baiano* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 2017).

[56] On the definition of geographies of enslavement and kinds of people that could be subject to slavery, see David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 63; Giuseppe Marcocci, *A consciência de um império: Portugal e o seu mundo, séc. XV-XVII* (Coimbra: Imprensa Universidade de Coimbra, 2012), 430-54; Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 104, 134.

[57] John Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641-1718* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 73-78.

[58] Gustavo Lopes and Leonardo Marques, "O outro lado da moeda: estimativas e impactos do ouro do Brasil no tráfico transatlântico de escravos (Costa da Mina, c.1700-1750)," *Clio* 37 (2019): 5-38.

[59] Camila L. Dias and Fernanda A. Bombardi, "O que dizem as licenças? Flexibilização da legislação e recrutamento privado de trabalhadores indígenas no Estado do Maranhão (1680-1755)" *Revista de História* 175 (2016): 249-280. Historians often mention the royal order allowing "forced descimentos" in 1718. Anais da Biblioteca Nacional,

Portuguese moved inland following the Amazon River. They raided and traded slaves in the Solimões and Japurá Rivers, developing tense relations with Spanish religious missions. In the late 1720s, after the Portuguese victory against the Manao people, the Portuguese opened their participation in the trading networks of the Rio Negro.[60] During the 1730s and 40s, the Portuguese transporteded an unprecedented number of Indigenous slaves from the areas drained by the Rio Negro to work in cities, farms, and ranches located thousands of miles away on the Atlantic coast. While historians have stressed the connection between slavery and colonization in the South Atlantic, a similar case can be made for the Northern parts of South America or the State of Maranhão.

Belém and São Luís, the most important centers of Portuguese expansion in Northern Brazil, followed different paths in this period. Over time, Belém overshadowed São Luís given its privileged geographical position that enabled more straightforward access to the Amazon River. São Luís and Belém also developed different economic activities. While Belém thrived in the export of cocoa and as a critical port in the commerce with the Amazonian interior, São Luís barely produced cocoa and specialized in cattle raising following riverine paths, despite numerous obstacles. As colonists from Belém "pacified" its hinterlands relatively early, São Luís' settlers faced fierce resistance from autonomous Indigenous groups.[61] For decades, the

Livro Grosso do Maranhão, Sobre os Indios que se descerem para as Aldeas ficarem nellas livres, e não como escravos, vol. 67 (1948): 152-153.

[60] George Edmundson, "The Dutch on the Amazon and Negro in the Seventeenth Century. Part II – Dutch Trade in the Basin of the Rio Negro," *The English Historical Review* 73 (1904): 1-25; David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed," 515-559; Décio Gúzman, "Encontros circulares: guerra e comércio no Rio Negro (Grão-Pará), séculos XVII e XVIII," *Anais Arquivo Público do Pará* (Belém: Secretaria Executiva de Cultura, 2006), 139-165.

[61] Vanice Siqueira de Melo, "Cruentas guerras: índios e portugueses nos sertões do Maranhão e Piauí (primeira metade do século XVIII)," (MA Thesis: Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2011), 103-111; Samir L. Roland, "Sesmarias, índios e conflitos de terra na expansão portuguesa no vale do Parnaíba (Maranhão e Piauí, séculos XVII e XVIII), (MA Thesis: Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2018), 42-48.

Maranhão's frontier was characterized by its burgeoning cattle ranches and interethnic violence between the Portuguese and autonomous Indigenous groups.

In Maranhão, the expansion of farms and ranches developed several colonial settlements beyond the city of São Luís. Two Portuguese settlements were close to the city. The first was Alcantara, located around the Bay of São Marcos and a key area for food production and a nodal point in the commercial networks with the captaincy of Pará. Icatu was in the Bay of São José and played a role in the enslavement of Indigenous people and cattle expansion. São Luís was surrounded by Indigenous villages administered by different religious orders, such as Vinhais (also known as Aldeia da Doutrina), Paço de Lumiar, and São José.

The expansion of the cattle frontier followed the main rivers in Maranhão, namely the Itapecuru, Mearim, Munim, and Pindaré. This movement led to the creation of several inland settlements, such as Viana (previously the Aldeia Maracu), Monção, Guimarães, and Caxias (previously the Aldeias Altas).[62] Finally, several religious orders administered Indigenous villages and important farms. The Jesuits played a key role until the Portuguese crown banished them from the empire in 1759.[63]

The expansion following the Amazon River and its main tributaries in the first half of the eighteenth century is usually seen as the apogee of the missionary system.[64] To resolve conflicts among the religious orders, the Portuguese crown divided the Amazon region into areas for the different orders: Franciscans of Santo António, Franciscans of Piedade, Jesuits, Mercedarians, and Carmelites.[65] As it is widely known, missionary activities were not divorced from colonist

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[62] César Augusto Marques, *Dicionário histórico-geográfico da Província do Maranhão* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fon-Fon, 1970), 365.

[63] Raimundo Moreira das Neves Neto, "Um patrimônio em contenda: os bens jesuíticos e a magna questão dos dízimos no Estado do Maranhão e Grão-Pará," (PhD. Diss: Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2012).

[64] Charles R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, 287.

[65] "*The Franciscans of the Província de Santo António were assigned to the Cabo do Norte and the north bank of the river up to Urubuquara; the Franciscans of the Província da Piedade got a stretch above Urubuquara and the*

initiatives. The cities of Belém and São Luís were the points of departure for the Portuguese colonial enterprise into the interior. These expeditions aimed to extract forest products valued in the international market and recruit Indigenous workers, essential for the colonial economies developed within and around those two cities. The Portuguese organized frequent expeditions that traveled up the Amazon River in search of cocoa, salsa, bark clove, and oils. The Portuguese founded forts, temporary trading posts, and missions in the interior that served as points of support for the expeditions and played a crucial role in their negotiations with autonomous Indigenous groups. Cattle ranches and farms around São Luís and Belém were part of the same process that dotted the Amazon valley with forts, religious missions, and trading posts.

III

Maranhão, Imperial Reforms, and the Rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (1755-1777)

Around the mid-eighteenth century, the Portuguese empire faced another crisis. The gold industry in Brazil showed signs of exhaustion, and the dependency on the English economy worried Portuguese empire policymakers. The beginning of imperial reforms under the Marquis of Pombal attempted to reorganize Portugal's vast overseas empire to make it more efficient in tax collection, military support, trading routes, and agricultural production. The reformers identified numerous obstacles that stove off state strengthening. Among the most prominent were the political supremacy of the nobility, the tremendous power enjoyed by Jesuits translated into their control of land, resources, and peoples in the overseas, widespread practices of contraband trade in the Atlantic, and the severe Portuguese dependency on foreign merchants, namely from England.

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settlement around Gurupá. The Mercedarians were to remain in the missions around Lake Saracá. The Jesuits were to carry on and expand through the entire area south of the river and west to the Rio Madeira. The Carmelites, with the greatest possible reluctance, were asked to try and establish missions in the most remote area available: the valley of the Rio Negro and the Rio Solimões." David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed," 637-638.

The transformation of territories considered "backwaters" into thriving economies through efficient agriculture and taxation was one of the goals of the reforms. Aiming for the region's economic development, the Portuguese crown created a trading company to foment the transatlantic slave trade and further develop cotton and rice plantations in Maranhão. Around the 1770s, Maranhão exported substantial quantities of cotton, rice, and leather. The trading company helped foment the export of cocoa, primarily concentrated in the captaincy of Pará.

In this context, Northern Brazil experienced a reorganization of the colonial administration. The State of Maranhão and Grão-Pará became the State of Grão-Pará and Maranhão, which officialized the prominence that Belém gained over São Luís in the eighteenth century. The border disputes with Spain and the complex and slow communication in this immense territory also forced the creation of another administrative unit, the Captaincy of Rio Negro, with a capital in Barcelos, the former Indigenous village of Mariuá.

During the demarcation of territories in South America along the Spanish border, Portugal designed another policy for Indigenous people. Indigenous people played a vital role in frontier areas where the European population was tiny, and disputes were settled by proof of actual occupation. The Portuguese transformed the status of Indigenous people and designed incorporation policies, including encouraging mixed marriages and the imposition of the Portuguese language in Indigenous villages. The Portuguese crown also transformed several missions in Brazil into towns and renamed most of them after Portuguese cities. In this context, the abolition of Indigenous enslavement in 1755 aimed to foster alliances in the interior with Indigenous groups. Thousands of miles away from the frontiers, the Indigenous people kept enslaved in colonial cities and farms had to navigate these changes.

IV

The Population of Maranhão during the Eighteenth Century

In the 1740s, São Luís was a small settlement on the Atlantic coast, with a limited urban footprint and some prominent Catholic Churches. From the late seventeenth century until the mid-eighteenth century, São Luís' population grew reluctantly.[66] The Jesuit João Felipe Bettendorff, who spent several years in Maranhão in the seventeenth century, wrote in his chronicle that: "[Não era a cidade de São Luís] cousa de consideração, senão mais que uma fortaleza cercada de um muro grosso para banda do rio Moni que encerrava o Colégio, e por banda da rua ia fechando-se com um portão feito pelos primeiros conquistadores, com umas poucas de casas espalhadas por várias ruas pouco povoadas..."[67]

A drawing published in 1698 but based on a different one produced in the 1640s shows a small city spreading in the land around a fortress (Figure 1). Another graphical representation of the city from the 1730s does not indicate a significant expansion in the urban footprint.[68] Bernardo Pereira de Berredo, who governed Maranhão from 1718 to 1722, published a history of the State of Maranhão in Lisbon in 1749. Berredo correctly described the city's location at the corner of the Atlantic Island and between the Bacanga and Anil rivers. According to Berredo, São Luís would have "more than a thousand vizinhos."[69] Another eighteenth-century historian,

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[66] Although populational data for the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century is not reliable, the number of Portuguese settlers living in Maranhão was likely very small. Rafael Chambouleyron, "Portuguese Colonization of the Amazon Region, 1640-1706" (PhD., Diss. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 29

[67] João Felipe Bettendorff arrived in Maranhão in 1660 and died in the region in 1698. His chronicle is one of the best sources for the seventeenth century, João Filipe Bettendorff, *Crônica da Missão dos Padres da Companhia de Jesus no Estado do Maranhão* (Brasília: Edições do Senado Federal, 2010), 19.

[68] A recent research has emphasized the role that the Municipal Council played in the regulation of the city's expansion, Mariana F. Schilipake, "Entre o enunciado e a prática: ocupação e organização do espaço urbano de São Luís (final do século XVII e início do século XVIII)," (MA Thesis: Curitiba, Universidade Federal do Paraná, 2020), 13.

[69] Bernardo Pereira de Berredo, *Annaes históricos do estado do Maranhão: em que se dá notícia do seu descobrimento e tudo mais que nele tem sucedido desde o ano em que foi descoberto até o de 1718* (Iquitos: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 1989).

Sebastião da Rocha Pita, from Bahia, was more optimistic when estimating São Luís' population,

something around "three thousand vizinhos."[70]

Figure 1 Planta da cidade de São Luís do Maranhão
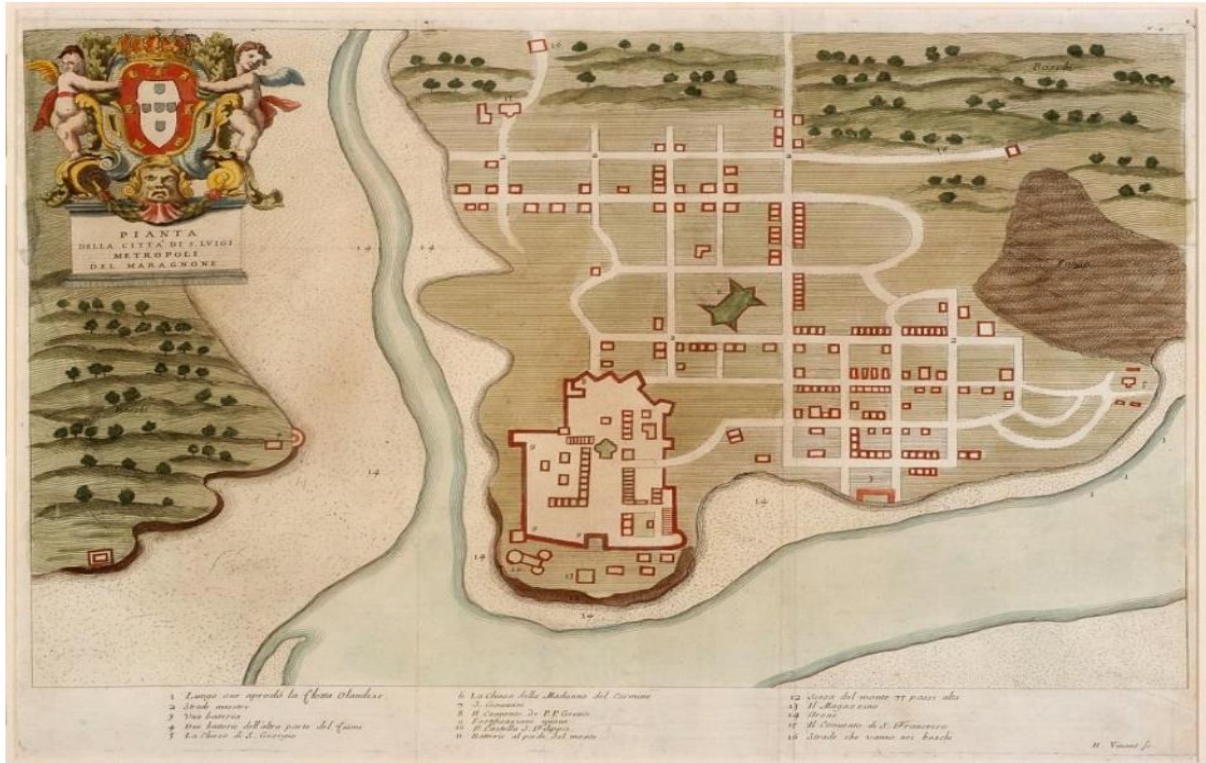
By the mid-eighteenth century, according to a *visita* conducted by Baltazar Fernandes

Bairros Homem, the *freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória* alone had 475 households with 815

white men and 1,161 women, a combined population of 1,976. The survey did not distinguish

between freed and enslaved people. There were 2,311 "enslaved men and diverse freed men" and

2,874 "enslaved and freed women" (5,185).[71] The population was more significant than the

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[70] Sebastião da Rocha Pita, *História da América Portugueza, desde o anno de mil e quinhentos do seu descobrimento, até o de mil e setecentos e vinte e quatro* (Lisboa: Officina de Joseph Antonio da Sylva, Impressor da Academia Real, 1730), 91.

[71] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 37, Doc. 3692 (1757). "Relação sobre várias freguesias da capitania do Maranhão, dando informações acerca de lugares, distritos e número de fogos."

figure provided by Baltazar Homem since he did not count the people living in the various farms

and ranches that belonged to the religious orders in the surrounding areas. The *ouvidor*, a crown

judge, João Dinis da Cruz Pinheiro, provided similar numbers in 1751. The ouvidor reported that

8,229 lived in São Luís and Alcantara. João Dinis da Cruz Pinheiro informed that from that

number, slightly more than half were enslaved people, 4,506.[72] Finally, the Jesuit José de

Moraes, in 1759, was one of the few to provide a more positive image of the city. According to

him, the city was well-structured and had good streets that could resist the rain.[73] All these

estimates that place the population of Maranhão extremely low did not account for the thousands

of Indigenous people that lived in the aldeamentos.

The growth of the transatlantic slave trade and the socioeconomic transformations in

Maranhão reflected an expanding overall population. The forced transportation of unprecedented

numbers of enslaved Africans and the development of cotton and rice farms increased

Maranhão's population. São Luís became a more important port, and this process probably

attracted migrants and merchants. Dauril Alden estimated Maranhão's population in 1776 as

46,410 people (the entire captaincy, not only the city).[74] In 1783, for example, the governor José

Teles da Silva ordered a population count in Maranhão. The total number of inhabitants in

Maranhão and Piauí was 98,743 (61,699 for Maranhão and 37,044 for Piauí). By that time, São

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[72] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 32, Doc, 3291 (1751). "Memória sobre os interesses do Estado do Maranhão e meios para remediar a sua ruína."

[73] "a maior parte das suas ruas se pode andar por elas com comodidade, porque são calçadas, sem que as muitas chuvas lhe façam difícil a comunicação de umas para outras, mas antes lhe servem de seu maior asseio. Deve muito esta cidade ao zelo e atividade do ouvidor geral João da Cruz Pinheiro Diniz." José de Moraes, *História da Companhia de Jesus na extincta Província do Maranhão e Pará* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do Comércio, 1860 (1759)), 14.

[74] Dauril Alden, "The Population of Brazil in the Late Eighteenth Century: A Preliminary Survey," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 43 (1963): 173-205. A document from 1777 counted 47,410 people in Maranhão. AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 52, Doc. 5014.

Luís alone would have 16,603 people. The neighboring village of Alcantara would have 11,290 people.[75] Finally, in 1798, the total population of Maranhão would be 78,860 people.[76]

Despite the questionable quality of the information provided by colonial bureaucrats, it seems safe to say that Maranhão – and São Luís – experienced a significant increase in population in the eighteenth century. The thousands of enslaved Africans disembarking yearly in Maranhão pushed this movement further. It is worth mentioning that Maranhão was one of the few regions in Brazil to have a slave majority in the nineteenth century. Economic growth also offered opportunities for settlers and merchants setting houses, farms, and ranches around the city and deep in the interior following the rivers. If the number of people in São Luís by the mid-eighteenth century was around 10,000, this number would be at least 15,000 by the turn of the century.

<div align="center">V</div>

Maranhão's Society in the Eighteenth Century: Settlers, Plebeians, Slaves, and Indigenous People

The society of Maranhão was composed of roughly four kinds of people. The first group was colonial bureaucrats, ecclesiastical bureaucrats, and settlers who owned ranches and farms. These boundaries were fluid since prominent members of settlers' families served as low-ranking colonial officers and occupied ecclesiastical positions. The second group was the city's free(d) skilled laborers, including carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, and blacksmiths. Enslaved people, both Indigenous and African, compose the third group. This group had several skilled workers,

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[75] *Mappa das cidades, villas, lugares e freguezias das Capitanias do Maranhão com número geral dos abitantes das ditas capitanias e em particular de cada huma das referidas povoações e da distância em que ficam da capital vindo-se pela notícia dos mortos e nascidos no conhecimento do aumento da população desde XIII Fevereiro de MDCCLXXXIII athé XVII de Dezembro de MDCCLXX-XIII que foy o tempo do governador Jozé Telles da Silva*, Biblioteca Nacional, setor de Cartografia, ARC 023, 04, 013.

[76] Colin M. Maclachlan, "African Slave Trade and Economic Development in Amazonia, 1700-1800," in R. B. Toplin (ed.), *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974), 136.

from specialized fishermen to carpenters and shoemakers. Finally, Indigenous people from the Indigenous villages likely circulated intensely in São Luís, either participating in local markets or laboring at settlers' houses and small farms.[77]

Settlers

Settlers setting houses and farms in Maranhão came mainly from three areas: other parts of Brazil, Portugal, or the Atlantic Islands, such as the Azores. The first waves of couples from the Azores came in the seventeenth century, and the connection between Maranhão and the Atlantic Islands would continue in the following century. Rich and powerful settlers came from areas as distant as Boston, France, and Ireland.[78] Guilherme Everton was from Boston. Pedro Lamaignere was from France. Lourenço Belfort was from Ireland.[79] The analysis of wills registered in São Luís' notary public demonstrates these larger migration patterns in the Atlantic.

I analyzed 157 wills covering 1676 and 1769, with a concentration in the 1750s (Table 1). Male settlers drafted a slightly bigger slice of the total wills, 97 (62%), compared with female settlers, who had the remaining 60 wills (38%).

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[77] Raimundo Gaioso, in the early nineteenth century, divided Maranhão's social structure into five classes: the elite from Portugal; the elite born in Brazil; a mixed-race class; the enslaved black population; and the Indigenous groups. Raimundo José de Souza Gaioso, *Compêndio histórico-político dos princípios da lavoura do Maranhão...* (Paris: P. N. Rougeron Impressor, 1818), 115-122. Mathias Rohring Assunção, *De caboclos a bem-te-vis: Formação do campesinato numa sociedade escravista* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2022).

[78] Antonia da Silva Mota, "A dinâmica colonial portuguesa e as redes de poder local na capitania do Maranhão," (PhD Diss. Recife: Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 2007), 29.

[79] It is curious to note that other "foreigners" appear in baptismal records. Lourenço Belfort was normally the godfather of these non-Portuguese men. For example, Jorge João, "from Groningen, Republic of Holland," was baptized as an adult on June 24, 1751, in Maranhão's Sé Church, and his godfather was Lourenço Belfort. AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 11 (1751/06/24).

Table 1 Number of Last Wills Maranhão

Number of Wills Maranhão

[Bar chart showing:]
- Before 1740: 10
- 1740s: 22
- 1750s: 81
- 1760s: 43

Y-axis ranges from 0 to 90 in increments of 10.
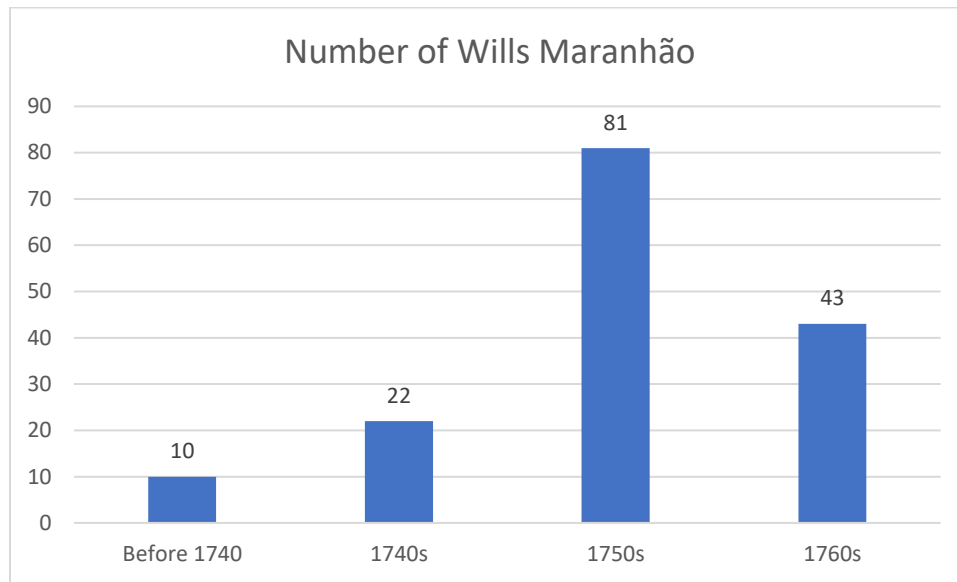
Most settlers declared their origin (*naturalidade*) from Maranhão (91).[80] A significant majority of those came from the city of São Luís, 69 out of 91. Another important area of origin was the neighboring city of Alcantara (15 out of 91). After settlers from the area, settlers from Portugal and the Atlantic Islands combine a significant portion, 49 occurrences. Most of the people from Portugal were either from Lisbon or Northern Portugal. Other parts of Brazil represented a minority among Maranhão's settlers. It is worth pointing out that important settlers from Maranhão came from areas as dispersed as Boston and Naples (Other).

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[80] I could not identify the origin for 8 wills. It is significant to point out that several settlers that declared their origin from Maranhão identified the origin of his/her parents from either Portugal or the Atlantic Island, which indicates a society still in transformation and thousands of people on the move.

Table 2 Place of Origin Maranhão's Settlers

Place of Origin Maranhão's Settlers

Category	Value
Maranhao	91
Portugal	41
Atlantic Islands	8
Brazil	4
Other	3
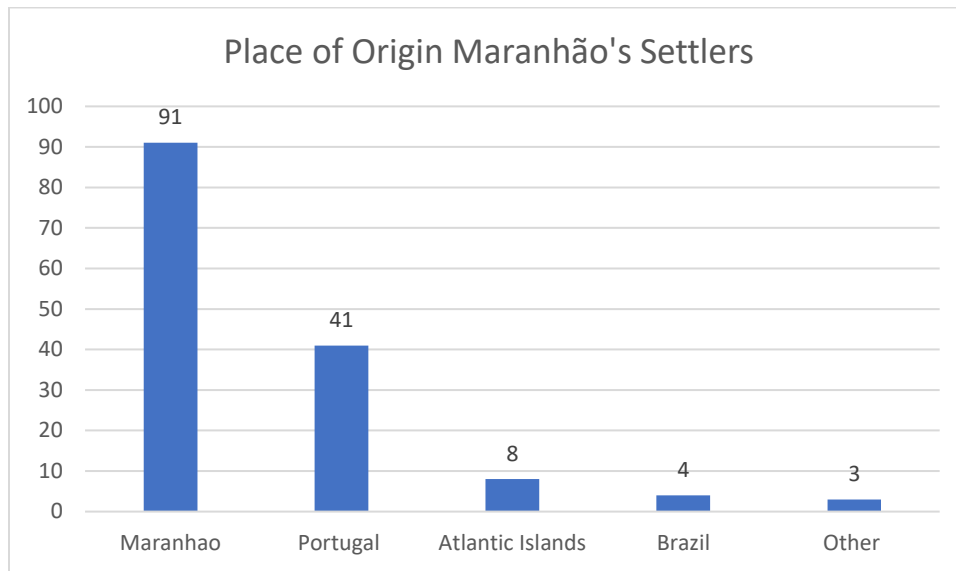
Plebeians

Even though São Luís was not a big city, there was a local market for carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and tailors. Enslaved people were also skilled laborers, but I will briefly discuss free or freed workers in this section. The Municipal Council had annual elections for representatives of those groups in local politics or what was called "juízes do povo."[81] The Municipal Council also fined skilled workers that offered services without authorization, such as the índio Felipe, who worked as a shoemaker "without being examined." The mulato Onofre also received a fine for providing his trade as a shoemaker to the "people [Povo] "without being examined."[82] The men elected for these posts were probably well-connected among the working classes. These prominent tradesmen were also typically married, possessed a house in the city, and kept some enslaved people in their houses.

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[81] They composed what was called in the Portuguese world "oficiais mecânicos," or people that depended on their manual labor to survive. In the social hierarchy they were below the nobility.

[82] "o índio Felipe José por trabalhar de sapateiro ao Povo sem ser examinado..." and "Onofre mulato sapateiro por trabalhar pelo dito ofício ao Povo sem ser examinado condenado em dois mil réis digo em quinhentos réis" APEM, Câmara Municipal de São Luís, Capítulos de Correição Livro 103, f. 12 and 14.

I found Raimundo Coelho among these workers, one former enslaved man who climbed the social hierarchy. Raimundo Coelho was a shoemaker who bought his manumission on February 10, 1751.[83] It is hard to evaluate the relationship between Raimundo Coelho and his former master, João Coelho da Silva, whose last name Raimundo carried. Yet Raimundo Coelho was able to fulfill the payment of fifteen "cotton rolls" in exchange for his freedom. The manumission payment happened only four days before Raimundo Coelho's marriage with Margarida Pinheira, who was also a freed woman. Raimundo Coelho and Margarida Pinheira had similar origins: they were children of single mothers who had achieved freedom during their lives. Raimundo Coelho's mother was a "mameluca" named Margarida, a former *serva* (serf/servant) of João Coelho da Silva.[84] Margarida Pinheira, in turn, was the daughter of Eufrásia, a freed woman.[85]

Raimundo Coelho moved away from enslavement with his skills and maybe with some help from his local networks of support. Raimundo Coelho and Margarida Pinheira baptized at least three children in the Sé Church in São Luís: José Joaquim (1752/02/27), João (1754/03/06), Dionínio Feliciano (1759/11/11). All of them had free godparents, including priests and local military officers. More significantly, Raimundo Coelho was elected twice, in 1762 and 1765, for the Municipal Council as São Luís' judge of shoemakers.[86] The figures below compare the signature of Raimundo Coelho in the notarized manumission record and the Municipal Council.

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[83] Cartório Celso Coutinho, Livro de Notas 1750-1751, f. 134v. The payment was completed on February 10 but the notarized document was only created on the 17th.

[84] I will explain in chapter 3 that servos(as) and escravos(as) were used as synonyms in Maranhão.

[85] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 39 (1751/02/14).

[86] APEM, Livro de Acórdãos da Câmara Municipal, Livro 13, f. 5v, 88v.

Figure 2 Raimundo Coelho's Signature

Beyond shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, and tailors, São Luís had many fishermen. People in São Luís probably relied heavily on fishing for access to protein. A diet composed of manioc flour and fish was typical in the lowlands of South America, and there is little reason to doubt that the situation would be different even at the core of Portuguese colonialism. Settlers employed enslaved Indigenous people as fishermen, but free(d) workers also engaged in the activity. In notarized commercial transactions, there are three references to "camboas," or areas that would be inundated with high tide trapping fish. For example, on April 8, 1768, Luzia Rodrigues sold her part of a "camboa" in a small river to the soldier António Coelho Pavão for 10$000 réis.[87]

Finally, soldiers like António Coelho Pavão can also be seen as part of this plebeian sector in São Luís. Some soldiers migrated from Portugal and integrated into São Luís. Others came from the lower classes and enslaved population. It is hard to know the origin of António Coelho Pavão, but he married Micaela Moreira, from whom I also do not have much information. The couple baptized at least two children: Maria (1768/07/08) and Arcangela (1769/12/31). In both cases, the godparents were free people.[88] António Coelho Pavão served as the godfather for three children born in São Luís in the 1760s: Rita, Ana Raimunda, and

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[87] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 4, f. 20.
[88] Maria: AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 109v (1768/07/08); Arcangela: AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 196v (1769/12/31).

Raimundo. While Rita and Raimundo were children of black enslaved people, Ana Raimunda was the daughter of another soldier.[89]

The Enslaved People of Maranhão

Enslaved labor was crucial for Maranhão's settlers, even before the rise of the transatlantic slave trade. 127 out of the 157 last wills notarized in São Luís and analyzed in this research mentioned at least one slave (80.8%). The average number of enslaved people per will is not high, a figure of around seven. Although wills are not the ideal documents to measure the number of enslaved people per household, they are the only ones that survived to understand the crucial transition period between the 1740s and 1770s. Historians use settlers' inventories to calculate the number of enslaved people per household, but the inventories stored in Maranhão's archives are highly concentrated in the nineteenth century.[90] While the earliest inventory I found is from the 1720s and is deposited in the Ecclesiastical Court extant documents, the earliest inventory deposited in the judicial archive is from the 1760s. From that earlier document, five enslaved people are listed with their classification, occupation, age, and value. The first was a man named Inácio, who was listed as *cafuzo*. He was also a skilled carpenter who specialized in crafting canoes valued at 240$000 réis. The young man Basílio was the second, and he appeared as *da terra* (from the land, a clear reference that Basílio was an Indigenous person). Probably because of his younger age and lack of specialized skills, he was valued at 140$000 réis. The young woman Izabel also da terra was able to sew, and her value was higher than Basílio's,

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[89] Rita: AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 243v (1766/09/22); Ana Raimunda: AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 177 (1769/08/11); Raimundo: AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 185v (1769/10/09).

[90] For analyses of slavery that employ Maranhão's inventory, see Antonia Mota, "A dinâmica colonial;" Walter Hawthorne, From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). It is worth noting that the results indicate a high concentration of slave ownership in the region, higher than the average for the rest of Brazil, Antonia da Silva Mota and Daniel Souza Barroso, "Economia e demografia da escravidão no Maranhão e no Grão-Pará: uma análise comparativa da estrutura da posse da cativos (1785-1850)," *Revista de Históra São Paulo* 176 (2017): 1-41.

200$000 réis. The fourth was the child Felicia, a *mameluquinha* valued at only 20$000 réis. Finally, the young Dionísio, a mameluco, for 40$000 réis.[91]

Like in other parts of Portuguese America, the number of slaves varied widely among settlers. Elite landowners, such as Captain Carlos Pereira, declared in 1765 the ownership of 55 slaves.[92] Ordinary dwellers of the city of São Luís, such as Manoel Alvares Branco, said in 1762 that he had only two slaves: "one man cafuzo named José, and one black called João..."[93] The regional variations certainly played a role in these divergent numbers. Elite settlers from rural areas and owners of farms and ranches tended to possess significantly more slaves than dwellers of the city that could employ a small number of slaves to help in their daily toil. Despite these caveats, the almost universal presence of slaves among settlers' assets proves the centrality of Indigenous labor and slavery for household production.

The landscape of enslavement in Maranhão changed dramatically between the 1740s and the 1770s. Few slave ships sailing from the African coast disembarked in Maranhão in the first half of the eighteenth century. If that trade route proved inconsistent until the 1710s, it would virtually disappear between the 1720s and 1740s. In the 1750s, the numbers slowly started to grow again as a direct response to the creation of the trading company. During the 1760s and 1770s, the arrival of enslaved Africans in slave ships became a recurrent scene in São Luís. Maranhão's enslaved population moved from an Indigenous American to an African majority in thirty years. Before the 1750s, approximately 3,400 enslaved Africans arrived in Maranhão.

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[91] AAM, Auditório/Câmara Eclesiástica, Lista Nominal 7, Cx. 24, Doc. 997.

[92] Antonia Mota, *Cripto Maranhenses*, 193.

[93] Antonia Mota, *Cripto Maranhenses*, 159. "*Declaro que os bens que possuo são os seguintes. Dois rapazes um cafuzo por nome José, e um preto por nome João os quais são meus escravos legítimos por serem filhos da minha preta Susana escrava de Cacheu.*"

According to Walter Hawthorne, between 1751 and 1787, the total number of enslaved Africans who disembarked in Maranhão reached more than 22,000.[94]

Notarized commercial transactions involving enslaved people reveal the transformations in Maranhão's slavery and how settlers managed the transition from Indigenous to African majority. Settlers went to the public notary in São Luís 34 times to register commercial transactions involving one or more enslaved people between November of 1762 and January of 1780.[95] Regarding sex, there were 16 males and 14 females, and on four occasions, the notarized deed involved more than one enslaved person; in one case, the parties recorded the transaction of 22 enslaved people. The average price of one enslaved person was slightly more than 100$000 réis, depending on age, sex, and degree of acculturation. Skilled laborers cost significantly more than the average. For example, on May 6, 1769, settler Francisco Amandio paid 330$000 réis to Raimundo de Santo António for the mulato Miguel Fernandes, a skilled blacksmith, or "oficial de ferreiro."[96] A few years earlier, on June 5, 1764, José de Santa Maria and José Bernardes Teixeira negotiated the black Pantaleão, also a skilled blacksmith, or "mestre ferreiro," for 200$000 réis.[97]

Because the sample only covers the period after the abolition of Indigenous enslavement, there were no explicit references to classifications associated with Indigenous ancestry, such as gentio da terra, índio(a), or even mameluco(a). Cacheu and Guiné were the common African designation for the recently arrived enslaved population in this period in Maranhão. They refer to the trading company's enslavement areas on the Upper Guinea Coast. One man, José, appears as

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[94] Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, 39-41, 51-53.
[95] I found 33 *escrituras de venda* and 1 *escritura de troca* with reference to enslaved people. I used the first 12 books in the notary office Tito Soares, excluding book 7 that is in terrible shape.
[96] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 4, f. 72v.
[97] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 1, f. 271v.

Angola, a reference to West Central Africa.[98] There were seven preto(a), a clear indication of color and African origin.

The cafuzo(a) and mulato(a) classifications reveal how racialization helped settlers manage the transformations in Maranhão's slavery. There were 15 references to cafuzo(a) and mulato(a). In about half of those cases, the notary included a genealogy of the enslaved person, one that reinforced the legitimate enslavement of his/her maternal line because she was a black woman.[99] For example, on August 13, 1766, when Josefa Maria de Ocanha and Bernardo José de Souza agreed on the sale of the cafuzo António for 140$000 réis, the notary explicitly said the António was a legitimate slave because he "was the son of the cafuza slave Camila and grandson of the black Ana, from the Mina Nation."[100]

In other words, when enslaved people were claiming Indigenous ancestry to reach freedom, masters - and notaries - reinforced genealogies to guarantee the continuation of slavery. On January 27, 1770, Maria Josefa do Vale sold the mulata Micaela - and her three children - to João do Vale for 330$000 réis. The notary emphasized in the notary deed that Micaela failed to win her freedom in the local court and she "had always stayed in possession of [Maria Josefa do Vale] as a legitimate slave and her two children, the mulato José and the mulata Maria."[101] The notary deed reinforced the long captivity of Micaela, who had belonged to the grandmother of Maria Josefa do Vale, Úrsula de Lemos, and had given up on her freedom suit.

Indigenous People

Beyond the enslaved Indigenous Americans, it is possible to separate two other categories: autonomous Indigenous groups and Indigenous people from Indigenous villages.

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[98] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 9, f. 60v.
[99] I expand this idea on Chapter 5.
[100] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 03, f. 7-7v.
[101] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 05, f. 17v-18v.

Settlers from Maranhão could not "pacify" the region's interior, and violent clashes with autonomous Indigenous groups were frequent. Settlers pushed farming and cattle raising activities on Indigenous territories. Even during the boom of cotton and rice plantations, settlers' farms were dangerously close to these violent frontiers.[102]

In the mid-eighteenth century, the prisoners of these violent clashes were baptized in São Luís, primarily women and children. Between October 22, 1752, and January 1, 1754, at least 27 Timbira people captured in an ongoing war were baptized in São Luís. Almost all of them were children. For example, on December 31, 1752, Francisco Matabosque baptized the recent-born José. The baptismal record describes José as a "three-month-old child, índio Timbira, captured in the war led by cabo João do Rego de Castelo Branco." José's mother gave birth to him during the the transportation between the interior and the city (*filho de uma índia Timbira da dita tropa nasceu na condução para esta cidade*). Captain Silvestre da Silva incorporated José and his mother as enslaved people in his household. Two enslaved people from the same household served as godparents, Estevão and his wife, Florência.[103]

Settlers declared in their last wills the Indigenous people captured in these skirmishes in the interior of Maranhão. For example, dona Antónia Pestana de Ataíde held the 10-year-old Catarina in her household. Catarina was "from the heathens of the land" and her enslavement was legitimate because she was captured in a "war against the Nation Timbira, from the first ones that came to be sold in Maranhão." Dona Antónia Pestana de Ataíde transmitted the young Catarina to Luís da Paixão and his wife, Maria Barbosa da Silva.[104]

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[102] Mathias R. Assunção, *De caboclos a bem-te-vis: Formação do campesinato numa sociedade escravista* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2022).

[103] APEM, LRBFSNV 103, f. 90v.

[104] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 113.

Indigenous villages close to São Luís provided invaluable labor and foodstuff. Indigenous people from diverse backgrounds composed the population of these villages, from Tupi groups from the coast to Indigenous people from the deep interior of Amazonia. On August 1, 1745, the Board of Missions decided that ten people that priest João António Baldez brought from the Japurá River were not slaves, and they had to join the "aldeia de São José de repartição deste povo."[105] The colonial government drafted these Indigenous workers to transport cattle from the interior to São Luís and perform farming for settlers. The contracts auctioned to local settlers to transport cattle from the ranches in the interior to São Luís typically involved the draft of several Indigenous workers. A topic that historians often ignore is the participation of Indigenous labor in the export economy. Evidence shows that the government tried to draft Indigenous workers to toil in the rice and cotton industries.[106]

VI

The City of São Luís

Around the mid-eighteenth century, São Luís was small, and its streets surrounded the fortress and significant Catholic buildings. The Sé Church was undoubtedly one of the prominent buildings within the urban footprint. The same was true for the Convent of Carmo and especially

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[105] APEM, Códice 1, Junta das Missões, f. 11-11v.

[106] There is evidence that Indigenous enslavement persisted in the nineteenth century. Francisco de Paula Ribeiro reported these practices in the village of Caxias in the interior of Maranhão. After reporting the abuses of the Portuguese, Ribeiro said "*Mas, oh maldade! de todas as maldades a mais execrável! Quão diferente não foi deste acolhimento protestando aquele acolhimento por eles encontrado nos ferros que imediata e traidoramente se lhes lançaram! Nas vidas que ainda a sangue frio se lhes tiraram sem causa! Na partilha que dos seus filhos, das suas famílias e deles próprios se fez em tom de escravos perpétuos, chegando a serem vendidos ou arrematados em hasta pública na mesma vila de Caxias! E levados aos descaroçadores dos algodões daqueles fazendeiros do distrito, aonde, amarrados como galés ao banco e ao remo, foram asperamente seus corpos fustigados para adiantar as tarefas do serviço que se lhes consignava, padecendo no entanto insuportáveis fomes!*" Francisco de Paula Ribeiro, "Roteira da viagem que fez o Capitão Francisco de Paula Ribeiro as fronteiras da Capitania do Maranhão e da de Goyaz no anno de 1815 em serviço de S. M. Fidelissima. *Revista Trimensal de Historia e Geographia ou Jornal do Instituto Histórico e Geographico Brasileiro*, tomo X, 1848, 42.

the Convent of Mercês. The palace of the governor was probably another eye-catching building. Maybe the Municipal Council could also impress a person walking in the streets.

From the analysis of notarized commercial transactions registered in one of São Luís' public notaries, it is possible to confirm the centrality of commercial operations involving houses and urban lots. I analyzed 282 notarized commercial transactions between 1761 and 1780 registered in one notary public in São Luís.[107] These commercial transactions involved the following assets in order of frequency: houses, urban lots, lands, farms, cattle, and boats. (Table 3). Houses represented 54.5% of all the sale transactions (273), followed by urban lots, 19.7%.

Table 3 Types of Assets Registered in São Luís' Notary Office (1761-1780)
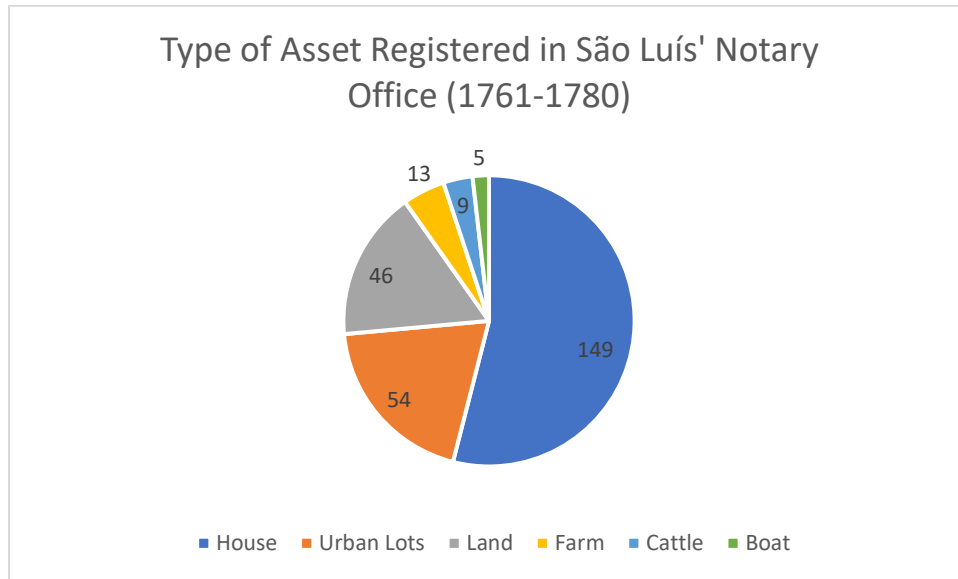
Historian Charles R. Boxer wrote about the city of São Luís: "Housing was equally simple, although by the end of the seventeenth century tampered earth and adobe houses with

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[107] From the total 282, 273 were *escrituras de venda*. The rest concerns exchanges, renting, etc.

tiled roofs had largely replaced the thatched timber shacks which had previously formed the average town dwellings."[108] Was Boxer's assessment of the city of São Luís correct?

Notarized commercial transactions typically divide the construction of houses into two aspects: the walls and the roof.[109] There are only 12 mentions of more sophisticated and costly types of constructions, the houses made of "pedra e cal."[110] Settlers decided to build their houses using two methods: "taipa de varas" and "taipa de pilão." Taipa de varas was what Boxer translated as "thatched timber shacks," and it was a cheaper type of construction. Taipa de pilão was Boxer's "tampered earth and adobe houses" and represented a studier house compared to the previous one. The roof was also mainly made of two different materials: "pindova" and "telhas." The first was made from big tree leaves from the local vegetation, and it could endure the heavy rainy season of São Luís. The second was even more durable and consequently more expensive. The combination of taipa de pilão and pindova was rare; only two houses are described in that way. When settlers decided to use the sturdier type of construction, taipa de pilão, they also built roofs of telha. The opposite is true for houses made of taipa de varas. For those, the majority used pindova roof (37), and the minority telha (13).

It is possible to understand settlers' occupation patterns because most commercial transactions involving houses pointed out the name of the street where the asset existed. Only on a few occasions can it be imagined that streets existed but were not named. Settlers typically refer to them as the parts of the town with which they connected. It is possible to imagine that the urban footprint of São Luís was not vast, considering the frequency that some streets appear in

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[108] Charles R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, 277.
[109] There were cases in which the house was built with mixed materials.
[110] One example was the transaction between the priest João Marques da Silva and Felício António Cordovil on June 18, 1763. Cordovil bought a house located at the core of São Luís, Formosa Street, for 1:600$000 réis. It was described as "*uma morada de casas de taipa de pilão cobertas de telhas e com muita obra de pedra e cal...*" Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 01, f. 205v.

notarized transactions. The core of the city was between the *Praia Grande* (6) and Desterro Street (6), passing through Cruz Street (6), Paz (7), Giz (10), Norte (6), Sol (8), Formosa (12), and Larga (6). Other streets, such as Açougue Street (6) and Carvalho Street (4), often appear.

VII

Cattle Ranches, Manioc Farms, and *Aguardente*

According to some sources, the Amazon Forest covered a vast part of Maranhão until the Parnaíba River in the eighteenth century. The immense forest made Portuguese settlers and colonial bureaucrats overestimate the potential of the soil for agriculture. Maranhão is a transition area between Amazonia, the *cerrado*, and the *caatinga*. For this reason, the area of Maranhão should not be taken as a whole but as "micro-regions." Following Mathias Rohring Assunção, the lands in the Southern Maranhão were mostly for cattle ranches, the Pastos Bons. There were several smaller areas in the North, but historical sources generally point out the fertility of the areas around Alcantara and Guimarães, where settlers used to land to cultivate a variety of products, mainly manioc, and raise cattle. The areas of the Pindaré, Mearim, Grajaú, and Itapecuru were normally understood as suitable for agriculture. From those, the lower Itapecuru was the most desirable one. Finally, the Eastern lands from São Luís to the Parnaíba River were considered unproductive.[111]

Beyond the cotton and rice production that would take off in the 1770s, settlers from Maranhão developed three main economic activities: cattle raising, manioc farming, and the harvesting of sugarcane to produce *aguardente*.

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[111] Mathias R. Assunção, *De caboclos*, 26, 28, 35. "*No Maranhão, o regime de precipitações diminui gradualmente do oeste para o leste e do oeste para o sul. Na área da floresta húmida no oeste, ele chega a 2500 mm, em média, por ano. No Maranhão oriental essa média cai para 1600 mm e no Sul para 1200 mm.*"

Cattle raising was the most common economic activity mentioned in notarized wills and commercial transactions. Some settlers declared possession of large herds and ranches; others were more modest. Custódia Pereira, in 1752, said that she had some land and "approximately two hundred heads of cattle between male and female."[112]

Another settler, Francisco Tavares Coelho, registered his will in São Luís on February 6, 1759, but possessed a cattle ranch in the Munim River. The São João farm in the Ribeira do Munim belonged to him, and it had "approximately one thousand heads of cattle and more than two hundred horses."[113] At Coelho's farm, Indigenous and African workers coexisted. He declared first that one of his former servas, the índia Quitéria Coelha was promised a small farm close to São João. Yet, the promise was nullified because Quitéria Coelha decided to marry Caetano da Costa, another freed índio, which was against the will of her former enslaver. Francisco Tavares Coelho declared he had "one slave from the Mina Coast called Faustino." He also possessed "nine or ten from the freed [dos alforriados], and they are well-known, and when they revoke the law, my heir will have them again."[114]

Between 1760 and 1780, I counted nine commercial transactions involving solely animals, typically horses and cattle. They usually specify that they were selling only the animals, not the land on which they were. The price was adjusted "per head," with horses slightly more valuable than cattle. These transactions occurred between the rural areas within the island where São Luís was located to the Ribeira do Mearim.

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[112] ATJMA, Livro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 63-63v. Custódia Pereira continued describing her horses: "*Declaro que possuo quinze éguas fêmeas e seis com crias pequenos e três com crias de nove meses pouco mais ou menos possuo mais duas potras e mais cinco potros de ano. Possuo mais oito cavalos de cela.*"

[113] ATJMA, Livro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 281v.

[114] Francisco Tavares Coelho is making a clear reference to the abolition law of 1755. "*Declaro que possuo um escravo do gentio da Costa da Mina por nome Faustino possuía mais nove, ou dez dos alforriados os quais são bem conhecidos, quando se revogue a lei meus herdeiros os haverão assim novamente.*"

When settlers sold farms and ranches, the prices were significantly higher than cattle or uncultivated land. In São Luís's public notary, settlers registered transactions from properties located in a vast geographical area: From ranches located in the perizes of the Itapecuru River, such as the transaction between António da Rocha Vieira and José Bernardes de Castro in 1775 for 900$000 *réis* to the property located in Viana that Francisco Inácio Ferreira bought from Ricardo António da Silva Leitão in 1771 for 2:600$000 *réis*.[115] The expansion of Maranhão's settlers followed the main rivers and was intimately connected with cattle ranches. These ranches produced leather for export to the European market and meat to supply the regional markets.

Manioc production came right after cattle ranches as a vital activity for Maranhão's settlers. Manioc was widely consumed by Indigenous people from the lowlands of South America, and colonists quickly adopted it as the main staple in the local diet. When listing their assets in their wills, settlers commonly mentioned the tools they possessed on their farms. A standard tool in Brazilian farms by that period was the "roda de ralar mandioca," or a machine to crush the manioc and transform it into flour, making it easy to transport and preserve. In a last will typical of the 1750s, Catarina de Souza Mascarenhas declared possession of a house in the city, two female Indigenous slaves, and "one roda de ralar mandioca."[116]

Settlers from São Luís notarized several commercial transactions involving small plots of land within the island of São Luís. Settlers likely used these plots of land to cultivate manioc. Between 1760 and 1780, at least 49 commercial transactions involved some plots of land. Such as the cattle ranches and farms, these plots of land encompassed a wide geographical area, from

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[115] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 09, f. 16 and Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 06, f. 8340.
[116] "... *uma morada de casas de taipa de pilão cobertas de telhas que são as em que moro, uma cafuza chamada Romana, uma negra da terra chamada Silvana com uma filhinha sua um rapaz chamado João, um tacho grande, uma roda de ralar mandioca....*" ATJMA, Livro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 68.

areas close to the city to more distant locations following the local rivers, such as the Mearim, Pindaré, and Itapecuru.

Although Maranhão did not occupy an important place in sugar production in the Atlantic world, local settlers still harvested sugarcane. Instead of sugar, they devoted their time to producing *aguardente*, an alcoholic liquor distilled from sugarcane. The consumption of aguardente was widespread in the city's taverns.[117] On August 19, 1769, the Municipal Council applied a 2$000 réis fine to Manoel Joaquim Mendes because he was "selling aguardente in two taverns."[118] The liquor was also key in the relationship with Indigenous groups and Indigenous workers, who constantly demanded the product to perform labor. The production of aguardente happened in small mills, what was called *engenhoca*. The Municipal Council taxed the engenhocas that existed in Maranhão.

The ouvidor João Diniz in the 1750s confirmed that Maranhão was not a sugar-producing area. He only counted thirty one "sugar mills" or "engenhos reais de fazer açúcar." But after saying that some of these properties held many enslaved people, "almost all of them work on the production of aguardente and because of that the price of the sugar is very low." The ouvidor reported one hundred and twenty engenhocas in the entire State of Maranhão; the captaincy of Maranhão would have forty-three.[119]

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[117] The Municipal Council tried to regulate the consumption and distribution of aguardente. The Municipal Council issud several fines related to illegal activities, APEM, Câmara Municipal de São Luís, Capítulos de Correição Livro 103, f. 7-7v. For example, "Alexandre Maurício por vender aguardente contra a postura dos almotacés."

[118] APEM, Câmara Municipal de São Luís, Capítulos de Correição Livro 103, f. 14. On that same day, "Francisco Pereira por vender aguardentes da terra sem licença condenado em quatro mil réis."

[119] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3291. "Há em todo o Estado trinta e um engenhos reais de fazer açúcar, cinco na capitania de São Luís do Maranhão, em que entra um dos padres do Carmo no rio Itapecuru com mais de duzentos escravos que não faz nada, e dois na capitania do Cumã em que entra um dos padres da Companhia, e vinte e quatro no Pará, um dos padres da Companhia no Moju e outro dos do Carmo no Guama ambos afamados pela muita quantidade de gente que conservam, e os mais dos moradores, que quase todos os ocupam em fazerem aguardente de modo que se vende o açúcar por pouco, sendo [] a três mil reis arroba e além destes há em todo o Estado cento e vinte engenhocas de aguardente, quarenta e três na capitania do Maranhão que vem a ser uma na freguesia de Pastos Bons, três na de São Bernardo da Parnaíba, uma nas Aldeias Altas, duas na do Icatu, quatro no Mearim, vinte e duas na do Itapecuru, e dez na Ilha do Maranhão, e na capitania do Cumã trinta e cinco, e no Estado do Pará quarenta e

Local settler mentioned their engenhos and engenhocas in their last wills. Captain Carlos Pereira, for example, in 1765, declared that he had one house in his farm called Janderoba, three pieces of land that have one league in that place, a mill, a sugar mill, distilleries, and land that produce honey.[120] Dona Antónia Pestana de Ataíde wrote her will on June 25, 1753. Like many other settlers that lived in Maranhão in this period, Ataíde forced Indigenous and African enslaved people to work in her ranches and farms. She received from her husband typical instruments for this rural world, "one sugar mill, one alambique, one farm, one horse, three oxen, and seven scythes," among many other items.[121] On November 8, 1761, the Convent of Nossa Senhora das Mercês sold the farm Santa Ana, located in the village of Icatu, to Clemente Xavier Ribeiro de Moura for 640$000 réis.[122] According to the commercial deed, the farm was equipped with a "sugar mill," and it was ready to farm manioc.

The analysis of the finances of one Jesuit farm illustrates the local economic activities. The Jesuit Farm of São Bonifácio was in the interior of Maranhão, close to the Indigenous village Maracu, later the town of Viana. Between 1766 and 1770, the profits from activities related to cattle raising accounted for 49% of the global profits (Table 4). The second most important activity in terms of volume of profit was the selling of aguardente, 26%. Cocoa and sugar responded for only 5% and 4%, respectively. Almost three-quarters of the gains accrued in

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duas, duas na capitania do Caeté, quatro na do Cametá, cinco na vila da Vigia e trinta e uma em todo o destrito do Pará e só para esta fábrica há aplicação suma e dela também muito cuidão os regulares a quem pertencem algumas das que estão declaradas."

[120] "uma morada de casas no meu sítio chamado Janderoba, três sortes de terras, que fazem uma légua na dita paragem, casa de engenho no dito sítio, Engenho de moer, dois alambiques maior e menor, uma faixa de fazer mel." Mota, *Cripto maranhenses*, 190. Settler Manoel Jorge also declared "alambique" and "engenho" in 1759. Mota, *Cripto maranhenses,* 122.

[121] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 108.

[122] Cartório Tito Soares, Livros de Notas 01, f. 82. "senhor e possuidor em bom titulo de benfeitorias de uma fazenda cita digo fazenda chamada Santa Ana cita na paragem chamada Jaboca termo da vila de Santa Maria de Icatu comarca desta cidade na qual tem Engenho de moer canas e todas as mais [abiquarias] a ele pertencentes como tambem de lavrar mandiocas e outras mais benfeitorias das quais se se ajustaram..."

the farm of São Bonifácio came from cattle raising and aguardente production, which

demonstrates the centrality of those two activities for the local economy.[123]

Table 4 Rendimentos Engenho São Bonifácio, 1760-1770

Rendimentos Engenho São Bonifácio, 1760-1770

4%
5%
16%
49%
26%

■ Cattle ■ Aguardente ■ Efeitos ■ Cocoa ■ Sugar
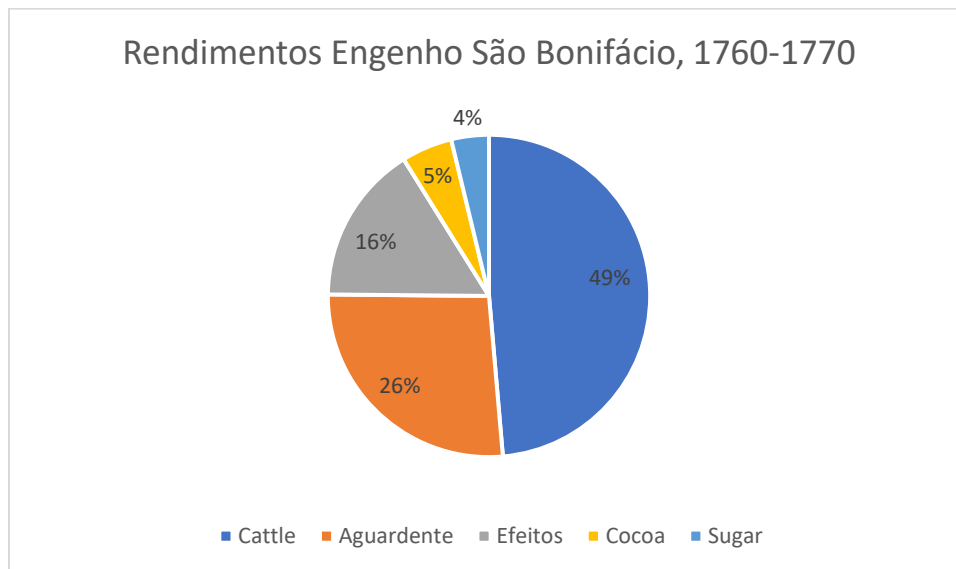
The Export Households

Sources clearly indicate the connection between settlers involved in the export economies

of cotton, rice, and leather and the acquisition of enslaved Africans. For example, the priest Aires

Antonio Rodrigues Branco sent a substantial amount of cotton to Lisbon in the 1770s. On

December 11, 1776, Branco sent 50 bags of cotton divided into the ships Santa Ana and São

Joaquim. Merchant José Murta bought the cotton in Lisbon, generating substantial money.[124] In

previous years, Catholic priests in São Luís baptized enslaved Africans from Aires António

Rodrigues Branco's household several times, particularly recently arrived ones. On May 2, 1770,

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[123] I built this chart based on the following document: Arquivo do Tribunal de Contas, Junta da Inconfidência, Doc. 236, "Conta do rendimento e despesa das fazendas e mais bens confiscados aos Jesuítas proscritos e possuídos na capitania de São Luís do Maranhão, remetida ao real erário em o ano de 1771."

[124] ANTT, CCGPM, Livro de Entrade de Partes 43, f. 99. Aires António Rodrigues Branco appear in 5 different transactions, f. 137, 173, 208, 224, 260.

the adult African men Felipe, Prudente, and Amaro were baptized together. They were labeled as "pretos do gentio de Cacheu."[125] Aires Antonio Rodrigues Branco likely farmed cotton and raised cattle on his farm called Prata, located in the saco do Piripiri.[126]

The Irish settler Lourenço Belfort is another example of a wealthy settler that enslaved hundreds of people in Maranhão. Lourenço Belfort was born in Dublin in 1708 and migrated first to Lisbon and then to Maranhão.[127] Lourenço Belfort participated in the Transamazonic slave trade and led one slave expedition himself in the Upper Rio Negro in the 1740s.[128] It is beyond question that Belfort employed Indigenous workers in his farms, ranches, and tanneries. Beyond these typical regional activities, Belfort partnered with another settler, José Bernardes Teixeira, to start producing indigo.[129]

Lourenço Belfort married twice daughters of influential local settlers. His first marriage was with Izabel de Andrade, the daughter of Guilherme Everton. Lourenço Belfort and Izabel de Andrade had three children: Ricardo Belfort, Maria Madalena Belfort, and Guilherme Belfort. After Izabel de Andrade's death, Belfort married Ana Tereza, daughter of Felipe Marques da Silva. Lourenço Belfort and Ana Tereza had seven children: Rosa Maria Belfort, Francisca Belfort, Ana Belfort, Miguel Belfort, Antonio Belfort, Lourenço Belfort, José Belfort.

In the Itapecuru River, Lourenço Belfort settled his farm, a property called Kylrue (or Kelru). In 1769, he even requested to create a parish in his estate in honor of Saint Patrick.[130]

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[125] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 212v.

[126] Priest Aires António Rodrigues Branco registered his will on February 18, 1793, Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 29, f. 49-51v. Land grant: AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 47, doc, 4574 and AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 47, doc. 4622.

[127] John Wilson Costa, *A Casa de Belfort no Brasil* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1945): 12; Antonia da Silva Mota, "A dinâmica colonial portuguesa e as redes de poder local na capitania do Maranhão" (PhD., Recife: Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, 2007): 22.

[128] See chapter 2.

[129] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 27, Doc. 2754.

[130] AAM, Auditório/Câmara Eclesiástica, Lista Nominal 2, Doc. 62, f. 2. "*entrou o suplicante a erigir uma capela da invocação de São Patrício, que de presente se acha acabada, tendo de cumprido 80 palmos, 35 de largo com*

Before that, he frequently brought the people he kept enslaved in his household to receive Catholic sacraments in the Sé Church, both Indigenous and Africans.

Scholars agree on the vital role played by Lourenço Belfort in establishing an export economy in Maranhão and his privileged connections with investors of the trading company. Maranhão's initial attempts to produce rice faced resistance in Lisbon because settlers harvested the rice "da terra," or red rice, a variation of the plant already cultivated locally. The European taste demanded white rice, or as it was called in Maranhão, "arroz Carolina." Lourenço Belfort was one of the first settlers to install a factory to crush "arroz Carolina" in Maranhão. Starting in the 1770s, Maranhão's rice production started growing exponentially.[131]

Pedro Lamaignere, a business associate to Belfort, constantly appears in the records of Maranhão's export economy, with particular emphasis on rice production in the 1770s. Pedro Lamaignere also appears consistently as the owner of recently arrived enslaved Africans in baptismal records. On October 20, 1769, Pedro Lamaignere brought three recently incorporated enslaved Africans. Eufrásia, Madalena, and Claudina were "pretas do gentio de Guiné," and curiously, the three women had two godmothers, the black Clara and Bernarda, also enslaved in the same household.

Another example is the settler Leonel Fernandes Vieira who married one of the daughters of Lourenço Belfort, Francisca Maria. Leonel Fernandes Vieira appears in several entries sending goods to Lisbon. He possessed lands, farms, and enslaved several people in Maranhão. Vieira also appears constantly in the parish records. On April 12, 1770, for example, he went to

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coro, pulpito, tribunais, e sua sacristia tudo forrado, coberto de telha com as seguranças necessárias para sua duração, e ornamentos precisos, e já lhe tem feito patrimônio, que é o que consta da escritura junta..."
[131] Walter Hawthorne discussed the rice production in Maranhão related to the background of African people from the Upper Guinea coast, Walther Hawthorne, *From African to Brazil*, 139-140.

the Chapel of Cajapio to baptize seven enslaved African men together: Estevão, Manoel, Julião, Matias, Cipriano, Cristóvão, and Sebastião.[132]

The list of prominent settlers involved in the export economy that baptized enslaved Africans is long. Lesser known were settlers with more modest means and controlled a smaller enslaved population. They show up occasionally exporting cotton, rice, or leather but more likely dedicated their farming and pastoral activities to the local markets. Zooming into the household of Cristóvão Aires Botelho reveals how enslaved Africans arrived in a world of labor dominated by Indigenous workers.

I selected Cristóvão Aires Botelho because he led one of the many slave expeditions in the interior of Amazonia. Botelho's father was António Botelho Gago, a man also involved in the Transamazonic slave trade. António Botelho Gago led at least one official slave raid in Amazonia in 1702.[133]

In the 1730s and 40s, around the same period when Lourenço Belfort was operating in the Rio Negro, Cristóvão Aires Botelho led one slave raid in the Branco River, one of the tributaries of the Rio Negro. The source attesting to Botelho's journey in the Branco River comes as part of the Portuguese dossier to prove their possession of areas in dispute with Spain in the second half of the eighteenth century. The document retells the first Portuguese expeditions that "navigated and traded" in the Branco River, accessing it through the Uraricoera River. The Portuguese started navigating these parts of Amazonia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but it was in 1736 that the settler from Maranhão, Cristóvão Aires Botelho, entered the river supported by the Indigenous chief Donaire.[134]

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[132] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 227.
[133] APEM, Livro de Registro Geral 1689-1746, f. 51v.
[134] Joaquim Nabuco, *Documents d'origine portugaise*, vol. 1: *Annexes du premier mémoire du Brésil* (Paris, 1903), 103. The document continues with important information about the slave expeditions: "*No de 1740 subiu por ele*

Botelho took advantage of those raids and exploited Indigenous workers to settle down as a landowner in Maranhão, following a familiar connection in the Atlantic world between engagement in slave raids and later investment in farming and pastoral activities. Back in São Luís, Cristóvão Aires Botelho became a member of the local elite. Although his name was not frequent in the export record, he did send some cotton to Lisbon in the 1770s. On January 24, 1777, Cristóvão Aires Botelho sent 30 bags of cotton to Lisbon on the ship Nossa Senhora da Insula. Merchant Pedro Rodrigues Ferreira purchased the cotton a few months later and generated a substantial profit for Botelho, 1:168$772 réis.[135]

Cristóvão Aires Botelho possessed land and participated in local politics, typical features of local elites in Portuguese America. Like other settlers, Botelho was elected vereador in 1766 with Teodoro Jansen Moler, Francisco da Serra Freire, and Bernardino José Pereira de Castro.[136] He also possessed urban properties, such as the house he sold to his son-in-law on Formosa Street, at the core of São Luís.[137]

Cristóvão Aires Botelho married Francisca Xavier de Andrade on May 16, 1744, in the Sé Church.[138] It is hard to understand the precise number of children because I did not find a last will or inventory for Botelho or Andrade. One of their children was Ana Francisca, who was baptized in 1761 and had Botelho's fellow Municipal Council officer Francisco da Serra Freire and Francisca Xavier da Silva as her godparents.[139]

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acima uma bandeira, comandada por Francisco Xavier de Andrade, um dos cabos da expedição, comandada por Lourenço Belfort, que estabeleceu o seu arraial em pouca distância da cachoeira do mesmo Uraricoera; de onde expediu escoltas, que chegaram a andar dois meses de viagem a margem daquele rio por ele acima; de tal forma que se lhe acabaram os extensos campos, que rodeiam este rio. Seguiu-se logo depois desta entrada, a que mandou fazer ao mesmo rio Branco, José Miguel Aires; e tanto este como Lourenço Belfort foram mandados pelo Governador e Capitão General do Pará João de Abreu de Castelo Branco."

[135] ANTT, CCGPM, Livro de Entrada de Partes 43, f. 118.
[136] APEM, CMSL, Livro de Acórdãos 13, f. 108.
[137] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 10, f. 100v-101v.
[138] AAM, LRCFNSV 84, f. 110v.
[139] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 416v.

Another son of the couple illustrates the generational transformation: from a grandfather involved in the Transamazonic slave trade to a cattle rancher. Inacio Aires Botelho, son of Cristóvão Botelho and Francisca Xavier de Andrade, married Ana de São José, daughter of João Alvares Gusmão and Francisca Xavier. The marriage occurred in the "Main Church in the village of Viana of Maracu" on February 21, 1773.[140]

I identified eight enslaved people in the household of Cristóvão Aires Botelho baptized in the *freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória*. In the 1750s, at least two couples of Indigenous workers were in Botelho's house. The two couples, labeled as "from the heathens of the land," married in the Sé Church on February 25, 1753: Ambrósio and Úrsula, and Angelica and Joaquim.[141] Did Botelho carry another slave expedition in the interior of Amazonia? The same Angelica likely baptized a son before the marriage, a boy named Remoaldo. It is hard to be sure if Joaquim was the father or not. Remoaldo's godparents were the priest António Tavares Cunha and the serva Paulina from the household of João Batista Perales.[142]

In the 1760s, enslaved people from Botelho's household reflected the broader transformations I have discussed in this chapter, particularly regarding the geographical areas of labor recruitment and the legalities of Indigenous enslavement. An Indigenous woman that worked at Botelho's household, Josefa, appears in baptismal records as both índia and mameluca. In the baptism of her daughter, Juliana, on June 28, 1768, Josefa was labeled as mameluca.[143] Two years later, on May 5, 1770, Josefa appeared as índia in the baptism of her son Bonifácio. In both cases, Josefa's legal status was "do serviço," reflecting the impacts of the

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[140] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 338. It is likely that Inácio was born in 1751. I found one baptismal record for a son named Inácio. AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 29v.
[141] AAM, LRCFSNV 85, f. 79.
[142] AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 44v.
[143] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 109.

new practices of Indigenous labor exploitation post-1755 abolition law.[144] The godparents of Juliana and Bonifácio were similar. Priest António Aires was the godfather of both children. And while the mameluca Clara de Oliveira was the godmother of Juliana, Luísa Maria da Encarnação was the godmother of Bonifácio.

Botelho employed another Indigenous woman in his household, Mariana, a Timbira índia captured in the many skirmishes against autonomous Indigenous groups within Maranhão. Mariana was baptized together with the African man, Julião, "preto do gentio da Guiné," enslaved in the household of Cristóvão Aires Botelho. On August 31, 1767, when the priest Bernardo Bequimão wrote down their baptismal records, he probably followed the decade-old custom and registered the African and the Indigenous woman as "escravos."[145] The Indigenous woman Mariana and the black Julião had the same godparents. Like the people explored in the previous paragraph, the godfather was a religious man, Francisco José Leão. The godmother was the same Clara de Oliveira, a mameluca.

Conclusion

On September 18, 1776, Francisco Xavier Camelo went to the notary to register the manumission of Josefa, a "black woman from the Nation Mina." Josefa was married to Arcangelo José, a "índio cafuzo." It is hard to know how long they have been married or what was precisely the relationship between the couple and Francisco Xavier Camelo. For example, was Arcangelo José formerly enslaved in Francisco Xavier Camelo's household? Regardless of the answer to these questions, the índio cafuzo Arcangelo José sought his wife's freedom and negotiated to buy it in installments, a common practice throughout the Americas. Francisco Xavier Camelo agreed to free Josefa for 35$000 réis, and when the parties went to the notary

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[144] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 221.
[145] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 43v.

office, Camelo declared that he had already received 10$000 réis from Arcangelo José. The remaining 25$000 would be paid in two different parts. Arcangelo José had one month to pay 20$000 réis, and the 5$000 réis left "will be paid with his services as a blacksmith."[146]

This manumission letter demonstrates the Afro-Indigenous connections in the city of São Luís. The Transamazonic slave trade declined in the 1750s, and formerly enslaved people still occupied spaces within the city, farms, and ranches. The rise of the Transatlantic slave trade brought thousands of people without social networks. São Luís's racial composition was changing fast, and ordinary people negotiated their positions within the social hierarchy.

The progressive incorporation of Maranhão into larger Atlantic commercial circuits certainly hardened the racial lines of slavery. As slavery became associated with blackness, Indigenous workers fought for their space. Rather than substitution, the case of Maranhão suggests that framing Indigenous and African enslavement as overlapping practices is more fruitful than a substitution.

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[146] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 10, f. 57. "*a quantia de dez mil reis [] e os vinte e cinco mil reis que resta será obrigado a pagar passado o mês de outubro vinte mil reis e os cinco serão obrigados a pagá-los em obras do seu ofício de ferreiro sem dúvida alguma...*"

Chapter 2: The Rise and Fall of the Transamazonic Slave Trade (1688-1755)

Abstract

The Transmazonic slave trade was the large-scale population displacement from the interior of Amazonia to coastal settlements, mainly the cities of Belém and São Luís. This chapter focuses on the last years of the Transamazonic slave, particularly after the war against the Manao people, and when Portuguese slavers reached the Rio Negro. Building on anthropological and archaeological works, I understand the Rio Negro as an Indigenous regional system. To participate in the slave trade, the Portuguese relied not only on violence but also on diplomatic relations and commercial alliances. The Transamazonic slave was a cross-cultural trade between Indigenous people from the Rio Negro and Portuguese slavers, who had to adapt to the trading goods demanded by Indigenous chiefs and participate in kinship networks by accepting Indigenous wives to solidify alliances. The chapter also explores the idea that the Portuguese developed an Atlantic legal framework for enslavement. Even though the Transamazonic slave trade produced written proof of enslavement, settlers successfully claimed possession over Indigenous workers even when they did not have those written proofs. I analyze notarial records and legal cases to understand settlers' vernacular practices of enslavement and how the community understood them as legitimate. In the 1750s, the Transamazonic slave started to receive less support from Lisbon. If the major slave expeditions organized by settlers ceased in those years, the thousands of Indigenous enslaved brought to São Luís in the last decades had to navigate the transformation experienced in the region.

This chapter studies the last years of the Transamazonic slave trade, particularly the connections between the Rio Negro and Maranhão after the war against the Manao people (1720s). I make two interconnected points. First, I consider the Transamazonic slave trade as a cross-cultural practice that helped shape the regional system of the Upper Rio Negro. While anthropological and archaeological works tend to emphasize the violent nature of this period and the severe demographic losses among Indigenous groups of the Rio Negro, the exchange of captives also depended on diplomatic relations, commercial alliances, and kinship.

The Upper Rio Negro was an Indigenous regional system.[147] The Portuguese invaded a space defined by Indigenous long-distance trading networks, kinship relations, shared religious practices, and warfare. The Portuguese demand for captives certainly heightened the violence among Indigenous groups, but it also demonstrated the codes the slavers had to follow to participate in the trade, particularly marriage practices and the understanding of the trading goods necessary to acquire Indigenous prisoners.

Second, I argue that the Portuguese created an Atlantic legal framework of enslavement. As settlers employed the vocabulary that they were roughly familiar with to enslave non-Christian populations, such as "resgates" and "just wars," local practices allowed the enslavement of Indigenous people to continue within the colonial sphere. I use notary records from São Luís and legal cases to explain how settlers understood the legitimacy of Indigenous enslavement. Their view often diverged from the king's laws. Settlers transmitted to their heir the Indigenous workers kept in bondage based on dependencies developed in the domestic realm.

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[147] I follow Eduardo Goes Neves' understanding of the Upper Rio Negro regional system, Eduardo Goes Neves, "Paths in Dark Waters: Archaeology as Indigenous History in the Upper Rio Negro Basin, Northwest Amazon," (Phd. Diss., Bloomington: University of Indiana, 1998), 144. The regional approach has been used by other scholars to understand different areas of Amazonia, Mark Harris, "The Making of Regional Systems: The Tapajós/Madeira and Trombetas/Nhamundá Regions in the Lower Brazilian Amazon, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Ethnohistory* 65 (2018): 622-645.

Some historians emphasized the critical importance of archival production in practices of Indigenous enslavement.[148] Historians of African enslavement, especially those working in the nineteenth-century context, tend to emphasize social relations and local definitions of enslavement and freedom.[149] In Maranhão, despite the production of written records, the so-called *registros*, Indigenous enslavement did not depend on them. Settlers claimed possession over Indigenous workers even without papers, and the local community recognized those practices.

The reversal of the Indigenous policies in the 1750s that culminated with the publication of a new abolition law in 1755 must not be interpreted as the end of Indigenous enslavement, especially in colonial areas that relied on the practice for decades. If anything, new royal policies, combined with Indigenous workers' savvy use of legal avenues, offered new opportunities for them to renegotiate their positions within the local social hierarchy.

I

The Transamazonic slave trade was the violent displacement of thousands of Indigenous captives from the interior of the South American continent to coastal settlements. Portuguese and Indigenous groups exchanged war prisoners through a complex network of raiding economies. Long-distance canoe journeys through the Amazon River and several major tributaries connected the slaving areas to cities, farms, and ranches close to the Atlantic coast. Portuguese law dictated different forms of Indigenous labor recruitment, mainly resgates, descimentos, and just wars. These different practices are better understood in a continuum rather than well-defined, distinct

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[148] Nancy E. van Deusen, "Indigenous Slavery's Archive in Seventeenth-Century Chile," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 101 (2021): 1-33.

[149] The literature is vast but only one example, Rebecca Scott, "Paper Thin: Freedom and Re-enslavement in the Diaspora of the Haitian Revolution," *Law and History Review* 29 (2011): 1061-1087. A recent edited volume focused on nineteenth-century Brazil has completely ignored Indigenous people's enslavement, Brodwyn Fischer and Keila Grinberg, *The Boundaries of Freedom: Slavery, Abolition, and the Making of Modern Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

categories. In theory, each practice recruited Indigenous laborers under different legal statuses. While descimentos conscripted free(d) workers, "just wars," and resgates generally involved enslaved people. Yet, the boundaries between these practices were fluid in practice, and the legal statuses of Indigenous workers were fuzzy once they entered settlers' households.

The legal framework created by the Portuguese empire to interact with Indigenous polities was permissive to violence, including the enslavement of prisoners captured in raids or ransomed from enemies. The Portuguese empire in the Amazon valley was a constellation of religious missions, frontier forts, and small trading posts designed to control riverine paths. Indigenous polities - allies and enemies - surrounded all these colonial enclaves. The Transamazonic slave trade was only possible because Portuguese slavers forged commercial and military alliances with some Indigenous groups. These alliances allowed navigation throughout the Amazon River basin and gave the Portuguese the illusion of control over the territories drained by that immense river. At the same time, Indigenous workers forcibly transplanted from the continent's interior to coastal settlement played a critical role in the consolidation of the Portuguese domain along the Atlantic coast, mainly the cities of Belém and São Luís and the ranches and farms around those two settlements.

1688 and 1755 serve as simple official legal markers for the rise and fall of the Transamazonic slave trade. As I outlined in the previous chapter, Portuguese involvement in Indigenous enslavement started at the inception of their colonial settlements, but in 1688, the Portuguese crown systematized and sponsored slave raids, both state and privately organized. In 1755, these policies were officially reversed when a new law confirmed the unconditional freedom of Indigenous people and their - maternal - descendants. Yet, the coherence of this period for the history of Amazonia goes beyond Portuguese laws allowing or forbidding

Indigenous enslavement. The first half of the eighteenth century was a moment of Portuguese

imperial expansion in the Atlantic, both in Africa and in Brazil. The discovery of gold in the

south of Brazil and the subsequent development of a thriving gold industry propelled an inland

population movement. This process increased the demand for enslaved African labor. As the

demand for enslaved labor soared in southern Brazil, so did their prices in the Atlantic market.

Under these circumstances, there was little reason for slave traders to look at markets such as

São Luís and Belém, regions economically less dynamic than southern and northeastern Brazil.

Consequently, in the 1720s, 30s, and 40s, the number of enslaved Africans disembarking

in São Luís and Belém was virtually zero.[150] Yet, in that same period, the Amazon valley

witnessed intense missionary activities, colonial expeditions to collect forest products, and

constant slave raids. The heyday of Indigenous enslavement in the first half of the eighteenth

century in Amazonia coincided with an expansion of the Portuguese presence in the South

Atlantic. In other words, the absence of enslaved African labor in Northern Brazil did not slow

the development of local economic activities.

The 1750s certainly did not mark the end of Indigenous enslavement, but inter-imperial

competition with Spain transformed the Portuguese policies aimed at Indigenous groups in South

America.[151] On the one hand, the Portuguese crown continued to declare "just wars" against

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[150] Colonial officials and settlers constantly requested the increment of the transatlantic slave trade to Maranhão. Since the seventeenth century, colonial officials linked the expansion of African slavery, economic development, and Indigenous evangelization: "*e sobretudo se aqueles moradores tiverem muitos destes escravos sucederia com eles o que se experimentou com os do Brasil, que pelo seu serviço deixaram o dos índios, que como os não avexarão, logo os sertões [estarão] em paz, e os missionário introduzirão por eles a luz do Evangelho.*" AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 8, doc. 869 (1693). Settlers also asked for enslaved labor to make their farms and ranches viable but complained about their prices and the irregularity of the trade. "*Expomos também na presença de Vossa Majestade o muito que esta cidade carece de escravatura de África, maiormente no tempo presente em que acha impedido o comércio do sertão das Amazonas, os quais podem ser introduzidos nesta Estado por meio da Real Fazenda de Vossa Majestade, como antigamente se fazia, ou por meio dos homens de negócio, com condição, porém, de venderem a metade nesta cidade; e a outra na cidade do Pará...*" AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 32, doc. 3230 (1750).
[151] While imperial reforms sometimes introduced new ways to negotiate with Indigenous groups, especially groups that lived beyond the colonial sphere, it is important to avoid one-sided histories of colonial contacts, or the ways that only place initiative on the European side, Heather F. Roller, *Contact Strategies: Histories of Native Autonomy*

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autonomous Indigenous groups.[152] Besides, economic activities in the interior of Amazonia still depended heavily on Indigenous labor under practices that resembled enslavement throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.[153] On the other hand, the large-scale population dislocation from the interior of Amazonia to coastal settlements ended in the 1750s, especially under the so-called tropas de resgate (slave expeditions). The Portuguese colonial government would no longer back up official slave raids. The king and governors consistently turned down settlers' proposals to organize expeditions to recruit Indigenous labor in the interior. The political climate changed in Lisbon in the 1740s, and traditional practices of Indigenous enslavement found no support in the Portuguese court.

Around the mid-eighteenth century, the Portuguese priority was to delineate the boundaries with Spain in South America, particularly the areas around the Plata and Amazon riverine basins. The international objectives of the Portuguese crown no longer aligned with massive enslavement in the continent's interior. Autonomous Indigenous groups were potential allies and proof of Portuguese presence in their dossiers against the Spanish claims. Moreover, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the transatlantic slave trade experienced an unprecedented expansion in Northern Brazil, fulfilling a significant part of the labor demand of economic activities developed around the cities of Belém and São Luís. The imperial reforms around the mid-eighteenth century reversed Portuguese policies favoring the massive enslavement of Indigenous people in Amazonia. As the priority moved to the international

in Brazil (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021), 59; Jose Manuel Moreno Vega, "Peace Came in the Sign of the Cross: Ritualized Diplomacy Among Natives and Spaniards in the Sonora-Arizona Borderlands, 1694-1836," *The Americas* 79 (2022): 399-424.

[152] Hal Langfur, "The Return of the Bandeira: Economic Calamity, Historical Memory, and Armed Expeditions to the Sertão in Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1750-1808," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 429-461; Yuko Miki, "Slave and Citizen in Black and Red: Reconsidering the Intersection of African and Indigenous Slavery in Postcolonial Brazil," *Slavery & Abolition* 35 (2014): 1-22; Heather Roller, *Contact Strategies*, 124.

[153] Adalberto Paz, "Free and Unfree Labor in the Nineteenth-Century Brazilian Amazon," *IRSH* 62 (2017), 23-43.

disputes with the Spanish monarchy, settlers found little support from Lisbon for their expeditions of labor recruitment.[154] Imperial policymakers understood Indigenous groups in the Amazon region as vital allies in the dispute with their Iberian foe.[155]

In the first half of the eighteenth century, missionary enterprises, collection of forest products, and slaving activities configured the patterns of Portuguese expansion in the Amazon valley. The Portuguese founded settlements, fortresses, and missions at strategic geographical locations, namely the mouth of the Amazon River and key riverine junctures, such as the Tocantins, Xingu, Tapajós, Madeira, and Negro. In a few decades, the Portuguese sponsored a complex system of missions covering an immense area under different religious orders: from Carmelites to Jesuits and Mercedarians to Franciscans. Mainly from the city of Belém, Portuguese settlers launched expeditions to travel up the Amazon River to collect cocoa and other forest products. Religious missions were critical to the success of those expeditions, the ones located in the Lower Amazon River and closer to coastal settlements and those located deeper in the continent's interior. Missions offered essential logistical support, such as the supply of manioc flour and other provisions, Indigenous rowers for the long canoe journeys, translators to interact with autonomous Indigenous groups, and riverine guides.[156] The Portuguese expeditions clashed with Spanish missions in the interior of Amazonia. Between the late

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[154] The governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado followed the imperial policies that favored Indigenous alliances in the interior. A similar situation was followed in Southern Brazil. Here is just one example on how Mendonça Furtado linked enslavement practices and rivalries between Indigenous polities and the Portuguese, a situation that would favor their Spanish rivals: "*Porém, como naqueles juízes não havia algum que deixasse de ter um grandíssimo interesse naquelas escravidões, porque até o mesmo missionário fazia um grande número de cativos para a sua Religião, se não era por paixão particular, raras vezes deixavam de ser julgados escravos toda aquela quantidade de índios, que na verdade eram livres, e desta sorte era tratado um negócio tão importante como este, o qual nos tem posto em um ódio quase irreconciliável com os tais índios, que em muita parte tem ido buscar a proteção das nações que confinam conosco, e lhes vão povoando as suas terras à proporção que se vão as nossas desamparadas.*" Pará, 10 de Novembro de 1752, Tomo 1, p. 291.

[155] This situation would change again after the independence in Brazil and Spanish America. The more centralized Indigenous policies of Iberian empires turned into a more localized and settler-dominated one.

[156] Heather F. Roller, "River Guides, Geographical Informants and Colonial Field Agents in the Portuguese Amazon," *Colonial Latin American Review* 21 (2012): 101-126.

seventeenth century and the first decades of the following century, Spanish complaints about Portuguese slave raids over their missions were constant.

As the Portuguese enslavers encountered difficulties recruiting Indigenous labor, they moved their slaving activities to the Rio Negro, where they found fierce resistance from an Indigenous autonomous group, the Manao people. Allegedly allied with Dutch traders from Essequibo and Suriname, the Manao blocked the Portuguese access to the Rio Negro, the primary area of enslavement in the Amazon region. The Manao specialized in long-distance trading activities and saw little motivation to trade with the Portuguese, given that they had access to better-quality iron tools and guns from Dutch traders. In the late 1720s, the Portuguese fought a bloody war against the Manao. Their victory initiated two decades of intense slaving activities in the Rio Negro, particularly in the Upper Rio Negro.

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, there was a connection between the expansion of agricultural and pastoral activities around Belém and São Luis and the expeditions in the interior to recruit Indigenous labor. Settlers from these two cities constantly pressured the Portuguese crown for new slaving expeditions. As settlers from Belém developed ranching activities, manioc farming, and cocoa cultivation, their counterpart from São Luís dedicated their time primarily to cattle ranches and manioc farms. The Transamazonic slave trade connected these distant parts of the Portuguese empire. It promoted commercial, military, and diplomatic alliances with Indigenous groups in the deep interior of the Amazon region, and it generated a critical workforce that consolidated Portuguese settlements along the Atlantic coast.

II

Despite the Portuguese large-scale projects of population resettlements, historians have emphasized the inefficiencies of labor recruitment and the region's poverty in the last decades. In

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these interpretations, labor recruitment appears as an uncomplicated practice, as though Indigenous people were available in the interior for settlers unable to buy enslaved Africans. Moreover, the labor recruitment system was inherently flawed due to settlers' abuses and Indigenous incapacity to become efficient workers given their cultural background. High mortality rates generated by constant epidemics, mainly of smallpox, made the system even more problematic for settlers. While these historians outline the legislation and royal orders, they miss how Indigenous people actively participated in the process of labor recruitment. The vast areas drained by the Amazon River and its major tributaries were not a passive source of cheap workers where settlers plundered resources and people.

More recently, historians have revisited narratives stressing the crown's abandonment of the Amazon region before the imperial reforms in the mid-eighteenth century. Research demonstrates the numerous policies directed by the Portuguese crown to develop economic activities and occupy the area with Portuguese settlers. Historians have studied the role of different institutions and progressive transformations of Portuguese legislation in favor of settlers' desire for Indigenous workers. If just wars declared against Indigenous enemies generated a substantial number of captives for the Portuguese, they relied more consistently on private "descimentos" and slave expeditions (*tropas de resgate*) to acquire the workers they wanted.

This scholarship has made invaluable contributions to our understanding of the Portuguese colonization of Amazonia, but it is still focused on official imperial policies. By doing that, historians tend to create rigid lines between the different modes of Indigenous labor recruitment. Besides, they tend to stop around the period of imperial reforms, creating an artificial separation between the two periods as though the publication of the 1755 abolition law

instantly freed all Indigenous workers kept in bondage.[157] The different practices of recruited Indigenous labor overlapped in practice. The boundaries between "descimentos," "resgates," and "just wars" were fluid, and the legal statuses that they created were negotiated once settlers included Indigenous workers in their households. Indigenous workers played an active role in defining these legal statuses, including their intense legal activism.

III

The Rio Negro occupies the central stage of Indigenous enslavement's history in Amazonia. Between the 1730s and 1750s, sizeable Portuguese slave expeditions targeted Indigenous people from that vast area. By the mid-seventeenth century, the Portuguese found a fortress in the Lower Rio Negro, after initial incursions from military men, missionaries, and explorers. Yet, it took some time for the Portuguese to regularly participate in the intense slaving operations consistently. From the evidence collected for this research and other scholars, the major slaving areas in the 1730s and 1750s were in the Upper Rio Negro, and some of its tributaries, mainly the Uaupés River.

Just like many areas of Amazonia, the Upper Rio Negro was a regional system. It was a complex Indigenous world connected by long-distance riverine trading networks, kinship relations, and multi-ethnic and linguistic communities. If the Middle Rio Negro was the historic place of the Manao people, an Arawakan-speaking group, the Upper Rio Negro was inhabited by Tukanoan and other Arawakan people.[158] Tukanoan and Arawakan groups have a complex

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[157] As Colin Maclachlan put many years ago in a work that is constantly cited: "*Indigenous slave labor is excluded, because slavery does not evolve in the same fashion as a nonservile labor system. In addition, it is debatable whether Indian slaves constituted a significant proportion of the labor pool. The well-publicized attempts of the Crown to restrict Indian slavery, although morally significant, did not reflect the actual number of slaves. In any event, the Crown managed to suppress indigenous slavery in the 1750s.*" Colin M. Maclachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800," in Dauril Alden (ed.), *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 200.

[158] Important ethnographic work on Tukanoan groups: Curt Nimuenjadú, "Reconhecimento dos rios Içana, Ayarí e Uaupés: Relatório apresentado ao Serviço de Proteção aos Índios do Amazonas e Acre, 1927," *Journal de la Société*

relationship with a third group of people from the area, the Maku.[159] While Tukanoan and

Arawakan groups practice agriculture and inhabit the margins of the rivers and were designated

the "River people," the Maku are hunter-gatherer people that live in the forest, somewhat distant

from the rivers.[160]

There are three different types of rivers in Amazonia: whitewater, clearwater, and

blackwater rivers.[161] As the name evidently suggests, the Rio Negro is a "blackwater" river

(*negro* means black in Portuguese). Blackwater rivers produce less fertile margins compared to

the Amazon's floodplains, for example, and the fishing opportunities are less abundant. People

from the river were/are adapted to these environmental conditions. Tukanoan and Arawakan

people from the Upper Negro River cultivated domesticated manioc using slash-and-burn

techniques, just like many other Indigenous groups from Lowland South America. Yet, in the

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des Américaniste 39 (1950): 125-182; Irving Goldman, *The Cubeo: Indians of the Northwest Amazon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963); Stephen Hugh-Jones, *The Palm and the Pleiades: Initiation and Cosmology in Northwest Amazonia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Christine Hugh-Jones, *From the Milk River: Spatial and Temporal Processes in Northwest Amazonia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Jean E. Jackson, *The Fish People: Linguistic Exogamy and Tukanoan Identity in Northwest Amazonia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983);. Janet M. Chernela, *The Wanano Indians of the Brazilian Amazon: A Sense of Space* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993). On Arawakan people: Robin M. Wright, *Cosmo, Self, and History in Baniwa Religion for Those Unborn* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Fernando Santos-Granero, "The Arawakan Matrix: Ethos, Language, and History in Native South America," in Jonathan D. Hill and Fernando Santos-Granero (ed.), *Comparative Arawakan Histories: Rethinking Language Family and Culture Area in Amazonia* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 25-50. More recent work on the Northwest Amazon: Paulo Maia Figueiredo, "Desequilibrando o convencional: estética e ritual com os baré do alto rio Negro (Amazonas)," (PhD. Diss., Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2009); Marcio Meira, *A persistência do aviamento: colonialismo e história indígena no noroeste amazônico* (São Carlos: EdUFSCar, 2018). A general and useful overview: Robin Wright, "História indígena do noroeste da Amazônia: hipóteses, questões e perspectivas," in Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (ed.), *História dos índios no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992), 253-66.
[159] The Maku have been the subject of fewer studies. The widely cited ethnography is Peter Silverwood-Cope, *Os Makú: Povo caçador do noroeste da Amazônia* (Brasília: Editora da Universidade de Brasília, 1990).
[160] Archaeologists and anthropologists have discussed for years the patterns of migration in the Upper Rio Negro. Based on oral stories and archaeological evidence, how old would the occupation of Tukanoan and Arawakan people be? Did they displace Maku people from the margins of the rivers? Neves' based his conclusion on an excavation of one fortress, close to the Jauareté in the Middle Uaupés, built between the end of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Neves argued that the occupation is relatively old, around 3,000 years old, and it is highly unlikely that they organized themselves around Chiefdoms, as some authors suggest.
[161] Emilio F. Moran, *Through Amazonian Eyes: the Human Ecology of Amazonian Populations* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 22; Susana Hecht and Alexander Cockburn, *The Fate of the Forest: Developers, Destroyers, and Defenders of the Amazon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 19-26.

Upper Rio Negro, bitter manioc horticulture predominated over sweet varieties, in contrast to areas such as the Western Amazon. The bitter variation of manioc can grow in the acid soils drained by Blackwater Rivers. Moreover, in contrast to other areas of Amazonia, people that lived on the margins Blackwater River relied more on fishing than hunting, even though fishing was not abundant throughout the year.[162] They understand the areas where and when fishing is more abundant.[163] To complete their diet based on manioc and fishing, people from the Upper Rio Negro made extensive use of palms, especially peach palms.[164]

As archaeologist Eduardo Goes Neves argued, Indigenous people compensated for the poor environmental conditions of the Rio Negro with extensive trading networks, especially for foodstuff. For Neves, Indigenous villages in the area should be interpreted as "nodes in an immense social network."[165]

Tukanoan and Arawakan groups from the Upper Rio Negro distinguish themselves from other groups of the South American Lowlands for their more hierarchical social structure. Their societies are typically systems of hierarchical *sibs* grouped in phratries. These phratries are commonly organized around ancestry, rules of linguistic exogamous marriages, kinship, residence in the same river, and mutual obligation around ceremonies and drinking parties. There are some indications that high-ranking *sibs* occupy better fishing areas.[166] Yet, what is critical about their social organization is the connection between language and identity and how it relates to exogamous linguistic marriages.

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[162] Emilio Moran, *Through Amazonian Eyes*, 36, 41.
[163] Irving Goldman, *The Cubeo*, 53-56; Stephen Hugh-Jones, *The Palm and the Pleiades*, 30; Jean Jackson, *The Fish People*, 42; Janet Chernela, *The Wanano Indians of the Brazilian Amazon*, 87.
[164] Eduardo Goes Neves, "Paths in Dark Waters," 129-130.
[165] Eduardo Goes Neves, "Paths in Dark Waters," 141.
[166] Janet Chernela advances this hypothesis that is contested by other ethnographies, Janet Chernela, *The Wanano Indians of the Brazilian Amazon*, 93.

Tukanoan and Arawakan people have a complex exchange of services and goods with the Maku people.[167] As anthropologists have argued, this symbiotic relationship is similar to other examples between nomadic and seminomadic groups. In the world view of Tukanoan and Arawakan, the Maku are inferior people. All ethnographies agree that Tukanoan and Arawakan people orient their lives to the river. The Forest is the unknown for them. It is the space of evil spirits inhabited by people they deem inferior, the Maku. According to European travelers and contemporary ethnographers, Maku people were common in Tukanoan and Arawakan societies and were commonly referred to as "servants." Among the many services that Maku people provided to Tukanoan and Arawakan people were farming, domestic labor, and hunting game since the last tended not to devote much time to that activity.

Whether or not the Maku were the "slaves" of Tukanoan people is a terrain of controversy among anthropologists. Irving Goldman affirms that Maku (*Borówa*) used to be "slaves" of the Cubeo people, but when he lived among them, the practice was already gone. Goldman argues that "It would seem that far from being slaves there was a symbiotic relationship between these very crude nonfarming people, who had no settlements or permanent houses of their own, and the Cubeo. The Cubeo do not stress the economic advantages to them of the *Borówa* other than to point out that they helped with all chores. In any case, no Cubeo was released from any of his normal tasks because of the presence of the *Borówa*."[168] Jean Jackson offers a more detailed account of the relationship between the Maku and Tukanoan in economic, political, and symbolic terms. Jackson questions that Maku were "slaves" of Tukanoan people,

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[167] Alcida Ramos, Peter Silverwood-Cope, and Ana Gita de Oliveira, "Patrões e clientes: Relações intertribais no Alto Rio Negro," in Alcida Ramos (ed.), *Hierarquia e simbiose: Relações Intertribais no Brasil* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1980), 135-182.
[168] Irving Goldman, *The Cubeo*, 106.

even though earlier European travelers described them as such.[169] Fernando Santos-Granero, in turn, based on historical evidence and travel narratives, advances the idea that the Maku can be considered slaves of Tukanoan people.[170]

In geographical terms, the world the Portuguese invaded in the 1730s was an immense area roughly limited by the Orinoco, the Branco, and the Middle/Lower section of the Rio Negro. Archaeologist Eduardo Goes Neves argued that "there is evidence that prior to the European conquest, extensive trade networks connected, directly or indirectly, different areas in a vast territory ranging from the Amazon River in the south to the Orinoco in the north, the Guiana Highlands in the east and the Colombian llanos in the west."[171] European powers operating in the region, either with European presence or through Indigenous allies, likely took advantage of these previous Indigenous trade networks mentioned by Neves. The Spanish were navigating through the Orinoco basin, the Dutch from the Guianas, and the Portuguese from their stronghold positions in the Lower and Middle Amazon.

Portuguese slavers' influence in the region increased between the 1730s and 1750s, and some scholars argued that the Portuguese demand for slaves forced the people to move to places harder to access. As I will demonstrate in the following sections, it is challenging to make clear distinctions between the ethnic groups targeted by Portuguese slavers. Evidence shows that the

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[169] Jean Jackson, *The Fish People*, 157, 161-163.

[170] Fernando Santos-Granero, *Vital Enemies: Slavery, Predations, and the Amerindian Political Economy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 14, 67-74, Alfred R. Wallace, a source generally mentioned by anthropologists, calls the Maku "slaves" of the other Indigenous groups. "The Macás often attack the houses of other Indians situated in solitary places, and murder all the inhabitants; and they have even depopulated and causes the removal of several villages. All the other tribes of Indians catch them and keep them as slaves, and in most villages you will see some of them." Alfred Russell Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro, with an Account of the Native Tribes, and Observations on the Climate, Geology, and Natural History of the Amazon Valley* (New York: Haskell House Publisher, 1969), 354.

[171] Eduardo Goes Neves, "Paths in Dark Waters," 76-77.

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Portuguese enslaved Tukanoan, Arawakan, and Maku groups. The Portuguese probably forged alliances with some Indigenous chiefs, possibly Arawakan, that exchanged their prisoners.

IV

Jesuit missionaries visited the Rio Negro as early as the 1650s.[172] Missionaries Manoel Pires and Francisco Veloso participated in a slave raid commanded by Vital Maciel Parente in those years.[173] Even though the Jesuits founded the aldeia de Santa Cruz in the region, their experience was short-lived because settlers banished them from the area in a local revolt in 1661. In the 1660s, Portuguese war parties raided Indigenous people in Rio Negro. They captured hundreds of prisoners, probably in the lower section of the river and with the help of Indigenous allies. In this period, the Portuguese founded a fortress in the Lower Rio Negro, attempting to control the riverine navigation and block the Spanish and Dutch advances in the region (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Prospecto da Fortaleza do Rio Negro

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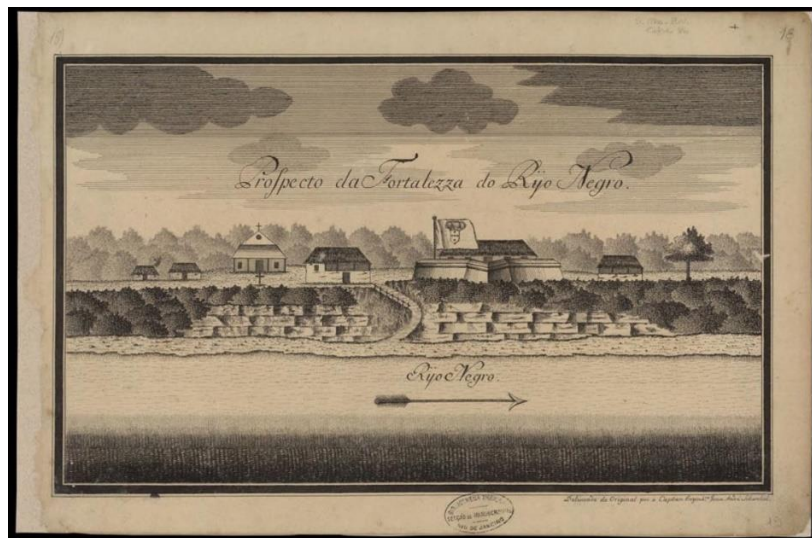
[172] Not to mention the several military expeditions that passed through the Rio Negro, even if briefly Orellana (1542), António Vicente Cochado (1628), and Pedro Teixeira (1638). Referece: Décio de Alencar Guzmán, "Encontros circulares: guerra e comércio no Rio Negro (Grão-Pará), séculos XVII e XVIII," *Anais do Arquivo Público do Pará* 5 (2006): 139-165.
[173] David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed," 290.

In the 1690s, the governor António de Albuquerque Coelho de Carvalho visited the Rio Negro. António de Albuquerque was an experienced man in the Amazon region and oversaw one expedition to the Rio Negro. A high-ranking Portuguese officer reaching the remotest military posts in the empire was a rare feat and only repeated by the powerful governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado in the 1750s when he managed the border negotiations with Spanish authorities. Albuquerque's goal was to check the fortress at the juncture of the Amazon River and the Rio Negro and to further the interests of Carmelite missionaries in the region, not to mention the possibility of enslaving Indigenous people to bring back to coastal settlements. The Rio Negro fell under the Carmelite order when the Portuguese crown determined the areas each religious order would operate in the Amazon region. In a few years, the Carmelites established eight Indigenous villages: Santo Elias do Jaú, Aracary, Comarú, Mariuá, São Caetano, Cabuquena, Bararuá, and Dary. Whether the Carmelite missions played a role in supporting Portuguese slaves in the area is a terrain of controversy among historians. It is clear that they participated in the process of European encroachment in the area.[174]

Some anthropologists and archaeologists have proposed that people in the Rio Negro coalesced in various regional multi-ethnic military confederacies in the period of Portuguese colonialism.[175] In the first decades of the eighteenth century, the Middle Rio Negro was dominated by an Arawakan military confederacy led by the Manao people. The Manao people

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[174] David Sweet does not hesitate in blaming the Carmelites for their participation in the enslavement of Indigenous people. Roberto Zahluth, in a recent research, offered a more nuanced view and argued that they actively tried to protect their missionary project, even if it was not a religious order with a history of conversion. Roberto Zahluth de Carvalho Jr., "Dominar homens ferozes': Missionários carmelitas no Estado do Maranhão e Grão-Pará (1686-1757)," (PhD Diss., Salvador: Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2015).

[175] Silvia M. Vidal and Alberta Zucchi, "Efectos de las expansiones coloniales en las poblaciones indígenas del Noroeste Amazónico (1798-1830)," *Colonial Latin American Review* 8 (1999): 113-132. Wright is more skeptical about the formation of these larger systems due to the lack of evidence, either colonial reports or archaeological: Robin Wright, "Escravidão indígena no Noroeste Amazônico," in Robin Wright, *História indígena e do indigenismo no Alto Rio Negro* (Campinas: Mercado das Letras, 2005), 78-79.

constantly raided other Indigenous groups and religious missions in the vast areas drained by the

Rio Negro.[176] They achieved their military prowess from trading networks that provided them

with iron tools and guns. The Portuguese accused the Manao people of having close ties with

Dutch traders in the Rio Negro. The evidence in Dutch archives does support the notion that

Dutch traders operating from the Essequibo River reached as far as the Rio Negro. Although

possible, the riverine connection between the Essequibo and the Negro was far from simple and

convenient. It involved terrestrial trails and several waterfalls, which only allowed traveling in

small canoes and limited its commercial potential.

      The Portuguese commonly accused the Manao people of supplying Indigenous enslaved

people to the Dutch in exchange for fire guns, iron tools, and textiles.[177] Yet, a more layered

relationship between the Manao and the Dutch was more likely. The connection between the

Dutch and Manao people happened through a chain of Indigenous trading networks throughout

the area drained by the Branco River. The traditional allies of Dutch traders were Carib-speaking

peoples, who were probably the intermediaries between the Dutch and the Manao and the ones

responsible for the wide circulation of European trading goods and guns all the way in the Rio

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[176] Many records indicate extensive trading networks. Samuel Fritz reported the Manao trading activities. "*Enquanto estava em minha choça, lutando com os achaques, veio comerciar com os Jurimaguas, em umas dez canoas, uma tropa de Manaves [Manao], índios gentios.*" Then, Fritz continued: "*São esses índios Manavez muito valentes e temidos dos gentios vizinhos, e fizeram frente há muitos anos a uma tropa portuguesa.*" Finally, Fritz described the trade between Indigenous groups: "*O comércio que tem esses Manaves com os Aisuares, Ibanomas e Jurimaguas, consta de umas lâminas de ouro, vermelhão, raladores de Yuca, redes de cachibanco, com outros gêneros de cestinhos e manacas que labram curiosamente.*" Samuel Fritz, "O diário do padre Samuel Fritz: com introdução e notas de Rodolfo Garcia," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, t. 81, v. 135 (Rio de Janeiro: IHGB, 1917), 379.

[177] The Governor of Maranhão, Bernardo Pereira de Berredo, wrote in 1719 about the fear of Dutch-Indigenous alliances in the Rio Negro: "*e de ser conveniente que se transfira a casa forte do Rio Negro para o sítio chamado o furo de Javeperi para se impedir o comércio dos nossos índios com os holandeses, fazendo a dita obra o capitão da dita casa forte: remetendo-lhe vinte peças de artilharia grossa.*" Ofício do Governador do Maranhão Bernardo Pereira de Berredo ao Governo de Lisboa propondo a mudança da casa forte do Rio Negro para o furo do Javaperi, com o fim de impedir o comércio dos holandeses com os índios. Parecer favorável do Conselho Ultramarino. Resolução régia - 8 de Julho de 1719. Joaquim Nabuco, *Documents d'origine portugaise*, vol. 1: *Annexes du premier mémoire du Brésil* (Paris, 1903), 30.

Negro. Dutch allies or not, the military confederacy of the Manao blocked the Portuguese

navigation in the Rio Negro and their access to slaving operations in that area. The Portuguese

framed the war against the Manao people as a treason narrative, just like many other just wars

they declared during the period. According to Portuguese records, because the Manao people,

and in particular one of their military leaders, the chief Ajuricaba, allied with the Dutch and

despised the Catholic faith, violence was the only way to interact with them. This narrative

obscures the clear imperial goal of the war, that is, to further the Portuguese interests in a

contested area between the Spanish and Dutch.

Moreover, the war must be placed within the dire circumstances of the 1720s in the

Portuguese settlements close to the Atlantic coast. Previous Portuguese slave raids were not

providing enough workers for settlers' economic activities. To complicate the situation, a severe

smallpox epidemic hit Maranhão and Pará in 1724. Smallpox epidemics were frequent in the

colonial period and tended to devastate the Indigenous population, mainly enslaved people living

in precarious conditions. Settlers understood that the demographic losses of the epidemic

justified more slave raids in the interior. This situation pushed the demand for Indigenous labor

further and aligned the Portuguese around the war against the Manao people.

Despite the victory in the war against the Manao people, it took the Portuguese some

years to organize slaving expeditions in the Upper Negro River.[178] In this period, there were

several major slaving expeditions between the end of the 1730s and the beginning of the 1750s,

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[178] The war resulted not only in a significant number of prisoners transported as enslaved people to coastal
settlements, but also the incorporated of several Manao in the religious missions. "*É provável que, no período
referido, os grandes descimentos feitos pelos principais missionários na região - frei José da Madalena, frei
Domingos de Santa Tereza e frei Matias de São Boaventura - fossem de grupos manao evadidos dos terriórios
devassados pelas tropas que avançaram sobre o sertão. Em 1768, o padre José Monteiro de Noronha, em visitação
ao rio Negro, descreveu grande parte da população das vilas da região como sendo compostas por índios Manao.
Essas vilas seriam Moura, Carvoeiro, Poiares, Barcelos, Moreira, Tomar, Airão e Lamalonga, antigas missões
carmelitas rebatizadas após o processo de secularização das missões.*" Roberto Zahluth, "Dominar homens
ferozes," 124.

when the crown banished the tropas de resgate. Lourenço Belfort commanded one between

1737-1739. José Miguel Aires was in the interior at least twice: 1739-1740 and 1748-1749. João

da Cunha Correia, in turn, led one in 1740-1741 and Estácio Rodrigues between 1741- 1743.[179]

V

On October 21, 1737, the settler from Maranhão Lourenço Belfort requested the king's

authorization to finance one slave expedition privately. In his justification, Belfort argued that

the royal treasury did not have enough funds to cover the costs of the adventure, but it could be

profitable with the taxes due on each Indigenous enslaved person brought to coastal settlements.

Beyond the possible financial return for the Portuguese crown, Belfort advocated in the name of

other settlers. According to him, "the reason for this offer [to organize a slave expedition] was

only to serve the people [*Povo*], and assist them in their miseries, and great need that the settlers

have."[180]

There are descriptions of Portuguese slave expeditions written by colonial officials,

missionaries, and travelers. The different sources offer a similar picture of how the Portuguese

operated. It was necessary first to appoint the military man that would lead the expeditions, a

cabo. Then, the expedition would appoint a missionary, preferably a Jesuit, to guarantee that

Indigenous people's enslavement was done according to Portuguese law. In general, the

Portuguese organized these expeditions in Belém and recruited some soldiers and Indigenous

people from the neighboring Indigenous villages. This support was essential since Indigenous

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[179] David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed," 600; Robin Wright, "Escravidão indígena no Noroeste Amazônico," 30.

[180] AHU, CU, PA, Cx. 21, Doc. 1967. "*e o motivo que o persuade a fazer este oferecimento é somente o servir ao dito Povo, e acudir a miséria, e grande necessidade que estão padecendo os moradores...*" The *regimento* carried by Lourenço Belfort is annexed in this document. The *regimento* was analyzed in: Camila L. Dias, "O comércio de escravos indígenas na Amazônia visto pelos regimentos de entradas e de tropas de resgate (séculos XVII e XVIII)," *Revista Territórios & Fronteiras* 10 (2017): 238-259.

people were the guides, translators, and rowers. Once the expeditions had recruited the necessary

workers and soldiers, the canoes were loaded with supplies and the trading goods necessary to

exchange captives with Indigenous chiefs allied with the Portuguese. The journey upriver was

long, and the Portuguese relied on other support points along the way. Once the expedition

reached the Rio Negro, Carmelite's missions offered some logistical support. There is clear

evidence that the Portuguese settled temporary trading posts along the Rio Negro as well, what

was called *arraial*.

Like other sources, Alexander von Humboldt describes that the Portuguese created

temporary trading posts along the banks of the rivers, and "after having excited the natives to

make war, they ransomed the prisoners." Humboldt did not overlook the presence of religious

missionaries to guarantee the legality of enslavement. By the late 1730s, the Portuguese were

part of the Upper Orinoco world, and "the desire of exchanging slaves (poitos) for hatchets,

fishhooks, and glass trinkets, induced the Indian tribes to make war upon one another."[181]

Governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado described a similar situation. The

expedition would have a cabo, a missionary, "almost always a Jesuit," and a few soldiers. Once

in the Rio Negro, the Portuguese settled temporarily in a "River populated with many heathens."

He said a few men would travel to meet Indigenous chiefs and trade captives. Mendonça Furtado

noted that there were two ways to "acquire many slaves." The first method was initially a

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[181] Alexander von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of the Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America during the Years 1799-1804* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1907) Vol. II, 426-427. The Jesuit João Daniel offered a description that was not very different: "*Do referido arraial saíam os brancos a contratar com os régulos daquelas nações bem escoltados (para que não lhes sucedesse irem buscar lã, e ficarem tosquiados, ou metidos no curral, como por vezes sucedeu) e a troco de um, ou dous machados, algumas facas, bolórios, e semelhantes cousas lhe entregavam aqueles tapuias encurralados, com os quais voltavam para o arraial a apresentá-los ao missionário da tropa, assim os que compravam os particulares, como os que se resgatavam em nome da tropa; e como ordinariamente cada nação tem diversa linguagem, se valia o missionário da tropa de línguas práticos para o efeito dos exames.*" João Daniel, *Tesouro descoberto no máximo Rio Amazonas*, Vol. 2. (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 2004), 312.

peaceful transaction that often turned to violence. Portuguese slavers would negotiate Indigenous

enslaved with Indigenous chiefs in exchange for "aguardente, velórios, and ferramentas." But the

Portuguese often forced Indigenous chiefs to wage war against their "neighbors," even when

they lived in peace. The second strategy to acquire Indigenous enslaved people described by

Mendonça Furtado was based on trickery. The Portuguese organized some ambushes and

brought entire Indigenous villages to their temporary posts. The missionaries would invariably

authorize their enslavement.[182]

Despite these historical narratives that describe Indigenous people in the Rio Negro as

passive victims of Portuguese slavers, the Portuguese had to adapt to several codes to trade

captives. A second slave expedition organized by Lourenço Belfort in the 1740s offers a good

idea of the necessary supplies and the trading goods used to acquire Indigenous prisoners in the

interior. The expedition armed two large canoes carrying food supplies, military apparatus, and

trading goods. Two categories of trading goods were essential to buy enslaved Indigenous people

in the Rio Negro: iron tools and European textiles. Among other examples of iron tools bought

by Lourenço Belfort on that occasion were "two hundred axes," "forty scythes," "seventy-two

dozens of knives," "three dozens of hooks," "two dozen of harpoon for *peixe boi*," and "four

dozen of razors." Beyond the iron tools, Belfort acquired several European textiles, such as "fifty

shirts of Britain," "sixty hats," "twenty skirts from Rouen," and "fifty-seven shirts from

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[182] Marcos Carneiro de Mendonça, *A Amazônia na era pombalina* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro), Tomo I, Pará, 10 de Novembro de 1752, 290-291.

Hamburg."[183] The expeditions carried "four hundred *pederneiras*," a type of fire gun, despite the Portuguese crown's prohibition to trade such items with Indigenous people.[184]

VI

Beyond specific trading goods, captive-taking activities in the Rio Negro relied on the exchange of women for alliance-making. Here, I explore two cases. The first is the freedom suit of an Indigenous woman named Francisca.[185] Francisca's case demonstrates how Indigenous women experienced captivity between the Indigenous world of the Upper Rio Negro and the colonial sphere. Francisca supposedly entered the colonial sphere as a "servant" of the daughter of an Indigenous chief that married Anacleto da Costa Raiol, a Portuguese slaver in the Rio Negro. After a series of commercial transactions, índia Francisca ended up enslaved in the household of dona Ana da Fonte in Belém. In 1739, after living years in captivity, Francisca sought a colonial court to try to achieve her freedom. The second case is the inquisitorial trial of Pedro de Braga in the 1750s. Braga was a *cunhamena*, a Portuguese trader who took Indigenous wives to solidify alliances with Indigenous chiefs, like the man that first uprooted índia Francisca from her Indigenous community.[186] At the height of the Transamazonic slave trade, cunhamenas

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[183] The importance of European textiles in the relationship with Indigenous people is exemplified in this passage from the governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado. "*A esta diligência mandou o dito Emu [Indigenous chief] a seu filho chamado Braga, que aqui esteve comigo, e indo com uns poucos de índios armados a uma daquelas aldeias lhes tomou a guarnição que nela estavam as armas, dando-lhes a troco delas vários gêneros, e seguraram-me que igualmente lhes compraram os escravos que levavam a troco de panos brancos listrados de azul, de que vinham vestidos todos os que aqui me vieram falar, não duvidando o mesmo Emu de dizer ao Capitão Miguel de Siqueira Chaves, quando foi o descimento do Principal Joá, que de caminho ia para Castela levar os cativos que tinha, aos padres, para lhes pagarem cujo fato passa naquele sertão como coisa notória e certa e se fez demonstrativa neste arraial, vendo-se todos aqueles índios vestidos de panos que se fabricam nas aldeias do Orinoco.*"

[184] APEP, Códice 25, f. 133-135.

[185] A pioneer work using Francisca's freedom suit is: David Sweet, "Francisca: Indian Slave," in David Sweet and Gary Nash (ed.), *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 274-291.

[186] *cunhamena* means male in-law in Tupi. *kuña* = woman and *mena* = husband. Barbara A. Sommer, "Cracking down on the Cunhamenas: Renegade Amazonian Traders under Pombaline Reform," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 4 (2006): 768.

were essential for the Portuguese to acquire Indigenous enslaved people in the Rio Negro. Yet, the Catholic Church tried to curtail the activities of these men that took multiple wives at the same time in the style of the "gentio" (heathens).

Índia Francisca lived in the Indigenous village of the chief Amu, located in the Rio Negro, where she was likely a lower-status woman, working on manioc farms and caring for domestic chores. Around 1715, the Indigenous chief Amu and Anacleto da Costa Raiol, a Portuguese trader, made a commercial pact. To seal their alliance, Amu conceded to Anacleto da Costa Raiol one of his daughters as wife, who would later be baptized as índia Rosaura. Índia Francisca accompanied Rosaura into Rosaura's new life as a wife of a Portuguese trader. Índia Francisca likely already served the household of chief Amu in their Indigenous village. After this initial transaction between Amu and Anacleto da Costa Raiol, Francisca experienced multiple exchanges that led her to a life as a domestic servant in the house of dona Ana da Fonte in Belém. These exchanges also illustrate the layered commercial networks in the Transamazonic slave trade.

When moving down the Amazon River, Anacleto da Costa Raiol traded Francisca with another Portuguese slaver, Anacleto Ferreira. Anacleto Ferreira reported that he had received trading goods from dona Ana da Fonte to acquire some Indigenous enslaved people in the sertões. These were items typical of the Transamazonic slave trade: European textiles and iron tools. For example, the textiles were "six massa de velório, from those four whites and two blues." Ferreira also carried "two dozen knives and six fire guns [peças de espingarda]."[187] In the middle of the journey, Anacleto Ferreira decided to trade Francisca with Estevão Cardoso, a "man from São Luís," who was also conducting some canoes in the Amazon River. The deal was

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[187] BNPT, PBA 642, f. 124.

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made between the two slavers with the condition that Francisca would be given to Manoel de Goes once the canoe arrived in Belém. Manoel de Goes was a commercial representative of dona Ana da Fonte, and it seems that Anacleto Ferreira wanted to honor his original business with dona Ana da Fonte. From the extant evidence, Francisca completed her journey down the Amazon River on Estevão Cardoso's canoe because she ended up in the household of dona Ana da Fonte as an enslaved woman.

At the core of this freedom suit is the legal status of Francisca when she was uprooted from her Indigenous world and entered the colonial sphere: was she only accompanying índia Rosaura as her "servant," or was she already a prisoner of chief Amu? Francisca's legal representative argued that she was a free woman because she was born in one "aldeia de paz." Francisca was the "aia" (a maid or criada) of índia Rosaura and not her slave. The exchange of women between chief Amu and Anacleto da Costa Raiol was a peace deal ("em sinal de tréguas") as "it was customary among the heathens" ("como é custume entre o gentio"). Because Francisca was not originally enslaved, the following transactions were all invalid. Finally, the expedition led by Anacleto da Costa Raiol was commercial, aimed at extracting wild cacao, and not a "war or slave expedition." Commercial expeditions did not produce legitimate slaves. Because missionaries were not present, they did not produce "registros."[188]

Dona Ana da Fonte's representation had a different understanding of the situation. Índia Francisca was not originally from one "aldeia de paz," but she was already enslaved by chief Amu "because Francisca was born from an índia that the said chief captured in just war against his enemies." Portuguese slavers bought from their Indigenous allies only their prisoners.[189]

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[188] Idem, f. 102-102v.

[189] "*por ter a A. nascido de uma índia que o dito Principal apanhou em despojo de justa guerra que trazia com seus contrários, da sorte que costumam fazer todos os principais das aldeias confederadas com os brancos, e destas*

Moreover, Francisca admitted that she was given as part of the "dowry" of índia Rosaura, and in that case, "everything that one father offers in a dowry for one daughter is supposed as [coisa própria que nela tem jus.]" Finally, even if Francisca was judged free, "she was obliged to serve [dona Ana da Fonte] because she raised Francisca."[190]

Hearing the witnesses in this case allows us to see some practices of enslavement on the ground. Francisca was able to mobilize only four witnesses to support her story. Between August 26, 1739, and September 11, 1739, the justice heard índia Apolinária, Manoel Dias, Angélico de Barros Gonçalves, and Inácio Castelo Branco. All witnesses confirmed that it was customary in the sertões to exchange women as a sign of peace. Besides, they all confirmed that Francisca was not captured in an official slave expedition.

Apolinária was a 30-year-old free índia (índia do gentio da terra forra) and gave her deposition with the assistance of a translator, the Captain Diogo Pinto da Gaia.[191] Apolinária came down the Amazon River in the same canoe as Francisca. She confirmed that chief Amu "gave" Francisca and his daughter, Rosaura, to Anacleto da Costa Raiol. Apolinária expanded her testimony, saying that the expedition was not to enslave Indigenous people and that "the principal Amu gave Rosaura as Anacleto da Costa's wife as it was customary among the heathens in times of peace."[192]

Dona Ana da Fonte counted with eight witnesses on her side. Some were convinced that Ana da Fonte acquired Francisca according to the law, while others were not so sure. They all agreed, however, that dona Ana da Fonte possessed Francisca as her slave. Two Indigenous men

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peças assim apanhadas é que vendem aos cabos de tropas, e a outras pessoas que com licença dos ilustríssimos, e excelentíssimos senhores generais vão ao sertão resgatar peças." Idem, f. 104.

[190] "*e caso negado se julgasse forra, estava obrigada a servir a [dona Ana da Fonte] pela criação que lhe deu.*" Idem, f. 104v.

[191] Diogo Pinto da Gaia was an experienced Portuguese slavers that led multiple expeditions in the Rio Negro. It is not a surprise that he could speak Indigenous languages or at least the *língua geral*.

[192] Idem, f. 112v.

testified against Francisca's story. First, índio Pedro, a man also enslaved by dona Ana da Fonte. Pedro made the journey down the Amazon River in the same canoe as Francisca. According to him, when Estevão Cardoso acquired him, Francisca was already in the canoe.[193] Índio Clemente belonged to the household of Pedro Alvares, the son-in-law of dona Ana da Fonte. Clemente spoke through an interpreter, the priest João Carneiro, and affirmed that one of his uncles, a man named Mabiary, captured Francisca in the first place. Then, Mabiary sold Francisca to another chief, Hya. Only after these events did Francisca end up in the hands of Estevão Cardoso.[194] Francisca's case ended with a decision against her freedom on April 23, 1740. Dona Ana da Fonte proved her possession over Francisca even with doubts about the legitimacy of her enslavement in the sertões.

Portuguese slavers developed alliances with some Indigenous chiefs in the Rio Negro that allowed them to capture thousands of Indigenous people. Francisca was only one of them. These alliances relied on specific trading goods in high demand among Indigenous groups. More importantly, these alliances depended on the exchange of women. Some men, like Pedro de Braga, specialized in these contacts between the Indigenous world and the colonial sphere. Braga accepted multiple Indigenous women as wives to trade with Indigenous chiefs and to convince some of them to join the Portuguese. These practices frustrated the Catholic Church, which went after men like Pedro de Braga in the 1750s.

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[193] "*e perguntado pela contrariedade da ré disse que só sabe que na ocasião que trouxeram a ele testemunha do sertão por escravo de Estevão Cardoso viera também a dita autora, e que na ocasião que venderam a ele testemunha ao dito Estevão Cardoso já lá estava a dita autora...*" Idem, f. 118.

[194] "*e perguntado pelo primeiro artigo da contrariedade disse pelo interprete o padre João Carneiro que estando ele testemunha na sua terra um tio seu chamado Mabiary apanhara a autora sendo já mocetona, e que o tio dele testemunha Mabiary a dera ao principal Hya e que então o principal a vendera a Estevão Cardoso que lá se achava a qual o trouxera para esta cidade, e que no tempo em que vendera a dita India autora se não achara nesse tempo tropa alguma mais que tão somente alguns brancos...*" Idem, f. 119-119v.

There is clear evidence that men like Pedro de Braga operated in the Rio Negro since the 1690s.[195] Pedro de Braga was a mixed-race man, the illegitimate son of a Portuguese man and an Indigenous woman.[196] Like many others, Pedro de Braga specialized in recruiting Indigenous people in the interior. Braga was a go-between, a man that convinced Indigenous chiefs to move their villages closer to colonial settlements, be that the incorporation into Indigenous villages or settlers' farms. Other historians have outlined the Inquisitorial case's broad contours, which is beyond the scope of this research. Barbara Sommer framed Pedro de Braga's prosecution as part of strengthening the state's presence in Amazonia, in this case, through the Catholic Church.[197] Here, I want to highlight aspects of Pedro de Braga's Inquisitorial process to suggest that the recruitment of Indigenous labor was made in Indigenous people's terms.

Pedro de Braga was a successful cunhamena until the late 1740s. Many settlers depended on his business to acquire Indigenous enslaved people. The fortune of Braga started to change when his interests clashed with Lourenço Belfort's large slave expedition in the Rio Negro. The two men probably fought for the alliances of Indigenous chiefs. In the end, Belfort moved Braga's operations to the Uaupés River.[198] The feud with Lourenço was not the only problem for Pedro de Braga. In 1750, the bishop of Pará, Miguel de Bulhões, launched a visita to ascertain that Portuguese men followed the Catholic religion. To Bulhões scandal, he understood that many Portuguese men lived among Indigenous people accepting many wives. The visita targeted

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[195] "Relação da jornada que fez Frei Manoel da Esperança, vigário geral, ao sertão do Pará para visitar a missão do Rio Negro...", Biblioteca da Ajuda, VII-27, f. 125.

[196] ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 5169, Pedro de Braga, f. 92v-93. "*que seus pais são já defuntos e se chamava Ilario Martins de Aragão que vivia de sua fazenda, e de Maricota não sabe de que naturais e moradores da cidade do Pará segundo lhe parece os quais não foram casados. E que seus avós paternos são já defuntos e se chamavam Francisco Martins de Braga que vivia de suas fazendas, e Margarida de Almeida de Andrade naturais segundo ouviu da cidade de Braga e foram moradores na do Pará. E que seus avós maternos também são defuntos, não lhe sabe os nomes porque foram gentios.*"

[197] Barbara A. Sommer, "Cracking down on the Cunhamenas: Renegade Amazonian Traders under Pombaline Reform," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 4 (2006): 767-791.

[198] BNPT, PBA 621, f. 214-216.

Pedro de Braga and Francisco Portilho de Melo, two of the most famous cunhamenas. After the investigation of Braga's crimes, bishop Miguel de Bulhões forced Braga to marry only of the Indigenous women that he kept in his house, Lizarda Maria, and no longer accept wives. Pedro de Braga did not seem to follow the bishop's orders.[199]

Pedro de Braga was arrested and sent to the Inquisition jail in Lisbon. Yet, the investigation that incriminated him is more illuminating than his deposition under severe pressure from the Inquisitor. Priest Manoel da Fonseca and Francisco de Nazaré conducted a series of interrogations in the Rio Negro. On January 2, 1755, the priests heard nine men that were unanimous in their assessment: the practice of accepting Indigenous wives to seal peace was widespread in the Rio Negro. Only priest João Evangelista was more evasive, justifying his ignorance because he had recently arrived in the region. Another priest, António da Costa, said, "there were many men that people call cunhamenas, like Francisco Portilho de Melo, Pedro de Braga, and Manoel Dias Cardoso."[200]

Some witnesses questioned whether the Indigenous women were their wives or their slaves. José Antunes da Fonseca heard that Pedro de Braga and Francisco Portilho de Melho "had many wives, and others said they had them for their slaves, but he does not know if they

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[199] "*Francisco Portilho de Melo acha-se no rio Negro há muitos anos, e me consta que fazendo ou resgatando os índios, contra as ordens de V. Mag. A amizade que em todo este tempo tem adquirido com os Gentios, o tem feito poderoso; que me consta ter sujeitas a seu domínio mais de 700 pessoas, por cuja causa, fazendo meu Antecessor diligência pelo tirar daquele sertão o não pode conseguir por meio algum, nem também João de Abreu Castelo Branco. A grande distância que há desta cidade e aquele sertão, e juntamente a extensão dele, fazem com que as ordens que se passam para este sujeito ser preso, não tenham o devido efeito; porém, sem embargo desta grande dificuldade passo ordem ao Capitão da Fortaleza do rio Negro para que a ele e aos mais que contém esta real ordem de V. Mag. busquem todos os meios de o remeter a esta cidade; e juntamente, procurarei também com suavidade e brandura ver se posso conseguir; sem embargo que tudo acho dificultoso, pelas razões referidas, e também porque o dito Portilho tem pessoas poderosas que o favorecem e avisam. V. Maj. mandará o que for servido. Pará, 2 de dezembro de 1751.*" Tomo 1, p. 87-88.

[200] ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Processo 5169, Pedro de Braga, f. 26v.

were slaves or wives."[201] The military man Manoel Pereira de Abreu offered a more complete deposition on the custom. Abreu said that the first time he went to the Rio Negro was in 1733, serving in the slave expedition of Captain Diogo Pinto da Gaia. On that occasion, he heard that "there were some men called cunhamenas because they accept Indigenous women, the daughters and relatives of Indigenous chiefs, as their wives."[202] Manoel Pereira de Abreu returned to the Rio Negro many times, and on one of those occasions, he met Francisco Portilho de Melo, who had been living there for many years. Abreu once visited the "aldeia" where Melo lived with many of his Indigenous women, but Abreu said they were apparently Melo's slaves.

It is not easy to understand the Indigenous groups with which Braga had a good relationship. Although he listed many wives that he accepted and the name of the Indigenous chiefs in his confession to the Inquisitor, Braga did not mention their "nations." The chiefs' names could offer clues about the languages they spoke, but these chiefs already had Christian names, or at least this was what Braga reported to the Inquisition. Yet, one of the witnesses of the investigation offered more clues on what Indigenous groups had closer ties with Pedro de Braga. Francisco Rodrigues, a man from São Luís that was living in the Indigenous village of Mariuá, said that Pedro de Braga "went to the sertão [mato] to accept one daughter of chief João, nation Quena, as his wife." Another cunhamena, Manoel Dias, "keeps until today in his power one daughter of the chief Macupi, nation Baniva." Quena is probably a reference to Warekena, an Arawakan language. And Baniva is clearly a reference to Baniwa, another language from the

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[201] "*que ouvira dizer que assistindo neste Rio Pedro de Braga e Francisco Portilho de Melo ouvia tinham várias mulheres e outros diziam que as tinham por suas escravas, com certeza não sabe se eram escravas, e mulheres, mas a voz comum sempre foi de que eram os tais cunhamenas...*" Idem, f. 28.

[202] "*que vindo ele a este rio na era de mil setecentos e trinta e três por escrivão da tropa de resgates de que foi cabo o capitão Diogo Pinto da Gaia ouvia dizer havia alguns homens cujos lhe chamavam cunhamenas, por estes aceitarem Indias filhas e parentes dos Principais do mato com o título de mulheres, mas como era a primeira vez não fez nisto apreensão, mas tornando por várias a este rio sempre no serviço de Sua Real Majestade foi tomando mais algum conhecimento e assim conheceu neste rio a Francisco Portilho de Melo, onde assistiu bastantes anos, e como este tinha por devoção a fazer descimentos...*" Idem, f. 30v.

Arawakan family. Moreover, at one point in his confession, Pedro de Braga confirmed that the Indigenous chiefs referred to him as "nocô," which meant son-in-law.[203] Further evidence of the Indigenous groups that interacted with the cunhamenas comes from the rituals they witnessed, both funerals and male initiation. The Inquisitor was keen to assess if Braga had participated in those ceremonies, especially Indigenous practices of anthropophagy, such as digging up the bones of dead people and celebrating with drinking parties. More interesting for the Indigenous groups of the Upper Rio Negro is Pedro de Braga's reference to flutes, trumpets, and other musical instruments among the Indigenous men with whom Braga interacted.[204] The connection between sacred flutes and trumpets and ideas of health and sickness and spirituality seems to have a deep history among the Upper Rio Negro people, both Arawakans and Tukanoans.[205]

Despite Braga's services helping move Indigenous people from the interior to the colonial sphere, the Inquisition sentenced him to banishment and three years in the galleys. His story, however, shows more than a process of the Portuguese state strengthening in the Rio Negro. It illuminates how Portuguese men had to adapt Indigenous codes of kinship to conduct trade in the region. Without Indigenous allies, the Transamazonic slave was likely impossible.

VII

One of the items in the list of items carried by Lourenço Belfort's slave expedition was "a blank book" (*um livro em branco*). This blank book was likely to produce "registers" of enslaved Indigenous people during the expeditions. After the prisoners arrived at the temporary Portuguese trading post in the Rio Negro, the missionary conducted a short interrogation to

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[203] Idem, f. 77v.

[204] What seems the Yurupary cult ritual of male initiation. Idem, f. 111-112. One of the first descriptions of the Yurupary cult among European travelers: Alfred Russell Wallace, *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro, with an Account of the Native Tribes, and Observations on the Climate, Geology, and Natural History of the Amazon Valley* (New York: Haskell House Publisher, 1969), 241-242.

[205] Robin Wright, *Mysteries of the Jaguar Shamans of the Northwest Amazon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 22.

guarantee that the person was legitimately enslaved. Several sources accuse the missionaries of abuses and corruption and say that the interrogation was nothing but a farce. The archives still hold some of these examples. The Indigenous prisoners captured by soldier Amaro Gonçalves are only one example.

Around September 1739, Amaro Gonçalves recruited eleven Indigenous people in the interior, most of them members of the same family. Amaro Gonçalves brought the eleven Indigenous men and women for the examination of the missionary, the priest Marcos António Arnolfini. Arnolfini judged almost all of them as "freed" because they were not captured in "just war."

The soldier Amaro Gonçalves bought from the Indigenous chief Juvâ the family of Camecû and Guimarani. According to Camecû, Indigenous chief Jarimâ captured him during a skirmish. Chief Jarimâ later sold him to chief Juvâ, who sold him to soldier Amaro Gonçalves. The missionary reported that the war was not "just" because Camecû had not done anything against Jarimâ, who only wanted to kill Camecû.[206] Imprisoned in such war, Camecû and his family were not slaves of Amaro Gonçalves but were distributed as "forros." Soldier Amaro Gonçalves bought Camecû together with his wife, Guimarani, and his three children: the baby Cacume, who was baptized in São Miguel in 1739; the boy Benu, a two-year-old, and Saviy, a fifteen-year-old woman. Amaro Gonçalves also acquired Guaju, the brother-in-law of Camecû, and his ten-year-old son, Cacumê. Finally, Mabacê was another prisoner bought by Amaro

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[206] "*um índio ancião orelhudo que tem bigodes chamado Camecû de nação Tkenuy, o qual pelejando com os seus contrários foi apanhado na peleja e daí o principal Jarimâ, em cuja mão estava preso o vendeu a outro principal chamado Juvâ, e este o vendeu ao soldado Amaro dito e perguntado por qual causa o supradito principal Jarimâ pelejara com ele, disse que não lhe tinha feito mal nenhum, e só que o dito Jarimâ o queria matar. Pelo que parece e julgo que este Camecû é forro.*"

Gonçalves, who was considered "a relative" of Camecû. Amaro Gonçalves acquired the "old woman" Manedua.

Of the Indigenous prisoners bought by Amaro Gonçalves, the only one considered "slave" by the missionary was Jaricû. The missionary wrote that after chief Juvâ's capture, Jaricû "was already sentenced to death, and soldier Amaro Gonçalves ransomed him with one [reda]." Because a ransom was involved, Jaricû was "a conditional slave according to the laws." The governor, João de Abreu Castelo Branco, confirmed that Jaricû was a conditional slave for five years, and the ten other Indigenous prisoners were distributed to Amaro Gonçalves "as forros for the settlers for the service and cultivate their lands."[207]

The slave expedition organized by Lourenço Belfort in the mid-1740s had the Jesuit Achilles Maria Avogadri as a missionary. In contrast to Marcos António Arnolfini, Avogadri judged most Indigenous prisoners as "slaves." The copious manuscript is stored in the local archive in Belém. It is one the richest sources for studying Indigenous enslavement in Amazonia.[208] The document has the name of each Indigenous person enslaved, body marks and scars, the age, the "nation," and the person who paid for the "ransom" (*resgate*). Unfortunately, the document is silent about the trading goods involved in the exchange.[209]

Based on the "nation" of about 1,300 Indigenous people enslaved during that expedition, it is possible to propose an approximation of the zones where Portuguese slavers operated. By the 1740s, the Portuguese enslaved Indigenous people in the vast area between the Upper Rio Negro and the Upper Orinoco River through the Cassiquiari Channel. The Portuguese mainly

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[207] APEP, Secretaria de Governo, Códice 25, 225.
[208] This manuscript was analyzed by Robin Wright, "Escravidão indígena no Noroeste Amazônico," in Robin Wright, *História indígena e do indigenismo no Alto Rio Negro* (Campinas: Mercado das Letras, 2005), 78-79.
[209] There is a document stored in the APEM recording Indigenous enslaved people between 1689 and 1728 with the items exchanged, see APEM, "Livro de Registro Geral, 1689-1746."

captured Tukanoan, Arawakan, and Maku people in this vast geographical area. To a lesser

extent, the Portuguese enslaved people in the Upper Branco River, especially in the Uraricoera.

Finally, there is evidence that people in the Middle Rio Negro were also captured. Here is a

visual representation of the data.

Figure 4 Zones of Origin of Enslaved Indigenous People (1745-1747)
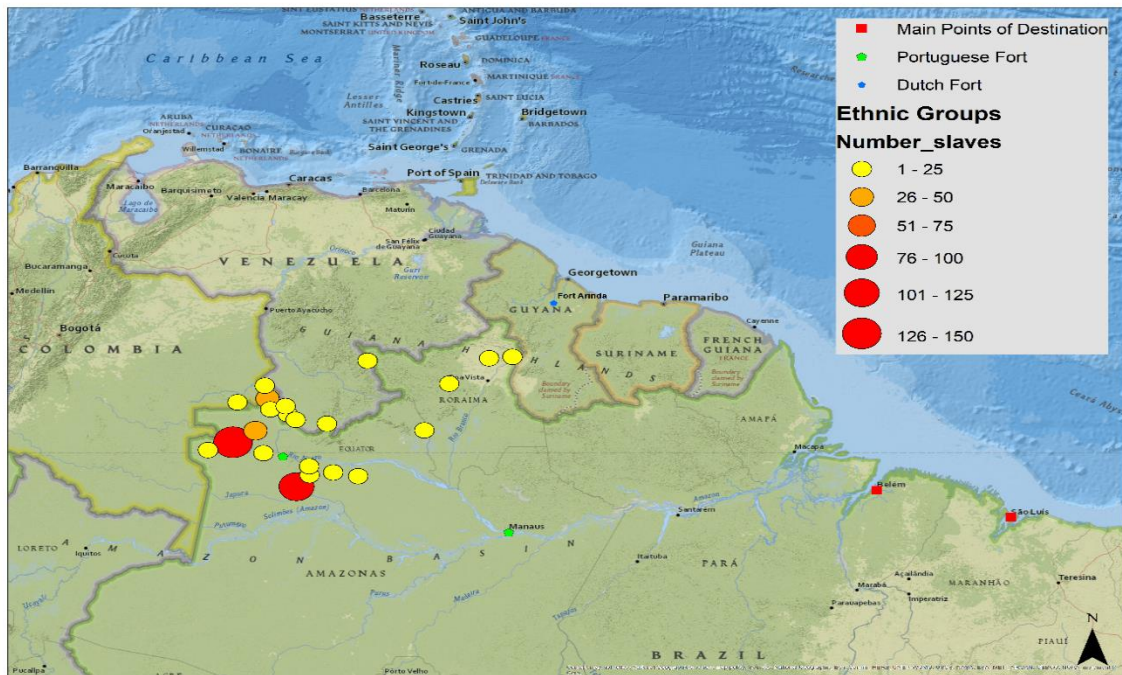
Figure 5 Approximate Areas of Slave Operations in Northwestern Amazonia (1745-1747)
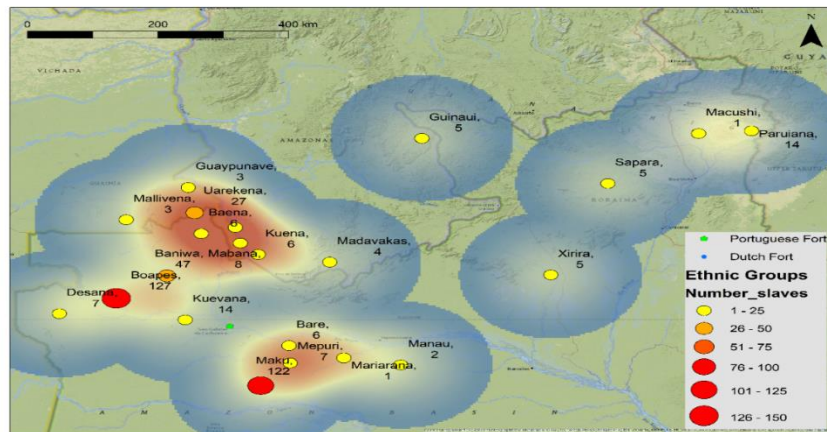
VIII

Although notarial and parish records played an important role in defining rights and legal statuses, they were not essential for settlers to claim ownership over Indigenous workers. Indeed, settlers in Maranhão constantly emphasized their possession of written documents to prove the legitimate enslavement of workers they kept within their households. This behavior is expected because Indigenous people composed the bulk of the enslaved population until the mid-eighteenth century, and their enslavement operated under shaky legislation. The written documents mentioned by settlers to prove their claims of legitimate enslavement over Indigenous workers varied from baptismal records to notarized last wills. The so-called registros or títulos assumed a prominent role in the first half of the eighteenth century in Maranhão. In this case, registros or títulos were notarized documents produced after a slave expedition. There was not a rigid formula for these documents, but they typically contained the missionary's assessment of the legitimacy of the enslavement of an Indigenous person, who bought him or her, and sometimes for how much. Settlers could later bring those documents to a notary public and create supplemental copies. These notarized documents generally refer to different steps in one Indigenous person's process of enslavement: from the record of his/her enslavement in the interior to additional commercial transactions and his/her situation at the moment of document production. Indigenous enslavement operated in this apparent paradox: As settlers understood that written documents were better bearers of their rights in the Portuguese system, they developed local practices allowing the enslavement of Indigenous people, despite written papers.[210]

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[210] Mariana Armond Dias Paes, *Esclavos y tierras entre posesión y títulos: La construcción social del derecho de propriedad en Brasil (siglo XIX)* (Frankfurt: Max Plank Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory, 2021), 78-79, 83, 91.

Notarized last wills reveal local understandings of the king's laws and vernacular practices of Indigenous enslavement. It is common to find settlers explicitly acknowledging their possession - or not - of written documents proving legitimate enslavement of Indigenous workers in their households. The lack of those written documents did not hinder the transmission of those workers to the settler's heirs. In 1742, for example, when Catarina Paes de Souza wrote her will, she said that she possessed "eleven slaves," and among them were "Tereza, Ana, Januária, from the land, António, João, and Manoel Amador from the land, Francisco criolo rapaz, Manoel mulato criolo, Inácio mulato criolo, José criolo, and the slaves mentioned above, all of them *legitimate slaves with registers…*"[211]

Roughly ten years later, on November 20, 1753, settler João Dias Xadre wrote his will and demonstrated the local practices of enslaving Indigenous people. Xadre kept two Indigenous workers in his household. First, Xadre said he possessed "one man from the heathens of the land named Miguel, my legitimate slave that I have his register." Then, she continued listing Indigenous person: "one old negra from the same heathens named Maria, and this old woman there will be assigned no value, and after the death of my wife, Maria will go the power of my niece Maria Telha de Teles da Cunha *because I do not have her register.*"[212]

While Catarina Paes de Souza reinforced her legitimate possession of their eleven slaves because she had written documents proving their enslavement, João Dias Xadre transmitted Maria, one of his servants, to his niece, regardless of the absence of written documents confirming Maria's legitimate enslavement.

The looming threat of freedom suits initiated by Indigenous workers was probably one reason settlers constantly emphasized the legitimate enslavement of their Indigenous workers. As

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[211] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1751-1756, f. 17v.
[212] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 121.

I will show in the following chapters, several Indigenous workers sought colonial courts to claim their freedom throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. At that point, freedom claims were mainly based on allegedly illegitimate enslavement, namely the lack of written proof by the settler trying to keep the Indigenous worker in captivity. Only one example in the notarized wills illustrates this point. In 1751, when the priest António de Almeida wrote his last will, he recorded that "two mamelucos that I possess brought a freedom suit against me and I had a decision in my favor in the Board of Missions (*Junta das Missões*), and because of that they are my legitimate slaves without any contradiction."[213]

The last wills written by the priest Francisco Pereira de Lacerda capture the practices of enslavement in Maranhão. Francisco Pereira de Lacerda wrote two wills: the first is from 1741, and the second is from 1753. Lacerda was part of the local elite and possessed a prominent house close to the Convent of *Nossa Senhora do Carmo*, at the core area of São Luís. As a religious man, Lacerda also had hundreds of valuable objects made of gold and silver and a prominent library of law and religious texts for the standards of colonial Brazil. In the first will, drafted in 1741, Francisco Pereira de Lacerda listed 12 enslaved people, mostly Indigenous people, apart from the black Manoel, who worked as a weaver (*tecelão*). Besides the black Manoel, it is possible to divide the other eleven enslaved people from Francisco Pereira de Lacerda's household into two groups: the enslaved people for which he stressed the possession of written documents and the ones that he did not but who were still transmitted to his heirs. Significantly, there are clear family groups from the second group, particularly female enslaved Indigenous workers and their daughters.

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[213] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1751-1756, f. 49v.

Francisco Pereira de Lacerda bought the Indigenous man João Piriquito, listed as "from the land," from another Catholic priest, Miguel Angelo, when he was still a young boy. It is difficult to know much about João Piriquito, but he certainly came from the interior of Amazonia since Lacerda mentions that he was from "Pará."[214] At this point, João Piriquito was very likely another prisoner of the Transamazonic slave trade in the Upper Rio Negro and arrived at Lacerda's house by one of the many trading networks that connected the Upper Rio Negro and São Luís through Belém. Even though the young João Periquito arrived at Lacerda's household without the proper written documents, Lacerda still transmitted João Periquito to his niece Francisca. Lacerda's Catholic guilt forced him to stress that Francisca could only exploit João Periquito's labor and never sell him.[215] Quitéria, also labeled as "from the land," faced a similar fate. Just like João Piriquito, Quitéria seems to have worked as a domestic servant for a few years in his household because Lacerda acknowledged that Quitéria used to serve his mother. As João Piriquito, Francisco de Lacerda transmitted Quitéria to one of his nieces, this time a woman named Floriana.[216]

Francisco Pereira de Lacerda transmitted Jerônima and Micaela, two Indigenous women, to his niece, Tereza, daughter of his sister Maria Brandoa, and according to his words, "these young women were sold by her father [Maria Brandoa's father], who know very well about the legitimate captivity of the said women."

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[214] As I explained in Chapter 1, Pará was the neighboring captaincy of Maranhão. In this context, it was used as a generic reference to the interior of Amazonia (*do sertão do Pará*, for example).

[215] "*e lhe não sei do registro que para livrar algum escrúpulo a dita minha sobrinha servir-se-á dele e o não vender a sem constar da verdade de seu cativeiro.*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 141.

[216] "*Declaro que possuo uma mocetona de registro por nome Quitéria a qual quero que sirva a moça Floriana minha sobrinha que esteve sempre em companhia de minha mãe sua avó e também esteve em minha companhia, a qual dita Quitéria se não há de entregar logo a dita Floriana nem dela estará de posse mas sim entregar-se-a a dita Quitéria a uma de suas tias minhas irmãs qualquer…*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759.

Francisco Pereira de Lacerda transmitted three Indigenous women to another daughter of Maria Brandoa, Luzia. Those were Clemência and her two daughters, Francisca and Leonor. Finally, Francisco Pereira de Lacerda transmitted four Indigenous women to his niece Francisca. There were two adult Indigenous women called Domingas, "two servas from the heathens of the land, both with registers." One had two children, the "cafuzas" Tomásia and Ana. The other Domingas "had no children."

Finally, because Lacerda knew the importance of written documents, he even specified the location of these papers inside his house: "I declare that these registers that I have in my power about these slaves are next to my letter of ordination inside a [cubo de chifre] that is inside a big box that I always had right next to my water fountain.[217]

Regardless of the possession of papers proving Indigenous people's enslavement, settlers' practices of transmitting Indigenous workers to their heirs were widespread. Yet, some settlers had their expectations frustrated by the intrusion of other settlers, missionaries, or the colonial government. For example, Manoel da Costa e Couto, from Belém, complained that his father's desires were not fulfilled. According to him, his father, Sebastião da Costa, from Alcantara, declared in his will that he had "four servos from the heathens of the land named Manoel, José, Inácio, and Vitória, children of one índia called Tereza, whom he had brought from the sertões."[218] He continued arguing that all of them were "born and raised in his household," but because there were some questions on the legality of their enslavement, "he let them free, but they should stay accompanying his heir." However, these Indigenous workers

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[217] "*Declaro mais que estes registros que dito tenho em meu poder destes escravos [encontram-se] junto com a minha carta de ordens dentro em um cubo de chifre que está dentro de uma caixa grande que sempre tive ao pé dos potes de água de beber.*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 157v.

[218] Manoel da Costa e Couto used the word "baixado" in his request, which certainly refers to the practices of "descimentos."

were currently serving other settlers' households and serving people "from whom they do not owe their raising or conversion (*a quem não devem a criação e doutrina*)." Manoel da Costa Couto justified that his family spent a lot of money bringing these Indigenous to the coast to free them from heathenism and offering education and Catholic instruction. Because of that, he deserved to enjoy their services in his "cacao and coffee farms paying them the customary salaries."[219]

People from São Luís and surrounding areas acquired Indigenous enslaved people from an extensive trading network connecting the city to the deep interior of Amazonia, particularly the Upper Rio Negro. As the priest Francisco Pereira de Lacerda did, the settler Antonio Júlio bought Indigenous enslaved people from other settlers in São Luís. António Júlio was from Salvador, Bahia, and migrated to Maranhão with his parents. Júlio settled in the *freguesia de Santo António do Surubim*, in the interior of Piauí. There, like many other settlers, he had cattle ranches and declared the possession of two slaves: "one from the heathens of Guiné named Bartolomeu and another from the heathens of the land named Agostinho, *for whom I have register because I bought him from Francisco Xavier da Silva in this city* [São Luís]."[220] Catarina Paes de Souza, in turn, recorded in her will her debt with Captain Hilário Pereira de Cáceres of 40$000 *réis* over "one negro that I bought originally for 120$000 *réis…*"[221]

In 1755, when Baltazar Fernandes Neves wrote his will, he showed the family connections with the Transamazonic slave trade. Neves briefly described two trips that his son, José Francisco, had done to the "sertão do Pará" to acquire Indigenous enslaved people. The first trip happened in 1743, and Baltazar Fernandes Neves invested 247$500 *réis* in cotton rolls. His

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[219] AHU, CU, PA, Cx. 22, Doc. 2043 (1739).
[220] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 25v.
[221] ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1751-1756, f. 17v.

son undertook the second trip two years after, in 1745, and carried almost the same investment, 200$000 *réis* in cotton rolls.[222]

The will of settler Felipe Marques da Silva contains several references to the Transamazonic slave trade. Felipe Marques da Silva says that two of his daughters, Josefa, Leonor, and Maria, purchased some Indigenous enslaved people. The two women used their privileged contacts with Lourenço Belfort, who organized major slave expeditions and was married to their sister. Josefa bought four Indigenous enslaved people, Isidora, Josefa, another Josefa, and Monica. Leonor also acquired another four people: Catarina, Micaela, Claudina, and Juliana. Maria was not different and registered four Indigenous enslaved people: Patrícia, Ana Maria, Francisca, and Inês.[223]

It was not only the daughters of Felipe Marques da Silva that bought Indigenous enslaved people taking advantage of their privileged commercial connections. Raimundo, one of his sons, received two enslaved people from the heathens of the land sold by Lourenço Belfort: Pantaleão and Apolônia.[224]

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[222] "*Declaro que meu filho José Francisco fez duas viagens ao sertão do Pará a saber uma no ano de mil setecentos e quarenta e três e a outra no de setecentos e quarenta e cinco para as quais viagens enviei e paparei dando-lhe na primeira vez 247$500 réis em dinheiro antigo e da segunda 200$000 réis na mesma moeda antiga de pano de algodão e isto além do mais que lhe dei para o tratamento da sua pessoa razão porque pertencem ao casal as peças que o dito meu filho trouxe das referidas viagens e nos que se acharem assim meu poder poder tem dado aos meus filhos o seu quinhão por deverem as tais peças entrarem nos bens de meu casal.*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1751-1756, f. 201v.

[223] "*Declaro que por achar capacidades governo e idade dei licença as minhas filhas Josefa Leonor e Maria para que pudessem com o seu trabalho agenciar algumas coisas para suas pessoas e com efeito agenciando com os seus trabalhos alguns resgates os mandaram a sua irmão e cunhado Lourenço Belfort para lhes resgatar alguns escravos do gentio da terra e com efeito entregues os ditos escravos as ditas minhas filhas a saber a dita minha filha Josefa quatro que são Isidora, Josefa, outra Josefa, e Monica e a minha filha Leonor também quatro que são Catarina, Micaela, Claudina, e Juliana e a minha filha Maria também quatro que são Patrícia, Ana Maria, Francisca, e Inês cujos escravos como dito tenho foram adquiridos com o trabalho das ditas minhas filhas pela licença que lhe dei como tido tenho sem que para eles entrevisse ou concorresse para eles com coisa alguma do casal o que assim faço esta declaração por descargo da minha consciência...*"

[224] "*Declaro que também fizeram esmola a meu filho Raimundo de um rolo de pano o qual o mandei a meu filho e genro Lourenço Belfort para resgatar alguns escravos do gentio da terra para o dito meu filho e com efeito foi feito o dito resgate dois um macho e uma fêmea o macho chamado Pantaleão e a fêmea Apolônia os quais escravos são do dito meu filho o que declaro por descargo de minha consciência por não entrever para eles coisa alguma dos bens do casal.*"

Finally, the trading networks of the Transamazonic slave trade went beyond the connections with Lourenço Belfort. Felipe Marques da Silva confessed that he was not sure about the debt of one of his sons, the priest António de São José. António de São José went to Belém to prepare a journey to the Rio Negro. There, he acquired some trading goods in his father's name to "ransom some slaves." The credit in trading goods was transferred to Felipe Marques da Silva's nephew, Manoel Gomes. In this interim, António de São José died, and Manoel Gomes was still traveling in the Rio Negro, almost unreachable when Felipe Marques da Silva was drafting his will. Then, Felipe Marques da Silva ordered the executors of his last will to pay whatever was owed in his name in Belém.[225]

Settlers sought notaries to legitimize the enslavement of Indigenous people that lived through multiple steps of captivity: from the capture in the interior to the Amazonian passage and the condition of workers in a farm, cattle ranch, or house. The few registers that survived in the notarial archive in São Luís show multiple events in an enslaved person's life through a notary deed of one or two pages. These deeds refer to settlers that bought Indigenous enslaved people from other settlers and went to the notary office to register the papers produced by the missionary responsible for the slave raid. The template for these notarial deeds is easy to grasp. First, it names the Indigenous chief (*principal*) who sold the Indigenous captive in the interior to a Portuguese military man. Then, it identifies the enslaved person by name, age, nation, and bodily marks. Third, it emphasizes the legitimacy of the enslavement, usually saying that the

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[225] "*Declaro que meu filho o Reverendo Padre Mestre Frei António de São José quando foi para a cidade do Pará e de lá havia fazer viagem aos sertões lhe pedi tomasse na dita cidade por minha conta alguns resgates em fazendas para mandar resgatar alguns escravos para eu pagar ou mandar pagar na mesma cidade a importância deles e com efeito o dito meu filho os tomou por minha conta e os remeteu para o sertão entregando a importância ou parcelas da carregação, a meu sobrinho Manoel Gomes que ainda se acha no dito sertão e porque o dito meu filho morreu e quase apressadamente na dita cidade e não sei o que se teria feito ordeno aos meus testamenteiros dos meus bens mandem pagar na dita cidade o que constar estar devendo pelo que o dito meu filho por minha conta tomou e da mesma sorte cobrar o que se achar na mão do dito meu sobrinho Manoel Gomes pertencente a carregação.*"

Indigenous person was captured in a "just war." This fact is confirmed by both the missionary

and the enslaved person himself/herself. Fourth, it mentions the price paid for the enslaved

person in the interior, generally in trading goods, such as textiles and iron tools. Finally, to make

the document legible in notarial terms, the notary recognizes the signature of the missionary, the

other scrivener, and the place and time. After copying the register produced in the slave raid, the

notary deeds could contain more information about the Indigenous enslaved person, such as

subsequent transactions until his/her situation at the moment of the production of the written

document. These papers created a particular "truth" about the enslavement of an Indigenous

person. They made the enslavement of an Indigenous person legible in the Portuguese rules.[226]

On December 5, 1743, Manoel da Costa Teixeira went to the notary office of Francisco

Pinto de Queiros to notarize one of those registros (Figure 1).[227] Manoel da Costa Teixeira

brought two other pieces of paper to prove his legitimate possession of an Indigenous man. First,

Manoel da Costa Teixeira showed Francisco Pinto de Queiros a register from August 23, 1742,

produced by the missionary of the slave raid, the Jesuit Achiles Maria Avogadri. The register

was one of the thousands of papers produced in slave raids during that period. It states that the

Indigenous chief Jamabuya sold one man named Toaraman from the nation Boapé. Toaraman

was a 16-year-old man with many bodily marks, including five scars on the right side of his face.

In the Upper Rio Negro, João Mendes Pereira bought Toaraman for "uma peça de Rouen" and

"outra de Bretanha," in other words, European textile pieces. The first document ends with the

date and the signatures of the Jesuit Achiles Maria Avogadri and the scrivener Estevão

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[226] Notaries as truth making, Michael Zeuske and Orlando García Martínez, "Estado, notarios y esclavos en Cuba," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* (2008); Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Bianca Premo, *The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[227] For other similar notarized documents, see, for example: Cartório Celso Coutinho, Livro 1743, f. 121; Cartório Celso Coutinho, Livro 1744, f. 111000; Cartório Celso Coutinho, Livro 1744, f. 112015.

Rodrigues. The second written paper was another register confirming that Manoel da Costa

Teixeira had bought Toaraman from the brother of João Mendes Pereira, a man named João

Alvares Pereira, for 45$000 réis in gold. This event occurred roughly one year after the original

enslavement, on September 1, 1743. On December 5, 1743, when Manoel da Costa Teixeira

visited the notary Francisco Pinto de Queiros, the notary deed produced on that encounter

compressed multiple events - the capture in the Upper Rio Negro and the subsequent sale in São

Luís - that happened at different points in time.[228]

Figure 6 Register of One Enslaved Indigenous Person in São Luís (1743)

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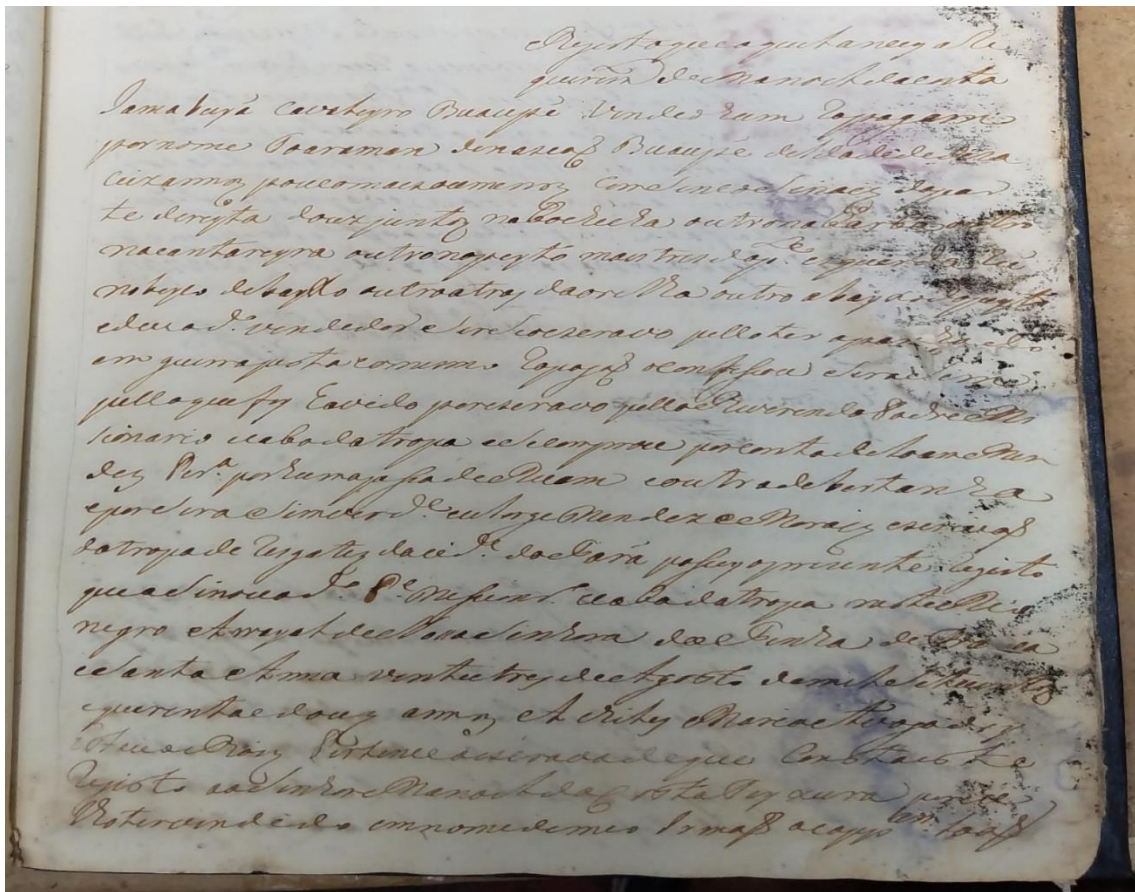
[228] Cartório Celso Coutinho, Livro de Notas 1743, f. 35-35v.
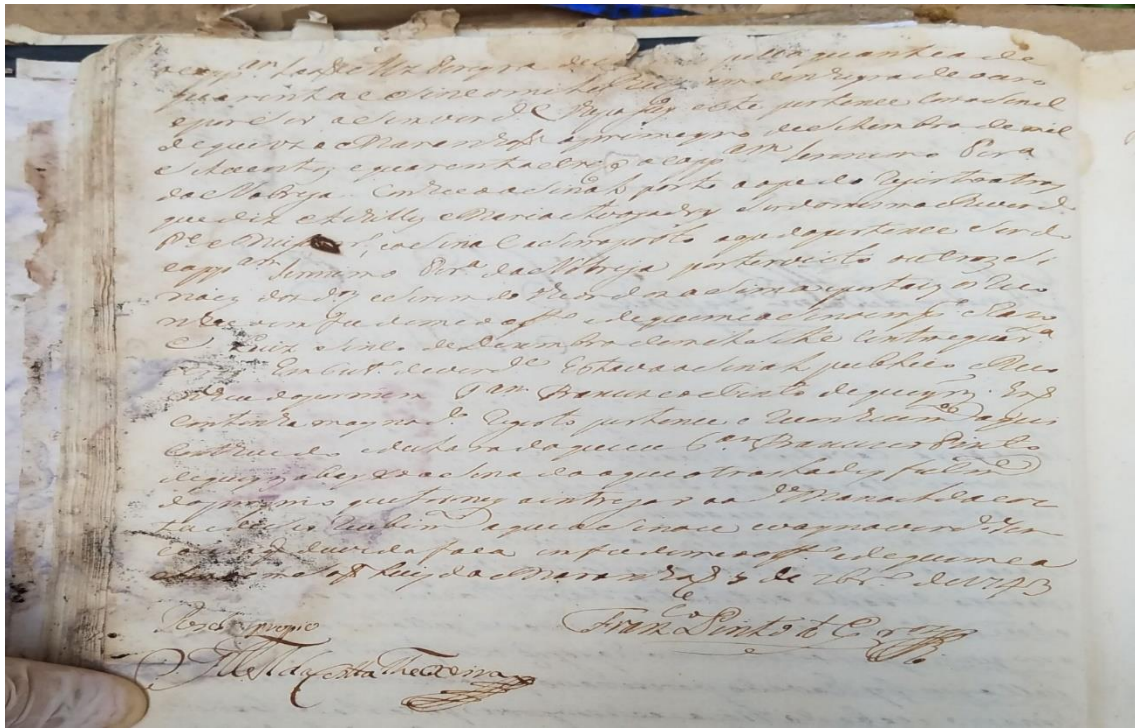
Despite these efforts made by settlers to legitimize the enslavement of their Indigenous workers with notarized acts, legal conflicts related to debts over Indigenous enslaved people show that written documents were not essential for claims of possession over workers. I will explore two cases that happened in the Ecclesiastical Court in Maranhão. The first involved Tomás de Souza, who lived in Belém, and the priest Henrique Ferreira Delgado. The second was a conflict between Lourenço Belfort and priest José Teles Vidigal. In both cases, one of the parties tried to contest the commercial transaction involving an Indigenous enslaved person based on the lack of written proof of enslavement. In other words, one of the parties did not fulfill the payment and asked the seller for the papers (registro) proving the legitimate enslavement of the person they bought before paying the price accorded. In both cases, the Ecclesiastical court ruled in favor of the party that sold the Indigenous enslaved person, regardless of the existence of a written record of enslavement.

At some point in 1729, the priest Henrique Ferreira Delgado traveled to Belém to acquire some Indigenous enslaved people.[229] Delgado negotiated with Tomás de Souza, who represented one of the networks of Indigenous enslavement in that city. Henrique Ferreira Delgado bought one Indigenous man and promised to fulfill the payment soon. The Indigenous man at the center of the legal dispute was never named in the case file. The price agreed between the two parties was calculated in gold (*quarentas oitavas de ouro*) for one "negro."[230] Because Henrique Ferreira Delgado did not make the payment, Tomás de Souza sought colonial justice to receive the promised money. Delgado justified his attitude by saying that he never received the "register" of the Indigenous person or the written proof that his enslavement was made according to Portuguese laws. The justice did not accept Delgado's justification and condemned him to pay the price accorded between the parties for the Indigenous man in a few days.[231]

The priest Henrique Ferreira Delgado ended up in jail for not honoring his promise and did not wait long to ask for his release, alleging that the Indigenous man's sale was not correctly done.[232] Delgado's justification for his lack of payment demonstrates some aspects of the enslavement of Indigenous people in Maranhão. His justification started emphasizing that the processual order was not followed in his case, a typical move in litigations. The following

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[229] AAM, Autos da Câmara Eclesiástica/Episcopal, Lista Nominal 1, Autos de Embargo, Cx. 1, Doc. 2 (1739). *Causa cível de ação de crédito*.

[230] Idem, f. 3v. "*Devo que pagarei ao senhor Capitão Tomás de Souza quarenta oitavas de ouro procedidos de um negro, que lhe comprei muito a meu contento, as quais me obrigo a dar para todo o tempo de navios da era de mil e setecentos e trinta, a cuja quantia obrigo minha pessoa, e bens, Pará três de janeiro de mil e setecentos e trinta. Henrique Ferreira Delgado.*"

[231] Idem, f. 5. "*Condenamos o Reverendo réu pague ao Autor por seu procurador as quarentas oitavas de ouro conteúdas no seu assignado f. 3 visto não alegar, nem provar dentro nos dez dias, que até foram assinados paga, ou quitação ou coisa, que da dita condenação o [relevasse], e pague os autos. São Luís vinte e oito de julho de mil e setecentos e trinta. José de Távora e Andrade.*"

[232] Idem, f. 2. "*Diz o padre Henrique Ferreira Delgado presbítero do hábito de São Pedro, que João Gonçalves Casquinha intruso de Tomás de Souza do Pará o executa sobre venda incerta de um negro do sertão do Pará e como se acha preso a ordem de vossa mercê pela sentença que contra ele proferio pelo que Pede a vossa mercê senhor doutor vigário geral seja servido mandar se lhe de vista da sentenã para embargos de nulidade provados dos mesmos.*"

arguments are more relevant. Although Henrique Ferreira Delgado bought an Indigenous man as an enslaved person, he started arguing in favor of freedom as a natural condition. According to natural, canon, and civil law, "all men are naturally free," and the Indigenous man in this legal case should be considered as such. Then, he emphasized the geographical origin of the Indigenous man. He was from the "sertões do Grão-Pará," and despite the king's permission to enslave people from that area, it was necessary to show "registers of captivity"; otherwise, every person should be judged as free.[233] Finally, following the previous points, if Tomás de Souza did not show the "register" of enslavement, the Indigenous man must not be considered a slave. Consequently, the commercial transaction was not valid.

The justice did not accept priest Henrique Ferreira Delgado's argument and kept the sentence ordering him to fulfill the payment. Delgado continues the case in superior tribunals, and it is hard to track what happened afterward. This case shows how local settlers and local justice understood the legality of Indigenous enslavement. While the written papers were important, they were not necessary to claim possession over Indigenous people.

The second case happened between Captain Lourenço Belfort and priest José Teles Vidigal. In 1743, Captain Lourenço Belfort sought the Ecclesiastical Court to charge priest José Teles Vidigal for debt over one unnamed Indigenous enslaved person, "a young man from the heathens of the land." In 1740, after the return of a big slave expedition organized by Belfort from the Upper Rio Negro to São Luís, both parties agreed on the price of five cotton rolls – the equivalent of 100$000 réis - for the Indigenous man. The judicial battle over the unnamed Indigenous man lasted almost ten years.

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[233] By the late 1720s, the reference "sertões do Grão-Pará" certainly indicate that the Indigenous man was from the Rio Negro.

Priest José Teles Vidigal acknowledged the man's purchase but argued that he rented one

of his other slaves, "*um oficial de carpinteiro*," or a skilled carpenter, to work for Belfort in the

renovations of his house with two other assistants for 148 days. For Vidigal, all those days of

work would amount to 118$400 réis, and Belfort owned him money, not the contrary. Vidigal

also said that he had never received the written proof of enslavement of the Indigenous man

bought from Belfort, the "registro."[234]

On the other hand, Belfort contended that he never rented a slave carpenter from priest

Vidigal but rather from Vidigal's mother, Rosa Maria.[235] Besides, the services of the slave

carpenter were not even close to what Vidigal claimed because the renovations were minor, and

the workers rarely dedicated an entire day to that task. Finally, Belfort had to visually inspect the

Indigenous man before issuing the written proof of enslavement. He needed to compare his

bodily marks with the many written registers produced during that slave expedition.

At the end of this long legal case, the vicar-general, João Rodrigues Covete, sentenced

priest José Teles Vidigal to pay the 100$000 réis to Captain Lourenço Belfort.[236] In other words,

the justice considered the enslavement of Indigenous people legitimate regardless of the

existence of written documents, like the case between priest Henrique Ferreira Delgado and

Tomás de Souza.[237]

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[234] Priest José Teles Vidigal was not the only one complaining about the conduct of Lourenço Belfort. The governor, João de Abreu Castelo Branco, wrote to the king reporting that Lázaro Fernandes Borges, Belfort's commercial representative in Belém, was smuggling Indigenous enslaved people. "*que o dito Lazaro Fernandes havia sonegado maliciosamente vinte e seis peças, as quais dava por fugidas, ou mortas, mandareis uma escolta a uma roça sua onde tinha algumas ocultas, das quais se apanharam somente três peças.*" AHU, CU, PA, Cx. 27, Doc. 2545 (1744).

[235] Curiously, another settler, José Pereira Cardoso, declared that he owned some money to a skilled carpenter enslaved by priest José Teles Vidigal. "*Devo mais a outro Mestre Carpina escravo do Padre José Teles seiscentos e quarenta feitio de uma obrinha.*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1756-1759, f. 257.

[236] AAM, Autos da Câmara Eclesiástica/Episcopal, Lista Nominal 34, Feitos Cíveis de Libelo, Cx. 144, Maço 657, Doc. 4659.

[237] The governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado criticized the ways that settlers claimed their Indigenous workers, "*Como a esta razão não havia que replicar, recorriam ao fundamento da manutenção daqueles bens, que haviam comprado com a sua fazenda, em que haviam constituído senhores e possuidores; e muitos deles por seus*

Conclusion

Throughout the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century, settlers from Maranhão constantly raided and traded Indigenous men and women in the interior of Amazonia and employed them in their households, ranches, and farms. Governors and other members of the colonial bureaucracy insistently wrote that it was impossible to curtail the practice without causing significant disruption or even a revolt. In 1739, for example, at the peak of the Transamazonic slave trade, the governor João de Abreu de Castelo Branco exposed his worries about the widespread practice of Indigenous slavery. He bluntly wrote that most Indigenous workers that settlers exploited under the guise of slavery were acquired by ignoring the royal laws and regiments. Castelo Branco blamed not only settlers but also Carmelite and Mercedarian missionaries for their participation in the slave trade. In Castelo Branco's assessment, it would be "impossible to remove these Indigenous slaves from their patrons without the total disgrace of this State."[238]

The political situation would change in Lisbon in the 1740s and 1750s, and slave expeditions found progressively less support to the point when they were banished in 1748.[239] They continued to operate informally, but it was a clear sign that the labor recruitment system was changing. Not satisfied with the situation, settlers from both Belém and São Luís relentlessly wrote the king and governor to allow new slave expeditions. By the late 1740s, another smallpox

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pais e avós. Esta instância, de tão falsas premissas como a antecedente, facilmente se lhes desvanecia com a certeza de que não podia haver regra alguma de Direito Imperatório ou Eclesiástico, nem ainda Lei Municipal do Reino que patrocinasse algum título falso, obtido desde a origem do primeiro vendedor da coisa mal adquirida: antes, todas as leis civis e morais concordam que em todo o contrato de compra e venda em que há dolo é, sem controvérsia, nulo; e como o direito da liberdade não prescreve, nem obsta ser antiga a possessão para deixar de ser de má fé." Mendonça, Marcos Carneiro de. *A Amazônia na era pombalina* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro), Tomo III, 1212.

[238] AHU, CU, Pará, Cx. 23, Doc. 2119 (1739). For a similar document, APEP, Códice 35, 0053.
[239] AHU, CU, Maranhão, Cx. 30, Doc. 3098 (1748).

epidemic devasted Belém. Local settlers wrote that the impacts of the diseases were enormous, "doing considerable damage to the slaves." According to them, it was impossible to work their farms without enslaved labor. On May 30, 1749, dissatisfied with the posture of the governor, settlers wrote directly to the king, expecting a different outcome. Yet, the royal orders reinforced that no slave expedition should go to the interior.[240]

It is not an exaggeration to say that governor Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado started a crusade against Indigenous enslavement. He was not against the exploitation of Indigenous labor if it was underpayment and aimed at the "civilization" of Indigenous people.[241] In a significant decision, Mendonça Furtado turned down the proposal of settler João de Souza Azevedo. Azevedo wanted to start producing indigo and requested authorization to recruit Indigenous labor in the interior. João de Souza Azevedo built his request on the many other cases when the Portuguese crown authorized settlers to finance private "descimento." Yet, Mendonça Furtado refused to approve such descimento because "in this land what is common to call descimento is in fact outright enslavement."[242]

The Portuguese crown and royal official certainly positioned themselves against the enslavement of Indigenous people. Yet, practices of Indigenous enslavement were deeply entrenched in Maranhão's social fabric. As I demonstrated in this chapter, settlers from Maranhão not only experienced a long history of raiding and trading Indigenous people in the

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[240] AHU, CU, Pará, Cx. 31, Doc. 2917 (1749).

[241] In one occasion, Mendonça Furtado wrote: "*Os índios que vossa mercê desceu com o nome de seus escravos os poderá vossa mercê aplicar ao seu serviço particular, pagando-lhes porém o seu ordenado como livres e forros que são de sua natureza. Recomendo a vossa mercê novamente a civilização dos índios, que deve ser o seu primeiro objeto, e em que deve trabalhar com a maior eficácia, da qual resulta não só conveniência a esses miseráveis, mas também utilidade a todo o Estado.*" Mendonça, Marcos Carneiro de. *A Amazônia na era pombalina* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro), Tomo II, 454-55.

[242] "*porque nestas terras é uma praxe chamarem descimento ao que são verdadeiras amarrações...*" Anais da Biblioteca do Arquivo Público do Pará, Tomo 3, 180-181.

vast areas drained by the Amazon River and its major tributaries, but local practices of enslavement developed within settlers' households.

If the Transamazonic slave trade started to fall in the 1750s and the number of Indigenous enslaved people from Amazonia arriving in São Luís diminished, their freedom was not a direct consequence of metropolitan norms and the benevolence of governors. In the following decades, Indigenous workers carved out their spaces of autonomy within the colonial sphere in a moment of intense expansion of slavery as an institution.

Chapter 3: Indigenous and African Enslaved People in Baptismal Records (c.1740-1770)

Abstract

Between the 1740s and 1770s, Maranhão, Northern Brazil, experienced consequential transformations in the context of imperial reforms. The Portuguese crown made another attempt to abolish the enslavement of Indigenous Americans (1755) and invested in the transatlantic slave trade to develop plantation economies of cotton and rice. To understand the overlapping practices of Indigenous and African enslavement in the city of São Luís, Maranhão's capital, this chapter places the freedom suit of Francisco Xavier alongside a database of baptismal records. In 1753, Francisco Xavier was one of the many Indigenous slaves who used colonial courts to search for freedom. Francisco argued that settlers illegitimately enslaved his mother in the interior of Amazonia, but his master proved his rightful possession over Francisco with written documents, including his baptismal record. In colonial societies, baptismal records could prove a person's legal status. Given the power of these documents, especially in a period of transition, I argue that the baptismal records were the product of a dialogue between the people involved in the event and the Catholic priest responsible for the archive. As the transatlantic slave trade gained momentum, the frequency of socio-racial classifications in baptismal records increased. The abolition of Indigenous enslavement was not the result of a new metropolitan norm, but a bottom-up process generated by Indigenous workers. In the 1760s and 1770s, as slavery became associated with blackness, Indigenous workers moved away from the legal status of "slave" to one roughly translated as "servant," or mobile free(d) workers who received salaries. Yet, these legal statuses could easily slip again into slavery, and baptismal records show the resilience of forms of Indigenous enslavement. While recently arrived enslaved Africans tended to create horizontal relations with another enslaved person, usually Africans from the same household, Indigenous workers forged ties with free people that reinforced relations of dependency.

During the summer of 1753, in the city of São Luís, Francisco Xavier, a *mameluco* slave, sued Captain dom Manoel de Castelo Branco for his freedom.[243] According to Francisco Xavier, his mother, the *índia* Juliana was not a slave, but rather an *índia de condição* (a conditional índia). This meant that she had been captured in the Amazonian interior by a military expedition lacking the proper papers justifying her legitimate enslavement.[244] Without the proper paperwork, local authorities registered Juliana as a free worker (índia de condição) to the household of Captain dom Francisco de Castelo Branco, where she would receive education and Catholic instruction in exchange for her labor.

Francisco Xavier was, thus, born and raised in dom Manoel's household. Tensions arose when dom Manuel decided to sell Francisco Xavier to another settler, and by the time Francisco Xavier challenged his captivity, he had changed masters three times. One owner even tried to sell him in a public square in Lisbon. Given Francisco Xavier's legal status, as a son of a índia de condição, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco was not allowed to treat him as property.

After some years of litigation, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco submitted two documents that proved his rightful possession of the índia Juliana: the register produced by São Luís's Municipal Council confirming the distribution of Juliana to his family and the baptismal record of Francisco Xavier indicating his enslaved status.

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[243] Throughout the text, I will use most classifications in Portuguese. They will be in italics only the first time they appear. Mameluco was a mixed-race person with some Indigenous background.

[244] Índio(a) was the word used for Indigenous people incorporated into the colonial world, but not exclusively. Most of them lived in Indigenous villages, the so-called índio(s) aldeado(s), but several were living in cities and farms. I decided to keep índio de condição in Portuguese throughout the text. A key work on the strategic use of the category índios aldeados is Maria Regina Celestina de Almeida, *Metamorfoses indígenas: identidade e cultura nas aldeias coloniais do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2013), 303. The existence of this Indigenous population living outside the Indigenous villages has been identified by historians but rarely object of research, some exceptions are: Angela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Lisboa: CNCDP, 2000), 179; Barbara Sommer, "Why Joanna Baptista Sold Herself into Slavery: Indian Women in Portuguese Amazonia, 1755–1798," *Slavery & Abolition* 34 (2013): 77–97; Heather Roller, *Amazonian Routes: Indigenous Mobility and Colonial Communities in Northern Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 174–80.

This chapter places the freedom suit of Francisco Xavier alongside the analysis of a baptismal record database to illuminate the local impacts of larger socio-economic and legal transformations within the Portuguese empire. Between the 1740s and the 1770s, Maranhão was transformed from a frontier economy based on the exploitation of an Indigenous workforce to a plantation economy built on African enslaved labor. The chapter analyzes how Indigenous workers tried to differentiate themselves from the growing number of enslaved Africans arriving every year in São Luís and the resulting racialization of slavery. By placing Afro-Indigenous interactions in the level of the community in which their lives transpired, I show that even Indigenous workers living outside Indigenous villages used the category índio strategically.[245]

I bridge questions and insights from social and demographic history of slavery in Latin America and a critical assessment of archival production and practices. Instead of treating baptismal entries as mere data points, I attempt to understand the role that each participant involved in the event played in the crafting of the baptismal record and the language used in those documents. I understand baptismal entries registered in the books as the product of the interplay between the socio-legal context in which they were produced, the people involved in the sacrament, mainly the child's parents, and the Catholic priest who wrote down the register.[246]

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[245] The theoretical debates on conversion and slavery between Indigenous Americans and Africans, Giuseppe Marcocci, *A consciência de um império: Portugal e o seu mundo, séc. XV-XVII* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2012), 429–53. Afro-Indigenous relations in the Spanish America treat the first as legal minors protected by the king's justice and the second as slaves, Rachel O'Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 167; Karen Graubart, "As Slaves and Not Vassals: Interethnic Claims of Freedom and Unfreedom in Colonial Peru," *Población & Sociedad* 27 (2020): 30–53; Larissa Brewer-García, *Beyond Babel: Translations of Blackness in Colonial Peru and New Granada* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 6.

[246] On the importance of Catholic priests, Sheila de Castro Faria, *A colônia em movimento: fortuna e família no cotidiano colonial* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1998), 308–12. A useful discussion on the "pacified" nature of parish and notarial records related to slavery, Jean Hébrard, "Esclavage et dépendance dans les archives paroissiales et notariales des sociétés esclavagistes en transition," *Esclavages & Post-Esclavages* 1 (2019): 1–18.

The discussion on the impacts of *compadrio* (ritual kinship) and slavery in Brazil has a long history. Baptism was the first sacrament a person received in the Catholic Church, and it was the master's obligation to make sure that their slaves received the necessary religious instruction before being baptized.[247] In this ritual, the person being baptized received a proper Christian name, and a bond was created between the baptized and the godparents (*padrinho* for the godfather and *madrinha* for the godmother) and between the godparents and the parents (*compadres* for male and *comadres* for female).[248]

Seminal works on slave family in Brazil have tried to understand the conditions through which enslaved people formed kinships and the extent to which these bonds helped them cope with the hardships of slavery.[249] The two institutions that have received the most historical attention are marriage and baptism. Historians have examined both to analyze enslaved people's strategies behind marriage choices and compadrio decisions. Scholars determined that enslaved people used compadrio instrumentally and investigated the godparents of the children of enslaved mothers to determine if they were other enslaved people (horizontal relations) or free people (vertical relations). Master-slave paternalistic relations did not impact compadrio. Although enslaved people tended to select free people to baptize their children, masters rarely

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[247] Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *People of Faith: Slavery and African Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 69. The administration or not of sacraments to slaves was a terrain of disputes in the early years of Portuguese overseas expansion, A. C. de C. M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441-1555* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 90–92. Giuseppe Marcocci, "Império e escravidão: nexos, tensões, controvérsias (ca. 1450-1600)," in *O governo dos outros: poder e diferença no império português* Angela Xavier and Cristina Silva (ed.) (Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2016), 125-150.

[248] For a broader discussion on *compadrio* and a critique of some foundational works that inspired historians of slavery, Guido Alfani, *Fathers and Godfathers: Spiritual Kinship in Early-Modern Italy* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 10.

[249] Stephen Gudeman and Stuart Schwartz, "Cleansing Original Sin: Godparenthood and the Baptism of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Bahia," in *Kinship Ideology and Practice in Latin America* ed. Raymond Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 35-58. A few years later, Schwartz would expand on his initial research and conclusions including other parish records, Stuart Schwartz, "Opening the Family Circle: Godparentage in Brazilian Slavery," in *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 137-160.

served as their slaves' godparents, even though the Catholic Church allowed that.[250] The data

indicate that compadrio patterns in Brazil reflected social and racial hierarchies.[251]

Other scholars went further into the data derived from baptismal records and offered a

finer-grained analysis of who the godparents were and how they were related to the parents and

the masters.[252] These scholars uncovered the political dimensions of slavery and the webs of

obligations that tied enslaved people and free(d) populations. This detailed analysis of family ties

called attention to the distinctions among enslaved people within households and the existence of

hierarchies. Compadrio, among other kinship ties and social relations, proved an important boon

for enslaved people seeking manumission and later social mobility.[253] Historians also used

Catholic records, including baptismal records, to understand patterns of racial and ethnic

identifications and how they changed over time in relation to socio-economic changes, social

mobility, and the waves of the transatlantic slave trade.[254]

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[250] This point was made by Stuart Schwartz and confirmed by several other studies, Alida Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil: Santana de Parnaíba, 1580-1822*, University of Texas Press (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 188; Kathleen Higgins, *"Licentious Liberty" in a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region: Slavery, Gender, and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Sabará, Minas Gerais* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 138–43. Historians found divergent patterns while working with different areas, Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 121.

[251] Horizontal relations, between slaves, were not necessarily a disadvantage: Sandra L. Graham, *Caetana Says No: Women's Stories from a Brazilian Slave Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 44–46. For a different context: Rachel O'Toole, "The Bonds of Kinship, the Ties of Freedom in Colonial Peru," *Journal of Family History* 42 (2017): 3–21.

[252] One of the best works on this topic in English is David Stark's study on Arecibo, a non-plantation area in Puerto Rico. There, enslaved Africans used compadrio to create ties with free people in a more fluid society with loose racial lines (more typical of plantation areas), David Stark, "Ties That Bind: Baptismal Sponsorship of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Puerto Rico," *Slavery & Abolition* 36 (2015): 84–110. A few years later, Stark developed even further his arguments and saw compadrio as a rite of passage to adulthood, David Stark, "Crossing the Threshold from Adolescence to Adulthood in Eighteenth-Century Puerto Rico: The Baptismal Sponsorship of Enslaved Infants in Arecibo, 1735–1772," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100 (2020): 623–54.

[253] Important and representative work on Brazil: José Góes, *O cativeiro imperfeito: um estudo sobre a escravidão no Rio de Janeiro na primeira metade do século XIX* (Vitória: Lineart, 1993); Silvia Brugger, *Minas patriarcal: família e sociedade (São João Del Rei - séculos XVIII e XIX)* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2007), 283–326; Roberto Guedes, *Egressos do cativeiro: trabalho, família, aliança e mobilidade social (Porto Feliz, São Paulo, c. 1798-c.1850)* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad, 2008); João Fragoso, "Efigênia Angola, Francisca Muniz forra parda, seus parceiros e senhores: Freguesias rurais do Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII. Uma contribuição metodológica para a história colonial," *Topoi* 11 (2010): 74–106.

[254] Douglas Libby and Zephyr Frank, "Voltando aos registros paroquiais de Minas colonial: etnicidade em São José do Rio das Mortes, 1780-1810," *Revista Brasileira de História* 29 (2009): 383–415; Douglas Libby, "A Culture of

Parish records – including baptismal records – occupy a privileged place in the

discussions on the relationship between categories of difference, labor, and social mobility in

colonial Latin America. For decades, historians have tried to understand the complex

classification system and multiple combinations derived from miscegenation. Initially, they

identified the repertoire of terms and their logic. Given the sources used – elite discourses,

official decrees, and other colonial bureaucratic documents – it was inevitable to emphasize elite

anxieties about the social control of the lower classes.[255] Over time, scholars found fertile terrain

on how lower-class workers manipulated and evaded top-down classifications from the colonial

bureaucracy and masters.[256]

What the colonial categories meant for people and if that was a form of identity worried

historians for years.[257] A critical approach to the colonial archive has changed the use of notarial

and legal records.[258] Attention to the formulas and templates of document production forced

historians to see the voices of colonial subjects through the mediation of the scribes and notaries.

Colors: Representational Identities and Afro-Brazilians in Minas Gerais in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 50 (2013): 26–52.

[255] Magnus Morner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967).

[256] John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978); Patricia Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico: Conflicts over Marriage Choice, 1574-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Ann Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Forasteros of Cuzco, 1570-1720* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990); Robert Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660 - 1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); Laura Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Joanne Rappaport, *The Disappearing Mestizo: Configuring Difference in the Colonial New Kingdom of Granada* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

[257] The relationship between external categorization and individual self-understanding: Andrew Fisher and Matthew O'Hara, eds., *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 19–21. Some historians have interpreted race as a "colonial practice of governance." Sherwin Bryant, *Rivers of Gold, Lives of Bondage: Governing through Slavery in Colonial Quito* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 47, 80–87.

[258] Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). Some historians have interpreted race as a "colonial practice of governance." Sherwin Bryant, *Rivers of Gold, Lives of Bondage: Governing through Slavery in Colonial Quito* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 47, 80–87. Some scholars, generally from literary studies, prefer to emphasize the structural aspects of race rather the fluidity seen by historians. For a work that uses space and segregation, Daniel Nemser, *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Biopolitics in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 4, 59.

These documents were at least jointly produced by the parties involved. Scholars have seen, then, categories of difference in notarial documents as expressions of self-invention and self-affirmation.[259] Inspired by these critical approaches to the colonial archive, historians have emphasized ordinary people's role in producing law and intellectual debates.[260]

Considering the production of baptismal records, I argue that ordinary people, particularly mothers and fathers already included in the colonial world, participated in the crafting of baptismal records. While the Catholic Church offered clear instructions on how to produce a baptismal record and how to store the books, the institution was silent on how to record legal statuses and socio-racial classifications. In Maranhão, Catholic priests often identified newly arrived Africans with terms that rarely appear for mothers and fathers. More precisely, Catholic priests tended to label recently arrived enslaved Africans with terms referring to their origin, such as "*preto(a) do gentio da Guiné*" and "*preto(a) do gentio de Cacheu.*" For mothers and fathers, Catholic priests tended to use the term "preto(a)." The same was true for Indigenous enslaved people and servants. When the Transamazonic slave trade was still operating, terms like "*do sertão do Pará*" appeared in the record. Yet, for mothers and fathers in the following years, "índio(a)" overshadowed the other terms.

The Catholic Church was actively interested in converting and evangelizing enslaved people, Indigenous workers, and other subordinated groups. These groups, in turn, appropriated

[259] Herman Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 5, 12–13; Karen Graubart, "The Creolization of the New World: Local Forms of Identification in Urban Colonial Peru, 1560-1640," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89 (2009): 471–99.

[260] Bianca Premo, *The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Adrian Masters, "A Thousand Invisible Architects: Vassals, the Petition and Response System, and the Creation of Spanish Imperial Caste Legislation," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98 (2018): 377–406; John Marquez, "Witnesses to Freedom: Paula's Enslavement, Her Family's Freedom Suit, and the Making of a Counterarchive in the South Atlantic World," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 101 (2021): 231–63; Karen Graubart, "Pesa Más La Libertad: Slavery, Legal Claims, and the History of Afro-Latin American Ideas," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 78 (2021): 427-58.

elements of Catholicism to advance their interests.[261] Because ordinary people understood that baptismal records could help prove their legal status, they shaped the sacrament both in what the priest wrote down about them and in the selection of godparents for their children.[262]

Francisco Xavier is only one of the many Indigenous workers who decided to challenge the legality of his/her enslavement.[263] From the early seventeenth century until the mid-eighteenth century, the Transamazonic slave trade forcibly transported thousands of Indigenous workers from the interior of Amazonia to coastal settlements. The Portuguese crown authorized the recruitment of Indigenous workers in the interior in three main ways: "Just Wars," *tropas de resgates*, and *descimentos*. "Just Wars," when transplanted to the Americas, targeted Indigenous groups that opposed settlers' advances. Native resistance often involved the use of violence, or the refusal of Christian doctrine, and colonists thus had royal approval to enslave Indigenous prisoners legitimately.

Resgate was initially related to the ransom of war captives, but in the American continent, it denoted trading Indigenous prisoners captured in intertribal wars in the *sertões*.[264] In Northern Brazil, the Portuguese created official and crown-sponsored military expeditions that would travel to the sertões to trade Indigenous captives for iron tools, European textile, and guns. These expeditions were known as tropas de resgate and operated irregularly until 1747.[265] A

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[261] Charlotte de Castelnau-L'Estoile, *Un catholicisme colonial: le mariage des indiens et des esclaves au Brésil, XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Puf, 2019), 390–404.

[262] Ariana Moreira Espíndola, "Papéis da escravidão: a matrícula especial de escravos (1871)" (MA Thesis, Florianópolis, 2016), 132-135.

[263] André Ferreira, "Nas malhas das liberdades: o Tribunal da Junta das Missões e o governo dos índios na capitania do Maranhão (1720-1757)" (MA Thesis, Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2017); Luma Prado, "Cativos litigantes: demandas indígenas por liberdade na Amazônia Portuguesa, 1706-1759" (MA Thesis, São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo, 2019).

[264] Alida Metcalf, "The Entradas of Bahia of the Sixteenth Century," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 373–400. Sertão (sertões plural) was a multi-faced word that roughly denoted areas beyond colonial control: Hal Langfur, "Frontier/Fronteira: A Transnational Reframing of Brazil's Inland Colonization," *History Compass* 12 (2014): 843–52.

[265] David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640-1750" (PhD Diss., Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1974).

military man – typically with experience in the sertões – would lead the troops of overwhelmingly allied índios responsible for paddling the canoes and military support. A Catholic priest accompanied the expedition to legitimize the enslavement of Indigenous people.[266] Expeditions like these enslaved Francisco Xavier's mother and thousands of Indigenous captives who arrived in Portuguese settlements without proper documentation. Those workers were called índios de condição.[267] Colonial officials distributed these índios to settlers and compelled them to work to repay the price of the resgate. Índios de condição worked typically for five years, after which missionaries would incorporate them into an Indigenous village.

Descimentos were the third common legal device to recruit Indigenous labor. The word derived from the verb *descer* (to descend) and reflected missionaries' or settlers' attempts to convince Indigenous peoples to relocate downriver to live close to Portuguese settlements. The party responsible for the descimento could only exploit the labor of the newly incorporated free Indigenous families but was never supposed to treat them as property.[268]

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[266] For a description, João Daniel, *Tesouro descoberto no máximo rio Amazonas*, vol. 2 (Rio de Janeiro: Contraponto, 2004), 79–94. On Portuguese law, Mathias Kiemen, *The Indian Policy of Portugal in the Amazon Region, 1614-1693* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1954); Colin Maclachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800," in: Dauril Alden (ed.) *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 199-230; Sue Gross, "Labor in Amazonia in the First half of the Eighteenth Century" *The Americas* 32 (1975): 211-21; Georg Thomas, *Política indigenista dos portugueses no Brasil, 1500-1640* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1982); Dauril Alden, "Indian Versus Black Slavery in the State of Maranhão during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Iberian Colonies, New World Societies: Essays in Memory of Charles Gibson*, ed. Richard Garner and William Taylor, 71-102; Camila Dias, "O comércio de escravos indígenas na Amazônia visto pelos regimentos de entradas e de tropas de resgate (séculos XVII e XVIII)," *Revista Territórios Fronteiras* 10 (2017): 238–59.

[267] Camila Dias and Fernanda Bombardi, "O que dizem as licenças? Flexibilização da legislação e recrutamento particular de trabalhadores indígenas no Estado do Maranhão (1680-1755)," *Revista de História* 175 (2016): 249–80.

[268] *Descimentos*' prominence lasted until the 1720s. *Resgates* became more frequent at the end of the 1730's. Smallpox epidemics surged indigenous labor recruitment. Barbara Sommer, "Colony of the Sertão: Amazonian Expeditions and the Indian Slave Trade," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 401–28; Dias and Bombardi, "O que dizem as licenças?" 275.

Despite these legal distinctions, the lines between legal statuses often blurred once

workers lived in settlers' households. An analysis of baptismal records from Maranhão reveals

that settlers produced an archive that allowed them to normalize the enslavement of Indigenous

Americans, just as in other parts of the New World.[269] The fine lines that divided forms of

Indigenous labor recruitment did not reflect on complex terminology involving legal statuses in

baptismal records before the 1750s.

The long history of Indigenous workers' struggle for autonomy – and freedom – gained

importance in the context of imperial reforms.[270] In the second half of the eighteenth century,

Portuguese reformers focused on regions considered underdeveloped within the empire. To

transform those economies, the Portuguese crown invested in expanding the transatlantic slave

trade. Maranhão became an important exporter of leather, cotton, and rice thanks to the creation

of the *Companhia de Comércio do Grão-Pará e Maranhão*, a trading company that imported

unprecedented numbers of enslaved Africans.

At this time, Portugal and Spain were competing to claim territories in the interior of

South America. To forge alliances and hold spaces in dispute, the Portuguese crown enacted a

law prohibiting the enslavement of Indigenous Americans. This policy had significant

consequences for Indigenous workers living in cities and farms thousands of miles away from

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[269] Nancy van Deusen, "Indigenous Slavery's Archive in Seventeenth-Century Chile," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 101 (2021): 1–33.

[270] Freedom in this context must be taken with caution. Most of the Indigenous workers were still forced to perform tasks for either settlers or the king. A good example was the campaigns against vagrancy launched by the Governor in the 1780s, Roller, *Amazonian Routes*. Discussions on abolition and the precariousness of freedom rarely include Indigenous workers and are focused on nineteenth century context and African and African descendants: Sidney Chalhoub, *Visões da liberdade: uma história das últimas décadas da escravidão na corte* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990); Sidney Chalhoub, "The Precariousness of Freedom in a Slave Society (Brazil in the Nineteenth Century)," *International Review of Social History* 56 (2011): 405–39; Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Brodwyn Fischer and Keila Grinberg, eds., *The Boundaries of Freedom: Slavery, Abolition, and the Making of Modern Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

the regions in dispute between the Iberian monarchs. Masters could keep their customary workers if they agreed and were paid. As a result, thousands of formerly enslaved Indigenous laborers became freed workers living in settlers' houses and farms. Those workers generally appear on baptismal records labeled as "*forro da lei do serviço de…*" or "freed by the law serving…," with slight variations. In the 1760s, there was a proliferation of legal statuses (*do serviço*) that could easily slip into the category of "slave" again and preserved almost intact the ties of dependency between masters and formerly enslaved people. Over time, that legal status became associated with Indigenous classifications, particularly "índio(a)" and later with "índio mestiço" and slight variations.

When the racial line of slavery was hardening, Indigenous workers sought to distance themselves from slavery. Because becoming free and remaining free depended on the public recognition of their índio status, Indigenous workers tried to ensure that Catholic priests correctly recorded their legal statuses and possible classifications. As the transatlantic slave trade grew in Maranhão, so did the frequency of socio-racial classifications in baptismal records. The growing number of enslaved Africans disembarking every year forced people to emphasize their categories of belonging. And in contrast with recently arrived enslaved Africans, Indigenous workers selected free godparents for their children, indicating their attempts to forge social networks within the free section of the population.

I

In the early 1750s, Francisco Xavier was in his late thirties when he initiated his freedom suit against his former master, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco, with the authorization of his current master, Faustino da Fonseca Freire Melo. At some point, Gonçalo Pereira Lobato e Souza, Maranhão's governor, described him as a colonial índio and a mixed-race person.

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According to the governor, Francisco Xavier did not come from the sertão, but he "was born in this city [São Luís], the son of an índia and a white man."[271] The freedom lawsuit was complex, and Francisco Xavier withdrew it once before initiating it again within a few months.

While it is difficult to understand why Francisco Xavier went to court after years of service, a passage on a letter sent by the governor of Maranhão to the Overseas Secretary hinted that Faustino da Fonseca Freire Melo and Francisco Xavier agreed to keep Francisco Xavier in his household as a freed worker. Melo would receive back the money he invested from the legal case.

Regardless of the existence or not of the scheme between Francisco Xavier and Faustino Melo, in 1753, Francisco Xavier claimed that he was born from a free womb (*ingênuo de nascimento*).[272] The stories recounted by Francisco Xavier and his former master, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco, differ on a critical point: was the índia Juliana, Francisco Xavier's mother, an índia de condição distributed to dom Manoel's father, dom Francisco de Castelo Branco, or a slave that he bought from a slave expedition (tropa de resgate)? How could one prove the legitimate enslavement of a person?

Francisco Xavier narrated a story in which his mother, the índia Juliana, was distributed from a tropa de resgate commanded by José Pinheiro Marques as a freed índia, and he, therefore, had never been enslaved. Dom Francisco de Castelo Branco raised Francisco Xavier in his household. After dom Francisco de Castelo Branco's death, his son, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco, kept Francisco Xavier in the household but later sold him to Luiz da Silva e Melo, despite knowing he was free. Luiz Melo sold Francisco Xavier to António de Moraes, who took

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[271] "*que o dito Francisco Xavier não é índio descido do mato, mas sim nascido nesta cidade de uma índia e de homem branco.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 38, Doc. 3705.
[272] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Petição*, f. 1v.

him to Lisbon, but Moraes sent him back to São Luís after realizing that Francisco Xavier did not have enslavement papers.[273] The final step of Francisco's story in bondage was when Faustino da Fonseca Freire Melo bought him for ten cotton rolls.[274]

Dom Manoel de Castelo Branco's story contested Francisco Xavier's recollection on two critical points. First, according to dom Manoel, his father bought Francisco Xavier's mother from the tropa de resgate commanded by António Botelho Gago, and he could prove that with a written document.[275] He did not deny that he inherited Francisco Xavier and that he was raised in his household but claimed he had the right to sell Francisco since his mother was the legitimate slave of his father. Second, dom Manoel remembered that his father had other índias de condição in his house whose children were now serving the Convent of *Nossa Senhora das Mercês* as freed índios. If Francisco Xavier was the son of a índia de condição, dom Manoel claimed his father, as an honorable man, would have released him together with the other índios.[276]

II

The many legal statuses in eighteenth-century Maranhão created by the coexistence of different forms of labor recruitment defy easy and well-sealed categories. On Francisco Xavier's freedom suit, he appears both with the unequivocal word *escravo* (male slave) and the ambiguous one *servo* (male servant/serf). If these two words coexisted in Maranhão's baptismal

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[273] Portugal received many slaves from Brazil, see Didier Lahon, "Eles vão, eles vêm. escravos e libertos negros entre Lisboa e o Grão-Pará e Maranhão (séc. XVIII-XIX)," *Revista de Estudos Amazônicos* VI (2011). Key work on the earlier enslavement of Indigenous people in Spain, Nancy van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

[274] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Libelo do Autor*, f. 4. Cotton roll (*rolos de algodão*) was the local currency. The circulation of metallic currency was limited in Maranhão at least until the 1760s-70s.

[275] Note that it is a different military man. Francisco Xavier claimed that the commandant of the ransom troop was José Pinheiro Marques. "*Provará o réu que a mãe do autor a houve o defunto seu pai dom Francisco de Castelo Branco capitão de infantaria por escrava da tropa de resgate e que foi cabo o defunto António Botelho Gago conforme uma certidão que o réu em seu poder tem do Senado da Câmara que a seu tempo apresentará da escravidão da mãe do autor.*" Masters generally thought that they were safe in the legal arena as long as they had papers to prove their claims over slaves. The same situation in a different context, van Deusen, *Global Indios*, 128.

[276] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Contrariedade do réu*, f. 13-14.

records, was there a distinction between the two? Over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Portuguese colonists developed ideological and institutional frameworks to exploit the labor of Indigenous Americans. In Southern Portuguese America, settlers called their Indigenous workers with terms ranging from *administrados* to servos, but there is little reason to believe that settlers treated those Indigenous workers differently than enslaved people.[277]

In Maranhão, the words "slaves" and "servos" were synonyms.[278] Because of this lack of precision between the two most common legal statuses used on baptismal records and the low number of enslaved Africans disembarked before the 1760s, it is possible to imagine that many Indigenous workers initially recruited as freed people – and their descendants – were labeled as "slaves/servos." Despite some evidence that the term servos could be reserved for Indigenous workers, a deeper look at baptismal records shows that this was not the case. If practices of Indigenous enslavement forced the use of the word servo, it was for creating a spectrum of bondage.[279]

The Catholic Church offered clear instructions on how to register baptismal entries in the books, but local priests showed their idiosyncrasies. The *Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia* (1707) offered even a model for every baptismal register: "*Aos tantos de tal mês, e de tal ano batizei, ou batizou de minha licença o Padre N nesta, ou em tal Igreja, a N*

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[277] John Monteiro, *Blacks of the Land: Indian Slavery and the Origins of Colonial São Paulo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 157–58.

[278] There are several documents that make no distinction between servos and slaves. The list of settlers and the number of enslaved people in the village of Cametá is only one example, see APEP, Códice 69, 008. It is important to emphasize that colonial bureaucracy made the distinction between servos and *índios aldeados*, or Indigenous workers that lived in Indigenous villages and participated in labor drafts. For one example in the context of cocoa collection in the interior, see APEP, Códice 35, 0023. Notarized commercial transactions also did not make clear distinctions between servos and slaves. In a notary deed from October 6, 1744, the notary wrote that "é senhor e possuidor em bom título e legítimo cativeiro de vinte e dois servos a saber..." Cartório Celso Coutinho, Livro de Notas 1744-13.

[279] The expression is from Juliana Barr, "A Spectrum of Indian Bondage in Spanish Texas," in Alan Gallay (ed.) *Indian Slavery in Colonial America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 309.

filho de N e de sua mulher N e lhe pus os Santos Óleos: foram padrinhos N e N casados, viúvos, ou solteiro, fregueses de tal Igreja, e moradores em tal parte."[280]

The importance of baptismal records for people becomes clear when Catholic priests demonstrate moments of hesitation and correction in the baptismal books. These corrections and hesitations ranged from mending the godfather's name to the type of sacrament. On January 25, 1756, the Sé Church was full when Baltazar Fernandes baptized the young Felix, the son of Germano and Luzia. Germano belonged to Captain Domingos da Rocha Araújo and Luzia to José Tomás. Felix's godparents were João Teixeira Cardoso and Inês Maria. The register would be ordinary if the priest Baltazar Fernandes had not mixed up the godfather's name. On the very same day, he wrote a small note at the bottom of the register saying that the godfather was Domingos Farias and not João Teixeira Cardoso.[281] A few years later, on December 23, 1765, the same Baltazar Fernandes, probably tired of the repetitive task of recording sacramental records, wrote incorrectly in baptismal records that he was recording a burial record. Fernandes amend the small error in the baptismal record itself.[282]

In the legal arena, masters often used baptismal records as proof of legitimate possession over an enslaved person. Given the power invested in this type of record, it was essential to correctly record the information. On November 24, 1765, Bernarda walked a few blocks to the Sé Church carrying her recently born son for his baptism. Bernarda was recorded as a slave of Ana Maria Cavalcanti, and the godparents of her son were José de Arede and Francisca Xavier

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[280] Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia feitas, e ordenadas pelo illustrissimo, e reverendissimo senhor d. Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, 5 Arcebispo do dito Arcebispado, e do Conselho de Sua Magestade: Propostas, e aceitas em o synodo diocesano, que o dito senhor celebrou em 12 de junho do anno de 1707. São Paulo: Typographia 2 de Dezembro de Antonio Louzada Antunes, 1853.
[281] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 120.
[282] AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 200v.

Pereira. However, the priest who signed the record at some point noticed a mistake. Bernarda was, in fact, only hired by Ana Maria Cavalcanti and was a slave of Francisco Matabosque. The correction was made in a small note in the margin of the page on the same day of the baptism.[283]

The Transamazonic slave trade kept displacing Indigenous workers from the interior of Amazonia to São Luís even after the banishment of tropas de resgate (slave expeditions). The adult Lourença had recently arrived in the city when she appeared before the priest Francisco Matabosque to receive the holy oils. On April 4, 1754, Matabosque fell into the old habit of registering servile people as slaves when they were recruited under different forms. Lourença appears as "from the Nation Jacora índia from the sertão of Pará, slave, say, forra de condição" who lived in the house of Joaquim da Serra.[284]

These moments of hesitation and correction further emphasize the potential collaborative process involved in crafting a baptismal record. Whether Catholic priests read these records out loud for the people involved after finishing writing them or when the priest revised the book afterward, baptismal records were not prepared to be forgotten in some dusty ecclesiastical archive. What was recorded in baptismal books reflected the multiple voices and interests.

The Bishop of Maranhão, Francisco de Santiago, baptized several newly included people in the 1740s and 50s labeling most of them as servos.[285] On August 16, 1748, in the Sé Church,

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[283] AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 196v.
[284] "*Aos catorze dias do mês de abril de mil setecentos e cinquenta e quatro anos nesta Igreja da Sé batizei solenemente, e pus os santos óleos a <u>Lourença adulta de Nação Jacora índia do sertão do Pará escrava de digo forra de condição assistente em casa de</u> Joaquim da Serra: foram padrinhos Eusébio da Luz e Marcela da mesma casa todos desta cidade de que para constar fiz este assento que assino. O coadjutor Francisco Matabosque.*"
AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 32.
[285] At least 49.

Santiago performed a collective baptism for eleven adults, all of them probably recently incorporated into the Portuguese settlement as servos of different colonists.[286]

A few years later, on July 11, 1753, three adult women, Vitória, Antónia, and Cataria, who had recently arrived from the Amazonian interior ("*do gentio da terra do sertão do Pará*"), were baptized together. They were servas of Francisco da Serra.[287] Portuguese slavers likely captured them in the Transamazonic slave trade. Despite the prohibition of the tropas de resgate in 1747, Portuguese military men were still trading and raiding Indigenous workers in the interior. In theory, Vitória, Antónia, Catarina, and many others were free workers.

The couple Comba and Dionísio illustrate how the boundaries between servo(a) and slave were fluid. One person could easily be labeled with one legal status in one instance and with the other at a different moment. In August 1748, Comba and Dionísio brought their newborn son, José, to the Sé Church to be baptized. The priest Manoel Correia de Brito registered Comba as "serva of Inácio Quaresma," adding, "I declare that the said Comba is forra (freed)." Her husband, Dionísio, appeared as "servo of Sebastião Gonçalves Volcão." The godparents of the young José were Xavier, also a servo of the mentioned Volcão, and Paula, a serva of João Delgado Barros.[288] When the couple returned to the Sé Church in April 1753 to baptize their daughter Joana, a new priest, Francisco Matabosque, registered Comba as "índia forra, who lived in the house of Inácio Quaresma." He also changed Dionísio's status from servo to escravo. Joana's godparents, unlike her brother's, were both free people, the couple José Pereira de Amaral and Margarida Tereza de Jesus.[289]

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[286] AAM, LRBFNSV 102, f. 43v. Here are their new Catholic names: Inacio, Josefa, Pedro, Maria, Monica, Claudina, Maria, Micaela, Inês, Apolônia, and Francisca.
[287] AAM, LRBFNSV 102, f. 108v-109.
[288] AAM, LRBFNSV 102, f. 45.
[289] AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 103.

Despite these cases suggesting that local priests reserved the legal status servo for Indigenous workers, Africans or their descendants were also registered with that descriptor. Escolástico, the legitimate son of Manoel Correia and Rosa Maria de São José, received the holy oils in February 1751. The priest João Rodrigues Covete recorded Manoel Correia and Rosa Maria de São José as servos of João da Cruz Diniz Pinheiro.[290] Two years later, the couple served as godparents for the children of two recently incorporated Timbira enslaved people, one-year-old Luísa and five-year-old António Luiz. Father Francisco Matabosque registered the couple as *pretos* (blacks).[291] When Manoel Correia and Rosa Maria de São José married in November 1750, Father Francisco Matabosque described Manoel Correia as of the "*Nação Angola*" and Rosa Maria de São José as of the "*Nação Costa da Mina*." Both were registered as slaves of João da Cruz Dinis Pinheiro.[292]

The definitive evidence that some Catholic priests used "servo" for recently arrived enslaved Africans came from the analysis of the year 1765 when Baltazar Fernandes baptized 27 enslaved people from Africa, and 26 of them received the legal status servo. Only one was labeled as a slave. On May 25, 1765, probably close to the arrival of one slave ship from Africa, five enslaved Africans received baptism in the Sé Church. From them, the most emblematic is the young Quitéria, daughter of a still unnamed woman identified in the record as "a heathen woman that came from Cacheu." Quitéria's mother appears as a slave of José Alvares. Quitéria's godfather was Marcelino José, a servo of dona Luísa da Assunção, and the black Maria, who also belonged to José Alvares's household.[293]

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[290] AAM, LRBFNSV 102, f. 157v.
[291] AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 93.
[292] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 34.
[293] AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 169v.

One of the critical distinctions between the different events briefly narrated above was the Catholic priest who signed the documents.[294] Some preferred to use the word servo, while others chose to use the escravo. As shown in Chart 1, João Rodrigues Covete, Manoel Correia de Brito, and Baltazar Fernandes Bairros Homem were among the priests who tended to use the term servo, while Francisco Matabosque and Bernardo Bequimão more commonly used escravo.[295]

Table 5 Legal Statuses (Mothers) and Catholic Priests, 1747-1770

Legal Statuses (Mothers) and Catholic Priests, 1747-1770

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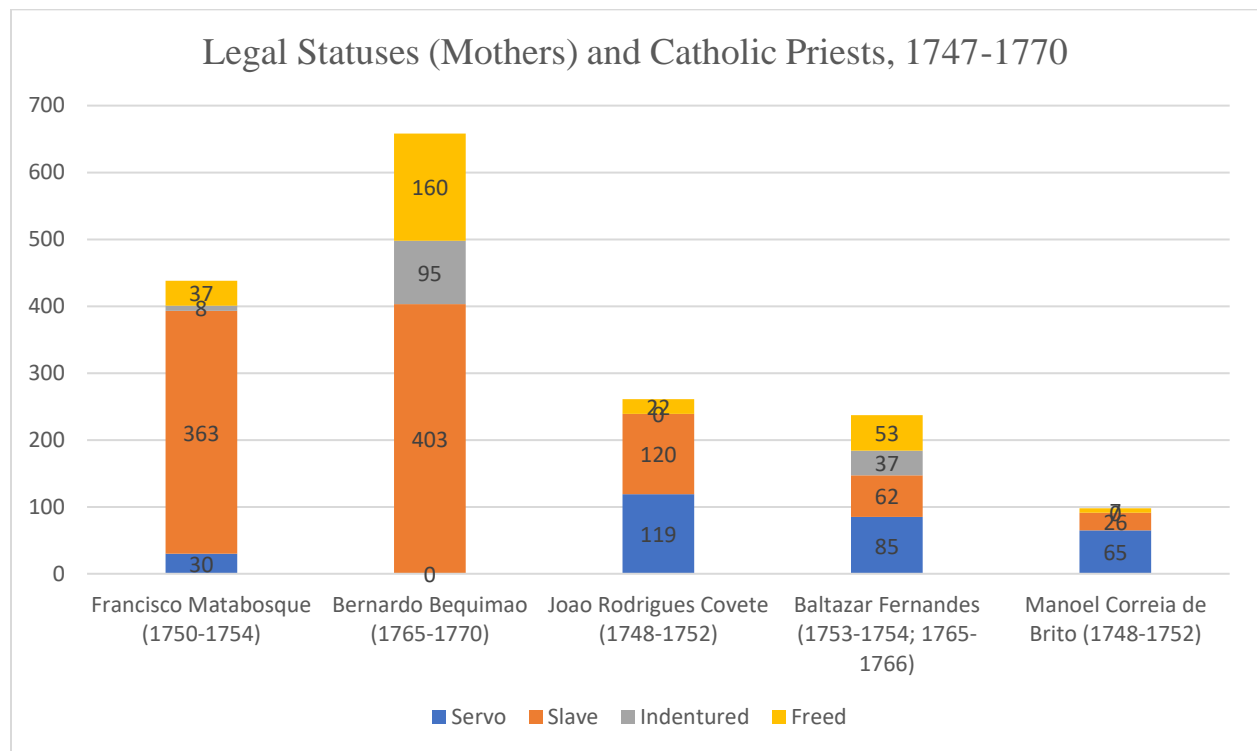
[294] As pointed out by Kathryn Burns, there were probably silent scribes in the craft of written records. Although a Catholic priest signed every baptismal record, it is plausible to imagine that a different person wrote down the registers leaving a space for the priest's signature at the bottom.

[295] Some cautious is in order. Take the *cafuza* Ana, enslaved by Manoel Pedroso, as an example. She was the godmother of Mariana Francisca and Joaquim, both baptized on the same day, October 22, 1752. Francisco Matabosque signed both registers, but in the first she appears as *serva* and in the second as *escrava*. AAM, LRBFNS 103, f. 77v-78.

It is difficult to defend rigid distinctions between servo and slave. The different

categories of labor recruitment constantly blurred once those workers were incorporated into

settlers' households. In Maranhão, where different forms of enslavement and regimes of forced

labor overlapped, many people lived in this broad spectrum of unfreedom.

The instruments used to determine a person's legal status and conditions of enslavement

were witnesses' testimonies and written statements. Community reputation was as essential as a

set of recognizable social behaviors. As dom Manoel de Castelo Branco argued in his defense, he

trusted the documentation he had for Juliana's legal status and would present them "at the right

moment."

III

In the freedom suit between Francisco Xavier and dom Manoel de Castelo Branco, each

party had the chance to mobilize witnesses. Francisco Xavier was able to gather four members of

São Luís's community that knew about his past and his mother's legal status. The first witness

was the military man, Gabriel Rodrigues. Rodrigues, an 80-year-old man, had already lived long

enough to have known dom Francisco, his wife, dona Maria de Monroy Siqueira, and the índia

Juliana in São Luís. Yet, his advanced age also made his memory spotty. Rodrigues affirmed that

dom Francisco had bought the negra Juliana from a tropa de resgate, but he could not remember

who commanded the expedition.[296] At the end of his deposition, the old soldier included some

important personal details. He said that he was Francisco Xavier's godfather, thus, Juliana was

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[296] "*conheceu a mulher do dito capitão dona Maria de Monroy a qual disse a ele testemunha que tinha comprado uma negra por nome Juliana por resgate, que tinha mandado pela tropa que tinha ido ao Pará sendo cabo dela um fulano Botelho desta cidade, que o nome certo do dito cabo não sabe ele testemunha ao presente.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do autor, o negro Xavier*, f. 18.

his comadre, and "he knew the mother of the plaintiff very well, and he always knew her as a legitimate slave."[297]

The other three witnesses were unsure about índia Juliana's legal status. The freed black José Elino Jorge, a fisherman from São Luís, knew the two índias from the house of dom Francisco and dona Maria de Monroy Siqueira. Yet, he heard from other people that they were índias de condição, not slaves.[298] Apparently, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco's failed attempt to sell Francisco Xavier in Lisbon circulated in the community. The fisherman told almost the same story told in Francisco Xavier's initial petition: that Francisco Xavier returned to São Luís because his owner did not possess his enslavement papers.[299] The freed índia Felícia Gonçalves limited her testimony by saying that she heard from others that the negra Juliana was a índia de condição from Amazonia (*do sertão do Pará*).[300]

The last witness, Maria Tereza de Jesus, provided a more meaningful deposition. She confessed that she knew the negra Juliana, who used to live in the house of dom Francisco de Castelo Branco, but she did not know if Juliana was an índia de condição or not. What she knew was that "dom Francisco de Castelo Branco treated her as his slave."[301] Maria Tereza de Jesus also testified that Francisco Xavier was the son of Juliana and that dom Francisco de Castelo Branco and dona Maria de Monroy Siqueira "betrayed her because she [Juliana] was a freed woman."[302]

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[297] Idem.

[298] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do autor, o negro Xavier*, f. 19.

[299] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do autor, o negro Xavier*, f. 19v.

[300] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do autor, o negro Xavier*, f. 20.

[301] "*dom Francisco de Castelo Branco se servia dela como sua escrava*." AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do autor, o negro Xavier*, f. 21.

[302] "*e dizendo também ela testemunha que a traiam naquele trato sendo ela forra*." AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do autor, o negro Xavier*, f. 21-21v.

Dom Manoel de Castelo Branco, in turn, gathered five witnesses, none of whom could definitively state that he held proper proof of Juliana's enslavement. Belchior de Sá, a fellow member of the local elite, confessed that he knew the defendant's father and mother but added that he "always knew Juliana as a slave, but he did not know if the defendant has titles of her enslavement or if she was captured in a tropa de resgate."[303] Soldiers José Simões and Estevão de Oliveira were also uncertain about Castelo Branco's possession of Juliana. Simões stated that the índio Quintiliano once told him that Juliana was a legitimate slave whom dom Francisco had bought from a tropa de resgate. Both soldiers remembered the story mentioned in Castelo Branco's defense about the other índia de condição in his household. The descendants of that índia were by that time working as freed índios in the Convent of *Nossa Senhora das Mercês*, and they stated that dom Francisco's honor would have led him to release Juliana's descendants if she were also an índia de condição.[304]

IV

After collecting witnesses' testimonies, each lawyer delivered a written defense of their case and provided documentation supporting their positions. Francisco Xavier's defender, Bernardo da Silva Gatinho, argued the plaintiff was "free and exempt of captivity" because he was the son of an "índia from the Amazonian sertões," who was distributed to dom Francisco and his wife dona Maria "under condition and free" ("*ingênua e de condição*") to receive education and Catholic instruction. He added that selling those índios was illegal and their "captivity unjust."[305]

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[303] "*e que sempre a conheceu por escrava porém que não sabe se dela tinha o pai do réu título algum de seu cativeiro, nem menos se fora de alguma tropa de resgate, e mais não disse deste.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do réu dom Manoel*, f. 22.

[304] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Inquirição do réu dom Manoel*, f. 24v.

[305] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Razões finais do autor*, f. 26-26v.

The defense also deployed the argument of Natural Law on the freedom of "índios

americanos aborígenes."[306] The mere possession of índios could not constitute legitimate

enslavement. According to the law of 1688, reducing índios to slavery required just titles of

enslavement from a tropa de resgate, signed by the military authority and a religious missionary.

Importantly, Bernardo da Silva Gatinho argued that even dom Manoel's witnesses questioned his

possession of the proper documentation. Gatinho added it was common in Maranhão to mislabel

"índios de condição" as "escravos de condição," a mistake caused by ignorance of the law that

could lead to illegal transactions, such as the case in hand.[307] As I have demonstrated so far,

Gatinho was correct in his assessment of archive production in Maranhão.

To prove his point on the possible misinterpretation of Juliana's legal status, Bernardo da

Silva Gatinho requested a copy of a document registered in the *Livro da Alfândega* (the Customs

House Register) confirming that dom Francisco de Castelo Branco and dona Maria de Monroy

had received two índias de condição and not two slaves. The register stated that Dom Francisco

received "one negra de condição from Pará [Amazonia]" and "with the obligation that he treats

her as a freed woman, and that he could not sell her in any time and was obliged to instruct her in

the Catholic faith." The copy of the register regarding the índia distributed to his wife reads

almost identically, but neither mentions Juliana's name.

Gatinho also requested a confirmation from the priest Tomás Mouzinho that Juliana was

a freed woman, and he confirmed that both Francisco Xavier and his mother were freed people.

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[306] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Razões finais do autor*, f. 28v. Bernardo da Silva Gatinho used the following legal references to support that debated point: a papal bull from 1537, Pope Paulo III; Juan de Solorzano Pereira's *Politica Indiana*; and a Portuguese law from 1646.

[307] "*e ser mesma de condição que se lhe deu para esse efeito, não por escrava mas sim como forra, e se mostra do termo da repartição que junta, de cuja errônea nasce o chamarem a estes índios escravos de condição nesta capitania, e alguns por inscientes da formalidade da lei da condição lhe vem chamar escravas e tê-las por tais e ainda alegam a vende-las como se fez ao autor.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Razões finais do autor*, f. 28.

The priest added that Juliana had even served him for a few months when he moved to the neighboring settlement of Alcântara, and "nobody came to seek for her, and she freely moved away from his house."[308]

Dom Manoel de Castelo Branco's defense, in turn, argued that Francisco Xavier was not "of free nature and exempt of captivity," as he claimed,[309] and that based on the witnesses' depositions and written documents, he should be judged a "legitimate slave of the defendant." One document produced by the Municipal Council stated that Juliana was distributed as a legitimate slave of António Botelho Gago's tropa de resgate.[310] Moreover, dom Manuel argued that the descendants of the other índia de condição from his household were serving the Convent of *Nossa Senhora das Mercês* as freed índios. Finally, the defense argued that Francisco Xavier and his mother were legitimate slaves because they were always treated as such.[311]

Strategically, dom Manoel de Castelo Branco's defense requested specific information from the Municipal Council's papers, not the entire document. For example, the defense only asked for confirmation that the tropa de resgate was conducted under the order of the king or the Municipal Council, in other words, if the tropa de resgate was legitimate or not. The scribe merely confirmed the title of the registers: "*Termo de junta para se repartirem as peças procedidas da tropa de que é cabo António Botelho Gago vindas a esta cidade em companhia do tenante general Fernão Carrilho em vinte e seis do mês de março de mil setecentos e dois.*"[312]

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[308] "*E depois que vim a ser morador em Tapuitapera [Alcântara] me serviu nela alguns meses como forra sem haver quem a procurasse até que espontaneamente se foi de minha companhia.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Petição do autor ao Governador do Bispado/Atestação*, f. 30v.

[309] "*de ser sua natureza livre e isento de toda a pensão de cativeiro.*"

[310] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Razões finais do réu*, f. 32v.

[311] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Razões finais do autor*, f. 33.

[312] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), f. 51v. Note that the copy annexed in the legal file perfectly matches with the tile on original document, Figure 1.

The defense also asked confirmation of the legal condition of the "*peças*" distributed by the Municipal Council: were they distributed to settlers as slaves or as freed (índios de condição)?

Fortunately, the original register produced by the Municipal Council survived in the local archive (Figure 1). The "*peças*" distributed on that occasion were indeed described as slaves, but neither dom Francisco de Castelo Branco nor his wife appear among the settlers that received those índios.[313] It is possible that dom Francisco de Castelo de Branco and dona Maria de Monroy Siqueira could have bought the índia Juliana from a settler to whom she was initially distributed, but this was not the story told in the legal file. By following the formulas of document production and activating them at the right moment, these copies created a legality for the enslavement of Juliana years after the event took place.[314]

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[313] Here is how a typical distribution would read: "Number three, two *negras* named Cunca Atuqua, pregnant, distributed to captain Manoel da Silva Serrão, she had given birth when distributed to the captain." "*Número 3 umas negras por nome Cunca Atuqua prenha que levou o capitão Manoel da Silva Serrão a qual havia parido quando se entregou.*" On that occasion, twenty Indigenous slaves were distributed by the Municipal Council to several settlers. APEM, CMSL, Livro de Registros Gerais 1689, f. 52.

[314] van Deusen, "Indigenous Slavery's Archive in Seventeenth-Century Chile," 10.

Figure 7 Register of Enslaved Indigenous Distribution by São Luís' Municipal Council (1702)
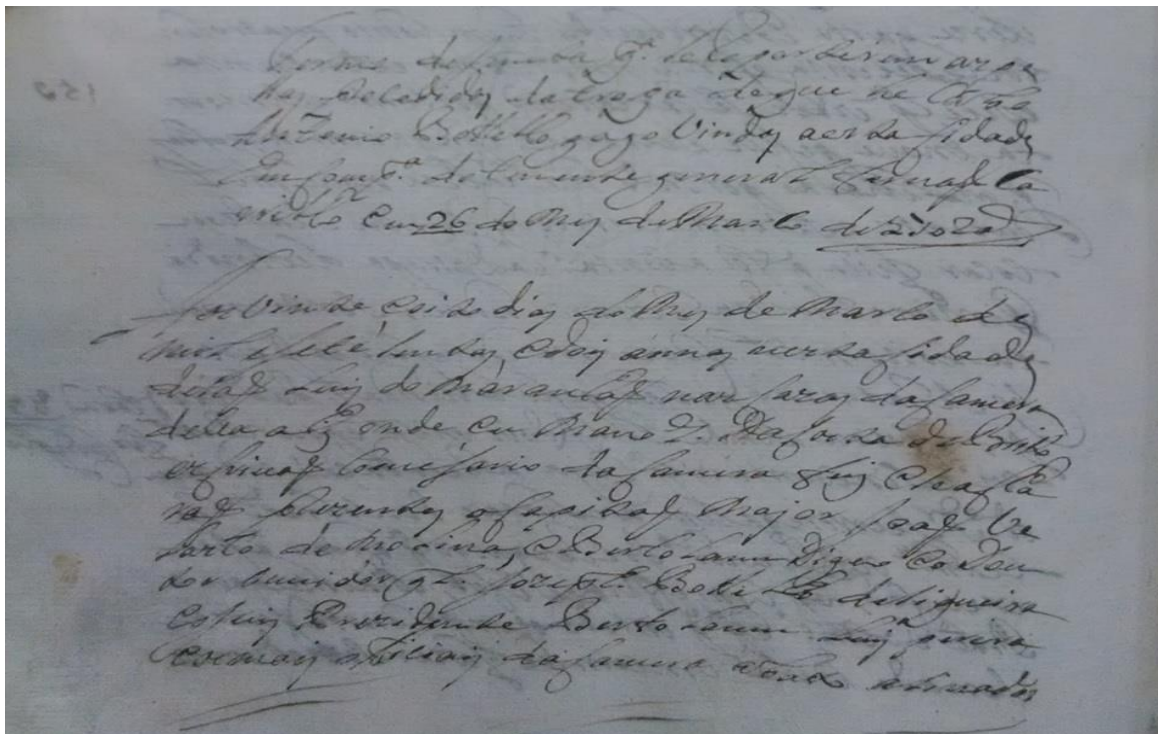
The final proof of Francisco Xavier's legal status came from a copy of his baptismal record. The copy annexed to the legal file at the request of dom Manoel's defense reads as follows: "On April 9, 1716, I baptized and put the holy oils in the Sé Church of this city on the *inocente* Francisco Xavier, *slave* of dom Francisco de Castelo Branco, his godparents were sergeant Gabriel Rodrigues, and Úrsula, slave of dona Maria Pita da Veiga, and to register I wrote and signed this document *era ut supra.*"[315] The text is dry and direct, as with thousands of other baptismal records. Francisco Xavier entered Catholicism as a slave of dom Francisco de Castelo Branco. The índia Juliana was not even mentioned in the copy annexed to the legal file.

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[315] "*Aos nove dias do mês de abril de mil setecentos e dezesseis batizei e pus os santos óleos na Sé desta cidade ao inocente Francisco Xavier escravo de dom Francisco de Castelo Branco foram padrinho o sargento Gabriel Rodrigues e Úrsula escrava de dona Maria Pita da Veiga e para que conste fiz e assinei este assento era ut supra.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3299 (1753), *Petição do réu/Certidão*, f. 36v. It is worth pointing out that I have never found this baptismal records in the extant books of baptism.

On March 19, 1757, after Francisco Xavier's request, civil and ecclesiastical authorities analyzed the documents produced in the case file. All agreed that he should remain enslaved because he based his freedom suit on false claims.[316]

The timing of Francisco Xavier's freedom suit was unfortunate. Had he waited a few months, the law of June 6, 1755, would have been published in May 1757 in Maranhão, abolishing the enslavement of Indigenous Americans. His case would be included in that norm since his Indigenous ancestry was never questioned in court, and the law declared the unconditional freedom of Indigenous people and their – maternal – descendants. Two years later, on April 7, 1759, Francisco Xavier sought the intervention of the *Junta das Missões* (Board of Missions) to achieve his freedom, and that authority declared "On the *autos* of the mameluco Xavier against dom Manoel de Castelo Branco, he was judged free."[317]

The world in which Francisco Xavier lived would be significantly transformed in the 1760s and 1770s with the abolition of Indigenous enslavement and thousands of enslaved Africans disembarking every year in São Luís. As the transatlantic slave trade grew, slavery became heavily associated with blackness. The growing presence of enslaved Africans forced Indigenous workers to present themselves as índios and guarantee their tenuous status as freed workers.

V

In a legal case like Francisco Xavier's, the Indigenous woman Ana, a dweller of the neighboring village of Alcantara, fought for her freedom against her master, the priest Matias de São Boaventura. The initial part of Ana's struggle for freedom also happened before the

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[316] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 38, Doc. 3705.
[317] APEM, Códice 01. Termo de Junta das Missões do Maranhão (04/07/1759), f. 88v. "*e estando assim todos juntos foram propostos vários autos em que se deferiu o seguinte... Nos do mameluco Xavier com dom Manoel de Castelo Branco chamado a autoria, julgado aquele por livre.*"

publication of the abolition law of 1755. According to Ana's defense, the *ouvidor* initially judged

Ana as a free woman, but Matias de São Boaventura appealed the decision in the Board of

Missions, reversing the outcome. Ana petitioned against the decision and asked for the case to be

considered in a superior tribunal in Lisbon. This case is unique because the priest Francisco da

Rocha Lima wrote down his arguments against Ana's freedom since he could not be present in

the meeting of the Board of Missions that decided her fate. In other words, Francisco da Rocha

Lima elaborated a defense of Indigenous enslavement based on customary practices of

Maranhão, or the custom that the burden of the proof was on the plaintiffs' shoulders in freedom

suits.[318]

Francisco da Rocha Lima started with his vote against the "*ação de ingenuidade*"

advanced by Ana.[319] Ana tried to destroy the "possession" of her master over her, and she had

failed to prove her freedom status with "documents" and "witnesses, as she should have

according to the law (*direito comum*)."[320] In Maranhão, following the law of April 10, 1658, the

plaintiffs, or Indigenous enslaved people, always had to prove their freedom status. According to

him, it was "old custom always followed in this city" that Indigenous slaves had to prove their

claims of liberty, and such "long-standing custom" must not be changed but respected.[321]

The defense of Indigenous enslavement advanced on the point on freedom as a natural

condition and the cases to reduce one person to slavery. The idea that freedom was a natural

condition was not followed in the region because of the importance of slavery. The legal status

of one person was presumed based on the current legal status.[322] Lima also defended the

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[318] BNPT, PBA, 627, f. 94-101.
[319] Idem, f. 94.
[320] Idem, f. 94.
[321] BNPT, PBA, 627, f. 95.
[322] Idem, f. 97v.

practices of tropas de resgate in the region in relation to broader practices of enslavement: people enslaved before the royal prohibition of the tropas de resgates were legitimate slaves, "just like black people are slaves of those who buy them in their lands…"[323]

Lima refuted claims of freedom based on geographical origin, or the interior of Amazonia (o sertão do Pará), another common strategy. According to him, the plaintiff did not prove her Indigenous ancestry, and even if that was the case, Lima shrugged, saying: "It does not matter if [she] was from the sertão do Pará or not because almost all slaves in this State came from there."[324] Finally, the potential lack of a written register from Matias de São Boaventura's part was not enough to prove her freedom for two reasons: first, when settlers enslaved Ana's family, the slave expeditions did not produce written records, which started after 1688; second, and most importantly, the possession over an enslaved person for many years was the same as the title.[325]

A few years after this written defense of Indigenous enslavement, Ana's case was judged again in the Board of Mission. This time, on October 6, 1759, the members of the Board of Missions decided that the mameluca Ana was a free woman because of her "quality" or because she descended from an Indigenous maternal line and was included in the "law of liberties."[326]

As in the case of Francisco Xavier, Ana initially failed to prove her freedom condition, but the abolition law of 1755 offered a more substantial basis for the claims based on the índio status. These cases demonstrate that the abolition of Indigenous slavery was not merely the result of a new royal law but it was part of a long history of Indigenous actors' interaction with Portuguese law. The new norm of 1755 was another ingredient in the disputes and debates over

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[323] Idem, f. 98.
[324] Idem, f. 98v-99.
[325] Idem, f. 99.
[326] "*Nos autos do Padre Frei Matias de São Boaventura contra a mameluca Ana, foi esta julgada por livre tanto em razão da sua qualidade ser empreendida na lei das liberdades, como pela...*" APEM, 01, f. 89.

peoples' legal statuses. The índio status resulted from how people were perceived in the local community, a process that involved social networks, lineage, appearance, and labor. In the 1760s and 1770s, how classifications and legal statuses appear on baptismal records show that Indigenous workers tried to differentiate themselves from recently arrived enslaved Africans.

The analysis of baptismal records over the two samples – 1747-1754 and 1765-1770 – indicates clearly that the use of classifications became more frequent over time (see Tables 7 and 8). While Catholic priests rarely used classifications in the first sample (1747-1754), classifications would appear more often in the second sample (1765-1770). There are at least two elements to understand this transformation. The first is the comparison between the different priests who signed the baptismal records. As discussed in section II for the legal status "servo," Catholic priests' preferences seem to have influenced the use of classifications for the enslaved, servile, and freed populations. The second is the significant increase in enslaved Africans disembarking in São Luís in the 1760s compared with the previous decades. The transatlantic slave trade moved from a virtually inexistent force in the 1740s to a major one in the 1760s and 1770s (See Table 6). As the number of enslaved Africans increased, so did the frequency of classifications, not only for African-related ones but for Indigenous and mixed-race.

Table 6 Transatlantic Slave Trade to Maranhão
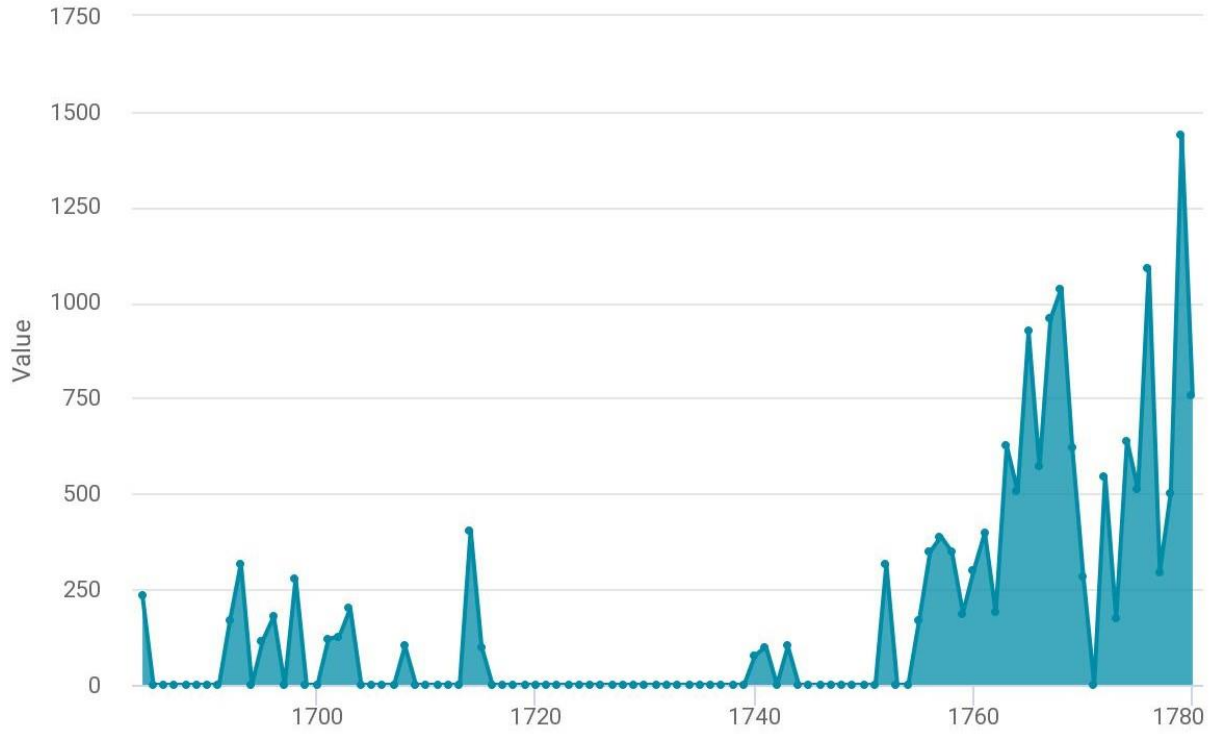
Table 7 Socio-Racial Classification Enslaved Mothers, São Luís, 1747-1754

Socio-Racial Classification Enslaved Mothers, São Luís, 1747-1754

Table 8 Socio-Racial Classification Enslaved Mothers, São Luís, 1765-1770

Socio-Racial Classification Enslaved Mothers, São Luís, 1765-1770

Category	Value
African	189
Indigenous	0
Mixed	59
Not Stated	284
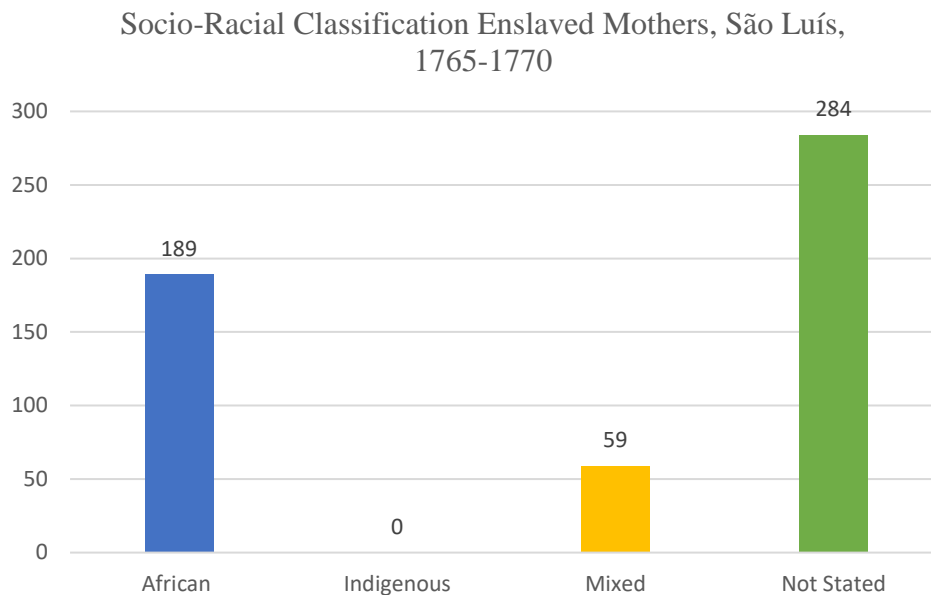
Two Catholic priests signed most baptismal records in the first sample, 1747-1754: João Rodrigues Covete and Francisco Matabosque. Covete and Matabosque had different preferences in terms of legal statuses: Covete tended to label people as "servo" and Matabosque veered towards using the word "escravo." The same cannot be said about classifications because they rarely used them. Before the 1760s, there was not enough pressure to use those words in baptismal records.

Two Catholic priests wrote down most baptismal records in the second sample, 1765-1770: Baltazar Fernandes Bairros Homem and Bernardo Bequimão. The numbers suggest that Baltazar Fernandes relied less on classifications than Bernardo Bequimão. Unfortunately, the fact that Bernardo Bequimão assumed prominence in baptismal records starting in 1767 and the subsequent years does not allow cross-comparisons between two or more Catholic priests. More importantly, the impossibility of comparisons does not allow us to offer a definitive answer on why classifications became more frequent over time: Was it a matter of Catholic priests'

preference or a direct response to the fall of the Transamazonic slave trade and the rise of the transatlantic slave trade? It is impossible to ignore the significant impact that the transatlantic slave trade had on the local community. As slave ships hailing from Africa brought thousands of men and women without social networks to São Luís, local workers decided to reinforce their categories of belonging. Reinforcing their índio status – or their Indigenous genealogy – could be the distinction between freedom and slavery.

Comparing the legal statuses in the two samples illuminates labor arrangements in São Luís between settlers and workers. In the first sample (1747-1754), servile people appear overwhelmingly as either slave or servo(a). Between 1747 and 1754, the language of slavery and forced labor was relatively simple in São Luís: most people were labeled as slave (and servo), regardless of their conditions of enslavement. The widespread illegal enslavement in the interior and the multiple forms to recruit Indigenous labor did not seem to reflect a complex terminology to define legal statuses in baptismal records.

In the following years, the situation would change with the proliferation of legal statuses that disentangled the worker from enslavement but kept the customary labor relation. It is possible to see two legal statuses appearing with frequency: "forro da lei" and "do serviço." "Forro da lei" was a clear reference to the abolition law of 1755. To say that someone was "freed by the law" explicitly acknowledges his/her Indigenous status or heritage, even if the baptismal records do not mention it. The law of June 6, 1755, was published in Maranhão in May, 1757, but the first reflections of this norm on baptismal records started to appear only in August of that year.

On August 20, 1757, When Francisco Matabosque wrote down the baptism of Marta, daughter of Inês, he used an unusual legal status to define Inês's relationship to Maria Cordeira.

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Matabosque recorded Inês as "*alforriada do serviço de Maria Cordeira*," or "a freed servant of Maria Cordeira."[327] Five days later, Matabosque was probably unsure of how to label Inácia, the mother of the young Ana Luísa. Inácia's legal status was erased, but it is still possible to read "*do serviço*" (Figure 8). On August 30, Matabosque recorded Marciana, the mother of Silvestre similarly: Marciana was "a freed servant of José Pereira Cardoso."[328] Finally, the first explicit reference to the law of June 6, 1755, was on October 31, 1757, in the baptism of the young Pedro Raimundo, son of Violante. The way that the Catholic priest Baltazar Fernandes wrote down Violante's condition indicates that the ties of dependency were still in place between master and formerly enslaved person. Violante was "*forra pela lei, assistente em casa de Monica de Moraes do Rego*," or "freed by the law who is living in the house of Monica de Moraes do Rego."[329]

Figure 8 Baptism of Ana Luísa (1757/08/25)

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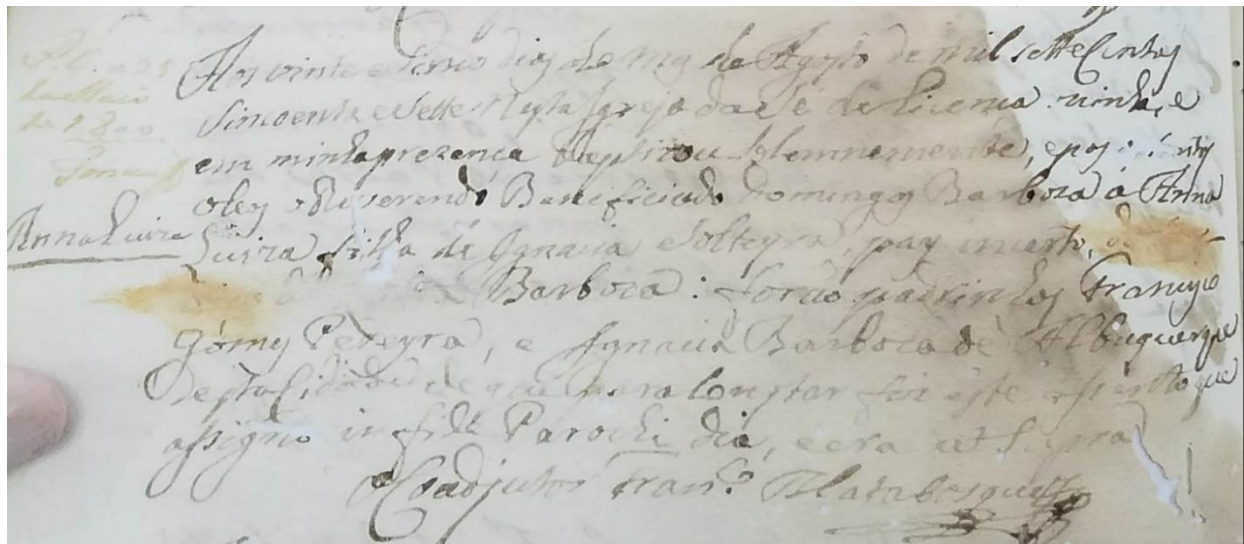
[327] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 185.

[328] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 188. There are other examples: índia Cecília do serviço (9/7/1757, f. 189), Maria do serviço de Maria Barbosa (9/18/1757, f. 190), Damiana índia da terra do serviço (9/21/1757, f. 191v), and Brígida alforriada do serviço (9/25/1757, f. 191v).

[329] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 194v. It is very likely that Violante was still living in the same household ten years after the baptism of Pedro Raimundo. On October 9, 1767, in the baptism of Luiz Carlos, she appears again as freed by the law living in the house of Monica do Rego. AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 52v.

People "freed by law" could appear simply as that or in two distinct situations. There were cases in which the customary labor relation was still in place: "*forro da lei do serviço de…*" or "freed by the law serving…" And there were cases in which the customary labor arrangement was somewhat suspended: "*forro da lei que foi do serviço de…*" or "freed by the law who used to serve…" The practices of Indigenous enslavement were deeply ingrained in Maranhão's society, and the abolition law of 1755 was by no means the first royal legislation abolishing Indigenous slavery. Keeping a consistent record of labor relations and reinforcing labor categories that could easily slip into slavery again was an important move from the master class.

The new norm from Lisbon did not intend to destroy customary labor relations. There is evidence that settlers could maintain their customary workers within their influence – or even within their households. The couple Júlio and Cecília illustrates how Catholic priests recorded servile people in Maranhão and the potential impacts that the legal changes could have.

Júlio and Cecília lived when the Transamazonic and the transatlantic slave trade overlapped within São Luís's households. On January 7, 1753, when they married in the Sé Church, the Catholic priest ignored both of their parents. Júlio was an African man, "*Nação Cacheu*," probably brought to São Luís in the first waves of the transatlantic slave trade. Cecília was an Indigenous Amazonian woman, "*índia do sertão do Pará*," likely captured in the last waves of the Transamazonic slave trade. They were both slaves of Captain Lourenço Belfort, one of the wealthiest men of Maranhão.[330]

The couple baptized two children in the span of four years. The first was António, who was baptized in an ordinary ceremony. Júlio and Cecília appear simply as servos of Lourenço

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[330] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 75v.

Belfort, and the godparents of António were two free people: José Bernardes and Francisca Xavier Pereira.[331] The second was Francisca, who was baptized on November 6, 1757, a few months after the publication of the abolition law. On that occasion, Júlio was still a servo of Belfort, but Cecília was "*forra da lei nova assistente na mesma casa*," or "freed by the new law who is living in the same house." The godparents of Francisca were two enslaved black people: Sebastião and Luísa.[332] Even though Cecília was an Indigenous woman – and freed by the new law – she stayed under the dependency of her husband's master.

Over time, these "servants" became associated with Indigenous classifications and slaves with African classifications. Here, the caveat of the Catholic priests' idiosyncrasies is again an important element; depending on how one slices the data, the results can look different. Remember that Baltazar Fernandes relied less on classification than Bernardo Bequimão. But Bequimão was responsible for recording the baptism events in the books when the number of recently arrived enslaved Africans reached an unprecedented level in Maranhão. Baptismal records show Indigenous-related classifications that were rarely used in the past, such as "índio cafuzo" and "índio mestiço." They indicate a category of Indigenous worker, a free(d) person who dwelled in São Luís or nearby areas.

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[331] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 24.
[332] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 195v.

Table 9 Socio-Racial Classification "do serviço" Mothers, São Luís, 1765-1770

Socio-Racial Classification "do serviço" Mothers, São Luís, 1765-1770

Category	Value
African	0
Indigenous	55
Mixed	15
Not Stated	65
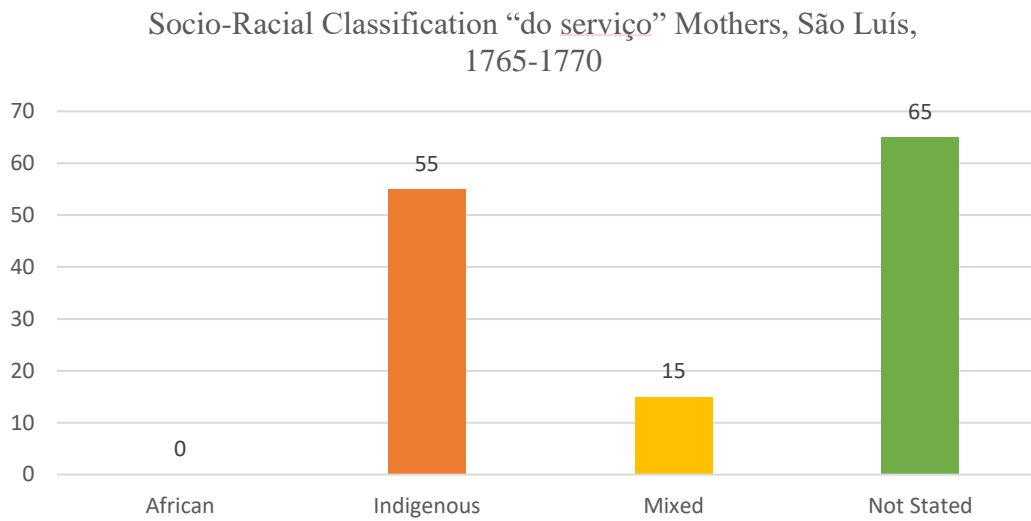
The emergency of those classifications related to an independent Indigenous working class was part of the abolition of Indigenous enslavement. It involved a set of social relations that they performed to be seen as free(d) people. These acts included severing the ties of dependency from former masters/patrons, setting up an independent house in the city, working their own plots of land, working for wages, and cultivating connections with the free sectors of that society. Whom they chose to be their children's godparents can be an important index to measure their autonomy in relation to former masters.

VI

In 1715, Francisco Xavier received a free godfather in the ritual of baptism, the military man Gabriel Rodrigues. Like Francisco Xavier, most enslaved people before the 1760s had free godparents (around 80% for godfathers and 70% for godmothers, see Table 7). There were more opportunities for close contact between free and enslaved populations in that period because most enslaved people performed domestic labor and small-scale farming and ranching. Yet, the ties with free sectors of society did not necessarily positively impact enslaved people's lives. For

example, Gabriel Rodrigues, Francisco Xavier's godfather, testified against him in court in his freedom suit producing crucial legal evidence in favor of his captivity.

Table 10 Legal Status of Godparents, Children of Enslaved Mothers, 1747-1754

A - Godfathers

Legal Status Godfather	Number	% Total
Free	667	**81.1%**
Freed	8	**1.0%**
Indentured	2	**0.2%**
Slave	145	**17.6%**

B- Godmothers

Legal Status Godmother	Number	% Total
Free	554	**70.6%**
Freed	23	**2.9%**
Indentured	2	**0.3%**
Slave	206	**26.2%**

There are two pressing questions on how godparenthood worked in colonial societies. The first is whether these relations were horizontal or vertical and the "positive" or "negative" impacts of these relationships in people's lives. While horizontal relations were between people with similar statuses, for example, between two enslaved people, vertical relations were between people with different statuses, for instance, between enslaved and free people. Considering the

various combinations, it is possible to understand horizontal relationships among slaves as both positive and negative. Horizontal relationships could reinforce connections with other slaves but simultaneously restrict opportunities to create networks with free people that could help enslaved people in moments of need or offer chances for social mobility, for example, manumission and paid labor. Vertical relationships could function both ways as well. They could provide protection in a dangerous and precarious world, but they could also forge – or reinforce – ties of dependency. The second question is the degree of choice in selecting godparents, especially for the enslaved population. More skeptical historians tend to emphasize that enslaved people had no say in the baptism sacrament. It seems plausible to argue that recently arrived enslaved people followed whatever arrangement made by the master, given their minimal understanding of the Portuguese language and the Catholic religion. Yet, mothers and fathers already included in the community – enslaved, servile, or freed – appear to have enough power to decide with whom they would forge fictional kinship ties with the baptism of their children. Determining whether horizontal and vertical relationships had positive or negative impacts on enslaved people is a difficult task. Equally daunting is identifying who the godparents were in the local networks.

Although masters rarely fulfilled the role of godparents for their slaves, people related to him/her did it, like spouses, sons, and daughters. When the black woman Páscoa brought her son José Raimundo to receive the holy oils on November 3, 1765, in the Sé Church, her master, Felício António Cordovil, was likely present. The godfather of José Raimundo was a man named Francisco José Rolim, and the godmother was a woman called Maria de Jesus, the wife of Cordovil. The black Páscoa likely worked as a domestic servant for Cordovil and Maria de

Jesus.[333] The enslaved woman Joana probably lived in a similar situation in Francisco Xavier Lemos's house. Rosa, the daughter of Joana, was baptized on February 20, 1765. While José de Nazaré was the godfather of Rosa, Francisca de Paula Flores, the daughter of Francisco Xavier Lemos, was the godmother.[334]

Masters probably influenced the decision on who the godparents would be even when they did not play that role or people directly related to them. The couple Lourenço and Ludovina belonged to the household of Captain Domingos da Rocha Araújo. Lourenço was an Indigenous man, but the Catholic records were always silent about Ludovina's origin. Between 1749 and 1756, the couple went to the Sé Church to baptize four children, Agostinho, Germana, Máxima, and Ricardo.[335] Except for Agostinho, the others had the same godparents, the Catholic priest José Marinho de Sampaio and Damázia da Costa, a freed woman who still lived under the roof of Domingos da Rocha Araújo. Therefore, by keeping compadrio relations within his household, Captain Domingos da Rocha Araújo was reinforcing the ties of dependency among his servants.

The baptism of recently arrived enslaved Africans was undoubtedly impacted by the masters' will, but it also reinforced horizontal ties. In 1769, at least three ships, *Nossa Senhora da Conceição*, *São Luís Rei da França*, and *Nossa Senhora da Oliveira*, disembarked hundreds of enslaved Africans in the port of São Luís. Among them were Mateus, João, and Rita, who received the sacrament of baptism together in the Sé Church on the very last day of that year by Bernardo Bequimão. Mateus, João, and Rita were "*pretos do gentio da Guiné*," and they belonged to Manoel Luiz Viana, who participated in the export economy of leather and cotton.

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[333] AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 193v. Maria Joaquina, another child of Páscoa, was baptized on the same day and the godmother was the daughter of Felício António Cordovil, Efigênia Maria.
[334] AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 158.
[335] Agostinho (AAM, LRBFNSV 102, f. 66v), Germana (AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 113), Máxima (AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 113), and Ricardo (AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 130).

The godfather of the three recently arrived enslaved Africans was another African slave, a man named Benedito. Benedito had arrived in São Luís a few years earlier and could understand both the Portuguese language and the Catholic religion better than the others. In 1767, for example, Benedito married Clara, also an African woman, in a ceremony celebrated in the Sé Church. They all probably came from similar geographical and cultural areas in Africa. Their master, Manoel Luiz Viana, likely impacted these decisions, but the Catholic rituals offered these men and women the chance to recreate or forge ties with people that shared similar experiences.

Recently arrived enslaved Africans, like Mateus, João, and Rita, often had another enslaved person as godparents, and these ties could signify the beginning of a relationship, not the culmination of one (See Table 8). There were cases in which the same person served as the godparent of a recently arrived enslaved African and as the witness for the marriage sacrament. The African Manoel had been in São Luís for a few days when his master, José Bernardes de Carvalho, brought him to the Sé Church to be baptized. Manoel's godfather was the Indigenous worker André Pedro da Costa, who also served as one of the witnesses in Manoel's marriage with Izabel, an enslaved African woman in the same household. It is difficult to understand the relationship between the Indigenous worker André Pedro da Costa and the master, José Bernardes Teixeira. Was André Pedro da Costa a formerly enslaved person in the same household? Was André hired by Bernandes to perform some labor? Formal relationships – compadrio and marriage – between recently arrived African slaves and Indigenous workers were rare, but they still indicate the intense interactions between the lower classes of São Luís, including carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, fishermen, and soldiers.

Table 11 Legal Status of Godparents, Recently Arrived Enslaved Africans, 1765-1770

A - Godfathers

Legal Status Godfather	Number	% Total
Free	121	**47.8%**
Freed	24	**9.5%**
Indentured	0	**0.0%**
Slave	108	**42.7%**

B – Godmothers

Legal Status Godmother	Number	% Total
Free	41	**28.7%**
Freed	20	**14.0%**
Indentured	3	**2.1%**
Slave	79	**55.2%**

The couple of enslaved Africans, Francisco and Ana, illustrate these connections between Indigenous workers and soldiers. Francisco and Ana received together the sacrament of baptism and had the soldier Manoel José de Meireles as their godfather. A few years later, when they went to the Sé Church to baptize their daughter Benedita, another soldier was her godfather, João Furtado de Mendonça. João Furtado de Mendonça was also the godfather of a boy named Manoel, the son of Micaela da Costa, an Indigenous servant from the household of Maria da Costa.

Table 12 Legal Status of Godparents, Children of Enslaved Mothers, 1765-1770

A - Godfathers

Legal Status Godfather	Number	% Total
Free	341	**66.2%**
Freed	30	**5.8%**
Indentured	7	**1.4%**
Slave	137	**26.6%**

B – Godmothers

Legal Status Godmother	Number	% Total
Free	273	**56.9%**
Freed	51	**10.6%**
Indentured	13	**2.7%**
Slave	143	**29.8%**

In contrast to recently arrived enslaved Africans, the children of Indigenous workers rarely received enslaved godparents (See Table 10).[336] The exceptions were when they were part of large households. João Matias, for example, probably arrived in São Luís from the interior of Amazonia when he was a young man. Because he unlikely knew how to speak Portuguese and lacked social connections in the city, he would gravitate toward people that shared his predicament. As part of the household of António Gomes de Souza, João Matias decided to

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[336] On Indigenous fictional kinship and labor recruitment, Paul Charney, "The Implications of Godparental Ties between Indians and Spaniards in Colonial Lima," *The Americas* 47 (1991): 295–6; Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination*, 91-5.

marry Efigênia Maria, another Indigenous worker who toiled for the household of Lourenço

Belfort, a close friend of António Gomes de Souza. The marriage occurred on May 24, 1763, and

both Efigênia Maria and João Matias appear as freed – by the law – and tied to labor relations

with their former masters.[337] The couple had two daughters in the next two years: Catarina and

Luísa Maria. In both cases, João Matias and Efigênia Maria chose enslaved people from

Lourenço Belfort's household as their children's godparents. The mulato João and Vitória for

Catarina, and the black Pereira and Matildes for Luísa Maria.[338] After João Matias's death,

Efigênia Maria married another man, Jerônimo Mendes, in 1772. Almost twenty years after the

abolition law of 1755, Jerônimo Mendes was still an Indigenous worker (índio cafuzo) serving

Inácio Mendes.[339]

Table 13 Legal Status of Godparents, Children of Indentured Mothers, 1765-1770

A – Godfathers

Legal Status Godfather	Number	% Total
Free	103	**78.0%**
Freed	9	**6.8%**
Indentured	9	**6.8%**
Slave	11	**8.3%**

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[337] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 97
[338] AAM, LRBFNSV 105, f. 112v and f. 188v.
[339] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 329.

B – Godmothers

Legal Status Godmother	Number	% Total
Free	85	**72.0%**
Freed	9	**7.6%**
Indentured	11	**9.3%**
Slave	13	**11.0%**

Indigenous workers experienced a higher degree of integration than recently arrived enslaved Africans. Unlike Francisco Xavier and many others, several Indigenous workers did not have to go to court to achieve their freedom; instead, they worked in São Luís for wages and probably settled in their own houses. They also reinforced their índio status by interacting with other Indigenous workers, commonly marrying another Indigenous person, and cultivating other relationships with free sectors of São Luís. The couple João de São João and Rosa Marinha appear as illegitimate children of Indigenous mothers in their marriage on September 27, 1767.[340] João de São João was "freed by the law" and used to work for the religious man Pedro Gonçalves Delgado. Rosa Marinha was "raised in the house of Domiciano José de Moraes." A few months later, Bernardo Bequimão baptized Maria Tereza, the daughter of João de São João and Rosa Marinha. On this occasion, the couple appears only with their names, no classification, and no legal status. Maria Tereza's godparents were both free people: sergeant António de Bastos and Tereza Paulina.[341] The couple made another appearance in the baptismal books on October 3, 1769, when the same Bernardo Bequimão baptized Firmiano. This time, both João de

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[340] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 215.
[341] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 82v.

São João and Rosa Marinha appear as índios. Firmiano received free godparents like his sister: the military man Clemente José Pereira and the same Tereza Paulina.[342]

Many other Indigenous workers shared with Francisco Xavier the challenges of breaking ties with their masters. The couple Cipriano Gonçalves and Mariana da Silva appear several times in baptismal, marriage, and burial records. They had Indigenous parents and appeared in the records as both índios and cafuzos, indicating their inclusion in the colonial world. Their marriage occurred on October 2, 1757, a few months after the publication of the abolition law. Cipriano was the son of índia Josefa and Mariana was the daughter of índios Gregório and Quintiliana. Cipriano was already serving ("do serviço") Manoel Gonçalves Trovisco, but at that point Mariana was working ("do serviço") for José Gonçalves Lima. The Catholic priest Baltazar Fernandes recorded that they were both "*alforriados da lei nova*" or "freed by the new law."[343]

A few years later, the couple went to the Sé Church to mourn the death of their four-year-old daughter Juliana. The same Baltazar Fernandes recorded Cipriano as cafuzo, and Mariana was now incorporated under the same labor arrangement as her husband in the household of Manoel Gonçalves Trovisco. In the following years, the couple baptized three more children, and they appeared in the records in a similar fashion: sometimes as cafuzo, other times as índios, but in general still servants of Manoel Gonçalves Trovisco.[344]

In 1771, the son of Cipriano and Mariana, the índio Francisco, married another Indigenous woman Maria Micaela, "Nação Guegue." Maria Micaela was the servant of Valério Batista Baima, who also served as a witness for the sacrament. Francisco did not receive a legal

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[342] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 184v.
[343] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 195v.
[344] AAM, LROFNSV 3, f. 155v.

status, but their parents were still identified in the community as "*escravos que foram de Manoel Gonçalves Trovisco,*" or "former slaves of Manoel Gonçalves Trovisco."[345] Around 15 years after the abolition law of 1755, Indigenous workers were still attached to their former masters, either in the community's memory or tied to customary labor arrangements.

Conclusion

When Francisco Xavier tried to reach his freedom in court in the 1750s, Indigenous people constituted the bulk of Maranhão's enslaved population. Indigenous workers recruited in varied geographical locations and under several legal frameworks forged that population. They repeatedly challenged the legalities of their enslavement in colonial courts if captured under dubious circumstances, and some were successful. Masters and their legal representatives often used written documentation to prove legal ownership or possession of enslaved people, as in Francisco Xavier's case.

The landscape of enslavement in Maranhão changed after the abolition of Indigenous slavery in 1755 and through the expansion of the transatlantic slave trade. As the transatlantic slave trade gained momentum in Maranhão, the frequency of classifications in baptismal records increased. Besides, Catholic records show a proliferation of legal statuses that could easily slip into slavery again. The abolition of Indigenous slavery was not the result of a new norm from Lisbon, but it was part of the long history of Indigenous struggle for freedom and autonomy in Maranhão. Indigenous workers presented themselves as índios when they interacted with a Catholic priest. Several of those, however, were still tied to their former masters.

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[345] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 296.

Chapter 4: Marriage Choices of São Luís's Working People (c. 1740-1770)

Abstract

This chapter analyses all Catholic marriages involving enslaved and freed people in São Luís between 1748-1773. In this period, Maranhão transitioned from a frontier economy to a plantation society. While until the 1750s, freed and enslaved workers were overwhelmingly Indigenous or descendants of Indigenous people, after the 1760s, the enslaved population was heavily "Africanized." The Catholic Church closely regulated the marriage sacrament and imposed several rules before performing the ceremony. Working people suffered the most under these restrictions. In this context, marriage choices should be taken seriously since the punishment for transgressing the norms could lead to prison and banishment. The chapter demonstrates the importance of social networks in marital choices among the working people of São Luís. If scholars have established that enslaved Africans preferred to marry another African person from a similar cultural background, Indigenous workers tended to make similar decisions. In this case, Indigenous workers recreated previous cultural patterns and avoided marital arrangements with people at the bottom of colonial society's social hierarchy. In a moment when most enslaved Africans were outsiders, it was expected that local Indigenous workers avoided marital arrangements with them. Marriage practices were at the center of community-building processes among Indigenous workers in São Luís.

I

In 1737, the enslaved man, André, aka Jaruca, escaped from his owner, dona Leonor de Távora, in São Luís. André found refuge in the hinterlands working on the ranch belonging to the Priest André Cordeiro. Responding to several complaints from different slaveholders, the Governor dispatched a military expedition that found André and other runaway slaves. On June 22, 1743, soldiers patrolling the riverine paths captured André, sent him back to São Luís, and locked him in prison. Slaveholders accused the black António, one of Priest Cordeiro's slaves, of supervising the work on the ranch and encouraging other enslaved people to join them. After André's arrest, dona Leonor de Távora petitioned the Ecclesiastical Court seeking reparations for the many workdays that André missed. Távora asked for the payment of $200 for every day of work, except Sundays, because "it was the price of the slaves' service."[346] Stories of enslaved people escaping bondage and finding shelter in the interior occurred in almost every slave society in the Americas. André, however, was not an African man or a man of African descent. He appears in the colonial archive as a "slave *do gentio da terra do sertão do Rio Negro.*" André had been enslaved and forcibly transported from the interior of Amazonia to work at settlers' houses, ranches, and farms.

This case demonstrates that Indigenous enslaved people remained an essential source of labor in Brazil well into the eighteenth century and were not simply replaced by enslaved Africans as is commonly understood. This case also offers a glimpse into the lived experiences of Indigenous enslaved people within Portuguese settlements. André, or as he was probably

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[346] AAM, Autos da Câmara Eclesiástica/Episcopal, Lista nominal 04, Autos de Libelo Cível, Cx. 19, Maço 81, Doc. 852. The settler António Borges Maciel also accused Priest André Cordeiro of the same crimes. Maciel protested that his slave, Domingas, *do gentio do sertão das Amazonas*, escaped in July of 1736 and was captured on June 22, 1743 (the same date as André): AAM, Autos da Câmara Eclesiástica/Episcopal, Lista nominal 04, Autos de Libelo Cível, Cx. 19, Maço 81, Doc. 853. Governor João de Abreu Castelo Branco identified the problem of slaves running away and other masters offering shelter for them, AHU, CU, Avulsos, Pará, Cx. 21, Doc. 1983 (1738).

known among his peers, Jaruca, survived the Amazonian passage, a three-month canoe journey from the Negro River to São Luís. While living there, Jaruca forged networks with people who coerced him to work and with those working shoulder to shoulder with him, and he may have recreated ties with people from Amazonia that shared his predicament.

Drawing on marriage records from the 1740s to the 1770s, I analyze how Indigenous enslaved people (and freed workers) recreated important aspects of their lives through Catholic sacraments. This was a critical period of structural, economic, and legal change in the Portuguese empire in general and in Maranhão in particular.[347] The 1740s represented the last years of the Transamazonic slave trade; the century-long forced resettlement of thousands of Indigenous workers into Maranhão.[348] Portuguese imperial policy shifted in the 1750s with the abolition of Indigenous slavery in 1755 and the foundation of a trading company, the *Companhia de*

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[347] For a more detailed explanation of the context, see Chapter 1. Like the Spanish counterpart, imperial reforms in Portugal aimed the "reconquest" of the colonies to reposition Portugal in the European stage and overcome their dependency on English traders. There were new bureaucratic norms, new administrative units, curbing the power of the Catholic Church, and military reforms. In Maranhão, the expansion of the transatlantic slave trade and the abolition of Indigenous enslavement hardened the racial lines of slavery. The abolition of Indigenous slavery was related to the consolidation of borders between Spanish and Portuguese possessions in South America: Kenneth Maxwell, *Conflicts & Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750-1808* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 32, 35; Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770 - 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 50–62. The impacts of the new imperial Indigenous policy that transformed missions into villages is the subject of several studies: Angela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Lisboa: CNCDP, 2000); Barbara Sommer, "Negotiated Settlements: Native Amazonians and Portuguese Policy in Pará, Brazil, 1758-1798" (PhD Diss., Albuquerque, University of New Mexico, 2000). Heather Roller updated these studies and in one chapter discussed the impacts of those transformations for Indigenous workers that were not part of Indigenous villages/communities, Heather F. Roller, *Amazonian Routes: Indigenous Mobility and Colonial Communities in Northern Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 190.

[348] For a more detailed explanation of the forms of labor recruitment, see Chapter 1. There were three principal ways to recruit Indigenous labor in the interior of Amazonia: *descimentos*, *resgates*, and Just Wars. While Indigenous workers recruited under the first category were in theory free laborers, the ones under the second and third were mostly slaves. Yet, the frontiers between these legal status were blurry once Indigenous workers entered settlers` households: Barbara Sommer, "Colony of the Sertão: Amazonian Expeditions and the Indian Slave Trade," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 401–28; Rafael Chambouleyron, "Indian Freedom and Indian Slavery in the Portuguese Amazon (1640-1755)," in *Building the Atlantic Empires: Unfree Labor and Imperial States in the Political Economy of Capitalism, ca. 1500-1914* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Camila Dias and Fernanda Bombardi, "O que dizem as licenças? Flexibilização da legislação e recrutamento particular de trabalhadores indígenas no Estado do Maranhão (1680-1755)," *Revista de História* 175 (2016): 249–80.

Comércio do Grão-Pará e Maranhão, that would import unprecedented numbers of enslaved Africans to develop a plantation economy of cotton and later rice. Enslaved Africans that survived the transatlantic crossing, mostly Upper Guineans, entered a world of labor already dominated by Indigenous workers.

I argue that ordinary people in São Luís defined on the ground the boundaries between socio-racial classifications and legal statuses, despite the alleged abolition of Indigenous slavery in 1755. By interacting with each other or avoiding formal interactions, the lower classes set the boundaries of race, slavery, and belonging. Their socio-racial classifications and legal statuses were the results of their social networks.[349] The chapter explores all marriage records registered in São Luís (*Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória*) involving enslaved and freed people (Total marriages analyzed: 820). I separated the data into two blocks. The first covers the marriage events between 1747 and 1757 (Total marriages analyzed: 350). The second encompasses 1758 and 1773 (Total marriages examined: 470). The law of June 6, 1755, that abolished Indigenous enslavement was only published in Maranhão in May 1757, and that year served as a division between the two blocks.[350]

Indigenous workers made conscious choices about whom they would marry and with whom they would forge other formal relations, whether with another Indigenous worker or an enslaved, freed, or free person. Considering that Indigenous workers living in São Luís came from vastly different places and groups, their decisions could be influenced by the shared experience in the Amazonian passage, cultural affinities, or a phenotypical assessment. Social networks forged by Indigenous workers after their inclusion and over generations also shaped

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[349] Robert Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660 - 1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 83; Alex Borucki, "Shipmate Networks and Black Identities in the Marriage Files of Montevideo, 1768–1803," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 93 (2013): 205–38.

[350] Most marriage events happened in the Sé Church, but there were a few registered in the surrounding chapels.

their choices. After the publication of the abolition law of 1755 and the intensification of the transatlantic slave trade to Maranhão, marrying a recently arrived enslaved African was not only a step down in the social hierarchy for Indigenous workers but also a marital arrangement with a person deprived of social networks. On the other hand, enslaved Africans, particularly those arriving in large numbers in the 1760s and 70s, lacked networks. The decision to marry another African person allowed them to recreate their cultures.

The boundaries between these classifications were not static and defied simple oppositions between Indigenous (*índio(a)*) versus African/African descendants (black or *preto(a)*). Hundreds of Africans had arrived in Maranhão before the foundation of the trading company and had already cultivated ties within the community.[351] Those already acculturated Africans could serve as potential partners for Indigenous workers who lacked networks or even for those who had, demonstrating the multi-ethnic and complex formation of those classifications.[352] Indigenous and African laborers lived in the same spaces and shared similar laboring experiences within São Luís and surrounding ranches and farms. They shared the hardships of poverty and subjugation imposed by their current or former slaveholders. They all experienced slavery or some form of coerced labor in a society structured around notions of honor and firmly committed to slavery.[353]

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[351] Walter Hawthorne estimated the number of enslaved Africans that disembarked in Maranhão to be at least 3,368. Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 40–41.

[352] The enslaved population was far from homogenous. Only one example on the distinctions and tensions between Africans and creole slaves in Bahia, João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 142–43.

[353] Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 252–53.

II

The history of marriages – including the enslaved population – relates to scholarly work on the history of family and sexuality. In societies structured around households, marriages concerned both state and church. Regulating marriages meant controlling people's morals and behavior and the definition of lawful inheritances.[354] A historian can identify a familiar pattern in this scholarship: If, in the past decades, most research focused on demography and social structure, recent studies tend to emphasize cultural aspects, representations, individual cases, and biographies.[355]

Historians working with family history in Europe questioned traditional narratives of modernity and the role that familial ties – or their disintegration – played in the process. A few decades ago, scholars in Brazil and Latin America appropriated the demographic models developed for the European context and tested hypotheses on different grounds.[356]

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[354] Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Sistema de casamento no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1984); Caroline Brettell, *Men Who Migrate, Women Who Wait: Population and History in a Portuguese Parish* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); Elizabeth A. Kuznesof, *Household Economy and Urban Development: São Paulo, 1765 to 1836* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986); Eni de Mesquita Samara, *As mulheres, o poder e a família: São Paulo, século XIX* (São Paulo: Editora Marco Zero: Secretaria de Estado da Cultura de São Paulo, 1989); Muriel Nazzari, *Disappearance of the Dowry: Women, Families, and Social Change in São Paulo, Brazil (1600-1900)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); Alida C. Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil: Santana de Parnaíba, 1580-1822*, University of Texas Press (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005). The discussion on the racialization of slavery and the idea that white people transmitted property and black people (especially enslaved Black women) only slavery is prominent in plantation context. Only one recent summary of the literature: Diana Paton, "Gender History, Global History, and Atlantic Slavery," *The American Historical Review* 127 (2022): 726–54.

[355] For a recent overview of the debate: Ana S. V. Scott, "Entre a 'curva e o 'caso': três décadas de história da família no Brasil," in *História da família no Brasil* (séculos XVIII, XIX e XX): Novas análises e perspectivas ed. Douglas Libby et all. (Belo Horizonte: Fino Traço, 2015), 21-50. Gender as a key category of analysis revolutionized historians' understanding of family, key works for different areas: Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Bianca Premo, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[356] Key studies for what formed the agrarian history in Brazil appropriated French and English models.

Historians drew a picture of the Brazilian colonial society different than the traditional view of the *senhor de engenho*.[357] Employing untapped primary sources by that point, such as populational lists and ecclesiastical records, scholars questioned the weight of patriarchalism. For example, the widespread existence of female heads of households forced a reconsideration of the prevailing image of a society composed of powerful masters who owned vast swaths of land and ruled extended families with several enslaved people and dependents (*agregados*).[358]

Other historians preferred to avoid jettisoning patriarchalism as a critical concept to understanding Brazilian society. They pointed out that results from specific regions could not be overgeneralized for the rest of Portuguese America.[359] Even if the extended household was less typical than scholars previously imagined, the ideological power of patriarchalism could not be understated.[360]

Back in the 1970s, when historians started to uncover the formation of slave families, their goal was to prove that enslaved people could form stable and meaningful families.[361] Traditional interpretations of slavery and its role in the making of Brazilian society contended the historical impossibility of slave family formation. Some scholars blindly emphasized descriptions produced by European eyes that could only see promiscuity and other pejorative

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[357] Antônio Cândido, "The Brazilian Family", in *Brazil: Portrait of Half a Continent,* T. Lynn Smith and Alexander Marchant ed. (New York: Dryden Press, 1951), 291-312. This view is present in classic interpretations of Brazilian society.

[358] Building on a critique of Gilberto Freyre, the possibility of a variety of living arrangements, and an emphasis on the role of women: Samara, *As mulher, o poder e a família*; Donald Ramos, "Marriage and the Family in Colonial Vila Rica," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 55 (1975): 200-225; Maria J. S. Brugger, *Minas patriarcal: família e sociedade (São João Del Rei – Séculos XVIII e XIX)* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2007).

[359] B. J. Barickman, "E se a casa-grande não fosse tão grande? Uma freguesia açucareira do Recôncavo baiano em 1835," *Afro-Ásia* 29/30 (2003), 79-132.

[360] Ronaldo Vainfas, *Trópico dos pecados: moral, sexualidade e inquisição no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Campus, 1989), 110.

[361] Sweet's critique of a focus on heteronormative families. Historians should pay attention to alternative family formation: James H. Sweet, "Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70 (2013): 251-72.

descriptors for enslaved Africans. Historian Robert Slenes showed the pitfalls created by critical interpretations of Brazilian slavery since they were based on travelers' narratives, mainly from the nineteenth century, and prevailing sociological theories in the 1950s.[362]

In the late 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, historians dug deep into the archives, primarily local collections, such as notary records and ecclesiastical documents, to overcome narratives of slave behavior derived from European descriptors.[363] This extractive approach to the archive showed many previously unknown characteristics of Brazilian slave society. These scholars emphasized the importance of the socio-economic context in which enslaved people lived, including the urban versus rural setting, the kind of labor demanded from enslaved men and women, the size of the households, and the impact of the transatlantic slave trade in the demography. Enslaved families tended to flourish more in rural areas than in cities, where households concentrated fewer enslaved people.[364] Consequently, enslaved people found fertile ground to form stable families when they were part of larger farms or plantations.[365] Finally, where the transatlantic slave trade brought more men than women, the gender imbalance left

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[362] Robert W. Slenes, "Black Homes, White Homilies: Perceptions of the Slave Family and of Slave Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil," in *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 126-146. Robert Slenes explores the pitfalls in influential interpretations of Brazil, such as Gilberto Freyre, Emília Viotti da Costa, Roger Bastide, and Florestan Fernandes.

[363] The influence of North American historians was crucial for these studies. Influential and conflictive interpretations are Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll* (New York: Pantheon, 1974) and Herbert Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom* (New York: Pantheon, 1976). While Genovese saw the relationship between owner and enslaved person as crucial, Gutman understood the horizontal relations within the enslaved community as essential to their survival. The history of slave family in the United States has traveled a long way since then.

[364] A very influential work is: Richard Graham, "Slave Families on a Rural Estate in Colonial Brazil," *Journal of Social History* 9 (1976), 382-402. Also important: Alida Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil: Santana de Parnaíba, 1580-1822* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 160. The recognition of slave families in inventories, Laird W. Bergad, *Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1720-1888* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 152-154. Slaves struggled to form stable families in cities, Mary C. Karasch, *Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 287–98.

[365] Silvia Maria Jardim Brugger, *Minas Patriarcal: Família e Sociedade (São João Del Rei - Séculos XVIII e XIX)* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2007), 119.

many young men without options to marry formally before the Catholic Church.[366] The role of slave families and the politics of slave marriage within a society dominated by slaveholders is a terrain of disputes. For some historians, it would be an element of master domination. For others, it would be a form of unity, cooperation, and cultural retention.[367]

It is beyond doubt that enslaved people formed families and struggled to keep their ties. Current questions concern why these families mattered, how family ties could be a road to freedom or autonomy, how the African cultural background shaped family patterns, and the role families played in sustaining slavery's survival.[368] The diversity of slave family experiences has led historians to investigate their relationship with other subjugated groups, such as Indigenous people.[369] The increasing interest among scholars in Afro-Indigenous relations in different contexts within Ibero-America has questioned the rigid division between the two Republics – the *republica de indios* and *españoles* – and the established interpretations of endogamous marriages. For example, in his work on Puebla de los Angeles, Pablo Sierra argues that Afro-Indigenous marriages could represent commercial advantages for the couple and the potential to

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[366] Manolo Florentino, "Tráfico atlântico, mercado colonial e famílias escravas no Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, c. 1790-c. 1830," *História: Questões & Debates* 51 (2009), 69-119.

[367] Some major problems among scholars working with slavery in Brazil are the formation of a slave community, social class, degrees of cultural retention, and cooperation. Representative of unity, cooperation, and retention would be Robert W. Slenes, *Na senzala, uma flor: esperanças e recordações na formação da família escrava: Brasil sudeste, século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1999). Other historians prefer to see a constant struggle between creoles and Africans, Manolo Florentino and José Roberto Góes, *A paz das senzalas: famílias escravas e tráfico atlântico, Rio de Janeiro, c. 1790-c. 1850* (São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2017).

[368] Only one example of current family reconstructions over time: Douglas C. Libby, "Family, Stability, and Respectability: Seven Generations of Africans and Afro-Descendants in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Minas Gerais," *The Americas* 73 (2016): 371–90.

[369] Giuseppe Marcocci, "Escravos ameríndios e negros africanos: uma história conectada Teorias e modelos de discriminação no império português (ca. 1450-1650)," *Tempo*, 2010; Matthew Restall (ed.), *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Matthew Restall, *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Rachel Sarah O'Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de Los Ángeles, 1531-1706* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Yuko Miki, *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Flávio dos Santos Gomes and Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, "Indígenas e Africanos," in Schwarcz, Lilia Moritz and Gomes, Flávio dos Santos (eds.) *Dicionário da escravidão e liberdade* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2018).

expand their social networks.[370] Most of this scholarship emphasizes cities as places of people's

circulation, cultural encounters, and racial mingling.[371]

Despite these critical contributions, scholars have overlooked the relationship – or lack of

connection – between enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples, especially in Brazil. With few

exceptions, historians still understand the slave family formation as an exclusively African

question.[372] Whenever historians discuss the role played by Indigenous workers in marital

arrangements, they usually assume it was a passive one. Several scholars have argued that

enslaved Africans tended to seek partners within their same original cultural zone back in the

African continent. In Brazil, where the transatlantic slave trade played an essential role in

reproducing the enslaved population, research tends to emphasize the endogamous nature of

slave marriages.[373] Walter Hawthorne studied Maranhão's matrimonial records and found a high

endogamy rate among enslaved people. According to Hawthorne, enslaved people chose their

partners not solely based on ethnic affiliations but in a broad geographical sense because most

enslaved people disembarking in Maranhão came from the Upper Guinea coast. In Maranhão,

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[370] Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de Los Ángeles, 1531-1706* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 198–99.

[371] Ana Beascoechea Zaballa, "Una ventana al mestizaje: el matrimonio de los indios en el Arzobispado de México, 1660-1686," *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 42 (2016): 73–96.

[372] Márcia Amantino, "Identidades e Mestiçagens entre negros e índios e o controle da Companhia de Jesus no Rio de Janeiro Colonial," *Perspectivas* 10 (2013): 27-42; Jonis Freire and Angelo A. Carrara, "Família, Compadrio e Demografia na Freguesia do Mártir São Manuel do Rio Pomba e Peixe dos Índios Cropó e Croato (1767-1819)," in *História da família no Brasil* (séculos XVIII, XIX e XX): Novas análises e perspectivas ed. Douglas Libby et all. (Belo Horizonte: Fino Traço, 2015).

[373] Historians have found high rates of endogamy in other parts of Portuguese America. On the Bahian high rates of endogamy, Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society*, 391–92. Rates of endogamy in Rio de Janeiro, James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 47; Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *People of Faith: Slavery and African Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 96–97.

forming families among Upper Guineans enslaved people was vital to recreating their cultures in the new context.[374]

The fact that Indigenous enslaved people and freed workers could also seek partners within the same cultural zone has never been asked. By obscuring the role played by Indigenous workers, historians tend to subsume them into an amorphous class of mixed-race workers without cultural background and willpower. Historians implicitly understand that Indigenous people outside the expected places, such as frontiers or religious missions, took an irreversible path that forced them to let their Indigeneity go. Following this interpretation, the condition of workers in cities and farms would be incompatible with being Indigenous once settlers uprooted them from the interior and put them away from religious missions. Even critical interpretations of the use of the category *índio* and the colonial situation in which these populations recreated their lives tend to downplay the importance of cultural zones and backgrounds in the relationships among the Indigenous population.

Mixed marriage is another line of inquiry, or marriage involving people with different legal statuses, when one part of the union was free(d) and the other enslaved. Simply put, marriages involving people with different legal statuses have been interpreted as either a master strategy to incorporate "cheap" labor into their households or a path toward the family's freedom.[375] It is plausible to imagine that enslavers (or maybe former enslavers) played a decisive role in those marital decisions. However, the numbers found by other historians leave

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[374] The data explored by Hawthorne came mostly from the inventories of Maranhão's planters. He does provide total numbers of marriages registered in the Catholic books, but he does not explore that data in depth. Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 180–83.

[375] Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Sistemas de casamento no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Editoria da Universidade de São Paulo, 1984); Eliana Maria Rea Goldschmidt, *Casamentos mistos: liberdade e escravidão em São Paulo colonial* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004); Charlottte Castelnau-L'Estoile, *Un catholicisme colonial: le mariage des Indiens et des esclaves au Brésil, XVIe-XVIIe* (Paris: Puf, 2019).

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unquestioned the majority of free(d) Indigenous workers that decided to formalize unions with

other free(d) Indigenous workers.[376] In other words, the supposed strategy of the slaveholders to

encourage mixed marriages had a limited impact. Much more significant was the decisions made

by Indigenous workers to formalize their unions with other Indigenous workers and not with

recently arrived enslaved Africans. In other words, marital choices were far from only an

extension of former owners' will over the freed population. Instead, these decisions helped create

boundaries among the servile population.

III

The Catholic Church created several norms outlining impediments to celebrating the

marriage sacrament, transforming it into a potentially costly experience for people, both

financially and emotionally. Transgressing those impediments could lead to legal procedures that

ended in light punishments, such as fines, or harsher sentences, from imprisonments to

banishments. The Catholic Church bureaucracy also regulated the sacrament by often requesting

several written documents beforehand – or the option to start a legal procedure for the absence of

those records. Such impediments and the costs associated with the marriage process put even

more weight on the poor classes' decisions to formalize their unions under the blessing of the

Catholic Church.[377]

Marriages officially registered in Catholic books represent a small fraction of consensual

and stable unions in colonial cities such as São Luís. At least two pieces of evidence prove this

point. As in other areas of Ibero-America, the illegitimacy rate among enslaved people was

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[376] Alida Metcalf found that marriages with people with different legal statuses represented 20% of her sample. The number found in my research are not distant and I will discuss them in the following pages.

[377] Not to mention the importance of dowries and the marriage contract implications for inheritance. Susan M. Socolow, "Acceptable Partners: Marriage Choice in Colonial Argentina, 1778-1810," in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Asunción Lavrin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 209-50; Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey in Colonial Mexico*.

significantly higher than that of the free people.[378] In addition, cases of concubinage involving

enslaved women were common.[379] Yet, thousands decided to take the next step and appeared

before the Catholic Church to be celebrated as husband and wife. Their choices should not be

taken lightly.

Brazil's vast territory, combined with a male-majority migrant population of traders,

soldiers, and farmers, encumbered the Catholic Church in its desire to control the people's

spiritual life. Portuguese migration patterns to Brazil involved overwhelmingly more men than

women. In other words, overseas family migration was rare in the Lusophone sphere, contrary to

other colonial enterprises.[380] In this situation, the Church's mission of evangelization of settlers,

Indigenous peoples, and enslaved people faced insurmountable challenges. Indigenous peoples'

marriage traditions and customary practices brought by Portuguese people were the two main

adversaries to the Catholic Church.[381]

Despite recognizing that marriage and unions between men and women belonged to the

natural order and the human instinct of survival, the Catholic Church saw the regulation of those

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[378] According to my research on baptismal records, between 1766 and 1770, 463 enslaved mothers baptized their children in São Luís and on 350 occasions the father was not mentioned in the record (75.6%).

[379] Concubinage was an unequal relation in colonial Brazil. For a discussion of this problem: Ronaldo Vainfas, "Moralidades brasílicas: deleites sexuais e linguagem erótica na sociedade escravista", in Laura de Mello e Souza (ed.) *História da vida privada no Brasil: cotidiano e vida privada na América portuguesa* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 234. Muriel Nazzari, "Concubinage in Colonial Brazil: The Inequalities of Race, Class, and Gender," *Journal of Family History* 21 (1996): 107–24. The Catholic Church tried to patrol the sexual behavior of the population through official *visitas* or denunciations. I found 5 cases of concubinage involving an Indigenous women in São Luís or surrounding areas (Alcantara, Mearim, Itapecuru, and Paço de Lumiar): AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 06, Docs. 913 (Domingos Barbosa Carneiro and Tereza), 923 (Faustino Garcia and Porcina), 927 (António José de Araújo and Joana Batista), 933 (José Araújo and Benta), and 935 (Faustino José Frazão and Catarina). There was a *visita* in 1749: AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 05, Autos de Visita, Visita e Devassa na Freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória em São Luís, Doc. 878 (1749/07/10). The local archive holds one *Livro de denúncias* with numerous cases of concubinage: AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Livro de Registro de Denúncias 1762-1782, Livro 212.

[380] Timothy J. Coates, *Convicts and Orphans: Forced and State-Sponsored Colonization in the Portuguese Empire, 1550-1755* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). For different patterns of migration, Ida Altman, *Emigrants and Society: Extremadura and Spanish America in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

[381] Silva, *Sistema de casamento*, 21-22.

practices as its obligation. Religious texts and moralists from the Early Modern period indicated the detrimental social effects of unregulated marriages, ranging from infertility to lust. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to review the practices of Indigenous marriage in the early years of Brazilian colonization. Still, it is enough to say that most of the debate gravitates towards Jesuit writings and their interpretations of Indigenous marriage rules and practices of polygamy.[382] Changing Indigenous marriage patterns was a great challenge for missionaries in Brazil.[383]

Just as Native Americans had their marriage traditions, Portuguese people brought socially accepted practices from Portugal that did not conform to the Catholic Church norms. Civil legislation, such as the *Ordenações do Reino*, recognized some of those practices, such as the "marriage at the church door" (*casamento à porta da igreja*) and the "presumed marriage" (*casamento presumido*).[384] Conflictive views emanated from Catholic norms, the local community, and other sources of law. While the first saw several of these practices as "concubinage," the latter understood them as legitimate.

After the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church made a concerted effort to bend or suppress those practices. The definition of concubinage is not consensus among specialists. Stable and publicly known relationships between men and women not married in the Catholic Church (*publicidade*) are generally configured as concubinage. Less important was when the man and the woman lived under the same roof (*coabitação*). The *Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia*, one of the most important bodies of norms regulating the Catholic

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[382] Brazilian anthropology has developed fertile discussion based on ethnographical work on kinship structures among Native American people. Only one example: Aparecida Vilaça, "Making Kin out of Others in Amazonia," *Royal Anthropology Institute* 8 (2002), 347-365.

[383] Silva, *Sistema de casamento*, 37.

[384] Silva, *Sistema de casamento*, 111-114.

Church in eighteenth-century Brazil, included explicit references to sexual relations to define concubinage.

The *Constituições Primeiras* clearly defined that enslaved people could marry, but the marriage sacrament would not mean their manumission.[385] There was a minimum age: for women, it was 12 and 14 for men. According to the norms, the Catholic Church's papers required the groom and bride to celebrate the sacrament were unclear. Concrete cases, however, point out the need to prove baptism and residency. In the case of widows, the Catholic Church could request the death record of previous partners. Proving baptisms and deaths that occurred in places different than where the marriage was taking place was challenging in a world with vast distances and inefficient communications. The lack of one of those proofs could lead to a – costly – legal case to justify the baptism and death.

Beyond issues related to baptism and death, there were several other impediments to celebrating the marriage sacrament. Still, the most common for the lower classes were the "*impedimento por afinidade*," or previous sexual relations with people related to the spouse. The *Constituições Primeiras* clearly established that the priest should publicize one's intention of marriage for the community on three Sundays or Saint Days to verify if there were impediments.[386] The community knowledge about the groom and bride would then emerge,

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[385] "*Conforme o direito Divino, e humano os escravos, e escravas podem casar com outras pessoas cativas, ou livres, e seus senhores lhe não podem impedir o matrimônio, nem o uso dele em tempo, e lugar conveniente, nem por esse respeito os podem tratar pior, nem vender para outros lugares remotos, para onde o outro por ser cativo, ou por ter outro justo impedimento o não possa seguir, e fazendo o contrário pecam mortalmente, e tomam sobre suas consciências as culpas de seus escravos, que por este temor se deixam muitas vezes estar, e permanecer em estado de condenação.*" Further in the text, the norm defined: "*E declaramos, que posto que casem, ficam escravos como de antes eram, e obrigados a todo o serviço de seu senhor.*" Constituições Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia feitas, e ordenadas pelo illustrissimo, e reverendissimo senhor d. Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, 5 Arcebispo do dito Arcebispado, e do Conselho de Sua Magestade: Propostas, e aceitas em o synodo diocesano, que o dito senhor celebrou em 12 de junho do anno de 1707. São Paulo: Typographia 2 de Dezembro de Antonio Louzada Antunes, 1853, 125.

[386] Idem, 110. "*Os que pretenderem casar, o farão a saber a seu pároco, antes de se celebrar o matrimônio de presente, para os denunciar, o qual, antes que faça as denunciações, se informará se há entre os contraentes algum impedimento, e estando certo que o não há, fará as denunciações em três domingos, ou dias Santos de guarda*

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producing evidence for a potential obstacle in celebrating the union, from previous sexual encounters with kin to husbands and wives still alive in different parishes. Two individual stories – the couple *índio* Inácio Pereira and *índia* Jacinta (IV) and the case of *índio* Vitor and *cafuza* Inácia (V) – help illustrate the challenges, sometimes with tragic consequences, faced by the lower classes to celebrate the Catholic marriage.

<div align="center">IV</div>

In the main Church of Alcantara, a village neighboring the city of São Luís, on May 6, 1765, the Vicar José Freire de Aguiar posted in consecutive Saint days the marriage intention of the índio Inácio Pereira, a free man, and the índia Jacinta, who served the house of Joana de Jesus.[387] Yet, on one of those occasions, the Vicar José Freire de Aguiar heard from the cafuzo slave Vitorio that índia Jacinta had "*cópula ilícita*" with the brother of Inácio Pereira, a man named Dionísio. The Vicar José Freire de Aguiar reported to the Ecclesiastical Court that the sexual encounter between índia Jacinta and Dionísio was public knowledge in the area because "several other índios knew about that case."[388] According to the Catholic Church norms, the kinship between Inácio Pereira and Dionísio configured an impediment to Inácio Pereira's intention to marry the índia Jacinta ("*impedimento de primeiro grau de afinidade*").

The bureaucracy machine of the Catholic Church worked fast, and in August of 1765, the vicar-general, João Rodrigues Covete, summoned the parties involved to testify before the Ecclesiastical Court. In total, the Court heard five men and women: the two people involved in the alleged sexual encounter, Dionísio and Jacinta; the man who told the Vicar about the event, Vitorio; and two men who had initially told the story to Vitorio.

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contínuos à estação da missa do dia, e as poderá fazer em todo o tempo do ano, ainda que seja Advento, ou Quaresma, em que são proibidos as solenidades do matrimônio."
[387] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4556.
[388] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4556, f. 4.

The vicar-general, João Rodrigues Covete, first listened to the story from the mouth of people directly involved in the incident: the índia Jacinta and índio Dionísio. On August 31, 1765, both índia Jacinta and índio Dionísio denied the allegations of their sexual encounter.[389] On that same day, the Vicar-General requested the presence of Vitorio, who started the rumors tarnishing índia Jacinta's honor. Before the Ecclesiastical Court, Vitorio said that he had heard from two other men the story, first from the índio Jobim and then from the mulato Vicente.[390]

A few days later, the mulato Vicente appeared in the Ecclesiastical Court to give his deposition. Apparently, he changed his story because he only said that there were two Jacintas in the household of Joana de Jesus, and it was impossible to know with whom Dionísio had sexual intercourse.[391] The índio Jobim, on the other hand, offered a straightforward answer that he knew that Dionísio and Jacinta had had sex in the past, and she could not marry Dionísio's brother.[392]

After a few months of delay, the Vicar-General confirmed the impediment to celebrating the marriage sacrament between índio Inácio Pereira and índia Jacinta. Still, the frustration with that decision did not stop the índio Inácio Pereira, who petitioned the Ecclesiastical Court to purge his impediments and allow him to marry the índia Jacinta. Inácio Pereira knew the legal

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[389] The vicar José Freire de Aguiar transcribed the words spoken by the índio Dionísio as: "*E perguntado a ele testemunha pelo mandado de justificação do justificante Inácio Pereira disse ser falso o dizer-se que ele testemunha tivera cópula ilícita com a índia Jacinta com quem está contratado de seu irmão Inácio Pereira para casar.*" Índia Jacinta's words were transcribed as follows: "*E perguntado a ela testemunha pelo mandado de impedimento do justificante Inácio Pereira disse ser falso impedimento com que lhe saíram estando-se a para casar com o cafuzo Inácio Pereira, pois que nunca teve cópula ilícita como disse com Dionísio irmão do impedido o cafuzo Inácio Pereira e mais não disse do dito mandado de impedimento.*" AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4556, f. 5v-6.

[390] "*E perguntado a ele testemunha pelo mandado de justificação do justificante Inácio Pereira disse ouvira dizer ao índio Jobim da vila do serviço da fortaleza e o mulato Vicente servo de Ana Lioneria tinha impedimento entre si o cafuzo Inácio Pereira, de primeiro grau de afinidade para não poder celebrar matrimônio com a índia Jacinta da casa de Joana de Jesus nascido de cópula ilícita que teve a dita índia Jacinta com Dionísio irmão do dito Inácio Pereira e lhe afirmaram as sobreditas testemunhas o ouviram dizer ao mesmo Dionísio.*" AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4556, f. 6v.

[391] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4556.

[392] "*E perguntado a ele testemunha sobre o [] de impedimento dos impedidos Inácio Pereira e da índia Jacinta da casa de Joana de Jesus disse que Dionísio irmão do dito Inácio Pereira tivera cópula ilícita com a dita Jacinta donde resulta o impedimento de primeiro grau nascido da tal cópula ilícita.*" f. 8.

avenues available in the colonial setting, and he signed an authorization (*procuração*) for the settler Francisco Fernandes to represent him in court. Francisco Fernandes argued that the alleged sexual encounter between Jacinta and Dionísio was a false rumor based on the existence of two Jacintas in the household of Joana de Jesus. Fernandes also argued that all this gossip came from worthless Indigenous people (*pessoas de pouco crédito como índios*) and that the court should not take them seriously.[393]

The case ended without a final decision from the Vicar-General but based on several similar cases in other areas of Brazil, it seems plausible to imagine that the Catholic Church later authorized the marriage between índio Inácio Pereira and índia Jacinta.[394] A lot more dramatic was the case of índio Vitor, who was involved in accusations of illicit sexual encounters with his wife's daughter before their marriage.

V

On October 4, 1762, in the Sé Church, the Priest Baltazar Fernandes Bairros Homem celebrated the marriage between índio Vitor, a servant of Inácio Frazão, and the cafuza Inácia, slave of João Ferreira. Both Vitor and Inácia traveled a somewhat long distance for the event. They lived in Maioba, a rural area between the city of São Luís and the Indigenous village of Paço de Lumiar. Rudimentary roads connected the Maioba to the city's core, where the Sé Church was located. This marriage record follows the same formula present in thousands of other documents of this kind: it states the date of the marriage event, the place where it occurred, the name of the priest who celebrated the sacrament, the name of the groom and his parents, the name of the bride and her parents, and the witnesses. The document also states categorically that

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[393] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4556, f. 14.

[394] Other cases of impediments involving Indigenous people in Maranhão. Doc. 4539 – José, preto, and Tereza, índia; 4566 (1771) – Vitório da Costa Lameiro, freed, and Marcela, índia do serviço de Francisco Xavier da Silva; 4570 (1771) – José Inácio, índio, and Marcela dos Reis, índia.

the Priest did the "three *denunciações* in this parish and did not find impediments."[395] These formulaic documents can conceal conflicts and stories that occasionally erupt in the archive.

A few months after the marriage event, on December 26, 1762, José de Faria Alves, an enslaved tailor, told the Priest Baltazar Fernandes Bairros Homem a rumor that could lead to the dissolution of Vitor's marriage. According to Alves, he had heard from another enslaved person, Tomé Pedro Diogo, aka Tomé *Galo*, that índio Vitor had had sex with Maria, the daughter of Inácia, before the celebration of the marriage.[396] Why did José de Faria Alves fail to report the impediment when the marriage intention was announced in the Sé Church three times? What could have happened between the people involved in these rumors between the marriage date and the day Alves went to the Priest's house to tell on Vitor and Inácia? We will never know the answer to these questions, yet these rumors prompted an investigation by the Catholic Church.

To have his deposition recorded, the enslaved tailor José de Faria Alves paused his work on December 29, 1762, and walked a few blocks from his master's house, Tomás Bequimão, to the house of the Vicar-General, João Rodrigues, located at the core of São Luís. The *escrivão*, Bernardo Bequimão, was also present at the occasion and wrote down Alves' words. Alves first confirmed that he was the same person that sought the Priest Baltazar Homem to inform him about the impediment between índio Vitor and cafuza Inácia. Then, Alves repeated the same story – Vitor had had sex with Inacia's daughter, Maria, before marrying Inácia. This tale circulated among the people in São Luís, and he had heard it from the mouth of the mulato Faustino and then the mulato Tomé *Galo*, both slaves of Hilário Pereira de Cáceres. The Vicar-

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[395] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 80.
[396] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 27, Autos Libelo Crime, Doc. 4238.

General requested the presence of Tomé *Galo*, Francisco Inácio, and Valério, who repeated the same stories with slight variations.[397]

The vicar-general, then, summoned the following witness: the índia Inácia, who was Vitor's sister and, like her brother, a servant of Inácio Frazão Castelim (do not mistake her with the cafuza Inácia that married Vitor). On January 3, 1765, the young índia Inácia felt intimidated at the house of vicar-general João Rodrigues Covete, filled with male Ecclesiastical bureaucrats. As the *escrivão* Bernardo Bequimão prepared his pen, Inácia remembered, to give herself more confidence, one of her ordinary days washing clothes at the public foundation when she had a conversation with Maria, daughter of cafuza Inácia. As Inácia filled her container with water, Maria told her about a previous sexual encounter with Vitor. Inácia also recalled Maria's astonishment at her mother's decision to marry Vitor. At the end of the work for that day, uncertain about the right decision to make but perhaps anticipating the potentially severe consequences for her fellow washerwomen, índia Inácia went to talk with both the cafuza Inácia and Inácio Frazão Castelim, her owner.[398]

It would be two days before Maria and the Vicar-General João Rodrigues Covete finally faced each other at his house, and she was able at last to unburden herself of the acts that she did together with índio Vitor. On January 5, 1765, Maria was just an 18-year-old woman. She started her deposition by confirming the story: she had told índia Inácia about the sexual encounter when they were washing clothes in the public fountain. Maria also confirmed that she lied before

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[397] They added the *cafuzo* José Luiz Camboa, the black Gonçalo Francisco and the black João.

[398] "*E sendo lhe perguntado pelo conteúdo no impedimento disse, que ela o que sabia somente era que estando a testemunha uma ocasião na fonte enchendo o seu pote que é o rio do seu sítio lhe disse Maria filha da cafuza Inácia impedida e escrava de Inácio Frazão, que não sabia como sua mãe a cafuza Inácia havia de casar com Vitor irmão dela testemunha pois ela Maria tinha tido cópula carnal com o dito Vitor e tendo disto notícia a dita cafuza Inácia, mandou chamar a dita Maria sua filha e perguntando-lhe se era certo ter tido a dita cópula com o dito Vitor, negou não ter tido dita cópula, e assim depois entrou a negar que não tivera dita cópula com o dito Vitor como foi a seus amos quando lhe perguntaram.*" AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 27, Autos Libelo Crime, Doc. 4238, 5v.

her mother and owner when they heard the story and questioned her about the truth. When Covete asked Maria why she had lied to her mother and master, she said it was because she was "ashamed of them."[399]

The evidence produced by these witnesses was enough for the Vicar-General to order the imprisonment of índio Vitor. The bailiff Manoel Vieira da Cunha went to the Maioba to capture Vitor and brought him in chains to the prison in the city. A few hours later, the jailor António Fernandes took Vitor to the presence of the vicar-general to be questioned. The questioning was probably fast since Vitor confessed his sin and was aware that his sexual encounter with Maria configured an impediment to marrying her mother. Yet, he pledged ignorance on whether that would annul his marriage with Inácia.[400]

A few days later, on January 13, 1763, was the time for Inácia to walk into the Vicar-General's house and offer her version of the story. Inácia, already a 40-year-old woman, was significantly older than Vitor and her daughter, Maria. Inácia started her deposition by saying that she had heard rumors involving her daughter and her husband (*ouviu algum sussurro)*. The whispers reached her ears through the índia Inácia, who later said she was teasing Inácia with that false gossip. Inácia recalled a conversation with her daughter, who also denied the truth of

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[399] "*E sendo lhe perguntado pelo conteúdo no impedimento, e no referimento que nela fez a testemunha a índia Inácia disse ser verdade ter ela tido cópula carnal com Vitor índio do serviço do senhor dela depoente Inácio Frazão, antes deste casar com sua mãe a cafuza Inácia escrava do ajudante João Ferreira, como também é certo ter dito ela depoente a índia Inácia do serviço também de seu senhor Inácio Frazão em frente do rio, ter tido cópula com o dito índio Vitor com quem a dita sua mãe pretendia casar, e tendo disto notícia a mandou chamar a ela depoente e lhe perguntou se era certo ter ela tido cópula com o dito Vitor ao que ela respondeu que era falso não ter tido dita cópula com o dito Vitor e o mesmo disse ela depoente a seus senhores quando lhe perguntaram, o que fez ela por vergonha da dia sua mãe e senhores.*" Idem, f. 6v-7.

[400] "*E sendo lhe perguntado pelo conteúdo no impedimento disse que ele era o próprio Vitor que dele se fazia menção no impedimento e que era certo ter ele tido cópula carnal com Maria escrava do dito Inácio Frazão antes de ela casar com a cafuza Inácia mãe da dita Maria a qual Inácia é escrava do ajudante João Ferreira com a qual ele testemunha já tinha tido cópula carnal antes de ter com a filha Maria; e casou ele depoente com a dita Inácia sabendo muito bem que tinha feito pecado grave em ter tido cópula com a mãe e com a filha sabia também que era impedimento para poder casar com a dita Inácia tendo tido cópula com a dita sua filha Maria, porém não sabia que se casando assim como se casou com a dita Inácia ficava nulo, ou não o dito matrimônio*." Idem, f. 7v-8.

the rumors involving her and índio Vitor. After all that, she said that she married Vitor "in good faith" because both her friend Inácia and her daughter Maria denied the rumors.[401]

The evidence produced in the investigation and the people's confession left no choice to the vicar-general but to keep Vitor in jail.[402] The promotor, Francisco Matabosque, wrote down serious charges against índio Vitor. According to him, Vitor decided to marry Inácia despite his awareness of his crimes and being a baptized Christian. For Matabosque, the marriage should be considered null, and Vitor should be charged with expulsion (*excomunhão*) and banishment (*degredo*).[403]

From prison, the índio Vitor gave powers to Silvestre António Nogueira to represent him in court.[404] Nogueira asked for forgiveness based on Vitor's condition as an "índio and miserable person" (*como índio e pessoa miserável*). Nogueira argued that Vitor did not know the law, and because of that, he was ignorant about the crime that he was committing. Finally, Nogueira asked the Vicar-General's forgiveness based on the time Vitor had already spent in jail and "his ignorance."[405] However, on February 2, 1763, Nogueira's arguments in favor of Victor's

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[401] "*E sendo lhe perguntado pelo conteúdo no impedimento disse que ela era própria Inácia conteúda no dito impedimento escrava do ajudante João Ferreira que com efeito contraiu matrimônio com Vitor índio do serviço de Inácio Frazão na suposição que entre eles não havia impedimento e por ela depoente ouvir algum sussurro de que sua filha Maria tinha tido cópula carnal com o dito índio Vitor, pelo assim ter dito a índia Inácia no rio indo-se lavar, e mandando ela depoente chamar a dita Inácia para averiguar a verdade esta lhe disse, que a dita sua filha Maria assim lhe tinha dito, mas que agora dizia, o dissera zombando pois nunca tivera cópula com o dito Vitor; e querendo ela depoente tirar se de toda a dúvida mandou chamar ela depoente a dita sua filha Maria, e inquerindo dela, do melhor modo que pode se era certo ter ela tido cópula carnal com o dito Vitor, porque se queria deixar ela depoente da pretensão de casar com ele lhe respondeu a dita sua filha que era falso pois nunca ela tivera em tempo algum cópula com o dito Vitor e replicando-lhe ela depoente que ela assim o tinha dito a índia Inácia irmã do dito Vitor, lhe respondeu que sim o dissera, mas que isso o disse por zombaria a dita Inácia por sempre andar zombando, e brincando com ela; mas que na verdade não tivera ela trato algum ilícito com o dito Vitor; e nesta boa fé casou ela então depoente com o dito Vitor, até agora que se descobriu o dito impedimento.*" Idem, f. 8v-9v.

[402] "*Obrigam as testemunhas deste sumário a que se conserve na prisão em que se acha, o índio Vitor a minha ordem e o Reverendo Doutor Promotor promova com libelo contra ele para o que fará citar, e contra, Maria escrava de Inácio Frazão se [processará] as ordens necessárias ser presa na cadeia desta cidade [visto] o que se prova contra ela neste sumário. Maranhão 14 de janeiro de 1763.*"
[403] Idem, f. 3.
[404] Idem, f. 5.
[405] Idem, f. 6.

"ignorance" were not accepted, and Victor should be punished with banishment ("*ser julgado por incurso nas penas requeridas no libelo*").

Vitor's case demonstrates the limits of the strategic use of the índio category. In his instance, the Catholic Church understood that Vitor knew what he was doing and had enough understanding of the law to be punished accordingly. In this case, the Church did not accept the special treatment for Indigenous people based on their "miserable" condition.[406]

Throughout the early modern period, the Catholic Church transformed the marriage sacrament into something bureaucratic, permeated by rules and impediments, that could be prohibitively costly for the population, especially the lower classes, and lead to punishments for violations of norms, from fines to prison and banishment. The two cases explored demonstrate that the Catholic Church was not the only part interested in people formalizing their stable unions before the Church. The lower classes also actively sought that when, for example, they started legal procedures to purge impediments. Considering the limitations imposed by the Catholic Church and possible grave consequences, the following section discusses the meaning of marriage choices among the lower classes in São Luís.

VI

Tereza, *índia forra do gentio da terra do sertão do Pará*, arrived in São Luís in the 1750s after travelling down the Amazon River from the *Aldeia de São Paulo* in the *sertão das Amazonas.* It is unclear whether Tereza decided to freely leave her life in the interior and move

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[406] The Introduction outlines how the Portuguese system incorporated Indigenous Americans into legal categories. There are other cases in the Ecclesiastical Court indicating that the "miserable" condition was not directly applied for Indigenous workers incorporated into the colonial sphere. The case of índia Juliana is worth mentioning here. Juliana sought the Ecclesiastical Court to divorce her husband, the cafuzo João. João was enslaved in the household of Francisco Xavier Baldez. João spent months away from home, and Juliana tried to remedy her situation by "selling" her body. After João's return to São Luís, he tried to stab her after knowing about Juliana's sexual relations with other men. Like Victor, Juliana activated the índio status and the miserable condition without success in court. AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 30, Autos Feitos Cíveis Libelo Divórcio, Doc. 4393 (1749).

to São Luís or if she was coerced by some Portuguese military expedition and recruited to toil in an urban household. While living in the interior, she probably acquired some knowledge of Portuguese or the *língua geral* and basic instructions in the Catholic religion. Upon her arrival in São Luís, like many other female workers, Tereza possibly performed domestic chores for a household, working as a washerwoman in the public fountain or doing light farming of manioc, tobacco, or cotton. By the end of 1753, Tereza decided to marry the black man José, a slave of the widow Angela dos Anjos.[407] After the *banhos matrimoniais*, the priest found some impediments to celebrating the union: Tereza had already married índio João Mirim from the *Aldeia Paraguari* (Solimões River), and there was no confirmation that João Mirim was dead.[408]

The priest responsible for spotting the impediment was dom João Marques da Silva, who had heard the rumors of Tereza's earlier marriage from another black slave called João. The Catholic Church summoned Silva to give his deposition about the case. On January 11, 1754, he confirmed that the enslaved black João told him that Tereza was married in the *sertões do Pará* to João Mirim, and there was no confirmation of João Mirim's death. A few days later, the Ecclesiastical Court requested the presence of the enslaved black João. In his deposition, João confessed that he knew the índia Tereza for many years because they lived in the same *Aldeia* called *São Paulo do Gentio Cameo do sertão das Amazonas*.[409] João recalled that one year ago,

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[407] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 33, Auto de Impedimento, Doc. 4539.

[408] Bigamy was considered a serious offense. The crime was under civil and Inquisitorial jurisdiction. "Regimento do Santo Ofício da Inquisição dos Reinos de Portugal," 1640, título III, parágrafo XII. It was also in the Ordenações, Livro V, título XIX. Silva, 122-123. On the *banhos*: Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Sistema de casamento no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1984), 114–17; Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 80–82. On the Indigenous *aldeias* David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640-1750" (PhD. Diss., Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1974), 492.

[409] I believe João was referring to the *aldeia* São Paulo in the Solimões River. "Cameo" is probably a reference to "Cambebas" or the Omaguá in Spanish sources. The region was constantly attacked by Portuguese slavers in the seventeenth century, and it was home to a large system of Jesuit missions under Father Samuel Fritz in the late seventeenth century. Carmelite missions would be established there in the following years. Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640-1750," 385.

when he left the *Aldeia*, João Mirim was still alive. Tereza had to request confirmation from a missionary that João Mirim was dead before marrying the black José. On January 30, 1754, the priest, Francisco da Rocha Lima, confirmed that Tereza was free to marry the black José. A few days later, on February 9, 1754, the black José and the índia Tereza appeared before the priest in the Sé Church to celebrate their marriage.[410]

Afro-Indigenous marriages were not so common in eighteenth-century Maranhão. Still, in this case, the black man, José, already had social networks in São Luís, and the Indigenous woman, Tereza, did not, since she had recently migrated from the interior of Amazonia. Throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, the abolition of Indigenous enslavement and the growth of the transatlantic slave trade continued to shape marital decisions.

The data exposed in Tables 11 and 12 confirm what historians have maintained: enslaved Africans tended to marry other enslaved African, mainly when specific geographical and cultural origins are considered. The trend became even more evident as the number of enslaved Africans steadily grew in the 1760s and 1770s. Yet, I offer two new elements: the power Indigenous workers had in shaping those marriage choices and the importance of social networks for those decisions.

Endogamous marriages were the norm, even before the publication of the law abolishing Indigenous slavery and before the massive arrival of enslaved Africans (1748-1757). Unions like José and Tereza, or of an African man and an Indigenous woman, were rare. Of the 41 African men identified in the records, only seven married Indigenous women (17%). Only 5 of the 37 Indigenous men in these records married African women (13.5%). In almost all these cases, the groom and bride belonged to the same household. Enslaved people commonly selected their

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[410] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 98v (1754/02/09).

partners among the other enslaved people from the same household, especially when they were part of sizeable households.[411] The couple belonged to the same enslaver in all but one of the cases in which an African man married an Indigenous woman.[412] They were all part of important and easily identifiable settlers' households: Lourenço Belfort, Pedro Lamaignere, and Vicente Ferreira da Costa. These settlers were all connected through kinship and commercial alliances and would later be involved in the export economy of leather, rice, and cotton. It seems plausible to suggest that before the constant flux of enslaved Upper Guineans, the boundaries between socio-racial classification were more fluid and that social relations within the household probably determined their decision to marry.

Table 14 Marriage Choices, Maranhão, 1748-1757

	FEMALE				
MALE	African	Indigenous	Mixed	NS	Total
African	20	7	7	7	41[413]
Indigenous	5	24	3	5	37[414]
Mixed	1	6	11	11	29[415]
N.S.[416]	1	6	5	81	93
Total	27	43	26	104	200

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[411] One example, Alida C Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil: Santana de Parnaíba, 1580-1822* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 165.

[412] The example already explored of the black José and *índia* Tereza is the only one in which the Indigenous bride was freed.

[413] Male/Angola: 15; Male/Cacheu: 5; Male/Guiné: 6; Male/Preto: 14; Male/Mina: 2; Male/Mozambique: 1 (Total: 43). Including two marriages that happened with Free people.

[414] Male/Gentio da terra: 15; Male/Gentio do Amazonas: 5; Male/Índio: 6; Male/Índio da terra: 4; Male/Sertão do Pará: 7 (Total: 37).

[415] Male/Cafuzo: 15; Male/Mulato: 4; Male/Mestiço: 7; Male/Mameluco: 3 (Total: 29).

[416] N.S. stands for "Not Stated," or cases when the classification was not recorded in the document.

Enslaved Indigenous from the interior of Amazonia recorded in Catholic marriage registers usually married another person from the interior of Amazonia. Of 80 people labeled as "Indigenous" in the Catholic marriage registers before the abolition of Indigenous slavery, 30 received labels associated with their Amazonian origin, such as "*do sertão do Pará*" and "*do gentio do Amazonas*," with slight variations.[417] These 30 Indigenous Amazonians represent a significant 37.5% of the Indigenous workers identified in marriage records. This number points to the crucial role that the Transamazonic slave trade played in the formation of the Indigenous working people in São Luís. Significantly, they tended to marry others with similar geographic designations, belonged to the same household, and had no parents listed in the Catholic record, indicating their recent arrivals. By the late 1730s and 1740s, Portuguese slavers raided and traded Indigenous prisoners, mainly in the Upper Rio Negro. These enslaved Indigenous people were likely Tukanoan, Arawakan, and Maku. Because these groups practiced linguistic exogamous marriage, it makes sense that they would gravitate towards people from the same broad geographical area.[418]

The Indigenous worker Tomé, for instance, survived the Amazonian passage and arrived in São Luís around June of 1753. On the 24th of that month, he received his baptism as an adult in the Sé Church. The Catholic priest recording Tomé's baptism labeled him as "*do gentio do sertão do Pará*" and as a slave of Lourenço Belfort. Deprived of social networks and probably with a rudimentary understanding of the Portuguese language, Tomé had a small pool of options

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[417] Male/Gentio do Amazonas = 5; Male/Sertão do Pará = 7; Female/Gentio do Amazonas = 8; Female/Sertão do Pará = 10.

[418] For a more detailed analysis of marriage practices among Indigenous groups from the Upper Rio Negro, see Chapter 2.

from which to choose his godfather. Felix, an enslaved man who also belonged to Belfort's household, fulfilled that task.[419]

Approximately one year later, Tomé went to the Sé Church again to celebrate his Catholic marriage. Not surprisingly, Tomé chose Germana as his companion, another Indigenous woman from the "*sertão do Pará*," who was also enslaved in Belfort's household.[420] What was the previous relationship between Tomé and Germana? What language did they speak? It is hard to answer these questions, but it seems plausible to suggest that they shared at least the experience in the Amazonian passage.

Tomé and Germana had at least one child, the woman Fabiana, who was baptized in the Sé Church by the priest Baltazar Homem on February 16, 1756, or around three years after Tomé's arrival in São Luís from the interior of Amazonia. On that occasion, Baltazar Homem recorded Tomé and Germana as "slaves" of Lourenço Belfort. Fabiana's godparents were selected among the servile people connected to Belfort's household. The godfather was Pedro, servo of Belfort. The godmother, in turn, was Vitória, serva of dom João Marques da Silva, who was Belfort's brother-in-law.[421]

Another couple of Indigenous workers, Rosaura and Caetano, further explore endogamous marriages' tendencies. It is impossible to know precisely when Rosaura was enslaved and compulsorily moved to São Luís. She could have been captured in one of the big slave raids in the mid-1740s, or she could have been forcibly transported there in earlier years as a child. Despite the lack of details about her ordeal through the Amazon River, Rosaura found herself in the 1750s working for the settler Fernão de Góes.

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[419] AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 111 (1753/06/24).
[420] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 111v (1754/06/01).
[421] AAM, LRBFNSV 104, f. 123 (1756/02/16).

On January 23, 1752, in the afternoon, Rosaura left Fernão de Góes' house and walked to the Sé Church for her marriage with Caetano, who was also an Indigenous worker. The Church was full that day. Among the people that descended to the city's center were the settlers António David Costa and Francisco Xavier das Chagas, the witnesses of the marriage event. Caetano appeared in their marriage record as "*criolo da terra*," a legitimate son of Bonifácio and Arcangela, a freed índia. The priest, Francisco Matabosque, wrote down more precisely the origin of Rosaura. She was "*do gentio das Amazonas*," a slave of Fernão de Góes. Matabosque silenced the names of Rosaura's parents.[422]

"*Do gentio das Amazonas*" is a generic classification indicating that Rosaura was at least not from the city of São Luís or one of the neighboring Indigenous villages. We will likely never know if Portuguese slavers captured her in the Rio Negro area, the Branco River, the Solimões, or even from which Indigenous group Rosaura originally belonged. Yet the marriage register of Caetano and Rosaura tells us that Indigenous workers sought each other in São Luís after surviving the Amazonian passage. It is possible to imagine that Caetano's parents also came from the interior of Amazonia, but a few years earlier. Based on his classification, he was born in the city but raised by his Indigenous parents. It is plausible that he would desire a wife culturally close to the environment he probably lived in São Luís.

A few months after their marriage, Caetano and Rosaura went to another Catholic Church to baptize their daughter, Lourença. The baptism occurred in the Chapel of São Gonçalo da Ilha Pequena, located not far from the core of São Luís. Fernão de Góes, the owner, probably had some small farm close by, and the couple was potentially there. Caetano and Rosaura appear simply as servos of Fernão de Goés, and the register does not provide a single clue about their

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[422] AAM, LRCFNSV 85, f. 53 (1752/01/23).

origin, color, or ethnicity. The young Lourença had two free godparents, José da Costa and Brígida Eleutéria.[423]

The examples of Indigenous workers Caetano and Rosaura and Tomé and Germana point out the resilience of Indigenous workers within cities and farms thousands of miles from where they were born. They appropriated Catholic sacraments to forge ties with people who shared cultural aspects and laboring experiences with them. On the one hand, marriages positioned those Indigenous workers within settlers' households and probably helped them cope with the hardships of slavery and life in a colonial setting far removed from their homelands in the interior of Amazonia. On the other hand, ritual kinship (compadrio) was a chance to create networks beyond the influence of the master and preferably with the free sectors of that society. Horizontal compadrio, among the enslaved population, like the example exposed in the couple Tomé and Germana, could serve their interests well.

VII

The number of unions between Indigenous and African workers dropped in the following decades. Only 14 of 168 marriages involved African men and Indigenous women (8.3%). Significantly, these African men did not receive socio-racial classifications associated with recently arrived enslaved people, such as "*Guiné*" and "*Cacheu.*" 11 of them were labeled as "*preto*" (or black), and 8 had parents listed, which indicates that they were rooted in the community. For example, on February 11, 1760, the preto Jeronimo and the índia Laureana married in the Sé Church. Jeronimo was the legitimate son of the *preto* Ventura and his wife, the *preta* Joana, all slaves of Maria da Costa. Jeronimo lived in the *Rua da Cruz*, at the city's core and just a few blocks from the Sé Church. The Catholic priest was silent about Laurena's parents

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[423] AAM, LRBFNSV 103, f. 109 (1753/06/10).

but recorded that she "came from the *sertão do Pará.*" Laurena was "freed by the new law" and

was still serving Monica Maria, who lived in the *Praia Grande*.[424]

Strikingly, only two unions were recorded between Indigenous men and African women.

This was probably a consequence of the gender imbalance of the transatlantic slave trade.

Table 15 Marriage Choices, Maranhão, 1758-1773

		FEMALE			
MALE					
	African	Indigenous	Mixed	N.S.	Total
African	137	14	5	12	168
Indigenous	2	54	9	21	86
Mixed	4	5	21	32	62
N.S.	3	12	17	122	154
Total	146	85	52	187	470

The vested interest of masters could have played a role in marital arrangements involving

people with different legal statuses. According to Canon Law, the wife must follow the husband,

and those unions could represent the acquisition of "cheap" labor for the groom's master.[425]

Considering only the second sample, between 1758-1773, and disregarding classifications, 49

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[424] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 11 (1760/02/11).

[425] Eliana Goldschmidt, *Casamentos mistos: liberdade e escravidão em São Paulo colonial* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004), 148–49.

male enslaved married free(d) women out of 224 (21.8%). Under the same conditions, 32 female enslaved married free(d) men out of 195 (16.4%). The numbers for Maranhão seem to align with the results for other regions, such as São Paulo.

Over time, Indigenous workers' decision to formalize their unions with other Indigenous workers became even more evident. Of the 86 Indigenous men in this sample, 54 married an Indigenous woman (62.7%). Two transformations in earlier marital patterns emerge from the serial data in the Church registers. First, Indigenous workers were no longer recorded as "slaves." After the publication of the abolition law of 1755, the Portuguese legal system preserved customary labor arrangements under the ambiguous status, "*do serviço*" and people formally designated as "slaves" now appear in the Catholic records either as "*forro*" or as "*do serviço*."[426] The governor enacted orders allowing masters to keep their Indigenous workers in their households if it was a consensual agreement and under the payment of a salary, known as "*soldada*."[427] One hundred seventeen people in the marriage record bore that legal status and 67 (57.2%) received some socio-racial classification associated with Indigenous people.[428] Moreover, the correlation between the master of the groom and the master of the bride was not as strong as the one that existed when both the groom and bride were "slaves," which seems to reinforce a movement away from the former enslaver's influence.

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[426] It is important to note that Catholic priest often recorded the former master of Indigenous freed workers. For example, on May 5, 1761, Agostinho married Ludovina. The Catholic priest, Baltazar Fernandes wrote that Agostinho was an "*índio*" and "freed by the law" who was a slave of Bento Lopes Graça. About Ludovina, Baltazar Fernandes said that she "used to serve" the deceased Manoel Afonso Pereira, and "today she is also freed by the new law." AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 37v (1761/05/05).

[427] APEM, CMSL, 86, f. 182v. "Registro de um bando que mandou lançar o Governador desta Capitania pelas ruas públicas desta cidade e a som de caixa sobre os índios não saírem fora das casas dos seus amos e o mais que nele se dclara."

[428] I found the same pattern on baptismal records. I identified 93 mothers between 1766-1770 with that legal status. 49 of those received Indigenous socio-racial classifications (52.6%).

Second, with the waning of the Transamazonic slave trade, socio-racial classifications associated with Indigenous Amazonians lost ground to more generic and creolized terms, such as "índio," "índio mestiço," "índio mameluco," and "índio cafuzo."

The union between Indigenous workers João Flávio and Josefa illustrates the process of endogamy among Indigenous people, how generic socio-racial labels replaced more precise ones, and the persistence of customary labor arrangements. A few years after the publication of the abolition law of 1755, on July 27, 1764, João Flávio and Josefa married in the Sé Church. Bernardo Bequimão, the Catholic priest, labeled both groom and bride as "*from the sertão do Pará.*" Both the groom and bride were still serving settler Francisco Xavier Correia, probably under some labor contract (*ambos do serviço de Francisco Xavier Correia*). The two witnesses in the marriage event were the brothers, Captain António da Rocha Araújo and Captain Domingos da Rocha Araújo.[429]

Four years after their marriage, on September 28, 1768, João Flávio and Josefa paid another visit to the Sé Church. This time, the couple baptized their daughter, Ana Josefa, and João Flávio and Josefa appear not as "from the sertão do Pará" but simply as "índios." Significantly, the godfather of their daughter was the same Captain António da Rocha Araújo, who had served as their marriage witness. The godmother also came from the free sector of that society, the Captain's wife, Engrácia Maria.[430]

After spending a few years in the city or surrounding ranches and farms, Indigenous Amazonians incorporated more generic labels. They recreated ties with people that shared their

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[429] AAM, LRCFNS 86, f. 132v (1764/07/27).
[430] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 125 (1768/09/28).

predicaments, but they broadened their social networks with ritual kinship with free people. Recently arrived enslaved Africans had a lot more trouble doing the same.

The endogamy of enslaved Africans was prominent when the broad geographical and cultural zone was considered. Considering enslaved people labeled as "Balanta," "Bijagó," "Cacheu," and "Guiné" as Upper Guineans, we count a total of 119 males between 1748 and 1773. An overwhelming majority, 101, married an Upper Guinean woman (84.8%). The other two groups identified in Catholic records are Angola and Mina. People who bore these classifications did not present the same willingness to find a similar one. Such as Walter Hawthorne argued that during the operation of the trading company, enslaved Africans arriving in Maranhão came from similar areas in Africa and recreated their ties after the Atlantic crossing. It also seems relevant to point out that their options were limited since already incorporated/creolized workers were unwilling to forge relationships with people deprived of social networks.

Noting who were the witnesses for marriage events offers another element to understanding the separation between Indigenous workers and recently arrived enslaved Africans. While enslaved people rarely served as witnesses for marriages among Indigenous workers, recently arrived enslaved Africans often relied on fellow enslaved Africans to fulfill that mandatory requirement in the Catholic sacrament.

Indigenous workers tended to marry another Indigenous worker, just as enslaved Africans from Upper Guinea did. The formation of that group in São Luís involved cultural traditions, phenotypical assessment, lineage, and labor. It is essential to point out that people from different Native American groups were lumped together under the colonial category "índio." During the 1730s, 40s, and 50s, Portuguese military men raided and traded Indigenous people from different

Amazonian areas under the guise of descimentos and resgates. Throughout the same period and continuing in the following decades, the violent clashes between Portuguese ranchers and farmers and autonomous Indigenous groups in Maranhão's savannah produced hundreds of captives that ended up in the households of São Luís's settlers. Coming from areas thousands of miles apart, these people certainly did not share language and cultural traits, but Catholic sources only allow us to suggest that during the period of the Transamazonic slave trade (before 1755), people from Amazonia sought relationships with other Indigenous Amazonians in São Luís. It is hard to make the same argument once generic socio-racial classifications for Indigenous people replaced broadly geographical terms for a person's origin (such as *do sertão do Pará* or *gentio das Amazonas*).

Over time, however, a significant part of Indigenous workers appeared in Catholic records as "naturais" from São Luís. They were likely descendants of enslaved Indigenous Amazonians who mingled with Indigenous people from other areas. These Indigenous workers were under a variety of regimes of coerced labor. The process of creolization, which included living and working in a colonial city, practicing the Catholic religion, understanding the place of índios within the empire, and socializing within a multi-ethnic society, certainly did not erase their Indigeneity but was at the very core of it. In sum, there was no contradiction in the fact that these Indigenous workers were probably born in the city and not part of communal life in an Indigenous village but could still strategically use the category índio.[431]

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[431] Indigenous rights as communal/localized exercises and the almost complete absence of the word indio in Native languages, see James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 8. For urban indios, the persistence of forms of identification, and strategic use of the category, Dana Velasco Murillo, *Urban Indians in a Silver City: Zacatecas, Mexico, 1546-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 5. The best comparision for Brazil is the notion of *índio aldeado* and their collective privileges, Maria Regina Celestino de Almeida, *Metamorfoses indígenas: identidade e cultura nas aldeias coloniais do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2013), 303, 324. The importance of legal categories in the colonial expansion, Tamar Herzog, "The

Some colonial sources discuss distinctions between Indigenous and African people based on phenotypical assessments, such as hair texture, the color of skin, and facial features. It is hard to grasp whether the servile population shared these notions. Yet, it seems plausible that people understood that lineage was vital to be included in the índio category. In other words, the socio-racial classification of one's mother – or how the community knew her – was crucial to defining one's socio-racial classification. Lineage became even more important for ordinary people once the new law from Lisbon (June 6, 1755) guaranteed freedom for those who were índios or descendants of índias. It is not a coincidence that some Catholic marriage records clearly emphasize the Indigenous ancestry of the newlywed couple. For example, on March 30, 1761, when João da Luz, a freedman, married Marciana, a freedwoman, the priest Baltazar Fernandes wrote down both of their parents, Rosa and Agostinho and Ana, respectively. Baltazar Fernandes also included the important information that they were all descendants of índios (*todos descendentes de índios*).[432]

The reconstruction of some moments in Zacarias da Luz's family reveals the trajectory of Indigenous people from slavery to freedom and autonomy. In roughly 20 years, Zacarias went from a life in bondage to a freed worker and owner of at least two houses in São Luís.

In the 1750s, Zacarias belonged to one of the prominent households in Maranhão before the rise of the export economy in the 1760s and 1770s. His initial owner was Francisco Xavier Baldez, a landowner and member of the local government, the Municipal Council. The wife of Baldez was Lourença de Távora, from another distinguished local family. Francisco Xavier Baldez died around October 19, 1750, and his last will certainly does not reflect the total number

Appropriation of Native Status: Forming and Reforming Insiders and Outsiders in the Spanish Colonial World," *Rechtsgeschichte Legal History* 22 (2014): 140-149.
[432] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 34v (1761/03/30).

of enslaved people from his household. Zacarias was not mentioned in the notarized will, and

Francisco Xavier Baldez granted manumission to two young men, Bernardo and Silvestre, sons

of the mamelucas Teodora and Cecília, respectively.[433]

A few years after Baldez's death, Lourença de Távora, his wife, wrote her last will.

There, we can certify that Teodora and Cecília were long-time servants of the households and

that Lourença de Távora freed the two women.[434] The domestic servants of Lourença de

Távora's house also received money and valuable objects. The mameluca Clara, for example,

received 10$000 *réis* and a bed. The boy Silvestre, son of Clara, received his manumission and

10$000 *réis*.

Yet, Zacarias certainly was not included in the gratuitous manumissions offered by

Lourença de Távora. Távora was explicit in her last will, saying that beyond the three domestic

servants that received manumission, the other would have to find another owner willing to pay,

go to the public, or pay for their freedom.[435]

Even though Zacarias does not appear in the last will of both Francisco Xavier Baldez

and Lourença de Távora, parish records confirm that he was enslaved for a few years in the

household. On February 7, 1751, Zacarias attended the baptism sacrament of Marcelo, the son of

another enslaved person, Catarina, a slave of Captain João Batista. Zacarias and Inácia were

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[433] "*Declaro que entre mim e minha mulher Dona Lourença de Távora forramos um rapaz por nome Silvestre filho da mameluca Cecília nossa escrava a qual dita alforria se acha no livro de notas feito por Francisco Tavares de Barbuda na qual alforria não haverá dúvida alguma.*" f. 22v.

[434] "*Declaro que os bens que possuo são os que me tocaram por meação do defunto meu marido, e alguns trastes e peças mais do meu uso, que bem sabem meus testamenteiros, e de tudo darão conta por juramento as* <u>*duas mamelucas que me servem porta a dentro*</u> *Clara e Cecília. Declaro que entre os escravos que possuo se acham estas duas acima nomeadas Cecília e Clara ambas filhas da minha mameluca Teodora as quais todas três filhas, e mãe deixo forras livres, e isentas de toda a pensão de cativeiro sem sujeição alguma pelo bom serviço que delas tenho tido, fidelidade, e amor com que me tem servido, com a condição porém de me mandarem dizer todos os anos cada uma delas três missas pela minha alma enquanto forem vivas.*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1751-1756, f. 85.

[435] "*Declaro que os escravos que possuo que sabem muito bem meus testamenteiros quais eles são fora os três que deixo forros poderão buscar senhores a sua satisfação e meus testamenteiros os poderão vender pelo seu justo valor sem que seja necessário irem a praça.*" ATJMA, Livro de Registro de Testamentos 1751-1765, f. 88.

Marcelo's godparents, and both appear in the record as "slaves of the widow Francisco Xavier Baldez."[436]

A few years later, on August 9, 1758, Zacarias decided to marry the índia Margarida. In this instance, Zacarias appears as the legitimate son of Calisto and Doreteia, enslaved by Francisco Xavier Baldez. Índia Margarida was the natural daughter of Izabel, "freed by the new law of Your Majesty and servant of Clara Peregrina." Priest Baltazar Fernandes Bairros Homem wrote down the register and added crucial information beyond the typical formula of those documents. After confirming the three denunciations and that no impediment was found, the priest penned that the bride was aware of Zacarias' legal status; Zacarias was still paying for his freedom and was in a liminal situation between slavery and freedom.[437]

Considering that Zacarias was an Indigenous man – or at least he would appear in later documents as índio: Why did he have to purchase his freedom after the publication of the abolition law of 1755? There are at least three possible explanations. First, the abolition law of 1755 was published only in 1757, and Zacarias could still not understand the legal avenues and how to use that law in his favor, despite the obvious example of his wife. Second, the law of 1755 explicitly said that freedom claims based on Indigenous ancestry were exclusive from the maternal side. Zacarias' Indigenous heritage could come from his father and not his mother, hindering the possibility of activating that part of the law to gain his freedom. Finally, Zacarias could have used his marriage with an Indigenous woman to become an índio or be incorporated into the local networks of São Luís' Indigenous workers through marital decisions.

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[436] "*escravos da vivúva do defunto Francisco Xavier Baldez.*" AAM, LFBFNSV 102, f. 155v (1751/02/07).
[437] "*com a condição de que saindo o dito contraente escravo, haver ela dita contraente o matrimonio por firme e valioso, pois era ciente, que o dito contraente andava liquidando a sua liberdade, e deste mesmo consentimento já havia feito termo na câmara eclesiástica, o que me vinha constando por uma postila do escrivão posta em um requerimento que o dito contraente havia feito ao Reverendo Doutor Vigário Geral deste bispado João Rodrigues Covete...*" AAM, LRCFSV 85, f. 228 (1758/08/09).

Ten years after his marriage, Zacarias and his wife went to the Sé Church to baptize one of their children. On October 27, 1767, the priest Bernardo Bequimão put the holy oils in the young woman Tereza de Jesus. She was the daughter of Zacarias and his wife, Margarida. The godparents were both free people: José António Barroso and Maria Madalena de Jesus. Significantly, Zacaria appears in this instance as a mestiço freed worker (*mestiço forro*) married to Margarida, also labeled as a freed worker.[438]

Zacarias da Luz's consolidation as an índio happened when he notarized a commercial transaction with João de Melo Sá a few years after the baptism of one of his daughters. On May 1, 1769, when the notary Carlos José da Câmara went to Zacarias' house in the *Rua da Fábrica*, he found both Zacarias and his wife and the buyer, João de Melo Sá. The parties had agreed to sell a house in the *Rua da Fábrica* to Sá for 30$000 *réis*. If João de Melo Sá was also an Indigenous worker is unclear. Yet, another Indigenous worker lived right next to the house that Zacarias was selling to João de Melo Sá, the *índia* Camila. It is easy to imagine an Indigenous working-class neighborhood in São Luís, but hard to demonstrate more empirical evidence.[439]

It is possible to confirm the final step of Zacarias' social ascension and his removal from slavery in 1771 when one of his daughters married. On June 24, 1771, the índio Luiz Nunes married Jerônima da Luz. Luiz Nunes was the legitimate son of Manoel António and Monica Rita, "índios that used to serve the Jesuits." Jerônima da Luz was the legitimate daughter of Zacarias and Margarida, "freed by the law of liberties."[440] The marriage of Zacarias's daughter

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[438] AAM, LRBFNSV 106, f. 55v (1767/10/27).

[439] Cartório Tito Soares, Livro de Notas 4, f. 71v. For other commercial transactions involving Indigenous workers, see CTS, Livro de Notas 6, f. 59v-60v (1772/01/10, Silvestre Aires, a blacksmith, and his sister, Ana Maria selling a small house, both índios cafuzos); CTS, Livro de Notas 6, f. 67v-68v (1772/02/15, índio Felipe, a tailor, buying a urban lot from Eufrásia Gomes); CTS, Livro de Notas 9, f. 100-101 (1776/02/12, João Agostinho da Luz buying a house from Maria Josefa Joaquina and the índio João Daniel was one of the neighbors); CTS, Livro de Notas 9, f. 11-11v (1775/06/03, Maria da Conceição, índia mameluca, selling part of a house to Teodoro Camelo de Brito, a freed black).

[440] AAM, LRCFNSV 86, f. 299.

with a man also from the group of local Indigenous workers demonstrates how in around two decades, Zacarias went from an enslaved person to an índio freed worker incorporated into the local networks of credit and marriage.

Conclusion

Cultural traits, phenotype, lineage, and labor practices created the índio category. Indigenous workers understood that under Portuguese colonialism, people categorized as índio had certain rights, such as being mobile workers, not being subject to an abusive master/patron, and receiving payment for their labor. The formation of that category – in relation to horizontal interactions among workers and vertical contacts with colonial institutions – must be placed within the context of the dramatic expansion of the transatlantic slave trade in Maranhão. While slavery was becoming heavily associated with African/black ancestry, Indigenous workers consciously avoided interactions that could jeopardize their hard-won spaces of autonomy.

While slavery was becoming associated with blackness in the 1760s and 70s, Indigenous workers resisted a marital arrangement with recently arrived enslaved Africans. Even if these Indigenous workers living in São Luís were not part of communal life in one of the Indigenous villages, they could still articulate the category's strategic use based on their lineage, appearance, and geographical origin. In the second half of the eighteenth century, lineage became vital in defining one's índio status. Indigenous workers, then, had little reason to marry a recently arrived enslaved African who lacked social networks in São Luís.

Chapter 5: Paths to Freedom and Autonomy between Indigenous and African Slavery (c.1740-1790)

Abstract

Northern Brazil experienced significant socio-economic and legal transformations by the mid-eighteenth century in the context of imperial reforms. If the region relied for decades on the enslavement of Indigenous Americans, the Portuguese crown banned the practice in 1755. To develop a plantation economy, the monarchy created a trading company responsible for shipping an unprecedented number of enslaved Africans. This chapter discusses ruptures and continuities on the enslavement of Indigenous Americans. It focuses on one city, São Luís, and extensively uses Catholic parish records (baptisms and marriages), notarial records, and legal cases, both ecclesiastical and civil. The chapter analyzes the connection between mechanisms that allowed the resilience of slavery (or forms that resembled slavery) and attempts to claim and preserve freedom or autonomy, in this case, the strategic use of the *índio* status. The chapter develops two of those mechanisms: social dependencies created within the households and the use of socio-racial classifications by colonial society. I make two interconnected arguments. First, I propose a bottom-up process of Indigenous slavery abolition. Indigenous workers were savvy litigants who fought for their place as mobile wage laborers within the city. Second, in that moment of socio-economic and legal transformations, slaveholders developed vernacular practices stressing black maternal origins to enslaved people.

On June 6, 1755, the Portuguese crown enacted a law abolishing - once again - the enslavement of Indigenous Americans.[441] The attempt to ban Indigenous slavery was integral to Portuguese imperial reforms in the second half of the eighteenth century for two reasons. First, it fostered alliances with Indigenous groups who played a critical role in the border-defining struggle between Spain and Portugal in South America. Second, Portuguese imperial reformers tried to pull Maranhão into the Atlantic economy by importing large numbers of enslaved Africans to develop a cash crop economy of cotton and rice. These reforms combined to strengthen Portuguese rule over Northern Brazil. In Maranhão's colonial settlements, the abolition law produced contradictory effects. There, the century-long practice of raiding and trading Indigenous captives in the interior (*sertões*) left thousands of Indigenous people in bondage. The present chapter explores ruptures and continuities in the enslavement of Indigenous Americans as importation of enslaved Africans rapidly increased.

The massive enslavement of Indigenous Americans in Northern Brazil has only recently started to receive scholarly attention.[442] Historians of colonial Brazil have traditionally

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[441] It is debatable whether this law can be considered *the* abolition of Indigenous enslavement or not. Several Just Wars would be declared in the following years, for example, the infamous war against the Botocudos in the early nineteenth century. Yet, the massive enslavement of Indigenous people in Amazonia through official slaving expeditions (*tropas de resgate* banned in 1747) and private resettlements (*descimentos*) would never return. Consequently, thousands of Indigenous workers dislocated from the interior to coastal settlements to work on settlers' farms, ranches, and houses had to navigate this important legal change. For the persistence of Indigenous enslavement, see Yuko Miki, "Slave and Citizen in Black and Red: Reconsidering the Intersection of African and Indigenous Slavery in Postcolonial Brazil," *Slavery & Abolition* 35 (2014): 1–22. The law of June 6, 1755, was mentioned in nineteenth-century freedom suits: Keila Grinberg, *A Black Jurist in a Slave Society: Antonio Pereira Rebouças and the Trials of Brazilian Citizenship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 108.
[442] An exception is David Sweet, "A Rich Realm of Nature Destroyed: The Middle Amazon Valley, 1640-1750" (PhD Diss., Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1974). On the legislation: Mathias Kiemen, *The Indian Policy of Portugal in the Amazon Region, 1614-1693* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1954); Colin Maclachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800," in: *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil*, ed. Dauril Alden (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 199-230; Sue Gross, "Labor in Amazonia in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," *The Americas* 32 (1975): 211–21; Georg Thomas, *Política indigenista dos portugueses no Brasil, 1500-1640* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1982); Dauril Alden, "Indian Versus Black Slavery in the State of Maranhão during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Iberian Colonies, New World Societies: Essays in Memory of Charles Gibson*, ed. Richard Garner and William Taylor (University Park: R.L. Garner, 1985), 71-102; Beatriz Perrone-Moisés, "Índios livres e índios escravos: Os princípios da legislação indigenista do período colonial." in *História dos índios no Brasil*, ed. Manuela Cunha (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992); Camila

interpreted Indigenous slavery as an institution typical of the peripheries - that is, São Paulo and Amazonia, the peripheries of sugar plantation areas.[443] New interpretations emerged when scholars overcame the tendency to analyze these regions in terms of what they lacked - sugar and enslaved Africans - and started to take seriously what they had - different economic activities based on various forms of coerced Indigenous labor.

This scholarship has been essential to debunk the image of Amazonia as a region long neglected by the Portuguese crown and to expand the history of slavery beyond the African experience.[444] In fact, both the recruitment of Indigenous labor and the enslavement of Indigenous people were central to Portuguese policies, which proved wrong the allegedly incompatibility between Indigenous slavery and colonial system in the long term.[445] Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cocoa production and cattle raising, the primary local economic activities, depended almost exclusively on Indigenous labor recruited under multiple forms. The Portuguese crown responded to local pleas for additional labor and created conditions for this major population resettlement. The number of Indigenous workers recruited in the interior was estimated at 100.000 to 260.000. This figure is comparable to the number of

Dias, "O comércio de escravos indígenas na Amazônia visto pelos regimentos de entradas e de tropas de resgate (séculos XVII e XVIII)," *Revista Territórios e Fronteiras* 10 (2017): 238–59.

[443] Ciro Cardoso, *Economia e sociedade em áreas coloniais periféricas, Guiana Francesa e Pará, 1750-1817* (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1984); Stuart Schwartz, "Colonial Brazil, c. 1580-c.1750: plantations and peripheries." in *The Cambridge History of Latin America, vol. 2*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 481-482. A notable exception: John Monteiro, *Blacks of the Land: Indian Slavery and the Origins of Colonial São Paulo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[444] Rafael Chambouleyron and Karl Arenz, "Amazonian Atlantic: Cacao, Colonial Expansion and Indigenous Labour in the Portuguese Amazon Region (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 53 (2021): 221–44; Camila Dias and Fernanda Bombardi, "O que dizem as licenças? Flexibilização da legislação e recrutamento particular de trabalhadores indígenas no Estado do Maranhão (1680-1755)," *Revista de História* 175 (2016): 249–80; Camila Dias, "Os índios, a Amazônia e os conceitos de escravidão e liberdade," *Estudos Avançados* 33 (2019): 235–52.

[445] On the structural aspect of the transatlantic slave trade: Fernando Novais, *Portugal e Brasil na crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial (1777-1808)* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1981), 102–5; Luiz Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico sul, séculos XVI e XVII* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000), 126–38.

enslaved Africans laboring in the sugar industry in Northeastern Brazil and mining operations in Southern/Central Brazil.[446]

As scholars re-examine the number of Indigenous workers, the economic activities they supported, and the Portuguese policies regulating their recruitment, other historians have started to sketch the lives of Indigenous workers. Freedom suits have been an important source for understanding the lives of thousands of Indigenous workers forcibly displaced from the interior to colonial settlements. The pioneer work of David Sweet argued that Indigenous freedom suits were rare.[447] More recently, Márcia Mello reconsidered the exceptionality of Sweet's case study and offered the first comprehensive explanation for the different forums that Indigenous people could access to reclaim their freedom. In the eighteenth century, Indigenous Americans frequently used the Board of Missions (*Junta das Missões*), a tribunal composed of ecclesiastical and secular authorities for Indigenous affairs. The Board of Missions operated under the dual charge of authorizing wars against Indigenous groups, hence their enslavement, and deciding over illicit enslavements, hence their freedom.[448]

Recently, other scholars have delved into the extant documents of the Board of Missions. Despite the fragmentary condition of the archival collection, they were able to better understand the place of the Board of Missions in the monarchy's architecture of power and how Indigenous people navigated the legal system in colonial Maranhão. Most of the litigants were enslaved women who also won the freedom of their families. The success of those freedom strategies depended on the appropriate mobilization of witnesses, the selection of legal representation, the

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[446] Camila Dias, Fernanda Bombardi, and Eliardo Costa, "Dimensão da população indígena incorporada ao Estado do Maranhão e Grão-Pará Entre 1680 e 1750: uma ordem de grandeza," *Revista de História* 179 (2020): 1–31.
[447] David Sweet, "Francisca: Indian Slave," in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, ed. David Sweet and Gary Nash (Berkley: University of California Press, 1981), 274-91.
[448] Márcia Mello, "Desvendando outras Franciscas: mulheres cativas e as ações de liberdade na Amazônia colonial portuguesa," *Portuguese Studies Review* 13 (2005): 1-16.

legal arguments and proofs chosen by them, and the balance of power in local politics since the composition of the Board of Missions changed over time.[449]

This body of scholarship relies on a rigid boundary between the period before and after the imperial reforms. This reliance obscures the continuities in Indigenous bondage. The different forms of labor recruitment ranged from slavery to forced or peaceful resettlement of Indigenous peoples. Yet, the customary *slippage,* to use the expression of another historian, between one mode of conscription to the other was not limited to the recruitment side of this large-scale process of resettlement.[450] The definition of Indigenous workers' legal status was hazy and disputed once they entered settlers' households.

This chapter focuses on the Indigenous population in Maranhão living outside the Indigenous villages and toiling in cities, settlers' houses, and farms.[451] It analyzes the connection between mechanisms that allowed slavery to persist (or forms of labor that resembled slavery) and people's attempts to claim and preserve freedom or autonomy, through the strategic use of the índio status.[452] Two of those mechanisms that kept Indigenous laborers in bondage were

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[449] André Ferreira, "Nas malhas das liberdades: o tribunal da Junta das Missões e o governo dos índios na capitania do Maranhão (1720-1757)" (MA Thesis, Belém, Universidade Federal do Pará, 2017), 133-184; Luma Prado, "Cativos Litigantes: demandas indígenas por liberdade na Amazônia portuguesa, 1706-1759" (MA Thesis, São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo, 2019), 144-169, 172-197.

[450] Barbara Sommer, "Colony of the Sertão: Amazonian Expeditions and the Indian Slave Trade," *The Americas* 61 (2005): 401–28.

[451] There is vast literature on the transformation of religious missions into Indigenous villages. Barbara Sommer, "Negotiated Settlements: Native Amazonians and Portuguese Policy in Pará, Brazil, 1758-1798" (PhD Diss., Albuquerque, University of New Mexico, 2000); Angela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Lisboa: CNCDP, 2000); Mauro Coelho, "Do sertão para o mar: um estudo sobre a experiência portuguesa na América, a partir da colônia: O caso do Diretório dos Índios (1751-1798)" (PhD Diss., São Paulo, Universidade de São Paulo, 2005); Patrícia Sampaio, *Espelhos partidos: etnia, legislação e desigualdade na colônia* (Manaus: EDUA, 2012); Heather Roller, *Amazonian Routes: Indigenous Mobility and Colonial Communities in Northern Brazil* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). Historians recognized the existence of this Indigenous population living outside of the Indigenous villages, but they did not explore further. There is also a growing literature on urban *indios* in Spanish America. Felipe Castro, "Los indios y la ciudad: Panorama y perspectivas de investigación" in *Los indios y las ciudades de Nueva España*, ed. Felipe Castro (Mexico: UNAM, 2010) 9-33; Dana Velasco, *Urban Indians in a Silver City: Zacatecas, Mexico, 1546-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[452] Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 5, 140–41, 223, 247; Nancy van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in*

social dependencies created within the households and the use of socio-racial classifications by the colonial society.

Some historians have argued that the 1755 abolition law was a "political fiction" or a "false freedom" and Indigenous people continued to live under the same regimes of exploitation with a new name.[453] Based on baptismal records, wills, petitions, and legal cases, it is indeed possible to visualize the persistence of bonds of social dependency ranging from sex, intimacy, honor, and ritual kinship (*compadrio*). These bonds kept Indigenous workers and masters linked.[454] Yet, to say that nothing has changed is to overlook the years of legal activism by Indigenous actors. Indigenous people were moving away from the legal status of "*escravo*" towards "*do serviço*," and this was not the result of colonial officials simply following the new abolition law of 1755. Instead, it was a bottom-up process of abolition. Indigenous workers learned how to use the channels offered by Portuguese colonialism, and the knowledge about the 1755 law, which circulated among the workers, was only another weapon.[455]

The transition from one legal status to another was not seamless and without conflict. It primarily involved public reputation, that is, being recognized as an índio(a) in the community. Whenever conflict emerged, one's ability to prove his or her free status through written

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Sixteenth-Century Spain (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 12, 224–25; Mónica Díaz, ed., *To Be Indio in Colonial Spanish America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 4-5. Influential work on Brazilian Indigenous communities, Maria Almeida, *Metamorfoses indígenas: identidade e cultura nas aldeias coloniais do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2013), 303.

[453] Scholars have tried to understand the tutelage problem. Important contribution: Manuela Cunha and Nádia Farage, "Caráter da tutela dos índios: origens e metamorfoses." In *Os direitos dos índios: ensaios e documentos*, ed. Manuela Cunha (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987), 103-118. "False freedom," John Hemming, *Amazon Frontier: The Defeat of the Brazilian Indians* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 1–17; "Political fiction," Nádia Farage, *As muralhas dos sertões: os povos indígenas no rio Branco e a colonização* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1991), 47.

[454] Bianca Premo, "As If She Were My Own: Love and Law in the Slave Society of Eighteenth-Century Peru," in *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas*, ed. Dania Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018), 71-87.

[455] Luiz Geraldo Silva, "Esperança de liberdade'. Interpretações populares da abolição ilustrada (1773-1774)," *Revista de História* 144 (2001): 107-149. For vernacular understandings of norms, Bianca Premo, *The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

documents or genealogy was essential. Under Portuguese colonialism, the status of índio offered

some constraining obligations, such as the requirement to participate in labor drafts, and some

special rights, like the payment for their labor, the freedom to choose whom one would serve,

and mobility. The protection offered by the Portuguese monarchy and settlers could work both

ways. Indigenous workers (or their masters) requested permissions to stay in the households

which they served for years. They also used the índio status to delineate spaces of autonomy and

independence from former masters.[456]

Building on the work of Maria Resende, this chapter stresses how Indigenous people's

legal activism forced masters to increase the use of socio-racial classification.[457] In the decades

of the 1760s and 1770s, with the growth of the transatlantic slave trade and the aftermath of the

publication of the law abolishing Indigenous slavery, the status "slave" became closely

connected to the socio-racial classification "black." People classified with one of the several

mixed socio-racial classifications could have their freedom endangered, if the black maternal

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[456] Literature discussing how workers asserted their freedom and structural and ideological limitations for it is mainly focused on Africans/African descendants. The literature is fast growing. Important examples: Sidney Chalhoub, *Visões da liberdade: uma história das últimas décadas da escravidão na corte* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990); Keila Grinberg, *Liberata, a lei da ambigüidade: as ações de liberdade da corte de apelação do Rio de Janeiro no século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 1994); Hebe Castro, *Das cores do silêncio: os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista, Brasil século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995); Sidney Chalhoub, "The Precariousness of Freedom in a Slave Society (Brazil in the Nineteenth Century)," *International Review of Social History* 56 (2011): 405–39; Mariana Paes, "O procedimento de manutenção de liberdade no Brasil Oitocentista," *Estudos Históricos* 29 (2016): 339–60; Michelle McKinley, *Fractional Freedoms: Slavery, Intimacy, and Legal Mobilization in Colonial Lima, 1600-1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Mariana Paes, "Ser dependente no império do Brasil: terra e trabalho em processos judiciais," *Población & Sociedad* 27 (2020): 8–29. The problem of Indigenous enslavement appears in the literature, but it still not at the center: Alejandro de la Fuente and Ariela Gross, *Becoming Free, Becoming Black: Race, Freedom, and Law in Cuba, Virginia, and Louisiana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). A notable exception: Miki, *Frontiers of Citizenship*. For the resilience of Indigenous forms of coerced labor: James Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 34, 351–53, 363–67; Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), 1, 9.

[457] Hal Langfur and Maria Resende, "Indian Autonomy and Slavery in the Forests and Towns of Colonial Minas Gerais," in *Native Brazil: Beyond de Convert and the Cannibal*, ed. Hal Langfur (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014), 132-65. John Monteiro found similar cases for São Paulo in the seventeenth century, Monteiro, *Blacks of the Land*, 208–12.

ancestry was emphasized and not the Indigenous one. Such was the case of the enslaved woman Rosa. In her freedom suit, Rosa tried to achieve her freedom by arguing that she descended from an Indigenous woman, but her master said that she was a *cafuza*, a descendant of an enslaved black woman. In that moment of structural economic changes and when several plaintiffs were seeking freedom by asserting their Indigeneity in local courts, settlers developed vernacular practices that entrenched the racial lines of slavery. Other written documents, such as manumission letters, demonstrate that those vernacular practices transferred into notarial language. By emphasizing the black ancestry of subjugated people, notaries could, in effect, legitimate their enslavement and hinder possible legal actions.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part explores the transformation experienced by Maranhão's society in the mid-eighteenth century, when the region transitioned from a frontier economy based on cattle ranching to cotton and rice plantations. The following two sections discuss the relations of dependency engendered between Indigenous workers and their masters. The strategic use of the category índio could limit their exploitation and create spaces of autonomy. The final part is lengthy and discusses every step of Rosa's freedom suit to understand the impacts of the transatlantic slave trade in the management of slavery and the post-abolition of Indigenous enslavement. The case illustrates the limits of the strategic use of the category índio.

I

The city of São Luís, founded by French explorers in 1612 and conquered by the Portuguese in 1615, sits on an island on the Atlantic coast. The Bay of São Marcos and the Bay of São José separate the island from the continent, and they are both home to two important satellite settlements, respectively Alcântara and Icatu. Despite fierce resistance from autonomous

Indigenous groups on the continent, Portuguese settlers and Catholic missionaries founded forts, villages, missions, farms, and several ranches along the three main rivers that flow from the interior, the Itapecuru, the Mearim, and the Munim. São Luís was namely the capital of the State of Maranhão (created in 1621), home to the Governor, and the official seat of the Bishopric (created in 1677). In practice, the Bishopric of Maranhão functioned most of the time without a bishop, and the governor spent more time in the city of Belém, located further north and strategically positioned to control the mouth of the Amazon River.

Despite its official status of capital, São Luís did not have a sizable population until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Atlantic currents isolated São Luís from the main Luso-Brazilian commercial maritime routes in the South Atlantic. The city's population certainly did not exceed 15,000 people in the 1750s.[458] The urban footprint was limited to a few streets and the only prominent buildings were Catholic Churches and Convents. The houses of most settlers were rustic and modest whitewashed mud constructions, and reference to more sturdy constructions was rare.

People living in the city dedicated their time to several artisan activities, such as carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, and petty commerce. Many women worked as washerwomen and men as fishermen. Soldiers also accounted for a significant part of the population. Members of the elite had at least one house in the city and farms and ranches around it. Economic activities developed in the countryside created employment opportunities back in the city. Indigenous workers transported cattle from the interior to the coast in canoes through riverine

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[458] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 37, Doc. 3692. The *freguesia de Nossa Senhora da Vitória* had 475 households. 815 free white men and 1161 free white women (1976). 2311 were "enslaved men and diverse freed men" and 2874 "enslaved and freed women" (5185).

paths.[459] Indigenous journeymen also worked in tanneries. Settlers in São Luís harvested sugar cane to manufacture *aguardente*[460], rather than sugar. Aguardente was widely consumed in the city taverns and played a decisive role in commercial relations with Native peoples.[461] São Luís became a bustling port city only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, with the intensification of the transatlantic slave trade and the rise of cotton and rice plantations.

Around the 1740s and 50s, however, Maranhão was a frontier economy based largely on cattle ranching, the production of manioc, aguardente*,* and cotton. In the mid-eighteenth century, the region counted 448 ranches spread along the rivers and going deep into the interior.[462] Manioc was the main staple in the local diet and was widely cultivated. Aguardente was consumed in the city and key to negotiations with Indigenous groups. Indigenous women harvested and weaved cotton to make homespun cloth. Cotton rolls (*rolos de algodão*) were the primary currency in a region where the circulation of money was scarce. Prices were fixed in cotton rolls, including commercial transactions, contracts auctioned by the Municipal Council, and the payment of Indigenous labor. Indigenous workers, enslaved or not, made possible all these activities.

From São Luís there were two frontiers of Indigenous enslavement and labor recruitment. The first was the savannah in Maranhão, where settlers clashed violently with autonomous Native groups. By the mid-eighteenth century, Indigenous Gê speaking groups, such as the Timbira, were systematically imprisoned in Just Wars declared by the Portuguese crown. The

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[459] The Municipal Council auctioned a contract to a settler responsible for the city's meat supply. The contract included the service of twenty Indigenous workers conscripted from one of the villages. APEM, CMSL, 12, f. 46v, 152, 179, 183, 211v.

[460] Alcoholic drink made from sugar.

[461] The Crown Judge (*ouvidor*) João Dinis counted only 5 sugar mills, contrasting with 120 *engenhocas*, the ones that produced *aguardente*. Rafael Chambouleyron, "The 'Government of the Sertões and Indians': Aguardente, Sugar, and Indians in Colonial Amazonia (Seventeenth Century)," *The Americas* 77 (2020): 3–39.

[462] According to the ouvidor João Dinis in 1751: AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 32, Doc. 3291.

bulk of São Luís's workforce, however, was captured in the Transamazonic slave trade. By the 1730s-1740s, Portuguese slave raiding expeditions were reaching as far as the Upper Rio Negro and Branco River. Settlers relied on two modes of labor conscriptions: privately financed resettlement of free Indigenous people, the *descimentos*, and slave expeditions, private or state-financed, the *tropas de resgate*. These modes of labor recruitment incorporated Indigenous workers with different legal statuses in colonial settlements. Indigenous workers conscripted on descimentos were free. Indigenous workers captured in Just Wars and tropas de resgates were enslaved. Once settled in masters' houses, farms, and ranches, the lines between free and enslaved Indigenous workers were far from clear.

Imperial reforms in the second half of the eighteenth century hardened the racial lines of slavery. The reforms attempted to regain control over the territories, resources, and subjects under the aegis of the Portuguese crown. The reformers projected the incorporation of "rustic peripheries," to enhance the extraction of natural resources and produce increased revenue through taxation.[463] In this period, two new forces emerged in Maranhão and changed the landscape of enslavement; the creation of a monopolistic trading company and the new Indigenous policy to claim possession of territories in dispute with Spain.

If Indigenous workers interacted with a limited number of Africans in the previous years, the port of São Luís saw constant arrival of slave ships after the 1760s. The trading company (*Companhia de Comércio do Grão-Pará e Maranhão*) founded in the 1750s transported enslaved Africans and fueled the development of cotton and rice farms in São Luís's hinterlands. Between 1751-1787, Maranhão received 22,414 enslaved Africans, drastically contrasting with the earlier

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[463] Kenneth Maxwell, *Conflicts & Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750-1808* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 32-35; Gabriel Paquette, *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions: The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770 - 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 50–62.

period, when only roughly 3,368 African disembarked there.[464] Cotton, leather, and later rice

exports rapidly took off. Trading balances before the 1750s reported hides as the only product

worth mentioning and did not account for a single bag of rice exported. In the following decades,

rice and cotton industries would achieve staggering levels of production and in the last two

decades of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Maranhão's cotton would supply

an important share of Britain's demand.[465]

　　Concomitantly, imperial reformers idealized new ways to incorporate Indigenous peoples

into the empire. Indigenous Americans were one of the cornerstones in the border disputes

because Iberians considered territories occupied by Indigenous allies as their own.[466] After the

publication of the 1755 abolition law, the Portuguese crown enacted the *Diretório dos índios*

(1757), a body of rules regulating the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the colonial

order. As another historian described, the Portuguese imagined a project to "Occidentalize"

Indigenous people.[467] Old religious missions were renamed after Portuguese cities, but the

transformation went well beyond a matter of nomenclature. From that moment on, Indigenous

people were eligible to posts in the civil administration, the villagers' administrators imposed the

Portuguese language, and encouraged inter-marriage with Portuguese. More importantly, the

colonial state closely regulated labor exploitation, guaranteeing a source of workforce for royal

services, such as the demarcation expeditions, the canoe journey connecting the mines in Mato

Grosso to the Atlantic, and naval construction. Several Portuguese-like polities emerged in the

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[464] Daniel Silva, "The Atlantic Slave Trade to Maranhão, 1680–1846: Volume, Routes and Organisation," *Slavery & Abolition* 29 (2008): 477–501; Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39-41, 51-53.

[465] Thales Pereira, "The Rise of the Brazilian Cotton Trade in Britain during the Industrial Revolution," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 50 (2018): 919–49.

[466] Tamar Herzog, "Struggling over Indians: Territorial Conflict and Alliance Making in the Heartland of South America," in *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900*, ed. Saliha Belmessous (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 92–94.

[467] Domingues, *Quando os índios*, 66.

Amazon region, serving as proof of the Portuguese possession of the main rivers and helping to recruit autonomous Indigenous groups in the interior.

The Portuguese crown designed a new imperial policy for Indigenous subjects centered on the frontiers. Within colonial settlements, however, where thousands of Indigenous workers lived in bondage, the adaptations to the local situations and customs prevailed.

II

This section first discusses the law of June 6, 1755, and the development of the category "*índio(a) de soldada,*" freed índios(as) that worked for a settler in exchange for a payment. Then, it explores why and how Indigenous workers attempted to stay or to move away from settlers' households. These endeavors depended on elements such as honor, ritual kinship, intimacy, sex, and autonomy. Reconstructing these stories shed light on the conflicts and conciliations that underpinned the transition from one legal status - slave - to the other - índio de soldada.

The law of June 6 1755 reinvigorated several aspects of previous Portuguese laws and policies, in particular their positions on Indigenous freedom, Indigenous possession of property, and the payment of Indigenous labor.[468] Returning to three laws from the seventeenth century, the 1755 abolition law stressed the unconditional freedom of Indigenous peoples.[469] Consequently, it revoked traditional practices that enabled the enslavement of thousands of Indigenous Americans throughout the seventeenth and first half of eighteenth centuries, such as the tropas de resgate, authorized and systematized in the alvará of 1688. The law reinforced points already present in the law of April 1, 1680, on Indigenous peoples' possession of property

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[468] The text of the law: Carlos Neto, *Índios da Amazônia, de maioria a minoria (1750-1850)* (Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1988), 152–62. Patricia Sampaio, "Fronteras de la libertad: Tutela indígena en el Directorio Pombalino y en la Carta Regia de 1798," *Boletín Americanista* (2012): 13–23. Robeilton Gomes and Márcia Mello, "'Sua Majestade é servida'? O processo de construção da Lei de Liberdade dos índios do Grão-Pará e Maranhão (1751-1759)," *Saeculum - Revista de História* 26 (2021): 473–87. A crucial point was to withdrew the administration of Indigenous labor from the Religious order and place them under the secular administration of the empire.

[469] Law of September 10 1611, Law of November 10 1647, and Law of April 1 1680.

and land, which guaranteed their legitimate possession over their farms against settlers'

encroachment and prohibited forced relocations. Finally, wages for Indigenous labor were a

matter of intense debate, and attempts to regulate payments date back to the mid-seventeenth

century and continued throughout the colonial period.[470]

The 1755 abolition law was published in Maranhão on May 8, 1757, two years after its

original enactment. The correspondence between the governor Francisco Xavier Mendonça

Furtado and his brother, the Marquis of Pombal, help explain the almost two-year delay. First, it

was indispensable that settlers would have access to enslaved African labor. After all, the

broader reformist project aimed at the colonies' economic growth and enslaved labor was

crucial. Second, after spending a few years in the region, Furtado understood that limiting

settlers' dominion over their Indigenous workers was a sensitive subject. "In this state," Furtado

wrote in 1751, "a rich man is not one with much land, but one with the greatest quantity of

Indians, [who are used] both for agriculture and for the extraction of forest spices."[471]

Shortly after the publication of the "law of liberties," the governors of both Maranhão

and Grão-Pará issued orders (*bandos*) allowing settlers to keep their former Indigenous slaves in

their households, if it was a consensual arrangement and they were paid. This arrangement was

known as soldada.[472] Portuguese authorities feared that once enslaved people knew about the

content of the law, they would immediately escape to the interior. The order authorized masters

to keep the Indigenous workers who "customarily serve them, and because of that are in their

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[470] APEM, CMSL, 88, f. 8v (1782). "Registro de um bando que pelas ruas desta cidade mandou lançar o Ilustríssimo e Excelentíssimo Senhor General deste Estado D. António Noronha sobre como se deve pagar os jornais aos índios."
[471] Francisco Xavier Mendonça Furtado to Governor Maranhão, Belém, November 10, 1752, in *A Amazônia na era pombalina: Correspondência do Governador e Capitão-Genral do Estado do Grão-Pará e Maranhão, Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, 1751-1759*, ed. Marcos Mendonça (Rio de Janeiro: IHGB, 1963), tomo 1, 77.
[472] APEM, CMSL, 86, f. 182v. "Registro de um bando que mandou lançar o Governador desta Capitania pelas ruas públicas desta cidade e a som de caixa sobre os índios não saírem fora das casas dos seus amos e o mais que nele se declara."

farms and houses, working the land and serving in the same houses," and it requested the masters

to present records of the Indigenous workers serving them within two months. In practice, the

order implicitly legitimized thousands of previous illegal raids in the interior and allowed the

continuation of customary labor arrangements almost indistinguishable from slavery.

Wills (*testamentos*) and baptismal records demonstrate that settlers and colonial officials

understood the abolition law of 1755 in relation to customary labor arrangements. Settlers

identified the Indigenous workers who used to serve them (or were still serving them).[473] Inês

São José's will, from 1758, illustrates this process. She declared ownership of not only herds of

cattle in Pastos Bons but also sixteen slaves, "legitimate slaves of the Guinea Nation." One índio,

however, suggestively named João das Missões from the city of Pará, was declared as her

legitimate slave whom she had bought and kept in her company, "but because he is covered by

this new law of His Most Faithful Majesty, I keep him by paying him a salary until another

resolution."[474]

Inês São José was not the only one who was expecting a new resolution from the king

and settlers were better off registering their slaves and former slaves. Years after the publication

of the 1755 law, priests were still recording those "freed by the law." In the Chapel of Senhora

Santa Ana, the priest Domingos Barbosa baptized Maria in July 1768. Maria's mother was

Luzia, "who used to serve Valério Fonseca freed by the law." Maria's godmother was Felizarda,

a free índia from São Luís.[475] It is difficult to assess what was the relationship between

Luzia/Maria and her former master, Valério Fonseca. In other cases, the priest recorded that the

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[473] Wills are stored in the ATJMA and published on Antonia Mota, *Cripto Maranhenses e seu legado* (São Paulo: Siciliano, 2011). They demonstrate the centrality of enslaved labor: 156 wills; 121 wills with slaves; Average of 7 slaves per will.
[474] Mota, *Cripto maranhenses*, 108.
[475] APEM, LRBFNSV, 106, f. 137v.

Indigenous worker was still living under the former master's roof. Mariana, for example, baptized her daughter Barbara in November 1752. She appeared as one of the <u>servas</u> (serf/servant) of Clara Peregrina's household.[476] Six years later, in March 1758, she went to the Sé Church to baptize her son, Francisco Xavier. Here, the priest recorded Mariana as "freed by the law, living in the house of Clara Peregrina."[477]

The way that the priests were recording Indigenous workers, explicitly saying their former masters, suggests that it was a form of identification within the community and public acknowledgment of customary labor arrangements. Moreover, contrary to what colonial officials imagined, Indigenous workers did not vanish from the city and farms. Instead, according to parish records, they were very much part of the community in which they were raised, attended the Church, married, and worked.

III

Last wills and baptismal records reveal Indigenous workers' subordinate position within households as well as deeper aspects of their relationship with their patrons. These close ties involved ritual kinship, honor, intimacy, and sex. Settlers frequently used ritual kinship (compadrio) as an excuse to keep Indigenous workers in their households. For instance, when Baltazar Neves drafted his will in 1755, he declared that "all the slaves that are heathens of the land [*do gentio da terra*] that I possessed are my legitimate slaves and I have their registers, only [with regard to] Domingos I do not possess registers. [He] will stay in the company of his godfather, my son, Father Alexandre Pedro."[478] As thousands of other Indigenous workers in São

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[476] APEM, LRBFNSV, 103, f. 84.
[477] APEM, LRBFNSV, 104, f. 209. There is no reason to think that servos(as) before the 1755 law were not slaves. For an in-depth discussion on the question, see Chapter 3. For a discussion on the word in São Paulo, Eliana Maria Rea Goldschmidt, *Casamentos mistos: liberdade e escravidão em São Paulo colonial* (São Paulo: FAPESP : Annablume, 2004), 149.
[478] ATJMA, Registro Testamentos, Livro 1751-1756, f. 201.

Luís, Domingos was probably captured in an unofficial slave raid in the interior, since Neves did not have documents proving his legitimate enslavement. Nevertheless, if a monetary value was not assigned to them, São Luís's settlers bequeathed these workers to their heirs based on the bonds of compadrio and the dependencies within the household.[479]

The publication of the abolition law of 1755 complicated the situation for settlers, and they commonly petitioned to the authorities requesting exception from the application of the law. Dona Ana Catanhede, of Alcantâra, relied on notions of honor, widowhood, and the common theme of poverty to request to keep her índios in her household, despite the new law. Three points sustained her argument. First, she claimed that she lived "honorably and honestly" with her husband, António Martins Vieira, until his death. Second, after her husband's death, she lived in poverty and did not have a single slave to serve her, "not even to wash her shirts, or to carry a pot of water for her to drink, or any other service." Finally, the few slaves that she had "were included in the law of liberties." The cafuza Antónia was an exception and stayed in her house. Antónia and Ana developed a long-term affectionate bond since Antónia was born in captivity and raised in Ana's house. Over the years, Antónia gave birth to several children. Ana Catanhede raised them in her household, despite her poverty, "with nobody's help, except God's." In her *justificação*[480], Ana Catanhede mobilized three witnesses to testify in her favor. They all confirmed Ana Catanhede's pious and modest way of living. More importantly, they all confirmed the personal ties that entwined patron and Indigenous workers within the household. Considering the evidence produced by Ana Catanhede's justificação, her request was granted.[481]

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[479] A discussion on the registers (*títulos*) and progressive importance of written documents: Mariana Paes, *Esclavos y tierras entre posesión y títulos: la construcción social del derecho de propriedad en Brasil (siglo XIX)* (Frankfurt: Max Planck Institute for Legal History and Legal Theory, 2021), 79.
[480] A quicker type of litigation.
[481] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 73, Doc. 6319.

Father Angelo de São Alberto from the Carmo Convent also desired to retain his índios in his household. Although after his mother's death he inherited one índia, called Dionísia, his Convent kept the índia for their services. Dionísia had had six children, of which four had died before Father Angelo's arrival. João was already in his possession, but Bonifácio was laboring for one of the Convent's farms. Father Angelo argued that because Bonifácio's mother "was seized in a descimento that Your Majesty conceded to my father," he had the right to enjoy his services. He argued that not only were they his servants, but their assistance was much needed given his poor health and the fact that without them "I have to go to the kitchen by myself and serve myself with my own hands."[482] Like Ana Catanhede, Father Angelo relied on customary practice to exploit Indigenous labor, even when their enslavement was questionable. Indigenous workers recruited from descimentos were considered free workers, at least in theory. These masters' pleas to keep their customary workers within their control reveal the importance of their labor for the reproduction of settlers' households. As honorable members of the community, they felt they should not engage in menial labor and expected the crown to do justice by not disrupting that order of things.

Indigenous workers themselves also fought to remain in their customary labor arrangement. For instance, in 1784, the índio Joaquim José, of São Luís, petitioned Queen Maria to stay in the household of Domiciano José de Moraes. According to him, he had lived for many years in that house. Moraes's wife had raised him and was his godmother, "always treating him with love." The labor arrangement was made after the publication of the 1755 abolition law. Joaquim José sought to remain working for his former master who would compensate him with the customary salary for Indigenous workers. Domiciano Moraes requested an official order

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[482] BNPT, PBA, 622, f. 83.

(*portaria*) from the governor to make sure that he would not have problems in the future, probably protecting himself from potential expensive judicial battles. The governor, however, according to Joaquim José, took him out of Moraes's house and drafted him to work for Francisco Salerio, who "treated him worse than a slave, beating on him without any reason." The petition builds on the laws that guaranteed Indigenous freedom and on other decisions made by the queen allowing Indigenous workers to remain under their customary labor arrangement.[483]

Sexual relationships also played a part in labor arrangements. Several cases of an illicit sexual relationship between settlers and Indigenous women survived in the records of Maranhão's Ecclesiastical Court.[484] In 1781, Miguel Maciel Aranha denounced the couple António Costa and the índia Apolônia for living together without being married. They were living in their house in the Ribeira do Itapecuru, not far from the city of São Luís, and, therefore, were still under the gaze of the Catholic Church. Despite the accusation of maintaining a relationship outside of marriage, António Costa requested the governor's written orders (portaria) to keep Apolônia in his house and promised the payment of a salary.

Governors issued hundreds of orders drafting Indigenous workers to work for specific settlers for a specified time. The archive for those lists is extremely limited for Maranhão. The only list that I found enumerates several Indigenous workers and their patrons. In the column where it should specify the number of months of service, it says "without limitation of time."[485] At a glance, this would be additional evidence of how settlers worked the system to maintain

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[483] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 63, Doc. 5650. In this case, a copy of the queen's order in favor of índia Maria Joaquina was annexed.

[484] AAM, Auditório Eclesiástico, Lista Nominal 06, Autos de Queixas e Denúncias, Doc. 936. To understand how the tribual worked: Pollyanna Muniz, *Réus de batina: justiça eclesiástica e clero secular no bispado do Maranhão colonial* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2017), 73-124.

[485] APEP, Secretaria Capitania, Correspondência Diversos Governo, Códice 267, f. 72-92, 106-131.

Indigenous workers within their households. Without discarding that possibility, I suggest that remaining indefinitely under settlers' roofs could benefit the interests of Indigenous workers.[486]

Apolônia probably preferred to remain under the roof of her companion, instead of risking being conscripted for some difficult work, such as farming in a distant land, or being selected to perform domestic labor for a potentially cruel new patron. It is difficult to determine if the relationship was abusive or not. Reading the witnesses' accounts, however, an image of a stable and long-term relationship emerges. All the witnesses confirmed the accusation that António had asked the Governor -- by issuing an order -- to keep Apolônia in his house -- with payment (soldada). All the witnesses also said in rather contradictory terms that António kept Apolônia "hidden" in his house, but that everyone in the community knew that. In his deposition, José Malheiros revealed that one day he saw Apolônia carrying water in his backyard going back to António's. At the end, the vicar-general lightly punished the couple. They had to go before the vicar and sign the terms of punishment. Moreover, they had to pay a small fine and the costs of the investigation (4$895 *réis*).

Although the examples narrated portray a peaceful image of the relationship between masters and Indigenous workers, there were cases of conflict, particularly when Indigenous workers wanted to move away from their masters and loosen the ties of dependency. The petitions and litigations of Indigenous workers challenge claims of imperial officials. They were not lazy vagabonds and indomitable workers that needed the tutelage of settlers to tame their lives. Their efforts to loosen the ties of dependency could be related to their desire for mobility and independence. The case of índio Bernardo demonstrates what could happen when Indigenous workers decided to sever their customary labor arrangements.

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[486] Barbara Sommer, "Why Joanna Baptista Sold Herself into Slavery: Indian Women in Portuguese Amazonia, 1755–1798," *Slavery & Abolition* 34 (2013): 77–97.

In 1770, António Cavalcanti, a planter from Maranhão, petitioned the king for a ten-year extension to pay his massive debts. Cavalcanti identified himself as a nobleman, married to a noblewoman, and head of a distinguished family of São Luís. Although he had possessed some rural estates and lived honorably with his wife and their several sons and daughters, he saw himself without means to afford his family's significant expenses. The reason for his bankruptcy and disgrace was solely the abolition of Indigenous slavery in 1755. In his justificação, he mobilized four witnesses that confirmed his noble status and the downfall he suffered with the abolition of Indigenous slavery.[487]

Regardless of the truth of António Cavalcanti's story, nine years before his petition, in 1761, he was involved in a litigation against the freed mulata Úrsula Boavida. Úrsula initiated the litigation in April 1761. According to her, she was a freed woman, the former slave of Marcos Boavida and the Priest Pedro Correia, who lived in the Ribeira do Itapecuru. The conflict did not involve her, but her husband, the índio Bernardo, with whom she has been married for thirty years.[488] Pedro Correia also kept Bernardo as a slave. Later, Correia transferred Bernardo to Cavalcanti. Bernardo achieved his manumission after the publication of the law but kept serving Cavalcanti's household as a fisherman. According to Úrsula, Bernardo's payments were no longer to his satisfaction, and he wanted to live with his wife in the Ribeira do Itapecuru because "according to the law of liberties [law of June 6 1755], índios can freely live their lives; they can serve whoever pays them a better salary, and nobody can force them otherwise."[489]

In around 1760, Bernardo was spending more time in the Ribeira do Itapecuru than in São Luís. The physical distance from his servant did not please Cavalcanti. Upon knowing about

[487] AHU, CU, MA, Cx. 45, Doc. 4387.
[488] Bernardo appears in this instance as an "índio do sertão do Pará," which meant that he was enslaved in the interior of Amazonia.
[489] AAM, Autos da Câmara Eclesiástica/Episcopal, Lista Nominal 01, Autos Embargo, Cx. 2, doc. 10, f. 3v.

the legal case, he argued that the ecclesiastical justice could not overrule the labor contract that he had arranged and confirmed by the governor (secular justice). This potential conflict of jurisdiction would represent insecurity for settlers because "we would not have people to row the canoes transporting cattle and other services essential to us."[490] Besides the potential jurisdiction conflict, Cavalcanti's defense articulated three other points: the legal status of Úrsula, the place of the couple's residence, and his noble status.

Úrsula justified her presence in the Ribeira do Itapecuru because of her obligations for the chapel instituted by her previous owner. Cavalcanti argued that she was freed by prescription and had been living as a freed woman for years. Moreover, Cavalcanti accused the couple of lying about their permanent move to the Ribeira do Itapecuru. Úrsula and Bernardo were living for more than two decades in a house in Cavalcanti's backyard in Desterro Street. Úrsula was a well-known washerwoman in the public fountain offering her services to several people in the city. Finally, Cavalcanti was a nobleman, married to a noblewoman, a member of the Municipal Council that needed his "servants." Cavalcanti argued that the justice should keep Bernardo as his fisherman, but also conscript Úrsula to his service because she is a "freed black of servile status." While working for Cavalcanti, she would not have time to come up with false claims and cause disquiet.[491]

The justice wanted to settle the legal status of Úrsula and requested a copy of Marcos Boavida's will. The outcome of the case is unclear. The conflict could have been solved by other means than judicial intervention or the papers have not survived. Nevertheless, the short story of António Cavalcanti and his Indigenous servants demonstrates the centrality of Indigenous labor

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490 Idem, f. 13.
491 Idem, f. 13v.

for settlers' households and how they could react when their Indigenous laborers tried to leave their control.

Seeking autonomy did not necessarily involve moving away from the city. One could achieve freedom by maintaining their own house and working for wages. Índia Ana Cordeira, for instance, of São Luís, said that although "she was living in her own house," the governor drafted her to serve the settler José Araújo in the occupation of "washerwoman and seamstress." Significantly, Ana Cordeira said that she had served Araújo for one year and seven months from her own house, and he did not "sustain her or help her when she was sick."[492]

Contrary to her expectations, José Araújo did not pay for her services. Araújo had only sent $10 réis to buy indigo and gum to iron his clothes. Cordeira complained that such small value was not enough to buy supplies to starch all his clothes. Instead of sending more money or indigo and gum, Araújo sent more clothes for Ana to sew: two skirts. In the meantime, Araújo requested the rest of his clothes back. Cordeira responded that she was still taking care of them.

The índia Ana Cordeira's response enraged Araújo, who started to complain to the governor about her behavior. Without a clear justification, the governor ordered Ana to prison. After she had been there several nights, the governor sent her late one night to the village of Guimarães to work on the farm of José Marcelino Nunes. The long distance between Guimarães and São Luís prevented her from demanding the satisfaction of more than one year's worth of work. Staying out of the city, Araújo and Nunes placed a new washerwoman and seamstress at índia Ana's house.

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[492] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 60, doc. 5487.

Ana Cordeira, "a miserable helpless índia," based on the law of June 6, 1755, pleaded the queen to order the *juiz dos órfãos*[493] to charge Araújo and Nunes for her services and, more importantly, restore her house in the city. The queen responded that the crown judge (*ouvidor*) should promptly act on Ana's case, and if what índia Ana alleged in her petition was true, she should regain her house and receive the payment for her labor.

These fragments of individual stories demonstrate the use of the status "índio" among workers in eighteenth-century São Luís. Indigenous workers understood that the legal recognition of their freedom had constraints in daily life. They also understood that as publicly recognized índios, they could enjoy some rights. As the next section will reveal, being acknowledged in the community as an índio(a) could be the difference between freedom and slavery.

IV

Rosa was born in the household of one the most prominent settlers of São Luís, Domingos da Rocha Araújo. Araújo was commonly referred as "Captain," indicating that he had a military position in the local militia, a typical social distinction among the local elites in colonial Brazil. As was also characteristic of the local elites in colonial Brazil, Captain Araújo controlled vast swaths of land, where he raised cattle and cotton destined for the European market.[494] Domingos Araújo was from Barcelos, Northern Portugal, the son of João Rocha and Brígida Araújo. He probably migrated to Maranhão as a young adult, and on July 16, 1744, he

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[493] A legal guardian of the interests of orphans and widows. That official had responsibilities over Indigenous workers. In a letter from the governor Francisco Mendonça Furtado to the governor of Maranhão, the main concern was with Indigenous people that did not want to work and should be forced to do so. Francisco Xavier Mendonça Furtado to Governor Maranhão, Belém, August 30, 1757, in *A Amazônia na era pombalina: Correspondência do Governador e Capitão-Genral do Estado do Grão-Pará e Maranhão, Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, 1751-1759*, ed. Marcos Mendonça (Rio de Janeiro: IHGB, 1963), tomo 3, 1132-1133.

[494] Land grants: AHU, CU, MA, Avulsos, Cx. 38, Doc. 3701 (1757) and AHU, CU, Avulsos, Cx. 45, Doc. 4436 (1771). Cotton export: ANTT, Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão, Livro Entrada Partes 43, f. 5, 34, 44.

married Cecília Costa, daughter of Gabriel Costa and Margarida Coelha, members of the local elite.[495]

The strategic marriage was Domingos Araújo's first step to establish himself as a key figure in the community. He lived with Cecília Costa in the Poço Velho Street, just a few blocks from other important settlers, such as Pedro Lamaignere, Lourenço Belfort, and António Gomes Souza. As did many other landowners, he served several times in the local government, the Municipal Council.[496] Besides his participation in the local politics, he often served as godfather to São Luís settlers' sons and daughters. On January 18, 1762, Domingos Araújo and Maria Josefa appeared as Paulo's godparents. Paulo was the son of Francisco António Domingues and Maria Josefa Cabessa. Just like Araújo, Domingues possessed many slaves, and was involved in the cotton export economy. They even negotiated some urban properties in the 1760s.[497] Araújo's broad compadrio network extended to the enslaved population. He was the godfather of some slaves of other members of the local elite, such as Ana, slave of Clara Peregrina.[498] More significantly, Araújo was the godfather of Indigenous workers incorporated into his household. On December 29, 1767, the "índios of the Nation Timbira" Frutuoso, Bernardino, and Ana were baptized in the Sé Church of São Luís. They were all children, "from the house of Captain Domingos Araújo," who also appeared as their godfather.[499]

Although I have never found a will or an inventory drafted by Captain Araújo, his wife notarized one. In her will, written in 1760, Cecília Costa donated a substantial amount of money to Catholic institutions, such as the Church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário and the Santa Casa da

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[495] AAM, LRCFNSV, 84, f. 112.
[496] Elected *vereador* in 1763: APEM, CMSL, 13, f. 30v.
[497] He served as godfather for at least 19 children in the sample analyzed. Commercial transactions with Francisco António Domingues: CTS, Livro Notas 01, f. 255.
[498] AAM, LRBFNSV, 102, f. 10.
[499] AAM, LRBFNSV, 106, f. 71v.

Misericórdia. She also distributed money to nieces and nephews. The will listed seven slaves: Venceslau, son of the cafuza Ivana, and the mulata Maria, mother of Domingos and Claudina. The enslaved women Angélica and Rosa completed the list. Cecilia Costa had inherited some of those slaves from her father, meaning that they had been enslaved in the family for decades.[500]

Yet, her will did not portray the diverse backgrounds of the household's servants. A quick glance at baptismal and marriage records reveals that Africans and Indigenous workers lived alongside under the roof of Domingos Araújo and Cecília Costa. In addition to the Indigenous workers of the Nation Timbira, their household included other Indigenous slaves, Indigenous freed servants, mixed slaves, and recently arrived enslaved people from Africa. Domingos Araújo and Cecília Costa seem to have played an important role in the incorporation of Native workers in the colonial world. In June 1755, the "índios from the land" Aníbal and Joana married in the Sé Church. They were former slaves of Captain Jeronimo Taloza from the village of Vigia, in Pará. At the time of their marriage, they were "living in the house of Captain Domingos Araújo." Among the witnesses were António Fula and Felipe, both slaves of Araújo.[501]

Of the slaves specifically mentioned by Cecília Costa in her will, three received conditional manumission. The two men, Venceslau and Domingos, had to remain in the company of her husband until his death. The woman, Claudina, was required to stay with Ana Maria until her last days. In the will, however, key details went unremarked. Some of the slaves were related, Rosa and Venceslau were cousins, for example. And Cecília failed to acknowledge

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[500] Mota, *Cripto maranhenses*, 136-140. The will was only opened nine years later, on March 29, 1769, after Cecília's death.
[501] AAM, LRCFNSV, 85, f. 141.

her kinship ties with some of her slaves. There was more tension within this household than her pious will let transpire.

It is difficult to understand why Rosa decided to use colonial law to seek her freedom. The couple Domingos Araújo and Cecília Costa did not have children, and Cecília Costa decided to make Ana Maria, an orphan raised by her in the household, the main beneficiary of her estate, that included the enslaved woman Rosa. In 1769, Ana Maria notarized her will. Ana Maria seemed to have granted the possibility for Rosa to achieve freedom, with Captain Araújo's permission.[502] From 1769 to 1772, something strained the relationship between Araújo and Rosa, when she asked for legal intervention in the master/slave bond. Curiously, Ana Maria's will was not a point of contention in the litigation. Cecília's, however, was critical.

In the summer of 1772, with someone's assistance, probably Bernardo da Silva Gatinho, who would later represent her in the litigation, Rosa decided to use a quicker type of litigation (*ação sumária*), an *ação de justificação*.[503] In her justificação, she articulated three interconnected points. The first and most crucial was her genealogy. Rosa was the daughter of Joana and the granddaughter of Micaela. Micaela, in turn, was the daughter of Dionísia, who, finally, was the daughter of Iria, "índia from the Amazon River." The índia Iria was, then, Rosa's "great great grandmother." More than stressing her Indigenous ancestry, Rosa emphasized Iria's legal status: she was "free and not subject to any form of captivity."[504] Índia Iria was not only legally free, but Priest André Lopes always treated her as such in his household, where she used to live. Rosa, thus, should be judged free once she proved that she descended from índia Iria.

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[502] Mota, *Cripto maranhenses*, 238.
[503] As it was recommended in the law of 1755. On the importance of different types of litigation: Fernanda Pinheiro, "Em defesa da liberdade: libertos e livres de cor nos tribunais do Antigo Regime português (Mariana e Lisboa, 1720-1819)" (PhD Diss., Campinas, Unicamp, 2013), 137–41.
[504] AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 46, Doc. 4485 (1772), f. 2-2v.

Finally, the Portuguese monarchs had enacted several laws guaranteeing the freedom of the "índios from this land." According to natural law, every person must be presumed free, including the descendants of an "American índia." Those who claim otherwise - that Rosa was a slave - bore the burden of proof.

The Captain's poor health stalled the freedom suit. His lawyer requested an extension to provide a response. Before challenging the content of Rosa's petition, the Captain's lawyer asked some questions to Rosa. First, why did she recognize Captain Araújo as her legitimate master? Second, why did she wait fifteen years to fight for her freedom? The law was published in Maranhão in 1757, and she did not fight for her freedom until 1772. Was she out of town during that period, or was she ignorant about the content of the law? Third, why did the índia Iria end up in slavery? Fourth, if Iria was from the Amazon River, from which Indigenous village (*aldeia*) did she come from? Finally, was she able to name her relatives that were now free?[505]

Rosa's answers to all these questions were simple. She began by saying that she was "free by her nature" and Captain Araújo kept her "unjustly" in slavery. The answer to the second question is more significant. She confessed that she was in town when the law was published, but she did not seek her liberty because Cecília Costa, Captain Araújo's wife, "who had raised her," asked her to stay in the house serving as slave, with the promise that she would manumit Rosa after her death. The captivity of Rosa's family began a few decades earlier when índia Iria was serving Priest André Lopes's household. When the Priest died, settlers took advantage of Iria's "ignorance" and divided his slaves among themselves, "because at that time they did enslave índios." For the final questions, Rosa's lawyer pointed out her inability and lack of obligation to give such information.[506]

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[505] Idem, f. 6v-7.
[506] Idem, f. 8-9.

Finally, on January 23, 1773, the Captain's representatives offered their version of the story.[507] The Captain's defense introduced an alternative genealogy for Rosa. The Captain's representative, José dos Santos Freire, articulated fourteen different points. He initially contested Rosa's genealogy, arguing that Rosa did not descend from an índia called Iria, but rather from "a black woman *legitimate* slave." Both parties agreed that Rosa was the daughter of Joana, the granddaughter of Micaela, and the great-granddaughter of Dionísia. Yet, in the narrative of the Captain, Dionísia "was not the daughter of an índia called Iria, as she [Rosa] says, because the mother of Dionísia was Sabina, a black woman *legitimate* slave."[508]

The Captain's defense also introduced a central character to the story, Damazia Costa, the daughter of Dionísia, and, therefore, sister of Rosa's grandmother (Micaela). More importantly, she was the half-sister of her owner, Cecília Costa, an illegitimate daughter of Gabriel Costa with one of his slaves. José Freire argued that Rosa's relatives recognized their legitimate enslavement and only achieved their freedom thanks to their masters' grace, including Damazia Costa. Her case is instructive because she was raised in the household of Captain Araújo and was considered "the most *ladina* of Rosa's generation."[509] Then, if she was the most ladina, she would have known she had the right to claim freedom based on the new law/Indigenous ancestry. Nevertheless, Damazia went through an ordeal to receive her manumission letter when she

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[507] Idem, f. 12-13.

[508] "*Ser falso quanto alega a escrava Rosa na petição justificativa f. 2 porque ela e todos os seus parentes nunca foram livres, nem descendentes de índia alguma, mas sim da preta legítima escrava, como é notório em toda esta cidade.*" f. 12. "*Que a autora não tem parente algum por parte materna que se ache gozando de liberdade por virtude da lei das liberdades, e alguns que obtiveram a dita liberdade foi ou pela mulher do contestante fazer-lhe a esmola forrá-los ou o mesmo contestante já depois da lei das liberdades ficando os demais em cativeiro como escravos legítimos que são por descendentes daquela preta Sabina legítima escrava.*" f. 12v.

[509] Ladino(a) is an Indigenous person who learned the Portuguese language and ways. Damazia's legal status on baptismal records is ambiguous. She appears as both *serva* and "from the house of Araújo." She was the godmother of at least 6 enslaved children, an extensive ritual kinship network among the servile population in São Luís. Two were enslaved in the same household. One, Maria, was enslaved within Maranhão, a Timbira Indigenous woman, "captured in the troop led by Captain João Castelo Branco." AAM, LRBFNSV, 103, f. 100.

wanted to marry a "white man" called José Joaquim. She begged Cecília Costa for her freedom, who tried, unsuccessfully, to convince her husband to sign the manumission letter. Only after many pleas from different people and when his wife was in bed sick did Captain Araújo agree to manumit Damazia Costa.

The alternative narrative offered by the Captain's defense relied on two additional important points. They emphasized the legitimate enslavement of Rosa's family by insisting that her relatives recognized their slave status. The ones that were freed achieved such status by the grace of their masters and not for being descendants of índias. Moreover, contrary to what Rosa argued, Cecília Costa's will was very clear on Rosa's legal status: she was transmitted to her heir, Ana Maria. Finally, they deny the existence of an índia Iria in the household of Priest André Lopes.

After recovering the Captain's account, the parts had ten days to collect witnesses' depositions. Each party would mobilize witnesses who would later be inquired by a justice official. While Rosa's witnesses had to respond to the three points raised in her justificação, the ones mobilized by the Captain responded to the fourteen points he made. The different social statuses of the witnesses mobilized by each part reveal the power imbalance in this judicial struggle. Eight women testified on Rosa's side, of which five were freed women, and five men, most of them from the plebeian classes, including a weaver, a soldier, and peasants. Captain Araújo mobilized nine men and five women, most from the local elite.

Witnesses on Rosa's side did not deny her Indigenous ancestry, but most of them were ignorant about who was the mother of Dionísia. Hipólito Souza and Narcisa Conceição were exceptions. On January 25, 1773, Hipólito Souza, an 81-year-old man, remembered that he knew Iria, from the household of Priest André Lopes. According to him, Lopes gave Iria to his sister,

Margarida Coelha, wife of Gabriel Costa and father of Cecília Costa. However, Iria was transmitted not as a slave but "to assist in the raising of her children."[510] Narcisa Conceição, a freed woman, also remembered índia Iria, whom she met in her youth. Narcisa confirmed the genealogy advanced by Rosa and included a phenotypical assessment of Iria's Indigenous origin: she knew that she was an índia because "she could *see* that she was an índia from her land."[511]

Damazia Costa, the freed woman raised in the household of Captain Araújo and Cecília Costa, testified on Rosa's side. She confessed that she was the daughter of Dionísia and half-sister of Cecília Costa. This fact probably explains why Damazia was raised in the household and then considered the "most ladina of her generation." It could also explain some tensions between her and her half-sister, Cecília Costa. Contrary to what the Captain's defense argued, Cecília Costa opposed her marriage with José Joaquim, and publicly said that she was an enslaved woman. Damazia was adamant about her decision to marry and threatened to "get her papers to show her freed status." Such attitude enraged her half-sister who bemoaned "that Damazia did not give her another regret."[512] In her deposition, although she confessed that she did not know the origin of her grandmother, she had heard from her brother that their mother was an índia called Iria. Also from hearsay, she testified that the very Margarida Coelha, wife of Gabriel

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[510] "*E perguntado a ele testemunha pelo conteúdo nos itens da petição da autora justificante disse ao primeiro que sabe por conhecer a justificante Rosa, que é filha de Joana, e neta de Micaela a qual era filha de Dionísia que era bisavó da justificante, e esta dita Dionísia era filha de uma índia chamada Iria, e esta Iria era da casa do padre André Lopes, o qual a deu a sua irmã que casou com Gabriel da Costa pai e mãe da mulher do contestante, não como escrava, mas sim para lhe criar os filhos, o que sabe ele testemunha de ciência certa e por ser notório, e por conhecer a dita Iria e toda a sua descendência, e mais não disse deste.*" AHU, CU, Avulsos, MA, Cx. 46, Doc. 4485 (1772), f. 27-27v.

[511] "*E perguntado a ela testemunha pelo conteúdo nos itens da petição da autora justificante disse ao primeiro que sabe de ciência certa (e por conhecer) digo certa por ter conhecido a Iria em tempo que ela testemunha era rapariga a qual era da casa do padre André Lopes e foi mão de Dionísia, e de outra filha chamada Margarida que casou com João Luiz hoje defunto, e da dita Dionísia procedeu Micaela, e desta, Joana mãe da autora Rosa e mais não disse deste nem dos mais digo Rosa, e que sabe por ver que a dita Iria era índia de sua terra...*"Idem, f. 28.

[512] Idem, f. 33v. In fact, José Joaquim Vieira and Damazia da Costa married on June 25, 1759, ten years before the death of Cecília da Costa (3/29/1769). Viera appeared as the legitimate son of Bernardo Francisco and Bernarda Maria dos Santos, who migrated from Lisbon. Damazia da Costa, in turn, was the natural daughter of Gabriel da Costa and Dionísia, and a slave of Captain Domingos Araújo. AAM, LRCFNS, 85, f. 255.

Costa, had told that "Damazia's mother, Dionísia, descended from an *índia,* and the said Dionísia was transmitted to her [Margarida Coelha] by her brother, the Priest André Lopes."

On the Captain's side, most witnesses confirmed his version of Rosa's genealogy. Apolinário da Costa, a 71-year-old tailor who lived in the Ribeira do Itapecuru, went to the clerk's office to give his deposition. Like Damazia, Apolinário was the half-brother of Cecília Costa, and another bastard son of Gabriel Costa. He confessed that he was raised in the same household and knew Rosa's entire family. After repeating the same genealogy, Apolinário said that "Dionísia was the daughter of Sabina, *a black woman and legitimate slave.*"[513]

The Captain's witnesses also agreed on the story of Damazia Costa's marriage with the "white man" José Joaquim and the existence of such índia Iria in the house of Priest André Lopes. The crucial point to prove about Damazia was that she married Joaquim after the publication of the 1755 law, and that therefore, she was freed by the grace of her mistress, and not by the benefit of that abolition law. Regarding the assets of priest André Lopes, it was important to establish that he bequeathed them to his sister, and not to Captain Araújo.

Rumors, whispers, and gossip circulated among plebeian and elite populations. Several witnesses gave their account about one episode that happened inside the house of Captain Araújo and Cecília Costa. In around March 1769, when Cecília was sick, she started hearing rumors that their slaves were saying in the city that they were freed. As many witnesses narrated the episode in their depositions, the couple gathered some slaves and questioned them about these inconvenient rumors. Some witnesses recounted this story by hearsay, others claimed to be

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[513] "*E do segundo disse que sabe por ter conhecido toda a geração da autora justificante por ter nascido ele testemunha na mesma casa onde se criou e viveu muitos anos, e por esta razão sabe que a autora Rosa é filha de Joana, e esta filha de Micaela, e esta filha de Dionísia bisavó da autora, e esta Dionísia filha de Sabina preta escrava legítima como dito tempo ao primeiro artigo as quais ele testemunha a todas conheceu e conhece as que existem pela razão já acima dita de ser criado na mesma casa...*" Idem, f. 38v.

present. Such was the case of Maria Coelha, a 40-year-old married woman from Nova Street. Maria reported to Cecília that some of Rosa's relatives were saying "behind Cecília's back" that they were freed. "They were her legitimate slave," Cecília confidently replied, "because they descend from a black female slave, and they were always seen as such." Maria added in her deposition that she had seen the Captain calling two of those slaves. After asking them about the rumors, both slaves denied the rumors, according to Maria Coelha.[514]

Both parties had difficulty including witnesses. On Rosa's side, the official initially refused to collect the deposition of Estácia Souza. The official argued that she was an enslaved woman and disqualified to testify in the case. Bernardo Gatinho convinced the crown judge (*ouvidor*) to include Estácia Souza in the case, given the fact that she was freed by prescription. Some of the Captain's witnesses were not in the city, and he requested a letter of inquiry (*carta de inquirição*) to collect three witnesses' depositions in the Ribeira do Mearim. One of them was an enslaved man, and the Captain requested authorization beforehand to include his knowledge of Rosa's genealogy in the legal case file.

In the Ribeira do Mearim, Rosa and her family were described by the official Bernardo Gomes Pereira as cafuzas, descendants of a maternal black lineage. The three witnesses who testified were old enough to have known Rosa's descendants. They were from a diverse social spectrum, ranging from a slave to a Captain. Both Captain Jerônimo da Gama, who was the neighbor of Gabriel Costa, and the slave Bruno da Costa, who was raised with Rosa in the same household, confirmed that the cafuza Rosa did not descend from índia Iria. Only the third

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[514] "*E do duodécimo disse sabe por presenciar que no tempo que a mulher do contestante estava doente da doença de que faleceu falara o contestante com a dita sua mulher, e lhe disse que tinha notícia que os parentes da autora diziam por detrás que eram forros, e que lhe pedia declarasse a verdade para saber como se havia haver com eles ao que respondeu a mulher do contestante que eram seus escravos legítimos por descenderem de preta escrava e que por tais sempre foram tidos e havidos; e logo na mesma ocasião chamou o contestante duas parentas da autora para ouvirem o que dizia a senhora deles, e as ditas escravas responderam, que tal não diziam...*" Idem, f. 49.

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witness, the widow Ana Correia, explicitly said that the "mother of Dionísia was called Sabina, a *legitimate* black slave."[515]

After the inclusion of the witnesses' depositions in the legal file, both parties delivered a written defense. Bernardo Gatinho produced a lengthy written legal argument to defend Rosa's free status. He made two main points: the presumption of freedom and the quality of the testimonies produced by the Captain. Gatinho argued that Rosa wanted to "use" her liberty and the Captain would not allow. Índios(as) were free people in the Portuguese empire according to several laws, particularly the law of June 6, 1755. Freedom was considered a natural condition, and it required proofs to keep a person in captivity. Even if Rosa descended from cafuzas, the Captain had to prove that the "mixing black blood came from maternal line."[516] Most of the witnesses knew about the case from hearsay and not direct experience. Several others had heard important information from Cecília Costa, which was not appropriate because she had a vested interest in the case.

Captain Araújo's defense also emphasized problems with the witnesses mobilized by Rosa. José Freire, who penned the defense, argued that the only witness produced by Rosa worth credit was Izabel Coelha Silva, a "white woman." And yet, Silva did not know if Rosa descended from an índia or black mother. The rest of the witnesses were from the plebeian classes, he argued, and not worth attention.[517]

Yet, the strongest part of Araújo's defense gravitated towards the scope of the law of June 6, 1755. The norm clearly excluded African and African descendant slaves. "The law of

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[515] "*E do segundo disse que sabe por ser público e saber ela testemunha de ciência certa que a autora Rosa é filha de Joana neta de Micaela e esta ser filha de Dionísia, a qual Dionísia diz ela testemunha é segunda avó da autora e que não era filha da índia chamada Iria e nem ela testemunha nunca ouvira dizer tal, e disse mais ela testemunha que sabe a mãe de Dionísia se chamava Sabina preta legítima...*" Idem, f. 67v-68.
[516] Idem, f. 87v.
[517] Idem, f. 96.

liberties of June 6, 1755, is not so universal," wrote José Freire, "that it also extends to descendants of black slaves, but it excepts these and keeps them in their legitimate captivity."[518] Concrete cases would generate some questions as to whether a person descended from blacks or índias. In those cases, their reputation would be critical. "It is enough that they *look like* an índio(a) to be reputed as such," wrote José Freire, but this would not apply to Rosa because "neither in her color, nor in her hair, [she] looks like an índia." In those cases, a visual inspection could be requested, but it is not necessary in the case at hand, "because her color and her hair demonstrate her black origin, and the enslavement of those are ratified by the Monarch in the said law."[519]

Freire decided to request four additional documents to further the Captain's case; first, a written request from the priest, Bernardo Bequimão, to attest that some of Rosa's witnesses were not part of the Catholic congregation; second, a written proof that Maria Coelha, the sister of priest André Lopes, was his only heir; third, a written proof signed by fray João de Santa Tereza saying that he was present when Cecília Costa was sick and asked her husband to sign Damazia Costa's manumission; and a copy of the part of Cecília Costa's will indicating Rosa's legal status.[520]

After the exposition of the case, the collection of witnesses, the written defenses of each part, and the inclusion of written evidence, Rosa requested the ouvidor to send the legal case file

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[518] "*A lei de liberdades de 6 de junho de 1755 não é tão universal, que se estenda também aos descendentes de pretas escravas, antes excetua estes e os manda conservar no seu legítimo cativeiro e prevendo aquele piíssimo legislador as dúvidas que poderiam ocorrer a respeito de serem ou não os índios descendentes de pretas escravas, determina que para que com o dito pretexto se não retenham em escravidão os ditos índios, bastará que tais pareçam, para assim serem reputados, e julgados...*" Idem, f. 98.

[519] "*Cuja presunção senão dá na autora porque nem na cor, nem no cabelo parece índia...*" Idem, f. 98. Visual analysis (*inspeção ocular*) emerged in other cases, such as the freedom suit of Helena, Francisca, and their 16 children and grandchildren against Agostinho Domingues Siqueira. The Board of Missions decided that based on the visual analysis, they were descendants of *Tupinambá* Indians from Maranhão, as they claimed. BNPT, PBA 615, f. 243-245.

[520] Idem, f. 101-105.

to the Board of Missions for a decision and stated that "any delay would be detrimental to her because she is in the yoke of slavery."[521] The Board of Missions, on June 15, 1774, expressed Rosa's fate in a laconic fashion. After repeating the genealogical version of Captain Aráujo, in which Rosa was descended from the black Sabina, and reaffirming that the 1755 law could not be extended in any case to blacks, they condemned Rosa to be "held in the hands of the defendant [Captain Araújo], as her rightful master."[522]

After the frustrating decision from the Board of Missions, Rosa still had a glimmer of hope and decided to appeal to a superior court. Following the 1755 law, Bernardo da Silva Gatinho sent the case to the *Mesa da Consciência e Ordens*, a tribunal in Lisbon.[523] It is difficult to understand the relationship between Rosa and her master during the two years in which the litigation occurred in São Luís. When Bernardo da Silva Gatinho appealed to the superior tribunal, he visited Rosa in Captain Araújo's house, which means that she was still living there. On July 25, 1775, one year after the Board of Missions' decision, the case file arrived in the Mesa da Consciência e Ordens.[524] Sadly, that is all I know about Rosa's attempt to achieve her freedom.

Rosa's case reveals the use of social-racial classifications to reinforce slavery. When the enslavement of Indigenous people was no longer legitimate, settlers and colonial documents inscribed alternative genealogies emphasizing the mixed or black maternal origin. Working

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[521] Idem, f. 115.

[522] Idem, f. 116v. The Board of Missions decided against the freedom of other plaintiffs based on African origin. Rita and Cecília lost their case against Francisco Abreu as the Board of Missions "judged them captives because they were daughters of the black Brígida, and Brígida was the daughter of the black Clara, who looked like a cafuza." APEM, 01, f. 85v-86. Another similar decision was Feliciano, in 1760: APEM, 01, f. 90v-91v. Even before the abolition law of 1755, blacks were beyond the scope of the Board of Missions. The case against António Serrão, in 1743, was beyond the jurisdiction since those slaves were "blacks from Mina." APEM, 01, f. 8.

[523] The 1755 law indicated the court of appeal. Other cases presented the same strategy. This legal strategy likely explains why the case file is stored in the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino. The case files were supposed to be sent for the Overseas Secretary perusal.

[524] ANTT, Mesa Consciência e Ordens, Secretaria da Mesa e Comum das Ordens, 225, f. 278.

people in São Luís shared an understanding of their neighbors' genealogy and reputation. This knowledge was crucial in a moment of transformation in Maranhão's socioeconomic structure. These communication networks disseminated legal knowledge that guaranteed the freedom of descendants of Indigenous mothers. In a region that relied on Indigenous enslavement for decades, many people could viably claim Indigenous ancestry.

Yet, to be reputed as índio(a) was not a given; one had to activate that status. The new norm opened the possibility for massive emancipation of slaves and disruption of the status quo. Therefore, masters reacted by hardening slavery's racial lines. Serial analysis of manumission letters illuminates vernacular practices stressing the black maternal origin of slaves.

Manumission letters registered in São Luís's notary public from the 1740s to the 1780s demonstrate the consistent use of socio-racial classifications by notaries.[525] Over time, classifications utilized to describe manumitted people reveal local adaptations to the transition from Indigenous enslavement to the mass arrival of enslaved Africans. Maranhão's notaries employed five main socio-racial classifications: *mulato*, *cafuzo*, *mameluco*, *crioulo*, and *preto*. The intensification of the transatlantic slave trade to the region explains the increasing number of pretos (blacks). Surprisingly, cafuzo, one of the most common classifications in other types of sources, such as baptismal records, was not recurrent (Table 13).

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[525] 257 manumission letters between two notary offices. Both *Cartas de Liberdade* and *Escrituras de Alforria*.

Table 16 Socio-Racial Classification of Manumitted Slaves in São Luís, 1740s-1780s

Socio-Racial Classification of Manumitted Slaves in São Luís, 1740s-1780s

Decade	Mulato	Cafuzo	Mameluco	Crioulo	Preto
1740s	9		10	2	2
1750s	7		5	1	1
1760s	11	0			16
1770s	23	0		4	9
1780s	39	0		9	30

■ Mulato ■ Cafuzo ■ Mameluco ■ Crioulo ■ Preto
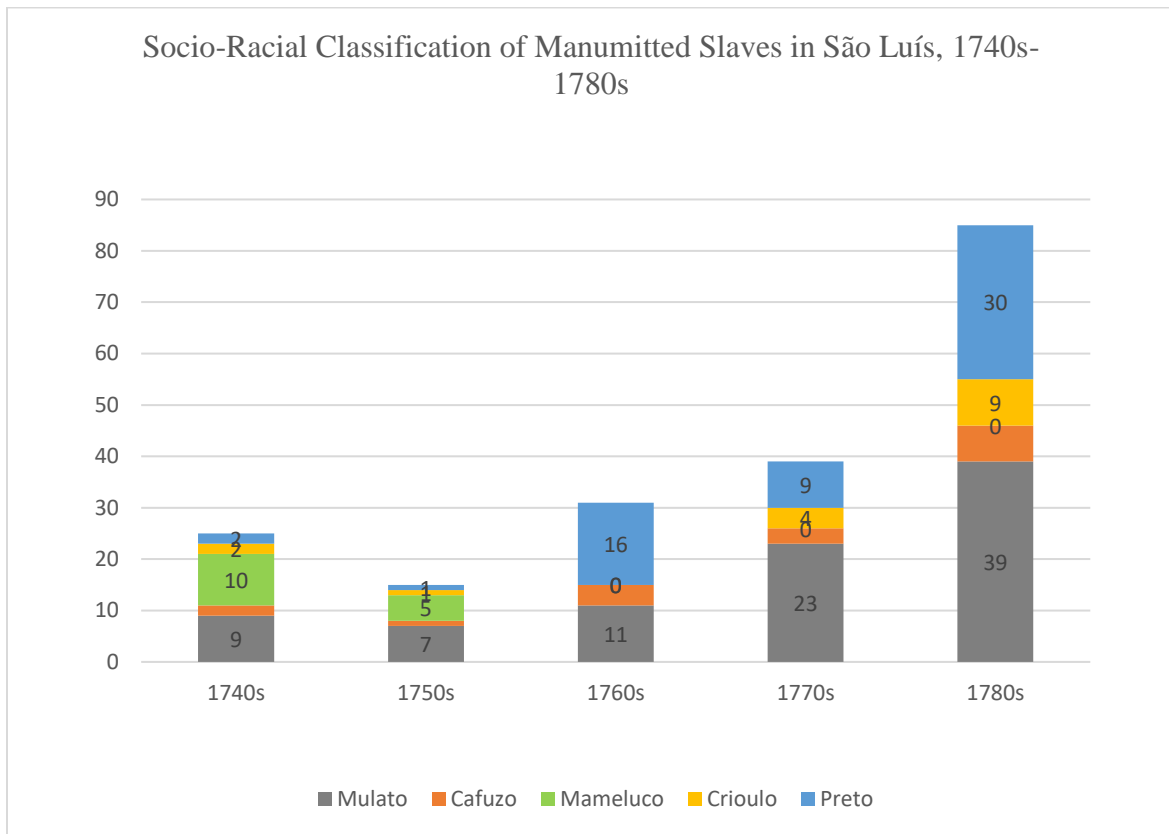
The contrast between mameluco and mulato reveals the transformations of Maranhão's slavery. The data suggest the progressive abandonment of the classification mameluco after the 1750s, even if I include one manumission letter that specifically labeled the slave as "from the heathen of the land" (*do gentio da terra*), a classification used for Indigenous Americans. From the master's point of view, it makes sense that the term mameluco would virtually disappear after 1755 because the term was associated with Indigenous ancestry. Although mulato appears in the 1740s and 1750s, its prominence in the following decades suggests two conclusions. First, the constant influx of African slaves galvanized the growth of a mixed population of African descent. Second, notaries and masters were intentionally classifying enslaved people as mixed-race or of African descent.

Beyond the quantification of socio-racial classifications, manumission letters suggest the formation of vernacular notarial formulas emphasizing a black maternal genealogy for enslaved people. Consider the example of the mulato João de Deus. On April 14, 1777, the notary Carlos Câmara went to Teodosia Tereza Jesus's house in the Larga Street to record João's manumission. The two-page deed confirmed that Teodosia Jesus had received the deposit of 130$000 réis in exchange for granting João's freedom. Câmara wrote - reminiscent of Captain Araújo's defense and his witnesses - that Teodosia Jesus had João de Deus "in rightful title of slavery a mulato *legitimate* slave because he was the son of another slave named Florência, a black woman, and Florência was the daughter of another black woman *legitimately enslaved* called Tereza."[526]

These vernacular notarial formulas appear in records from the 1760s and 1770s and disappear in the 1780s. It was the moment after the publication of the 1755 abolition law and when several Indigenous workers were renegotiating the terms of their servitude, proving the abolition of Indigenous enslavement did not weaken slavery as an institution.

Conclusion

Imperial reforms around the mid-eighteenth century transformed Maranhão's socioeconomic structure. The rise of a plantation economy, the thousands of enslaved Africans disembarking, and the new imperial policies toward Indigenous subjects impacted the lives of ordinary people in São Luís. Yet, these new forces did not remove Indigenous workers from the city, farms, and ranches. They offered new challenges and opportunities for the strategic use of the índio category.

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[526] CTS, Livro Notas 10, f. 101v-102.

The presence of Indigenous workers in the city and around it destabilized the colonial order. Their existence puzzled imperial surveyors. "It is difficult to accurately separate the three mentioned classes of people [White, Black, and Mulato]," wrote one of them in 1799, "without a rigorous investigation. There are mulatos almost white; mamelucos that descend from white and índios; cafuzos of mulato and preto; and mestiços of preto and índio; they easily pass into the nearest class. The wandering índios, those living outside the villages, were counted in the mulato class in their Parishes."[527] The stories narrated in this chapter demonstrate that Indigenous workers were not as amorphous as the surveyors depicted them.

Histories of Indigenous enslavement described the process of captive commodification and the progressive transformation of Indigenous Americans into a servile population within colonial settlements. Because Indigenous enslavement was legally unstable, slaveholders concealed their workers' Indigeneity to transform them into slaves.[528] The stories told here show the incompleteness of this narrative. Indigenous workers were resilient members of São Luís's community where they worked, socialized, formed friendship and romantic bonds, and attended the Church. They restructured their lives and became índios within the colonial world.

For those Indigenous workers, many former slaves, representing themselves as índios involved mainly being reputed as such. Three aspects composed the índio reputation: genealogy, appearance, and labor. Over generations, the community formed knowledge about one person's lineage. A phenotypical assessment was as important as one's ancestors. Indigenous workers

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[527] AHU, CU, Avulsos, Cx. 104, Doc. 8313.
[528] Muriel Nazzari, "Transition toward Slavery: Changing Legal Practice Regarding Indians in Seventeenth-Century São Paulo," *The Americas* 49 (1992): 131–55. John M. Monteiro, "From Indian to Slave: Forced Native Labour and Colonial Society in São Paulo during the Seventeenth Century," *Slavery & Abolition* 9 (1988): 105–27.

fought for their recognition as mobile wage laborers who had the right to serve whoever paid them better.

These transformations coincided with the growth of the transatlantic slave trade. The possibility of mass abolition and disruption of the order haunted slaveholders and colonial officials. During this period, vernacular practices - including notarial formulas - stressed maternal black origins to the enslaved population. Vernacular practices hardened the racial lines of slavery, showed the limits of the strategic use of the índio, and preserved the reproduction of slavery, the bedrock of the Portuguese empire.

Conclusion

Was there an Indigenous Post-Abolition?

In thirty years, from the 1740s to the 1770s, Maranhão started its transition from a frontier economy to a plantation society. While in the 1740s, the region's economy was mainly based on cattle raising and small-scale farming, in the 1770s, Maranhão exported significant quantities of cotton, rice, and leather. In this period, the enslaved workforce moved from an Indigenous to an African majority. Yet, as this research demonstrates, this process did not mean the end of Indigenous practices of enslavement.

Slavery was important in Maranhão even before the creation of the trading company and the unprecedented number of enslaved Africans that arrived after the 1760s. Portuguese settlers enslaved thousands of Indigenous people in the interior of Maranhão and brought them to cities, farms, and ranches on the Atlantic coast. Based on last wills and baptismal records, it was possible to confirm that the presence of enslaved people in settlers' households was widespread. Decades of Indigenous enslavement forced settlers to develop local practices to keep people enslaved.

The fall of the Transamazonic slave trade in the 1750s did not mean the end of Indigenous enslavement. The publication of the law of June 6, 1755, reflected new imperial policies. Aiming to prove possession of territories in dispute with Spain, the Portuguese changed the status of Indigenous people. Heavily dependent on Indigenous alliances in the continent's vast interior, the Portuguese imagined they had better chances to forge durable relations by ceasing violent enslavement. This Indigenous policy designed for the frontiers had real impacts on thousands of Indigenous people living in captivity since many of them could viably claim freedom based on Indigenous maternal ancestry.

Settlers enslaved Indigenous people in the interior of Amazonia for decades using the legal devices they knew. Some practices recruited Indigenous enslaved people, while others recruited free workers. As scholars have proposed, the boundaries between these practices were fluid in practice. I defended that the legal statuses of Indigenous people recruited under different forms were also fuzzy once they entered settlers' households. The long history of Indigenous enslavement developed local practices to keep people enslaved that were accepted in the community. Settlers transmitted their Indigenous workers to their heirs in their last wills, even when the conditions of enslavement were dubious. Settler and Indigenous workers' personal dependencies, sometimes intimate dependencies, allowed the continuation of bondage. Settlers justified these practices with ideas ranging from their position as noblemen who relied on their servants to debts owed by Indigenous workers for Catholic instruction and raising them.

Because the boundaries were fluid, the distinction between enslavement and freedom had to be negotiated. Baptismal records indicate that before the 1750s, Indigenous enslavement did not develop a complex terminology to define legal statuses and racial classifications. Racial categories were not frequently used to determine labor categories. In short, enslaved people appear in baptismal records almost always with their names and as "slave" or "servo(a)." I suggest that it was only after the substantial influx of enslaved Africans that people in São Luís relied on racial categories to define labor relations.

Taking advantage of these uncertainties over legal statuses, settlers tried to impose mixed-race classification to reinforce the enslavement of people. The legal activism of Indigenous people started well before the publication of the abolition law of June 6, 1755. Yet, this law offered a solid basis for freedom claims based on Indigenous maternal ancestry. The pressure from Indigenous people forced settlers to deny the Indigeneity of the people they were

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trying to keep enslaved. As I demonstrated, this process was a vernacular practice of enslavement that was not limited to freedom suits. From the extant evidence from notarial records, mainly manumission letters and commercial transactions, settlers and notaries emphasized maternal black lineages onto the enslaved population to guarantee legitimate enslavement.

Indigenous workers became índios in São Luís. This dissertation tried to track some of these efforts. The legal activism of Indigenous workers relied on their networks of knowledge circulation, and success in court depended on the mobilization of witnesses that could confirm your genealogy. The evidence from marriage records indicates that Afro-Indigenous marriages were not the norm. Indigenous workers saw little reason to formalize a union with recently arrived enslaved Africans who occupied an inferior social hierarchy. Baptismal records also indicate divergent patterns in terms of *compadrio*. While Indigenous people tended to forge relations with free people, the children of enslaved Africans had another enslaved person as godfather and godmother. The transformations in the practices of enslavement in Maranhão were not smooth as some colonial officials tried to portray. Indigenous workers actively participated in the definition of new labor categories and racial classifications.

Appendix

Sources and Methods

     Bonds of Belonging is the first work to analyze all the information available for the enslaved population of Maranhão between the 1740s and 1770s in Catholic parish records and notarial documents. Access to these documents is not always easy. While Catholic parish records are safely stored in the *Arquivo Público do Estado do Maranhão*, and last wills are in the *Arquivo do Tribunal de Justiça do Maranhão*, the notary books unfortunately are still part of private collections and only available in their respective notary offices (Tito Soares and Celso Coutinho). The conditions for doing this research in the notary offices are far from ideal.

     I combined these records in a structured database using the system Spatial Historian developed by James Schindling to reconstruct the stories of Indigenous and African workers in São Luís. This database allows a wide range of characteristics, references, and relationships to be recorded and subsequently queried, supporting data analysis from various perspectives. Similar capabilities using a spreadsheet would require several linked workbooks and would quickly become untenable as the number of people grows beyond more than a handful.

     In São Luís, Catholic priests registered enslaved and free people in the same books, unlike several other Catholic parishes. Baptismal and marriage records tend to follow a formula and different entries provide the same information, allowing comparison across time. One ordinary baptismal record contains the date of the event, the place where it occurred, the name of the person being baptized, his/her legal status, the name of the master, if applicable, the socio-racial classification, and the priest who signed the document. The same information was also present for the parents and godparents. Marriage records follow a similar format but include the

name of the groom, the bride, and their respective parents. In place of godparents, marriages required the attendance of witnesses.

I extracted almost all the information from these records. Based on each baptism and marriage (the event), I first noted the archival reference and the date when the event occurred. Then, I recorded the person's name, sex, age category, status, and classification. I extracted the same data for masters, fathers, mothers, godfathers, godmothers, and witnesses. In the end, I recorded the priest who signed the record.

People in the database have five possible statuses: Free, Slave, Servo, Freed, and Indentured. Catholic parish records would rarely say that a person was *livre* (free). Then, I used Free in cases when the legal status was absent. The Slave legal status is straightforward, and I used Slave when the person was listed explicitly with the word *escravo(a)*. I applied the same condition for Servo. For Freed people, I included people labeled as *forro(a)*, but I made an important addition to the Freed status and included people labeled with legal statuses that implied previous servitude, such as *que foi do serviço* or *forro da lei que foi do serviço*. Finally, Indentured includes people explicitly labeled with the legal status *do serviço* or less frequent ones such as *da administração* or *da obrigação*. The category also encompasses people labeled with legal status that imply present servitude, such as *forro da lei do serviço*.

Socio-racial classification is the umbrella term that I used to include all labels used to describe people. The use of this category requires contextualization and care. Yet, I decided to keep all these labels in one place to allow easier comparisons and data management.

List of Classification used in the dataset:

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1. "African"

    1.1. Angola.

    1.2. Balanta.

    1.3. Bijagó.

    1.4. Bissau.

    1.5. Cacheu.

    1.6. Guiné.

    1.7. Mandinga.

    1.8. Mina.

    1.9. Mozambique.

    1.10.　　Negro.

    1.11.　　Preto.

2. "Indigenous"

    2.1. Gentio da terra.

    2.2. Gentio do Amazonas.

    2.3. Guegue.

    2.4. Índio.

    2.5. Índio Cafuzo.

    2.6. Índio da terra.

    2.7. Índio Mameluco.

    2.8. Índio Mestiço.

    2.9. Sertão do Pará.

    2.10.　　Tapuia.

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3. "Mixed"

    3.1. Caboclo.

    3.2. Cafuzo.

    3.3. Mameluco.

    3.4. Mestiço.

    3.5. Mulato.

    3.6. Pardo.

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