



Between West Africa and America

The Angolan slave trade in the Portuguese and Spanish Atlantic Empires (1560-1641)

Miguel Geraldés Rodrigues

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

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Examining Board

Prof Regina Grafe, EUI

Prof Jorge Flores, EUI

Prof Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam

Prof Toby Green, King's College London

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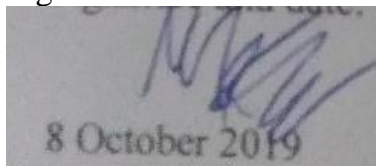
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Abstract

According to the most recent figures, more than 400,000 African slaves are now estimated to have disembarked in Spanish American territories during the years of the Iberian Union (1581-1640). The vast majority of those captives arrived to America from West Central Africa, primarily via port of Luanda. This thesis explores the interconnection between the Portuguese occupation and colonization of Angola, and the development of the Iberian slave trade to Spanish America during the Union of Crowns (1581-1640). By focusing on Angola, a territory traditionally regarded as a periphery in the vast realm of the Habsburg Monarchy, I look at the evolution of the different administrative, economic, and military policies employed by the Crown in this territory during the dynastic union, and demonstrate how they were closely intertwined with the economic expansion of Spanish American colonial societies. Portuguese large-scale warfare in Ndongo was contemporary with Spanish's own economic expansion in the Americas, and the vast number of slaves captured in West Africa supported Spanish American's colonial societies.

This dissertation also explores the financial and legal organization of the Iberian slave trade. It explores the different policies and strategies for capture and acquisition of African slaves in Angola, and its relationship with the financial mechanisms drawn in the metropolis by both Iberian Crowns. To conduct businesses on the territories on the edge of the empire, knowledge of the different colonial markets was crucial, and attainable only through the establishment of networks with local entrepreneurs or on the spot agents experienced with cross-cultural trade, who could oversee their operations. This research captures some of the commercial strategies and dynamics of local elites from Luanda participating on the slave trade, both from an official and informal nature, and intermingles their business operations and slave capture activities with distant credit operations between the metropolis or in America.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AGI – Archivo General de Indias
- AGS – Archivo General de Simancas
- AHU – Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino
- ANTT – Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo
- BAL – Biblioteca da Ajuda de Lisboa
- BNP – Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal
- Cód. – Códice
- Cx. – Caixa
- Coord. – Coordinator
- Doc. – Document
- Ed (s). – Editor/Editors
- Fl (s). – Fólio/os
- L/Lib. – Libro/livro
- Mç. – Maço
- N - Numero
- Org. – Organizador
- P./ pp. – Page/Pages
- R - Ramo
- TSTD – Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database
- Vol. – Volume

Currency Exchange

Spanish Currencies

1 *ducado* = 1.1 cruzados

1 *ducado* = 1.375 Pesos | 1 peso = 0.727 *ducados*

1 *ducado* = 375 maravedís = 11.029 Reales = 435 *réis*

1 Peso (of unassayed silver/*plata corriente*) = 8 reales (peso de a ocho) = 272 *maravedís*
= 320 *réis*

1 Peso of assayed silver (*plata ensayda*) 450 *maravedís*.

1 Gold Peso/Peso de oro = +400 *maravedís*

1 Real = 34 *maravedís*

1 Real = 40 *réis*

Portuguese Currencies

1 Cruzado = 400 *réis*

1 Cruzado = 10 reales

1 Cruzado = 1.25 pesos

1 Conto = 1.000.000 *réis*

1 Vintem = 20 *réis*

1 Tostão = 100 *réis*

I – Introduction

During the summer of 1614, King Phillip III appointed a special *Junta* to evaluate the state of the *renta de los esclavos negros*, and the future of the slave trade to Spanish America.¹ The members of the *Junta* were handpicked out of the different Councils of the Habsburg Monarchy – Indies, Portugal, and the Treasury –, and they gathered in the Court to assess the changes to the economic performance of this revenue. Three years had passed since the introduction of a new law (issued in 1611), which prohibited the previously established direct shipping between the Portuguese commercial outposts in Africa and the Spanish colonies in America. The *Junta* was instructed to debate on the positive and negative effects of this law, and attempt to find ways to maximise the revenues of this trade. This special *Junta* was created on account of the numerous reports arriving to Madrid from the Americas, requesting more slaves, as well as from the Royal Treasury, alerting the King about significant losses linked to this revenue. The situation looked bleak for the Monarchy: after a decade of prosperity during which the Crown’s combined slave revenues had generated more than 200,000 *ducados* per year, the introduction of the new law (following the earlier *cédula* of 1608) and prohibition of direct navigation between the two imperial spheres completely halted the legal movement of the slave trade, causing several of the Habsburg’s monopolies of both the Portuguese and Spanish Crown to default.²

The Iberian slave trade had thrived during the first decades of the Union of the Iberian Crowns (1581-1640). The relaxation of the imperial borders in the Atlantic, combined with a growing demand for coerced labour from the Spanish American markets, had greatly encouraged the Portuguese to expand slaving enterprises on the West Central Africa. The growing output of African slaves brought to Spanish America by the

¹ *Juntas* were small councils and *ad hoc* committees composed of a select number of hand-picked ministers, councillors, and political figures close to the King, assembling to reflect and deliberate on a particular problem which would usually fall under the competences of other councils. Ruth Mackay, *The Limits of Royal Authority. Resistance and obedience in seventeenth-century Castile* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p. 27

² See below.

Portuguese in turn motivated a reform in the legal system for the taxation and provision of slaves to America, which ultimately culminated in the implementation of the first *asiento* in 1595. The administration of this trade was farmed out to Portuguese third-party contractors, which provoked complaints by Seville's merchant and financial community. Following the multiple accusations of smuggling, frauds, and contraband performed by Portuguese slave ships in Spanish America, the King issued the aforementioned law prohibiting direct trade between the imperial territories of the two different Crowns. Phillip III also granted the administration of this trade to Spanish naturals, breaking the Portuguese hold on the management thereof. Slaves were suddenly required to be transported from Portuguese factories in Africa to Seville, and from there to the territories of Spanish America. The ramification was the petering out of this revenue for the Crown's coffers, as operation costs more than doubled overnight, which resulted in less than nine ships being officially licenced to sail over three years.³

Among the multiple reports, enquiries, and opinions produced by the different members of the *Junta*, arguing either in favour or against the new law, defending or attacking the Portuguese and Spanish management of the trade respectively, a memorandum signed by two members of the Council of Portugal, Mendo da Mota and the Count of Vila Nova, is highly illustrative of the vital importance of the slave trade for both Iberian Empires, and why the fates and fortunes of the Monarchy rested on its conservation. According to information collected by the latter authors, the Iberian slave trade had strongly dwindled over just three years. Instead of the usual 120,000 *ducados* which the Crown had received from the lease of the *asientos* every year, and the more than 100,000 *cruzados* generated by the lease of the three Portuguese African monopolies, the Crown collected next to nothing since the implementation of the law, and recorded losses in excess of 600,000 *ducados*. Mota and Vila Nova reminded the King that he was in fact the ruler of both Portugal and Spain, and that this trade was of consequence for the Treasury of both Crowns. Not only did this new law prevent the supply of Spanish America's markets, but it also halted the revenues of the slaves' export duties in Portuguese Africa, making the problem trans-imperial in nature.

The massive costs associated with the shipment of slaves via Seville to America, rather than halting illegal voyages, encouraged more smuggling into the Americas

³ This will be one of the main topics of Chapter 5.

instead. At the same time, the financial underperformance of the slave monopolies of the Portuguese Crown made the colonial apparatus in Africa at risk of collapse, considering the King financed the colonial governments in Angola, Cape Verde, and São Tomé through the revenues of their respective monopolies. The Habsburg Monarchs, hard-pressed by increasing fiscal pressure and growing military expenditure in Europe, were also left without one of the Crown's most stable revenues in the *asiento*, and would lose the ability to issue interest bearing bonds (*juros*) over this lease accordingly. Finally, Spain's colonisation of America relied (on a foundational level) on the importation of large waves of enslaved Africans to sustain its colonial societies. The transatlantic slave trade was therefore fundamental for the sustenance of both Iberian empires. It supported the Portuguese colonial governments in Africa, financed the Monarchy's debts in the Kingdom, and contributed to the Spanish Imperial expansion in the Americas. The report of Mota and Vila Nova touched on a variety of problems of a fiscal, commercial, and imperial nature, pertaining to not only the Portuguese Crown, but the Spanish one as well, all tied together and united by one single economic activity: the slave trade. They urged the King to revert the law and return the trade to its previous state, highlighting the key role of the slave trade for the Monarchy, which they labelled as '*el mal necesario*', a necessary evil.⁴

The report touched upon many topics covered in this dissertation. The main subject of this thesis will be study of the Angolan slave trade to Spanish America during the Union of Crowns (1581-1640), as well as the legal and financial mechanisms behind the management of the Iberian slave trade, particularly the financial framework of the *asientos* and the Portuguese monopoly contracts of Africa. This dissertation proposes to focus specifically on Angola, a territory traditionally regarded as a 'periphery' of the vast realm of the Habsburg Monarchy, exploring the interconnection between the Portuguese occupation and colonisation of Angola and the expansion of the Iberian slave trade to the Spanish colonies during the Union of Crowns. In doing so, light will be shed on the role of West Central Africa's slave trade for the foundation of an early Iberian Atlantic system. By framing the different stages of the Portuguese settlement in Angola within a broader imperial and financial framework of the Habsburg Monarchy, the military enterprise in this territory, as well as the shifting patterns in the provision of West African slaves on

⁴ BNP, *Coleção Pombalina*, códice 249, f. 45 ss. "Parecer sobre os negros que se navegaõ a Indias" (06-1614)

transatlantic markets will become much clearer. The slave trade integrated the two Iberian imperial spheres long before the dynastic union, and it played a fundamental role in the support of the Spanish Imperial enterprise in the America. One of dissertation's aims is to look into this trans-imperial enterprise and demonstrate how the Portuguese advances in Angola, and the growth of Spanish American colonial societies were contemporary, intersected, and mutually reinforcing ventures.

The creation of different legal mechanisms to regulate the slave trade by the two Iberian Crowns, and their gradual integration during the Iberian Union will also be a focus point of this thesis, from a financial and a commercial perspective. From the early unsupervised slaving ventures and collaboration with African kingdoms, to the development of highly articulated merchant networks and financial instruments for the regulation of the slave trade, this dissertation will shed light on collaborative trans-imperial business ventures, from the top of the administration of the slave trade in the *asentistas* and *contratadores* settled at Court, to the small private actors and entrepreneurs engaged in local exchanges and cross-cultural trade in Angola. The topics in question cover the period of the Union of Crowns from 1581 to 1641, comprised of the reigns of the three Phillips. Throughout this thesis, this chronological setting is expanded to previous years of the Union to take into consideration the early contacts and experiences of the Portuguese with the societies of the West African Coast, and the early Spanish colonisation in America in order to observe the first settlements, interactions, and evolution of the Iberian fiscal mechanisms considered in regulation of the slave contracts. This will enable a much clearer comparison with the later fiscal solutions in order to gauge the impact and the transformations (but also the continuities) registered in the integration of the Portuguese imperial sphere into the Habsburg Monarchy. While the author of the current dissertation is aware of the outdated and often artificial chronological timeframe imposed on slave trade contexts by the Iberian Union, as noted in recent historiographical contributions detailing the persistence of a slave trade to Spanish America after the Portuguese restoration, the year 1641 was chosen as a limit on account of this thesis' focus on the Portuguese project in Angola, as well as on the financial administration of the trade.⁵ Both these elements collapsed by 1641, following the cancelation of the *asiento*

⁵ Alex Borucki, David Eltis, David Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 120, issue 2, 1 April 2015 pp. 433-461; Tatiana Seijas, Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, "The Persistence of the slave market in seventeenth-century Central Mexico", *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 37/2 (2016) pp. 307-33

with the Portuguese revolt, and the Dutch occupation of Luanda, thereby closing the chronological window. The date 1560 was symbolically chosen for the title, as it marked the arrival of the first official Portuguese mission to Ndongo.

Early modern Iberian studies are often limited to the political and historical framework of either the Portuguese or the Spanish Empires. However, the geographical proximity between both countries, combined with a shared historical, cultural, and religious background, resulted in mutual interactions, stable communications, and various exchanges between the imperial spheres of the Iberian Crowns. Portuguese and Spanish enterprises evolved side by side since the very beginning of their overseas ventures, and were not only contemporary, but also competitive and perfectly aware of one another. During their respective expansions, the Iberian empires registered parallels and overlaps in their respective overseas territories, as the porosity of its respective imperial borders invited a certain penetration, participation, and collaboration of agents from the opposite Crowns in each other's domains. Early Iberian ventures and shared experiences in the Atlantic helped shape the formation of their respective governmental structures and commercial policies before coming into contact with different indigenous populations in their respective empires. Those encounters would result in different imperial and colonial experiences for each Crown, leading in turn to the formation of new and unique colonial societies for the different geographies of the Iberian empires. As a result, the Portuguese and Spanish would ultimately develop divergent imperial projects, notwithstanding similar patterns and practices across their respective empires at the earlier stages.⁶

Despite the close association between the Portuguese and Spanish empires during their respective overseas expansions, the tracing of parallels, processes of collaboration, or the adaptation of similar strategies in their respective imperial experiences, is often side-lined in favour of traditional narratives that explore Iberian imperial ventures independently from one other. The studies that engage in comparative exercises between both empires are mostly focused on tracing and identifying the processes and features that made their imperial enterprises different, rather than exploring their continuities, similarities, or shared experiences.⁷ As a result, both empires have been traditionally studied from a contrasting perspective, one that highlights their different empire 'models',

⁶ Francisco Bethencourt, "Iberian Atlantic: Ties, Networks, and Boundaries", Harald E. Braun, Lisa Vollendorf (Eds.), *Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic* (Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 15-36

⁷ Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 70-72, 101-115

with the Spanish favouring a territorial approach grounded in the conquest of vast indigenous empires and the exploitation of its territory and people, and the Portuguese privileging a maritime enterprise based on the control of a system of scattered strategic ports, fortresses, and commercial entrepôts in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.⁸

This historiographical paradigm has been shattered in later years by scholars such as Serge Gruzinski and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, who challenged those antipodal narratives by exploring the multiple interconnections between the different territories of the Iberians empires. Adopting a comparative methodology that opened new avenues for historical inquiry, their work highlights the existence of multiple cultural encounters, social interactions, and exchanges between Iberian imperial policies, colonial agents, and the indigenous populations from ‘the four corners of the World’. Both authors defend the need to broaden the geographical, political, and ‘national’ frame of analysis, and engage with the ‘crossed’ or ‘connected histories’ of the Portuguese and Spanish empires. This approach invites a new look at the experiences between Iberians and the colonial populations across the different territories of the Habsburg Monarchy from a local, regional, or global perspective.⁹ By using comparative methodological tools, it encourages researchers to explore different connections and exchanges that took place in the distant peripheries of the Iberian empires, and to tackle the “deep and terrible pit” that separates the histories of the Portuguese and Spanish empires. The historiographical work of Subrahmanyam and Gruzinski stresses how Portugal and Spain, rather than completely distant and isolated political entities, began their processes of expansion in the Atlantic at roughly the same time, where they both employed patterns of settlement grounded in a shared medieval ideological and religious background, forged during the years of the Christian conquest of Iberia (*Reconquista*), and in the early expansion to the Atlantic Islands and North Africa. Those early connections ensured that Portuguese and Spanish

⁸ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Holding the World in Balance: The Connected Histories of the Iberian Overseas Empires, 1500-1640”, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 112, n°5 (Dec. 2007), pp. 1359-1385

⁹ Serge Gruzinski, *Les quatre parties du monde. Histoire d’une mondialisation* (Paris: Éditions de la Martinière, 2004), *Idem*, *The Eagle and dragon: Globalization and European Dreams of Conquest in China and America in the Sixteenth century*, (Cambridge Polity Press, 2014); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected histories: notes toward a reconfiguration of early modern Eurasia”, *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 31, n°3 (1997), pp. 735-762

enterprises evolved side by side during their respective imperial expansion, and were not only contemporary, but also collaborative and competitive with one other.¹⁰

While both empires were undeniably distinct and separate entities, they experienced considerable overlaps in, and multiple connections between, their respective imperial spaces, particularly in the Atlantic region. Portuguese sailors were actively present in the Spanish exploration of America, Andalusian ships regularly visited the Upper Guinea coast to trade slaves, and Columbus mirrored Portuguese slaving practices in the early settlements in Hispaniola.¹¹ This knowledge and awareness of their counterparts' imperial experiences was carried into the sixteenth century, and influenced the direction of the policies of the two Iberian Empires. The wealth generated by the silver mines in Mexico and Peru stimulated the imagination of Portuguese colonial officials, and was often quoted in their reports to the Crown calling for support of the military enterprises in Africa searching for mineral resources.¹² In turn, the profits of the Portuguese trade in spices and the Cape Route inspired Spain's own attempts to penetrate Asian markets, given shape in the voyages on the Pacific Ocean that led to the discovery of the Philippines and the settlement in Manila.¹³ Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers, as well as captains, merchants, officials, overseers, or mere *arbitristas*, often had their Iberian counterpart in mind when they submitted their letters, reports, and memorandums. Their political, economic, and military projects for the different imperial domains incorporated, more often than not, formulas and solutions borrowed from Portuguese or Spanish practices in different colonial contexts.¹⁴

The sale of African slaves from Portuguese Africa to Spanish America was one of many collaborative enterprises between the two Iberian empires, whose study falls within Atlantic narratives. The field of Atlantic history has inspired various inquiries, methodologies, debates and lines of research in recent years.¹⁵ The surge in the production

¹⁰ José Antonio Martínez Torres, "'There is but one world': Globalisation and Connections in the Overseas Territories of the Spanish Habsburgs, 1581-1640", *Culture and History Digital Journal*, 3 (1), (2014), pp. 1-15

¹¹ P. E. H. Hair, "Columbus from Guinea to America", *History in Africa*, vol. 17 (1990), pp. 113-129

¹² Curto, *Cultura Imperial*, pp. 177-193, 281-305, 307-352

¹³ Rafael Valladares, "Fenicios pero Romanos. La Unión de Coronas en Extremo Oriente", in *Idem, Por toda la Tierra. España y Portugal: Globalización y Ruptura (1580-1700)* (Lisbon: CHAM, 2016) pp. 123-132

¹⁴ José Antonio Martínez Torres, "Politics and Colonial discourse in the Spanish Empire: The African Atlantic Possessions, 1575-1630", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, 51 (2014), pp. 113-148

¹⁵ Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History. Concepts and Contours* (London: Harvard University Press, 2005)

of Atlantic scholarship over the past decades has resulted in considerable new studies exploring the commercial, cultural, and social transformations throughout the Atlantic region between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Atlantic scholarship has garnered the interest of the academic community in recent decades, especially due to large contributions to the study of the Atlantic slave trade, network analysis, migrations and African Diasporas. It attempts to draw parallels or comparisons between the European empires operating on and around the Atlantic Ocean, even if occasionally taking political and institutional frameworks for granted.¹⁶ Within the field of Atlantic history, the transatlantic slave trade and African diasporas are among some of the most popular and dynamic subjects. Their study encourages scholars to search for common patterns on the opposite sides of the Ocean, tracing the different exchanges between the European, African, and American societies in an attempt to frame the “Atlantic field as a whole” and unified system.¹⁷

The publication of Phillip Curtin’s ground-breaking monograph, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* in 1969, inspired a new wave of research into the Atlantic slave trade. Curtin’s quantitative approach and comparative Atlantic methodology inspired many scholars to engage with numerical analysis, and adopt large-scale comparative frameworks in their studies to the trade.¹⁸ The assessment of overall figures – the ‘numbers game’ – inspired many debates, with counter proposals, adjustments, and new projections framed by scholars such as Inikori, Lovejoy, Manning, and Klein.¹⁹ The quantification of the transatlantic slave trade has undergone a considerable revision in the last decades, yet the true extent of the scale, direction, and nature of African slave trade to Latin America remains an ongoing debate in Atlantic historiography to this day, especially for the earlier chronologies of Iberian colonisation in America.²⁰

¹⁶ John J. McCusker & Kenneth Morgan (Eds.), *The early modern Atlantic economy: Essays on Transatlantic Enterprise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

¹⁷ Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 111, 3, (2006), pp. 741–75

¹⁸ Phillip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969)

¹⁹ Joseph Inikori, “Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade: An Assessment of Curtin and Anstey”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 17, N^o 2 (1976), pp. 197-223; Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Paul Lovejoy, The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis”, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 23 n^o4 (1982) pp. 473-501; Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

²⁰ David Eltis and David Richardson (Eds.), *Extending frontiers: essays on the new transatlantic slave trade database*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)

New research and data regarding the numbers and statistics of the trade, together with the examination of encounter with natives, cross-cultural exchanges, and network analyses have been recently explored with great success.²¹ Quantification studies are nowadays epitomised by the collaborative project led by David Eltis, the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. This digital tool has assembled information on thousands of slave voyages collected from different archives, combining research from several scholars covering different chronologies, regions, and countries involved with the slave trade, and organised them in one massive database. Initially launched as a CD-ROM in 1999, the database has since been updated, and been published online under the name *Voyages: the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (henceforth TSTD) in 2010. The *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* is an invaluable tool for scholars of the slave trade, greatly facilitating comparative exercises between different regions, but it is not without its faults. A project of such large dimensions working with input variables is bound to offer figures that will remain open for debate. The categorisation and regional separation for Africa's coast is questionable at times, as it follows Curtin's model of 1969, and thereby its perceptions regarding the division of the Senegambia region in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and the Windward Coast, the overlaps of the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and the description of the entire coast from the north of Congo to the Cape of Good Hope as West Central Africa.²²

Despite the considerable increase in scholarly production, the majority of Atlantic historiographical production has focused on the involvement of Northern European Nations in this trade, and placed an extensive emphasis on the dawn of plantation societies in the Northern hemisphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²³ As a result, Atlantic scholars have paid far more attention to the nature, structure, and impact of the slave trade for the British and French empires in North America and the Caribbean, rather than its links to colonial Latin America or Atlantic Africa itself. This trend has left the Iberian empires and their respective experiences with slavery in the Americas and Africa

²¹ David Richardson, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Eds.), *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange. Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867* (Leiden: Brill, 2014)

²² For criticism on the Slave Trade Database see Paul Lovejoy, "The Upper Guinea Coast and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database", *African Economic History*, vol. 38 (2010) pp. 1-27; Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, Stacey Sommerdyk, "Reexamining the Geography and Merchants of the West-Central African Trade: Looking Beyond the Numbers, Idem, pp. 77-105; Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 195-6

²³ John J. McCusker & Kenneth Morgan, (eds.), *The early modern Atlantic economy: Essays on Transatlantic Enterprise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Horst Pietschmann, *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System 1500-1830* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002)

underrepresented when compared to their northern counterparts, and underestimates their importance.²⁴

Recent research based on new archival sources and voyage data gathered by the TSTD, has estimated that more than 1.5 million African slaves disembarked directly in the colonies controlled by the Spanish Crown between 1520 and 1867, with an additional 0.5 million more captives arriving through other empires' colonies in America (intra-American or intercolonial trade). This branch of the trade totalled over 2 million slaves. This re-evaluation of the volume of the transatlantic trade places the Spanish empire as the second major destination for African slaves in America, second only to Brazil, and surprisingly narrowly ahead of the entire British Caribbean. In spite of the overwhelming inflow of African captives and the prominent position of the Spanish empire in the attraction, capture, and absorption of enslaved labour in the Americas, the nature and composition of the slave trade to Spanish Latin America, and Spanish experiences with slavery in colonial America, have traditionally been overlooked in favour of the other branches of the trade. This fact is described as absolutely “puzzling” by Eltis, Borucki, and Wheat in their latest reassessment of the volume of the transatlantic slave trade. Although there is a rich tradition of Latin American studies on slavery, their separate national historiographies and respective subdivision in several regions and different chronologies hinder its engagement with Anglophone (and Francophone) scholarship. This contributes to a high complexity of the study into the transatlantic slave trade in Spanish American territories, as well as into its links with Atlantic Africa. According to the three authors who also work on the database, the numbers of this new reassessment invite a closer examination of the involvement of the Spanish empire in the Atlantic slave trade, and of the economic and social impact of Africans on the colonisation of Spanish America.²⁵

One of the most interesting features presented by the new estimates of the TSTD, is the fact that approximately two-thirds of the more than two million captives disembarked in Spanish America during the whole era of the slave trade, arrived well

²⁴ Jack Greene, Philip D. Morgan, “Introduction: The present state of Atlantic History” in *Idem, Atlantic History: a critical appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) pp. 3-33

²⁵ Alex Borucki, David Eltis, David Wheat, “Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America”, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 120, issue 2, 1 April 2015 pp. 433-461; “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database”, <http://slavevoyages.org/>. The authors of the database acknowledge the criticism it received, particularly the absence of figures for the trans-imperial and intra-American slave trades which would provide a different picture than the one portrayed in this article. The new estimates represent an increase of arrivals of almost 60 per cent compared to the 2010 Voyages data.

before the development of any sort of large-scale plantation economies in the Caribbean region. The great plantation complexes of Puerto Rico and Cuba only experienced an extremely fast growth during the eighteenth century, when they became economically significant export industries.²⁶ Anglophone scholarship and accounts of the transatlantic slave trade are often excessively focused on the exchanges and historical processes registered in the Northern Hemisphere, and restricted to the later stages of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, thus placing a heavy emphasis on the rise of large scale Caribbean plantation economies strictly oriented towards commodity exports and capital gain. Those narratives completely disregard the historical role of Africans in earlier colonial and Atlantic settings, especially those in the Spanish Caribbean and South America, in the process.²⁷ The numbers presented by the three scholars also show that more than one third of all African slaves that disembarked in the era of the transatlantic trade in Spanish American colonies arrived during the early colonisation of the Americas in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, matching the years of the Iberian Union. This was long before the establishment of Northern European powers in the Caribbean or the development of any sort of major plantation economy.²⁸

The overlooking of early colonial experiences of the Portuguese and Spanish in both America and Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, combined with the perception of the Iberian empires as backward counterparts to the dynamic economies of the English and French colonies has been criticised over the past decades by a new wave of Atlantic scholars. Their counter narratives focus mostly on the Southern Hemisphere with an emphasis on the historical processes and bilateral exchanges between Africa and South America, a subsystem coined as ‘Iberian Atlantic’, a concept that is “as disputable as the British Atlantic”.²⁹ Scholars have called for the need to study the direct exchanges between Africa and South America (as opposed to the triangular configuration

²⁶ David Eltis, Frank D. Lewis, Kenneth L. Sokoloff, “Introduction”, *Slavery in the development of the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 1-27

²⁷ Stuart Schwartz (Ed.), *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Linda Heywood, John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

²⁸ Alejandro de la Fuente, “Sugar and Slavery in Early Colonial Cuba”, in Stuart Schwartz (Ed.), *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004) pp. 115-157

²⁹ Harald Braun, Lisa Vollendorf (eds.), *Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Francisco Bethencourt, “Iberian Atlantic: Ties, Networks, and Boundaries”, *Idem*, pp. 15-36

associated with north Atlantic studies), the different patterns of the African diaspora in colonial Latin America and Brazil, as well as the cultural, economic, and social implications of the transatlantic slave trade for the Iberian empires.³⁰ The history of slavery in the Americas needs to account for the Portuguese, Spanish, and African experiences in the South Atlantic region, as well as its links to Atlantic Africa during the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³¹ The historical processes and transformations that took place in the Atlantic Coast of Africa, as well as the commercial strategies and cultural ramifications of the transatlantic slave trade for West African societies are vital elements for the study of Iberian empires in the Atlantic region. Africans slaves' historical role in the formation and development of American colonial societies was neither limited to forced labour nor restricted to productive and export sectors, playing a far greater part in the development of both the Portuguese and Spanish imperial enterprises.³²

The scholarship on the transatlantic slave trade has been divided in quantitative approaches, focusing on broader macro-analyses of the scale and direction of the slave trade, including demographic patterns of the African regions of capture, and culturally centred studies on the impact of slavery and forced migration to the New World, which not only highlight the micro-histories of slavery for American societies, but also explore the political, economic, and cultural dimension of the transatlantic slave trade for African societies over the centuries.³³ The dynamics of the cross-cultural Euro-African interactions in Africa, and the role of private agents, middlemen, and informal inter-imperial networks operating the trade in those spaces, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries have only recently begun to attract scholarly attention.³⁴

³⁰ Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the era of the slave trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Mariana Candido, *An African slaving port and the Atlantic World. Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

³¹ Leslie Bethel (ed.) *The Cambridge history of Latin America* vols. 1-3 (1984-5); Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010),

³² Linda Heywood, John Thornton, *Central Africans*. James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

³³ Roquinaldo Ferreira, Tatiana Seijas, "The Slave Trade to Latin America", *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction*, Alejandro de la Fuente, George Reid Andrews (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp. 27-51; Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 4-9

³⁴ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in West Africa. Empires, merchants and the Atlantic System 1580-1674* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 1-19; Cátia Antunes, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Cross-Cultural Entrepreneurship in the Atlantic: Africans, Dutch and Sephardic Jews in Western Africa, 1580-1674," *Itinerario*, 35, nº1 (2011) pp. 49-76; Peter Mark, José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora. Jewish*

Notwithstanding the contributions of scholars such as Miller, Green, Midlo Hall, Thornton, and Hawthorne regarding the cultural encounters between Iberian empires and West African societies in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well as the impact of the slave trade on Latin America, they are still a minority in the field.³⁵

The European experiences in Africa during the Early Modern Age, together with the impact that the African Diasporas had on the shaping of the Atlantic world, and mostly the role that the African societies played in the development of the transatlantic slave trade, both as producers and consumers, have been traditionally neglected. The interest for the histories of the societies on the African Coast in the centuries prior to the peak of the slave trade is commonly reserved to Anthropologists, Archaeologists and scholars of African History. The fields covered by their scholarships, oriented towards the ethnography, culture, politics, linguistics, religion and demography of the African continent, offer considerable information regarding the political, economic and social structures of the African societies, both before and after their integration into the wider Atlantic economy through their participation in the trans-Atlantic slave trade.³⁶ Although they promote the use of transdisciplinary tools, providing invaluable information on various encounters and exchanges outside the influence of Eurocentric constructions, they find little resonance in European, Atlantic or even global historians' perceptions of African societies.³⁷

For the longest time, Africa has been neglected in most studies which attempt to establish comparative perspectives between Europe and America. African themes and the territories covered by Atlantic Coast of African are often ignored in the histories of the European Atlantic empires. The same holds true for the two Iberian empires, and their respective administrative, institutional, economic, demographic and even racial

communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

³⁵ Joseph Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu States in Angola* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Walter Hawthorne, *Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves: Transformations along the Guinea-Bissau Coast, 1400-1900* (New Haven: Heinemann, 2003)

³⁶ Jan Vansina, *How Societies are born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004); Joseph C. Miller, "Life begins at fifty: African studies enters its age of awareness", *African studies Review*, vol. 50, n°2 (2007), pp. 1-35

³⁷ Joseph C. Miller, *The Problem of Slavery as History: A Global Approach* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012)

experiences and legacies in Africa and America.³⁸ The African diaspora which resulted from the trans-Atlantic slave trade was a key element to the formation of an early modern Atlantic economy, essential for the emergence of an Atlantic World, and as such, cannot be overlooked.³⁹ The unawareness of local African settings and political structures, the lack of sensibility to non-Eurocentric inquiries, or simply the discretionary disinterest for the African continent has created a void in the discussions on the social, historical and cultural dynamics between the European and the African authorities, as well as the informal encounters and exchanges between their private merchants, go-betweens, middlemen, and – at a later stage – Euro-African networks.⁴⁰

West Africans played a vital role in the early development of the slave trade, and they were fundamental for the formation of the Americas and the shaping of an Atlantic system. Africa's involvement in the slave trade is neither ahistorical, nor operated from an inferior position.⁴¹ The political elites and socio-economic groups on the Western Coast of Africa which were engaged in the Euro-African trade were extremely demanding and highly selective regarding the quality of goods, and fluctuating market prices were representative of this commerce. Portraying those economic groups and local elites as 'exploited' becomes especially problematic when looking at the goods Europeans had to bring to be competitive on their markets. European agents carefully had to negotiate their presence on African shores during the early modern period, and exchanged goods which came from a plethora of markets as distant as Northern Europe, Asia, the circum-Caribbean and South America.⁴² Political and social structures of the societies of West Africa, as well as its local economies and cultural practices deeply impacted on the evolution of the Atlantic World, which affected the development of its own political organisations in turn. These reciprocal relationships, in conjunction with multiple internal

³⁸ Pedro Cardim, Tamar Herzog, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez, Gaetano Sabatini (eds.), *Polycentric Monarchies How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal achieve and maintain a global hegemony?* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012)

³⁹ Patrick Manning, *The African Diaspora: A History through Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

⁴⁰ George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, social status, gender, and religious observance from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2003)

⁴¹ Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery. A History of Slavery in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press); Philip J. Havik, *Silences and soundbites: the gendered dynamics of trade and brokerage in the pre-colonial Guinea Bissau region* (Münster: LIT, 2004); Linda Heywood (ed.), *Central Africans and Cultural transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

⁴² Ralph Austen, *African Economic History: Internal development and External dependency* (London: James Currey, 1987); Toyin Falola, Emily Bronwell (eds.), *Africa, Empire and globalization: Essays in honor of A. G. Hopkins* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2011)

and external factors led to the emergence of new African kingships and transformations of their own societies.⁴³ By sharing their own histories, cultures and regional markets with the Europeans and opening them to the Atlantic region, they became intrinsically connected with, and directly involved in the creation and development of an Atlantic economy since the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade. Without the study of such processes and market behaviour on the Western Coast of African, together with the evolution of its societies, it is possible neither to understand the origins of transatlantic trade, nor fully to grasp its subsequent development and organisation under the Iberian financial framework.⁴⁴ The study of the Atlantic slave trade requires an analysis of its multiple variables, elements, outlines, contexts and regional settings – be they of an African, American or European nature –, alongside a systematic investigation of the available sources, and an in-depth reflection on constructed notions and pre-existing concepts of the slave trade, thus “enabling the perception of its creation, consolidation and persistence” throughout the centuries.⁴⁵

Jan Vansina’s lifelong research helped reconstruct the history of Equatorial and West African societies dating back several millennia, and the way in which the slave trade and European intervention affected their political and cultural institutions.⁴⁶ David Birmingham’s studies are among the earliest contributions for the political history of West Central Africa’s relations with the European, which were followed by Robert Harms’.⁴⁷ The work of John Thornton and Linda Heywood has been fundamental not only to expand our knowledge on the history of pre-colonial West Central Africa, but also for displaying the dynamics and interactions between the Portuguese and African societies, as well as the role of West Central Africans in the creation of a creole Atlantic

⁴³ Linda Heywood, “Slavery and its transformations in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1492-1800”, *The Journal of African History*, vol. 50, n^o1 (2009), pp. 1-22; Joseph Miller, “A Note on Kasanze and the Portuguese”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 6, n^o1 (1972) pp. 43-56

⁴⁴ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 5-6

⁴⁵ Isabel Castro Henriques, “A Rota dos Escravos. Angola e a rede do comércio negreiro (sécs. XV a XIX) in João Medina, Isabel Castro Henriques (eds.), *A rota dos escravos. Angola e a rede do comércio negreiro* (Lisbon: Cegia, 1996), p. 85

⁴⁶ Jan Vansina, *Paths in the rainforests. Toward a history of political tradition in Equatorial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); *How societies are born*

⁴⁷ David Birmingham, *Trade and conflict in Angola. The Mbundu and their neighbours under the influence of the Portuguese. 1483-1790* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1966); Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorro: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trades, 1500-1891* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)

culture.⁴⁸ Joseph Miller's lifetime work is nothing short of astonishing, and greatly contributed to our understanding of the political background of the West African coast, which is complemented by his massive interdisciplinary work, shedding new light on the social and cultural structures of the native societies that interacted with the Portuguese, especially the practices and customs of the *Mbundu* and *Imbangala*. Yet, Miller's research on the slave trade, albeit focused on later chronologies (eighteenth century), remains his *magnum opus*.⁴⁹

Miller's legacy regarding slave trade studies and Africa's Atlantic links has since influenced multiple scholars. Authors such as Roquinaldo Ferreira, Robert Conrad, Mariana Candido, and Daniel Domingues da Silva explored slave trade mechanisms on the African continent, focusing particularly on Angola, as well as its links with Brazil, and its role in the broader Atlantic economy.⁵⁰ Luis Felipe de Alencastro expanded on this topic, establishing new interconnected Atlantic narratives for the history and identity of Brazil in early chronological settings, and exploring the direct relationship between the emergence of colonial Brazil and the military campaigns' in Angola led by the Portuguese.⁵¹ Also focused on earlier chronological settings of the transatlantic trade, Toby Green's work is essential to re-appraise and rethink the slave trade from a cultural perspective, and expanded on the role of West Africa in the creation of early Creole societies, and in the formation of an Atlantic space from the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁵² The works of Alencastro and Green, in conjunction with that of Stuart Schwartz, showed the impact that the inception and development of the transatlantic slave

⁴⁸ Linda Heywood, John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120; John Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820*. (Cambridge University Press, 2012); *Idem*, "The origins and early history of the Kingdom of Kongo, c. 1350-1550" in *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 34, n^o1, (2001), pp. 89-120

⁴⁹ Joseph Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu states in Angola*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); *idem*, *Way of Death. Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan slave trade 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988)

⁵⁰ Robert E. Conrad, *World of Sorrow: The African Slave Trade to Brazil* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana University Press, 1986); Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the era of the slave trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Mariana Candido, *An African slaving port and the Atlantic World. Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Daniel Domingues da Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

⁵¹ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes. Formação do Brasil no Atlântico sul* (São Paulo: Companhia das letras, 2000)

⁵² Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-atlantic slave trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

trade had on the development of the early outposts on the Atlantic Coast of Africa, and on the creation of a shared and ‘pan-Atlantic’ space.⁵³

The efforts in international Atlantic scholarship have gradually become partially accompanied by Lusophone scholars, who have attempted to fill the voids in the History of Africa and the slave trade in the later years, and explored the role and dimension of Africans in their interaction with Portuguese colonial societies, such as the works of Luis de Albuquerque and Maria Emilia Santos, António Carreira, Arlindo Caldeira, Ilídio do Amaral, and Adriano Parreira.⁵⁴ The language barrier still remains one of the major issues of Portuguese and Lusophone historiography regarding Africa, as some of its breakthroughs and main essays are still relatively unknown to the international community which studies the Atlantic. There are exceptions, as some authors work directly in the Anglophone sphere or successfully publish translations of their investigations, which was the case for Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, José Curto, José da Silva Horta (in collaboration with Peter Mark).⁵⁵ Of vital importance for the study of Angola’s history during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the work of Beatrix Heintze, whose multiple contributions and publications over the decades have been recently assembled and revisited in a volume dedicated exclusively to the history of Angola before the arrival of the Portuguese, as well as the Luso-African culture which emerged from those encounters. Beatrix Heintze also holds the publication of one of the most complete collection of sources for the study of Angola, the private papers of the Governor Fernão de Sousa.⁵⁶ Finally, to this day, Isabel Castro Henriques’ lifelong contributions remain

⁵³ Stuart Schwartz, *Sugar plantations in the formation of Brazilian society: Bahia, 1550-1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

⁵⁴ Luis de Albuquerque, Maria Emilia Santos, *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação tropical, 1991-2002); António Carreira, *Os portugueses nos rios de Guiné (1500-1900)* (Lisbon: Litografia Tejo, 1984); Arlindo Caldeira, *mulheres, sexualidade e casamento em São Tomé e Príncipe (séculos XV-XVIII)* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmo, 1999); *Idem*, *Escravos e traficantes no Império Português*, (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2013); Ilídio do Amaral, *O consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais. Angola no último quartel do século XVI e primeiro do século XVII* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação científica e tropical, 2000); Adriano Parreira, *Economia e Sociedade na época da Rainha Jinga século XVII*, (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1997)

⁵⁵ Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*; José C. Curto, *Enslaving spirits. The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol trade at Luanda and its hinterland, c. 1550-1830* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Peter Mark, José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora. Jewish communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

⁵⁶ Beatrix Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII. Estudos sobre fontes, métodos e história* (Luanda: Kilombelombe, 2007); *Idem*, *Fontes para a História de Angola do século XVII, Memórias, Relações e outros manuscritos da colectânea documental de Fernão de Sousa (1622-1635)*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlaag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985)

paramount to understand the societies of Africa, and the transformations it underwent after contact with the Portuguese.⁵⁷

While this thesis will engage with scholarship of African History, and look to contextualize and integrate West Central African authorities' role in the development of the transatlantic Iberian slave trade, this is neither the main core nor focus of this dissertation, as fascinating and stimulating those topics may be. They will serve as background to observe the evolution of the Iberian slaving ventures, as the events in Angola and warfare in Ndongo were contemporary with Spanish's own imperial enterprises in the Americas, and closely intertwined with one another. Therefore, the main emphasis will be on how the slave trade connected Caribbean colonies and Portuguese Africa, and show that the occupation of Angola and the colonisation of America were not only a contemporary, but also mutually reinforced enterprises.

This thesis is composed of six chapters, which tackle the different geographies and financial frameworks that impact the Iberian slave trade, the Portuguese presence in Angola, and the political context surrounding their establishment and relations with the African societies, as well as the integration of this territory and economic activity into the global policy of the Habsburg Monarchy. Chapter 2 explores the inception of the Atlantic slave trade, and the diplomatic and commercial relations with West African societies since the first stages of the Portuguese overseas ventures. It addresses how the Portuguese integrated this existing trade, and how African societies engaged with the opening of the Atlantic slave trade, and their respective strategies in the relationship with the Portuguese. It explores the institution of slavery in West Central Africa before interaction with Europeans, and explores diplomatic relations with West Central African kingdoms like Kongo.

Chapter 3 delves into the historical processes which led to the foundation and settlement of the Portuguese in the bay of Luanda, together with the different policies implemented by the Spanish Monarchy in this territory following the death of Paulo Dias de Novais. It is explored how the financial reforms at Court coincided with this shift in the Crown's policy for Angola. The partnership established with Governor João Rodrigues Coutinho represents a clear attempt by the Crown to unite the colonisation and

⁵⁷ Isabel Castro Henriques, *O pássaro de mel* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2003); *Idem, Os Africanos em Portugal. História e memória – séculos XV-XXI* (Lisbon: Comité Português do projecto UNESCO A rota do escravo, 2011)

economic exploitation of the territory, and support settlement via its integration into a wider Atlantic commercial system through the slave trade. The different phases of Portuguese occupation were motivated by the search for precious metals, but it was the profits of the slave trade that ultimately supported Angola's colonial apparatus, as it will be shown. The campaigns of Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos, which destroyed the Kingdom of Ndongo, deeply transformed the Ibero-Atlantic slave trade during the first half of the seventeenth century, resulting in an unprecedented number of slave captives being exported to not only Brazil, but also Spanish America. The integration of Portugal into the Habsburg Monarchy, and the repercussions of the dynastic union in colonial context is also a point of focus.

Chapter 4 takes a step back, shifting its attention to the other side of the Atlantic in order to integrate the previously described stages of the Portuguese occupation in Angola into the broader framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. It explores the overlapping Iberian experiences in the Atlantic region and the early Spanish Caribbean colonies, and connects the experiences with slavery in the Americas with Portuguese advances in West Central Africa. This is further demonstrated by tracing the evolution of the volume and patterns of the Iberian slave trade. This chapter discusses the main scholarship on the transatlantic trade, and identifies the most recent estimates, patterns, and trends in the Iberian slave trade. It traces the origins and the evolution of capture rates in the main African regions, and links the growth of Spanish American colonial societies with the different phases of the Portuguese settlement in Angola, and to specific stages of warfare in Ndongo. The shared and 'connected' experiences of the Portuguese and Spanish in the Atlantic is also tackled here.

Notwithstanding the relationship between the Portuguese warmongering policies in West Africa, and the expansion of Spanish American economic sectors based on coerced labour, the metropolitan economy and the financial circumstances of the Habsburg Empire had a significant impact on the development of the Iberian slave trade during this period. Chapter 5 follows the development of the legal structures in the financial administration of the Iberian slave trade before and during the Union of Crowns, and its emerging role in the political economy of the Habsburg Monarchy. It traces how the Habsburg financial policies affected the supply of slave labour to Spanish America, and how this economic activity became gradually essential to balance the financial haemorrhage of the Spanish Imperial Treasury during the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. This chapter also explores how this trade was originally managed, and how the Union of Crowns and the intersection between the Spanish and Portuguese systems for the provision of African slaves to Spanish American markets contributed to the expansion of this trade at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Moreover, it illustrates the role played by private players in the administration of the empire's finances, particularly the monopolies on the slave trade (the *asientos*), and how they took advantage of their privileged positions to expand their personal businesses and commercial ventures.

Chapter 6 examines the economy of Angola and transatlantic slave ventures from Luanda. It tackles the financial organisation of the Portuguese monopoly contracts in Africa, and explores the transactions in colonial contexts, particularly through the bartering of several commodities. An explanation is offered on how trade worked on an informal level under the leaseholders of the official monopoly contracts, exploring private ventures such as the creation of commercial companies and trans-imperial partnerships between merchants in the Kingdom and Angola to profit from slaving ventures. It sheds light on cross-cultural trade by studying commercial exchanges on the African markets, and highlight the role of informal agents in the linkage of slave capture centres to the transatlantic networks. Through the description of historical cases based on official reports and personal accounts, this chapter demonstrates some of the strategies and dynamics of local groups and Luanda elites involved with the slave trade, portrays how their business operations and slave capture activities linked and intermingled with the distant credit operations in the metropolis or America.

This thesis used a wide array of primary and secondary sources. They can be divided geographically in order to answer the core questions of the thesis: Information regarding the political strategies and economic ventures on the in Angola come from official Portuguese institutions in the Kingdom, and reports by the Portuguese official authorities in Luanda, including royal overseers, missionary letters, port records, or travellers' private journals and logs. Those ranged from political and military affairs to economic issues of Luanda's transactions and descriptions of the slave markets and fairs (the *pumbos*) of the interior, cultural and social aspects of the neighbouring local chiefs (called *sobas*), port activity, religious and geographical descriptions of the known rivers and respective borders, and above all, they describe the evolution of policies of slave capture in Angola.

In similar fashion, information has been drawn from the official Spanish governmental authorities in America, in order to evaluate the range and impact of the slave trade to its ports, and to give a better perspective on how the different territories reacted to the presence of Portuguese slave traders, and how they engaged with this inter-imperial enterprise. Documentation on the legal framework of this trade, particularly the study of different slave licences, *asientos* and its respective revenues has been drawn from the different treasury institutions of the Habsburg monarchy. Other documents related to the slave trade to the Americas, such as the *cartas de cuentas*, discussions from the Monarchy's councils, and other financial instruments that regulated this trade were drawn from Seville and in American *audiencias*.

The same exercise was made for the Portuguese side of the trade, in order to assess the different costs of management and exploration of the monopoly contracts of the coast of Africa. An emphasis was placed in the monopoly contract of Angola, and new archival data was uncovered to contribute to the better understanding of how this trade was operated, regulated, and integrated with the Spanish *asientos*. Finally, this thesis used sources of informal agents and private entrepreneurs, working on private initiative or in commercial association with other merchants. They offer a rich perspective on slave voyages to Angola, and the financial and logistical operations inherent to early modern slave ventures across the Iberian Atlantic.

Throughout this thesis, there are several names, expressions and terms in either Portuguese or Spanish. Every time it occurs, I provide my own personal translations in English in a parenthesis, or through a brief explanation next to them or in a footnote.

II – Settlements: The Portuguese and the Atlantic Coast of Africa (XV-XVII)

Isabel Castro Henriques, one of the most renowned Portuguese scholars of African History, described Angola as a product of a “long-historical construction, in which not only African societies participated”. The spaces that constituted ‘Angola’ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were inhabited by different societies “with very complex historical relations and links between them (...), integrating different but well-articulated hierarchical positions into a geographical space that spread from the Atlantic to Central Africa”.⁵⁸ Those relationships, interactions, and interdependencies conditioned and affected the different types of cultural and economic settings encountered by the Portuguese after their establishment on the coast, and their subsequent interactions with those people and their spaces. The territories in West Central Africa played a definitive role in the growth and evolution of the transatlantic slave trade during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as in the formation of a broader Atlantic world.⁵⁹ Recent publications by scholars of African History have greatly enriched our understanding of the history of the societies of colonial Africa prior to and after the arrival of the Europeans. However, many of the elements explored by those scholars continue to be ignored in narratives of the slave trade. This chapter seeks to explore the Portuguese involvement with early Atlantic trade, and the evolution of the diplomatic and commercial relationship with the different African authorities along the Western Coast of Africa, particularly in West Central Africa with the Kingdom of Kongo and Ndongo. It will tackle the earlier contacts and exchanges with some of West African societies that were involved in the slave trade, and explore how the Portuguese managed to integrate (and expand) this pre-existing trade. By exploring how local African political and social configurations conditioned and influenced the formation and development of an Atlantic economy at the dawn of the seventeenth century, this chapter will connect some of the local polities of West Africa with the inception and evolution of a transatlantic slave trade.

⁵⁸ Henriques, *A rota*, p. 86

⁵⁹ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 48

2.1 – The Origins of the Atlantic Slave Trade: First Contact on the Coast of Africa

First Settlements, African markets, and the value of slaves

Early in the morning, the sailors started to pull in their ships and unloading the captives [...] what heart [...] could be so hard to not be pierced with pity observing that poor group; Some had their heads lowered [...] and their faces washed with tears; Others were groaning and screaming, painfully gazing at the sky and shouting, as if they were calling for help from Nature's father; some stroke their faces with the palm of their hands, others fell to the floor; To aggravate their sorrow and pain, soon came the ones in charge of counting them, and began separating them into smaller groups [...] the children were placed on one side, and upon seeing their fathers on the other, would rise and run to them; mothers held their other sons in their arms and covered them, receiving multiple strikes and beatings [...] so they [children] would not be taken from them!⁶⁰

Gomes Eanes de Zurara, the official chronicler of the Court of the Portuguese King Afonso V (1438-1481), describes in this passage the arrival of the first great contingent of African slaves to the Portuguese territory in 1444. Zurara's infamous account of the arrival of the expedition of Lançarote de Freitas has been read and quoted multiple times, as the auction of slaves in Lagos disturbingly captures the moment regarded by many scholars to have signalled the very beginning of slave shipments conducted on the Atlantic by the Portuguese. The 235 slaves brought over by the Lagos Company in August 1444 had been captured in Mauritania, just south of the White Cape, but they were not the first Africans brought over for sale on Iberian shores. Zurara's first mention of slaves from Africa were those brought from the Canary Islands by Gil Eanes in 1433, and he describes how Portuguese slave raids had started years before on the coast of Africa.⁶¹

Portuguese missions along the African Coast date back to the early fifteenth century. The 'overseas expansion' of the Portuguese began with the conquest and occupation of the Moroccan city of Ceuta in 1415, a key node in trans-Saharan trade

⁶⁰ Gomes Eanes de Zurara, *Chronica do descobrimento e conquista de Guiné, escrita por mandado de el Rei D. Affonso V, sob a direcção scientifica, e segundo as instrucções do illustre Infante D. Henrique / pelo chronista Gomes Eannes de Azurara* (Paris: Officina Typographica de Fain e Thunot, 1841), pp. 132-4

⁶¹ Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), pp. 161-2

routes. Driven by their quest for better supplies of gold from this trade, among other economic (and political) factors, the Portuguese gradually carried voyages of exploration along the Atlantic Coast of Africa.⁶² While navigation beyond the Cape Bojador (southern Morocco) was dangerous and its waters unknown, the commercial exchanges in North African markets, combined with knowledge acquired from Sub-Saharan African diaspora merchants, and Jewish communities in Sahelian regions, encouraged the gradual reconnaissance of the Atlantic coast of the Western Sahara and Mauritania. During those contacts, the Portuguese became aware of the Berber groups and Black Africans living beyond the desert, as well as of sub-Saharan polities, such as the existence of the Jolof and the Mali empire.⁶³ The voyager Gil Eanes managed to sail beyond Cape Bojador in 1434, and the Portuguese soon ventured beyond Cape Blanc into Western Africa, and reached the Senegal River during the 1440s.⁶⁴ The Portuguese continued to explore Africa's coast and tap into new markets, venturing into the Senegambia and reaching as far as the Gambia River in 1455, continuing their quest for West African gold, while trading hides, wax, salt, spices in those Rivers, as well as enslaved Africans.⁶⁵

Early Portuguese voyages of exploration and trade in the fifteenth century were also accompanied by raiding expeditions against the populations on the coast.⁶⁶ The indigenous inhabitants living in smaller villages on the coast of Senegal were initially taken captive by force, and sold in Portugal as slaves in similar fashion to the described episode of the Lagos company. However, peaceful and trading relations with the local powers gradually replaced plundering expeditions in Senegambia during the second half of the fifteenth century. Not only were the Portuguese unable to establish a foothold and venture far inland, but the resistance and organisation of local African communities on West African shores proved to be major obstacles. Those populations were able to fully defend themselves against the foreign threat to their lands, and even to repel the Portuguese ships from their shores. Zurara describes the expedition of Rodrigo Annes and

⁶² Anthony Russel-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire 1415-1800: A World on the Move* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998)

⁶³ Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 70-2

⁶⁴ 'Western Africa' includes Senegambia (from the Senegal to the Gambia Rivers), Upper Guinea (from Gambia to Sierra Leone) and the Cape Verde Islands. The term is adopted from George Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in Western Africa, 1000-1630* (Boulder: Westview, 1993)

⁶⁵ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *A Expansão Quatrocentista Portuguesa*, 2nd edition (Lisbon: Edições Don Quixote, 2007) pp. 329-52

⁶⁶ Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 51

Diogo Dinis to the isle of Gorée around 1445, and reports their failed attempt at seizing slaves there, since its inhabitants “were not easy to enslave” as they were “strong foes, competent in battle who bring arrows bathed with a dangerous herb [poison]”.⁶⁷ The local populations along the Senegambia and Upper Guinea used small vessels to outmanoeuvre the large ships of the Portuguese, and drove them away with their poisoned arrows which rendered the Portuguese armour useless. The massacres at the hands of the raiders from the Bissangos islands, seasoned sailors and marauders, were but a few of the episodes which made the Portuguese abandon their military and raiding goals and engage in peaceful relations.⁶⁸

In order to continue to expand their commercial exchanges on the West African coast, the Portuguese understood that they had to negotiate their presence and cooperate with the different local African authorities residing on the Atlantic coast, as well as bring valuable commodities to properly compete on their markets. It was through various exchanges and commercial interactions, and familiarity with the different markets of Senegambia that the Portuguese understood the value of slaves on the continent. In the early stages of the Luso-African exchanges and trade on the African coast, slaves were not among the main commercial goods sought.⁶⁹ The majority of the slaves in the fifteenth century purchased (and captured) by Portuguese and Spanish sailors found their way into the port cities of the Iberian Peninsula, like Lisbon, Seville, Cadiz or Valencia, as well as in the Mediterranean (Genoa and Venice), coming mostly from the Maghreb, Senegambia, and later Upper Guinea.⁷⁰ North African and some Sub-Saharan slaves were already exchanged in Iberian ports during the fifteenth century, brought through trans-Saharan routes into the ports of North African, and sold into the Mediterranean. They were mostly employed in domestic and artisanal tasks, as well as for entertainment purposes, and were displayed in the European squares for their ‘exoticism’.⁷¹ Others were later employed as servants and auxiliaries of noblemen and soldiers, accompanying their masters on their overseas ventures.⁷²

⁶⁷ Zurara, *Chronica do descobrimento e conquista da Guiné*, pp. 342-6

⁶⁸ John Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: UCL Press, 1998), pp. 44-51

⁶⁹ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 77-84

⁷⁰ Alfonso Franco Silva, *Registro Documental sobre la esclavitud sevillano (1453-1513)* (Seville: Universidad Sevilla, 1979)

⁷¹ Robin Blackburn, *The making of New World Slavery. From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (London: Verso, 1997), pp. 34-64

⁷² Frederick F. Bowser, *The African slave in colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974)

Portuguese merchants thus became increasingly familiarised with the African slave trade through the trans-Saharan trade during the fifteenth century. Their growing involvement in the trade would in turn, open a new maritime route for this trade.⁷³ The trade in slaves offered important advantages to the Portuguese sailing to the coasts of Africa, as slaves were valuable for commercial exchanges on the West African markets, as well as units of production in Mediterranean, and later Atlantic sugar productions in Madeira and the Canary Islands.⁷⁴ As a result, Portuguese slave ventures in West Africa continued to develop in the second half of the fifteenth century. After establishing regular trade with the Jolof, the Portuguese acquired an increasing number of slaves by diverting some of the exports from trans-Saharan trade to the African Coast.⁷⁵ The opening of an Atlantic vector, while beneficial for the elites of Senegambian societies, at the same time intensified the existing violence and political instability in the region, whose by product (captives of war) were usually directed to the trans-Saharan markets.⁷⁶ The Portuguese continued to expand their commercial activities southwards, reaching the ‘Rivers of Guinea’ (Casamance, Cacheu, Nunez, Sherbro, and Pongo Rivers). Between the years of 1445 and 1462, the Portuguese explored the coast of Sierra Leone and the archipelago of Cape Verde and established an important settlement on the island of Santiago. Despite the initial destiny of slaves being Europe and North Africa, the Portuguese acknowledged their value in the West African trade and began to exchange considerably more captives across the economic circuits of the West Coast of Africa, especially after their arrival to the Gold Coast in the 1470s.⁷⁷

Merchants networks and trade diasporas helped the Portuguese to tap and integrate existing trade circuits in West Africa.⁷⁸ Muslim merchants linked to trans-Saharan trade

⁷³ Pier Larson, “African Slave Trades in Global Perspective”, John Parker (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History*, (Oxford University Press, retrieved from <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199572472.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199572472-e-004>)

⁷⁴ Franklin W. Knight, “slavery and lagging capitalism in the Spanish and Portuguese American Empires, 1492-1713” in Barbara Solow (ed.), *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 62-74

⁷⁵ António de Almeida Mendes, *Esclavages et trates Ibériques entre Méditerranée et Atlantique (XVe-XVII Siècles): Une Histoire Globale* (Paris: Unpublish PhD dissertation, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2007)

⁷⁶ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 79-85

⁷⁷ Philip Havik, Toby Green, “Introduction: Brokerage and the Role of Western Africa in the Atlantic World”, Toby Green (Ed.), *Brokers of Change. Atlantic Commerce and Cultures in Pre-Colonial Western Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) pp. 1-26

⁷⁸ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 69-73

had already established a trade in West Africa and reached coastal regions through the inland Senegal and Gambia Rivers. When the Portuguese reached the Gold Coast, they found an existing and profitable trade with the Akan, who controlled the access to the gold in the region between the Volta and Komoé Rivers where the gold. As a result, the Portuguese began to import and transport slaves along the Atlantic Coast of Africa, rather than sell them in North African and European markets.⁷⁹ The main centres for trade where the Portuguese concentrated their activities in the Atlantic Coast of Africa were in Arguim and Elmina. Two forts were built and operated as trade factories (*feitorias*), the former in 1455, and the latter in 1482. The slaves obtained in Arguim were mostly destined to the south of North African and Iberian markets, and later to the Canary Islands and Madeira.⁸⁰ The fort of São Jorge da Mina on the other hand, operated as Portuguese collection centre on the Gulf of Guinea. Elmina became the first and most principal commercial fort south of the Sahara, where the Portuguese stored the African gold exchanged with the Akan before shipping it back to the Kingdom. Slaves that were acquired in the Gulf of Guinea were either taken to Elmina to be exchanged for gold, or shipped to the Atlantic archipelagos to support and finance the development of the sugarcane economy in Madeira and São Tomé.⁸¹

Portuguese demand for slaves increased in the last quarter of the fifteenth century as a result of the trade in São Jorge da Mina, since slaves were valuable ‘commodities’ for exchange and access West African gold, and continue their exploration journeys.⁸² By 1475, the Portuguese had contacted the Kingdom of Benin, and explored the entirety of the Gold Coast (current Ivory Coast, Ghana) and arrived at the Slave Coast (current Togo, Benin, Gabon, Nigeria). They also reached Loango and officially visited the Kingdom of Kongo in 1483. By 1485, the colonisation of the offshore islands like São Tomé provided an additional base of operations close to West Central Africa, as well as another stage for experiences with sugar cane plantation in the islands. The expansion towards southern markets led São Jorge to quickly replaced Arguim as a main slaving entrepôt, with the majority of slaves being obtained along the rivers of Senegambia, and later followed by

⁷⁹ A. N. Klein, “Toward a new understanding of Akan origins”, *Africa*, vol. 66, n^o2 (1996), pp. 248-273

⁸⁰ António de Almeida Mendes, “Traites ibériques entre Méditerranée et Atlantique: Le noir au cœur des empires modernes et de la première mondialisation (c. 1435–1550),” *Anais de História de Além-Mar*, vol. 6 (2006), pp. 351–88

⁸¹ John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast, 1469–1682* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979) pp. 57-8, 70; Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, “The slave trade and the development of the Africa port system 1400-1800s”, *International Journal of Maritime History*, vol. 29 (I), 2017 pp. 138-154

⁸² António Carreira, *Notas sobre o tráfico português de escravos* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova, 1978)

Upper Guinea.⁸³ Portuguese merchants thus acted as carriers of enslaved Africans, which they looked to exchange for gold, but also other commodities, such as wax, ivory, spices, and salt. The establishment of a gradual trade with the Kongo and Loango coasts by the Portuguese created a maritime trade circuit completely independent from previous trade routes, in which the Portuguese had simply inserted themselves.⁸⁴

Portuguese ships that visited the Loango and Kongo coasts began to supply more slaves to Elmina than previous regional circuits that would connect to inland routes. The increase in slave transactions and their commercial employment in those areas expanded the slave trade and enhanced the structure and profits of slave enterprises, as well as contacts between the region involved in this trade.⁸⁵ The archipelago of Cape Verde was gradually transformed into a commercial entrepôt and collection centre for slaves from the coast of Africa thanks to the development of an intra-insular trade. When the trans-Saharan routes were diverted from Arguim around the 1540s, the Cape Verde islands became the main supplier of the Atlantic slave markets, especially after the opening of trade towards America.⁸⁶ Santiago became the main Portuguese slave hub in West Central Africa and all slaves taken from the continent would be taken to Ribeira Grande to pay the royal and custom duties before being dispatched to their respective destinations. This fact ensured the supremacy of the Cape Verdean axis regarding the shipment of enslaved captives in the Atlantic slave trade until at least the end of the sixteenth century.⁸⁷ The archipelago of São Tomé, while also operating as a platform for the redistribution of slaves in the Gulf of Guinea, absorbed the majority of enslaved Africans arriving at its port to employ in its own sugar plantation economy.⁸⁸

⁸³ Ballong-Wen-Menuda, *São Jorge da Mina, 1482-1637: La vie d'un comptoir portugais en Afrique occidentale*, 2 vols. (Paris: Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1993)

⁸⁴ Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery. A history of slavery in Africa* (2nd edition) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 36-46

⁸⁵ Phillip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Atlantic Trade* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1975), pp. 6-58; Ray Kea, *Settlements, Trade and Politics in the seventeenth century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: 1982), pp. 206-47

⁸⁶ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torráo, "Actividade comercial externa de Cabo Verde: Organização, Funcionamento, Evolução", Luis de Albuquerque, Maria Emília Madeira Santos (eds.), *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, vol. I (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de História e Cartografia Antiga, Instituto Nacional da Cultura de Cabo Verde, 1991) pp. 237-346

⁸⁷ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes. Formação do Brasil no Atlântico sul* (São Paulo: Companhia das letras, 2000) pp. 54-5

⁸⁸ Cristina Maria Seuanes Serafim, *As ilhas de São Tomé no século XVII* (Lisbon, 2000), pp. 15-9; Robert Garfield, *A History of São Tomé Island 1470-1655: The Key to Guinea* (San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press, 1992)

Accompanying this development of the economies of the Atlantic Islands and Atlantic slaving ventures, merchant networks that aimed to control this trade gradually established and took residence in Portuguese Atlantic archipelagos. They focused their activities on the Upper Guinean Coast, greatly benefitting from their early interactions with the local African populations, and the proliferation of individual agents who settled next to local African populations and acted as brokers between the coastal authorities and the Portuguese. They were gradually integrated into local communities where they were settled, and were called *lançados* and *tangomaos*.⁸⁹ The Luso-African relations and slave trade ventures then extended from the West Central African region to the Loango and Kongo coasts by the very end of the fifteenth century. Over the course of the next century, the Portuguese began to increasingly access the Kongo markets, and even received royal privileges and endorsement for the trade of slaves within this region. By the second half of sixteenth century, Portuguese merchants were collecting slaves not only on the Kongo coast and along the Zaire (Congo River), but also on Angola's shores. During the late 1510s, the trade already acquired a trans-Atlantic dimension, with slaves being shipped to Caribbean colonies, and later to Brazil. The authorisation of a systematic direct shipping to the Americas from the Atlantic archipelagos in 1518 marked a new age in the transatlantic trade.⁹⁰

Therefore, enslaved Africans acquired a gradual value and importance for Portuguese merchants over the years. Prior to and the existence of the transatlantic shipping looking to cover labour demands from the emerging economies of the Portuguese and Spanish America, the trade in African slaves off the coast of Africa flourished in the fifteenth century, due to the value and importance of slaves throughout the different markets and interregional trade circuits in Atlantic Africa. The Portuguese penetrated in existing markets in North Africa, Senegambia, and Upper Guinea, but it was on the Gold Coast, where the Portuguese achieved their biggest profits, and latter connecting the markets from Loango and Kongo to Elmina in the sixteenth century.⁹¹ Therefore, the growing Euro-African trade on the Atlantic was linked (and owed) to the

⁸⁹ Peter Mark, José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora. Jewish communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

⁹⁰ Maria da Graça Alves Mateus Ventura, *Negreiros Portugueses na rota das Índias de Castela (1541-1556)* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 1999)

⁹¹ Phillip Curtin "Africa and the wider monetary world 1250-1850" in Richards (org) *Precious metals in the later Medieval and early modern worlds* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1983), pp. 238-9; Vogt, *Portuguese Rule*, p. 70

existing circuits and networks that connected the coast to the sub-Saharan areas and its markets, simultaneously offering an alternative to the caravan routes of the trans-Saharan trade.⁹² The century and a half that followed the first big shipment of slaves of the Lagos Company described by Zurara (1444) witnessed a gradually increasing involvement of the Portuguese in the African slave trade, and a shift in the direction of the end markets of this trade.⁹³ The growing demand for slaves from the sugar plantation economies of the Portuguese settlements on the Atlantic islands, followed by the archipelagos on the coast of Africa like São Tomé, where the sugarcane culture found an even greater success than in Madeira, greatly contributed to the increased market value of African slaves during the sixteenth century. This trade would grow and acquire a trans-Atlantic dimension with the opening of the American markets, as it will be shown in the following chapters. The Cape Verde Islands emerged as the main commercial hubs and supply centres in the Atlantic during that period, collecting the slaves coming mostly from the Upper Guinean Coast. Yet, it was the transformations on the West Coast of Africa (Kongo and Angola) during the second half of the sixteenth century that would set in motion a process which would transform that reality by the end of the sixteenth century. At the dawn of the seventeenth century, the greater part of the economic activities of Portuguese merchants, as well as the consequent volume of captives taken from Upper Guinea, showed a gradual shift towards the coast of Angola.⁹⁴ Such changes were the result of the political instability in Kongo, and the beginning of the Portuguese military campaigns in Ndongo. Those events linked to the history of the West Coast of Africa are essential to understand the evolution of the different rates of capture during the Union of Iberian Crowns, and the commercial shift between those regions.

European Perceptions of Slavery

Gomes Eanes de Zurara's chronicle explores in close detail the extreme anxiety and fear felt by the African captives disembarked in Lagos. In a vibrant and disturbing

⁹² Ralph Austen, "The Trans-Saharan Slave Trade. A tentative Census." In Henry Gemery, Jan Hogendorpe (eds.), *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), pp. 23-76

⁹³ Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A history of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 44-8

⁹⁴ António de Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations of the System: A reassessment", in David Eltis, David Richardson (dirs.), *Extending the Frontiers, Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) pp. 63-94

account, Zurara describes the desperation of the families upon their forced separation in groups for their respective sale, claiming that such a scene would inspire piety in the hearts of every man. Although Zurara appears to be moved and unsettled by the suffering of the African slaves, like many of his contemporaries, he firmly promoted the capture and the trade of slaves.⁹⁵ Around the Mediterranean Sea, slavery pre-dated Roman times, and it was equally present on the southern shores of Portugal and Spain during Medieval times. Though it had long lost its prominence, slavery was still practiced in close waters, mostly by Barbary pirates coming from Gibraltar and North Africa, but also on the Mediterranean, where active slave markets existed in Genoa and Venice, and later Livorno, for captives of Slavic and Muslim origins.⁹⁶ The capture and consequent ransom of people in the Mediterranean Sea, and on the North African and Iberian shores by corsairs, of both Christian and Islamic affinities, was a common occurrence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The enslavement of infidels was in complete accordance with the principles of the Crusade; therefore, it was widely accepted by Western civilisation and Islam, and promoted by the Portuguese and Spanish in Iberia as well. However, the captivity of heathens from sub-Saharan Africa, ignorant of God and the teachings of Christianity, raised questions regarding the legality of their captivity and sale. This discussion occupied many scholars and philosophers at the time, causing them to deliberate on the moral legitimacy of heathens' enslavement.⁹⁷

Although Zurara himself appears to stress the suffering of the slaves disembarked in Lagos, he firmly defended the legitimacy of their enslavement: not only from a theological perspective, but above all for their economic value as commodities for exchange on the shores of Africa.⁹⁸ As a private aid to Prince Henry the navigator, who was in charge of the monopoly of Guinea, Zurara was well aware of their value on the inter-economic circuits of West Africa, and how they were a central part of a trade in Elmina. The Portuguese took advantage of this existing circuit to participate in this trade by capturing and selling those slaves, vital in their commercial exchanges for gold.⁹⁹ In its origins, this trade was conducted by Muslim caravans on trans-Saharan routes, which

⁹⁵ Zurara, *Chronica da Guiné*, pp. 132-4

⁹⁶ Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1-7

⁹⁷ Caldeira, *Escravos*, pp. 40-3

⁹⁸ Metcalf, *Go-betweenes*, pp. 162-3

⁹⁹ Ivor Wilks, *Forests of Gold: essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1993)

linked its profits and gains to the Islamic political entities bordering the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁰ According to Zurara, this fact granted an evangelical purpose to the slave trade, adding an equally important element to the important financial enterprise, a religious one. This would ensure the moral authority of the Portuguese over the “pagan and heathen” individuals captured on the West African shores, in order to legitimise and endorse their enslavement. The chronicler described that it was the duty of the Portuguese to bring “those Negros [who] do not come from the same lineage of the Moors, but from the gentile [heathens] (...) to the path of salvation”.¹⁰¹

This twisted and perverse logic became one of the theological foundations used by the Portuguese to justify West African’s condition as slaves in the eyes of Church. Numerous authors, theologians and, above all, priests failed to condemn the enslavement of West Africans. Rather, they claimed it was “justified and functional” for society, as slavery made possible the evangelisation of countless new souls, enabling priests to save them from eternal damnation. In the eyes of the clergy, it was in the best interests of oblivious and pagan individuals from African to be deported to the Iberian Peninsula or the Atlantic archipelagos, and become good Christians through hard labour. The mechanism that would enable their salvation on Christian shores would be the slave trade conducted by the Portuguese.¹⁰²

Religious proselytism and promises of a new Crusade became one of the weapons of the Portuguese King Afonso V to obtain two papal bulls in 1452 and 1455, attaining the support of the Church and the Vatican to conduct a ‘Holy War’ in Africa. The purpose of this request was not of a strictly religious nature, as it was mainly a tool to ensure the exclusivity of the Portuguese trade on the Guinea Coast, and deter other European traders from trading along Africa’s shores.¹⁰³ The bull *Romanus pontifex*, granted by Pope Nicholas V, bestowed an official, holy, and evangelical dimension to the slave trade, endorsing it with the Vatican’s blessing. Following the discussions of theologians and priests, it would be legitimate to trade and own African slaves for the Catholic Church and its doctrine, as long as it enabled their baptism and saved their souls. The private

¹⁰⁰ Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A history of slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 23-5

¹⁰¹ Zurara, *Chronica*, p. 94

¹⁰² Henriques, *A rota dos escravos*, pp. 90-6

¹⁰³ Ivana Elbl, “Cross-Cultural Trade and Diplomacy: Portuguese Relations with West Africa, 1441-1521”, *Journal of World History* 3 (1992), pp. 165-204

ownership of human individuals deprived of their freedom was but a side effect of this new stage of the Crusade two years after the Ottomans had taken Constantinople, and thus a preferable consequence over that same trade and its economic dividends being taken over by Muslims or the Turks. The ownership of slaves could “at the very least help save the souls of the Negros”. Besides the Crusade and the expansion of Christianity, it was of equal importance to prevent the captives from falling into Muslim hands, and being instructed in the ‘wrong’ religion.¹⁰⁴

Despite the evangelical and salvation aspects of the Church’s mission, baptism and catechism did not change the condition of captives from West and West Central Africa as slaves. Particularly in colonial settings, like Brazil or Angola, baptism was nothing more than a mechanism to validate and confirm the links of domination over the Africans through the use of religious rituals. The trade and ownership of slaves in colonial contexts was a form of embracing the religious duty of the Catholic Church, and with the validation of the links between master and servant, the overseas evangelisation as well as the bringing of countless new souls under the Vatican’s sphere would be ensured.¹⁰⁵ The chief of the first Jesuit mission to Brazil, Manuel de Nóbrega, was adamant about this fact, and defended the ‘greater good’ of slavery. He only condemned slave owners who did not instruct their slaves on the Catholic doctrine. As long as it was properly accompanied by catechism and enabled the salvation of the heathen’s souls, slavery could be justified. Despite their conversion to Christianity, African captives would retain their status as slaves. Unlike Islam, Christianity had no issue with the enslavement of fellow Christians. The development of extensive arguments to justify the enslavement of Africans had no direct connection to the need to legitimise the existence of slavery itself. Slavery was a common occurrence on the Iberian Peninsula during the Christian Conquest (*Reconquista*). In addition, the slave trade was still present in the Mediterranean world, including the enslavement of not only Muslims, but also Catholic and Orthodox Christians captured by pirates. Famous theologians, from Saint Augustine to Saint Thomas Aquinas, described slavery as a ‘natural state’, one that was recognised and accepted by God.¹⁰⁶ For this reason, Portuguese priests had no problem with enslaving converted African Christians. Slavery was strongly defended by priests in colonial

¹⁰⁴ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 53-4

¹⁰⁵ Margaret M. Olsen, *Slavery and salvation in Colonial Cartagena de Indias*, (Florida: University of Florida Press, 2004)

¹⁰⁶ Metcalf, *Go-betweenes*, pp. 159-160

settings due to their economic value in the Atlantic economy for European settlements and missionary missions. As long as it was profitable, slavery would persist.¹⁰⁷

The priest Baltazar Barreira, who accompanied Paulo Dias de Novais in Angola, had no doubts regarding the righteous moral foundations of the enslavement of Africans in West Central Africa, since “the Negros sell slaves among themselves (...) and it was not possible to discern or ascertain if the ones we buy were justly captured or not (...). The safest *peças* [slaves] you can buy [are in] Angola (...) because the war we conduct there and the way we acquire them is just and fair”. The ‘just war’ that the Portuguese waged on Angola was based on the belief that the ruler of the Mbundu people had rejected the Christian faith, according to Barreira. According to the Jesuit’s reports, the *Ngolas* had requested Portuguese missionaries on multiple separate occasions, only to eventually dismiss and mistreat them. This gave the Portuguese a ‘moral authority’ to conduct a just and holy war in Ndongo. The priests of the mission to Ndongo argued that only through the conquest of the entire “Kingdom of Angola” could the Mbundu be educated “from the beginning (...) and could be repressed the abuses and audacity of their sorcerers whom these people look up to (...) who deal personally with the devil”.¹⁰⁸ Similar to the Spanish experience in America, religious proselytism was deeply engrained in the Portuguese discourse during the wars in Africa. The capture of slaves in Angola was completely in accordance with the Church’s religious principles, according to Priest Barreira.

The quest for mineral resources, as well as the desire to obtain slaves for the trans-Atlantic trade, were unsurprisingly absent from the priest’s reasoning for war. Slaves were also a vital element of the economies of West Central Africa, “where no gold coin or other metal currency exists” according to Barreira. They constituted the prime commodity of those markets, and were therefore essential for the purchase and acquisition of other goods. Barreira claimed in 1582 that a slave was equivalent to a grown bull in terms of pricing.¹⁰⁹ Priests in Africa and America could not and would not dismiss the usage of slaves due to their crucial economic value, both as a source of production and an economic commodity. In this sense, the justification of African slavery was intrinsically

¹⁰⁷ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 160-1; 171

¹⁰⁸ “Residência de Angola” (1588), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. 3, p. 375

¹⁰⁹ Baltazar Barreira, “Informação acerca dos Escravos de Angola” (1582-1583), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. 3, pp. 227-29

linked with the economic and political environments of the Portuguese overseas settlements along the Atlantic.

Catholic Proselytism and the salvation of African souls were not the only European arguments or strategies to legitimise and rationalise the slave trade. The rejection of 'Black Africans' as a 'civilised' individual played an equal part in their process of enslavement. This notion was reproduced in the minds of Europeans through prejudices and a progressive construction of an imagery that portrayed Africans as natural slaves. In multiple reports, the people from the Atlantic Coast of African were objectified and described as creatures devoid of human qualities and values, savages and barbarians living in constant sin and associating with the devil. This narrative was built by European philosophers and theologians, with the contribution of multiple reports of priests and missionaries in the field, like the aforementioned Barreira, who emphasised Africans' lack of decency regarding sexuality, polygamy, and the sanctity of marriage.¹¹⁰

European's perception of Black Africans as natural slaves was also based on old prejudices, a discourse that is found in Zurara's Chronicle of Guinea. When describing the different people that could be found and captured on the coasts of Africa, Zurara makes a clear distinction between two groups: one of "reasonable whiteness" found on the upper Western Coast of Africa, and another further south composed by "*pardos* and *negros*". Those differences were supported by multiple prejudices that can be traced back to biblical myths. Zurara illustrates some of his prejudices through the tale of Noah and his degenerate son Ham (Cham), who was cursed 'into servitude of all the other generations of the World' by his father. According to Zurara and many of his peers (he quotes the archbishop D. Rodrigo de Toledo and the books of the antiquities of the Jewish people), the offspring of Ham had been eternally cursed by Noah due to his wicked nature, which they associated with the barbaric nature of sub-Saharan Africans, thus justifying the African's natural condition as a slave, rejecting any moral constraints on the ownership and trading of their people.¹¹¹ David Goldenberg has described this biblical story as "the single greatest justification for Black slavery for more than a thousand years", writing that "the Curse of Ham, i.e., the exegetical tie between blackness and

¹¹⁰ Baltasar Barreira, "Informação dos casamentos de Angola" (1582-1583), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. 3, pp. 230-2

¹¹¹ A.C. Saunders, *História Social dos escravos e libertos negros em Portugal 1441-1555* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional/Casa da Moeda, 1994) pp.64-6; Gomes Eanes de Zurara, *Chronica*, pp. 93-4

servitude” and “the increasing reliance” on such biblical readings “coincides with the increasing numbers of Blacks taken as slaves”.¹¹²

The dehumanisation of Africans due to their alleged savagery, based on their nudity, sexuality, polygamy, ‘devilish practices’, cannibalism, or disregard for the ‘natural laws’ of men was a narrative reinforced by multiple reports of priests and officials based in Africa. Baltazar Barreira and Nóbrega were two examples, among many, of priests operating in colonial settings on both sides of the Atlantic, who advocated for the enslavement of Africans. The priests would emphasise the importance of their missions while reinforcing the ‘bestly’ behaviour of Africans, thus glorifying the role of their expeditions in the distant peripheries of the empire. António Vieira, protector of the Brazil’s native Amerindians, considered the African slave trade a “miracle”, since it allowed heathens from a pagan continent to escape their terrible fate and be saved in catholic lands like Brazil, similar to when Las Casas had asked the King of Spain to send African slaves to Hispaniola.¹¹³ Not only priests but also Crown officials reinforced the ‘religious mission’ of the Portuguese, in order to validate the economic usage of the slave and the exploitation of their free work force. West Central African’s alleged anthropophagy was also emphasised in this ideological war. António de Oliveira Cadornega, a Portuguese soldier in Angola, underlined the virtues of the slave trade through the baptism and catechism of the captives, alluding to the anthropophagy of the people enslaved in Angola and how Christianity prevented them from suffering that fate at the hands of their people, giving them a purpose and employment in catholic territories. Their bodies and souls could be saved by this process, and subsequently crossing the Atlantic to be employed in the Christian economies of South America.¹¹⁴

All of those depictions had as a final goal the justification of enslavement, and establishing the superiority of Europeans over the people on the Atlantic Coast of African. They converged with the objective of declaring Africans incapable of any logic of civilisation in order to use their workforce to generate the maximum financial returns possible from their activities where they would be employed, or through their value as a

¹¹² David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) p. 197 *apud* Metcalf, *Go-Betweens*, p. 163

¹¹³ Alencastro, *O trato*, p. 53; Francisco R. Calderón, *Historia económica de la Nueva España en tiempo de los Austrias* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura económica, 1988) pp. 151-66

¹¹⁴ António de Oliveira Cadornega, *História das Guerras de Angolanas*, vol. I (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1940-2), 13-14

commodity. Slavery had become increasingly important not only on the African continent and its markets, but also for the growing Atlantic economy, in America and on the Atlantic islands. In this sense, the religious element cannot be dissociated from the economic and political project of the Portuguese in Africa.¹¹⁵

2.2 Slavery in West Central Africa, and the African Trade in Slaves

It is not the purpose of this chapter to dwell too much on the semantics and different socio-cultural practices and conceptions regarding the institutions of slavery in both Europe and Africa. While moral issues are a natural concern in any history of the slave trade, discussions on Atlantic slavery do not have to focus in questions of morality or blame that accompanied abolitionist movement.¹¹⁶ Debates on African agency can acknowledge the historical role of their societies on the slave trade in pre-colonial contexts without falling into the pit of guilt and responsibility. The arrival of the Europeans in Africa and the development of the transatlantic trade undoubtedly impacted the different regions of the Atlantic Coast of Africa, and contributed to intensify cycles of violence and plunder that supplied the demand of this branch. However, as Toby Green argues, while “demand increased, the initial mechanism of supply was merely the intensification of the violence that underlay the slave-procurement process already in existence for the supply of the trans-Saharan trade.”¹¹⁷ Slavery already existed in West Africa, and the trade in slaves was not an innovation introduced by the Portuguese. The existence of a strongly articulated Eastern branch of the slave traffic, centuries before the arrival of Europeans on Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean show that the different societies of West Africa, like most civilisations relied at some point in slave labour.¹¹⁸ Slaves were bought and sold between various ethnic groups inhabiting the Atlantic Coast of Africa. The concept of a general ‘Africa’ itself was popularized by the European during the eighteenth century according to Mudimbe.¹¹⁹ The Portuguese initially tapped into this

¹¹⁵ Henriques, *A rota*, pp. 99-106

¹¹⁶ Ralph Austen, “The Slave Trade as History and Memory”, *William and Mary Quarterly* (58/1), pp. 229–44

¹¹⁷ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 79-81

¹¹⁸ Jacques Heers, *Les négriers en terres d’islam: La première traite de Noirs VIIe-XVIe siècle* (Paris: Editions Perrin, 2003); Almeida Mendes, *Esclavages et trates Ibériques*, p. 15

¹¹⁹ Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa : Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 1988)

trade, and capitalised from pre-existing regional and inter-regional markets for human commodities on the coast of Africa. In this sense, the Europeans (mainly the Portuguese) only integrated into these markets upon their arrival. However, they gradually expanded those existing markets, and deeply affected the level of the demand with the opening of the transatlantic trade to the New World.¹²⁰

It is possible that slavery's diffusion and practice was owed mostly to the absence of the concept of land ownership among West Central African societies, as well as its usage as a form of revenue and personal wealth. In contrast to European socio-economic structures, the basic economic production of which was based on the private ownership of land and the respective revenues it could generate, the means to produce income in Africa were established by the ownership of labour, the scarce factor of production. Economic historians of Africa such as Gareth Austin, hold that African societies in land-abundant regions, e.g. the ones south of Sahara, developed specific economic and institutional settings due to under population. Even if focusing on later chronologies, Austin uses the Ghanaian and Asante cases to explain that land was never a scarce factor in Africa, and therefore could not be taxed as in the European context. African slave markets existed, and persisted into the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, to offset sub-Saharan societies' biggest shortage, which was labour.¹²¹ Therefore, the accumulation of wealth was reflected in the ownership of the force that produced labour: slaves. African slaves were the only form of private property acknowledged by African legal and cultural structures that could generate revenues.¹²² In the African context, prestige, riches, and power were therefore determined by the amount of dependents and labour that their owners were able to control, ownership of slaves being the only way for African elites and rulers to accumulate wealth. The question of the absence of private ownership of land among the African societies has been addressed by different Anthropological studies that observed and analysed traditional practices and cultures on the African continent.¹²³

¹²⁰ Caldeira, *Escravos*, 24-8

¹²¹ Gareth Austin, *Labour, Land, and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante 1807-1956* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2005); Idem, "Cash Crops and Freedom: Export Agriculture and the Decline of Slavery in Colonial West Africa", *International Review of Social History*, vol. 54/1, (2009), pp. 1-37

¹²² Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 74-6

¹²³ Paul Bohannon, Phillip D. Curtin, *Africa and Africans*, 3rd ed. (Prospect height, Ill. 1988), pp. 129-46

John Thornton elaborates on the dichotomy between land and labour, and establishes a parallel between West Central African concepts of slavery and the Medieval European serfdom between landlords and their tenants due to the inexistence of private land in the former. Slavery was fundamental for the societies in West Central Africa, according to Thornton, since lacking the private ownership of one of the vital elements of production (land), they had to ensure the ownership of the other (labour). In this sense, the concept of private ownership of labour in Africa ensured the production and accumulation of wealth and economic prosperity, not only for the African Monarchs, but also for their local elites, and ‘normalising’ the institution and the spread of slavery. In his *Description of Africa* (1665), Olfert Dapper describes this same situation, reinforcing that the ownership of slaves “was the main form of wealth in central Africa”.¹²⁴ Similar to how serfs in Medieval Europe worked on the land of their Lords to produce economic dividends and guarantee their living, enslaved Africans were employed in all sorts of productive tasks by their owners, enlarging the latter’s estate and guaranteeing their own sustenance in the process.¹²⁵ African rulers (such as the *Manikongo* in the Kingdom of Kongo) were also owed tributes in the form of slaves and could distribute those contributions among their administrations, officials, and family members, since they received no other form of income.¹²⁶ This social system and existence of private property in the form of slaves also encouraged African elites to obtain and sell slaves among themselves in order to enlarge their estates and achieve a significant economic status. The arrival of the Portuguese and the accessibility of the Atlantic just provided those elites with other business opportunities, simultaneously explaining why the Portuguese found so many local authorities willing to engage and participate in the Atlantic trade.

Slaves were not marginalised in West Central Africa in the majority of cases since they were deeply integrated in specific economic and social branches of their societies. They were generally employed in a variety of tasks related to economic production, such as agriculture, fishing, hunting, mining, artisanal production, but were also present in administrative duties, being employed as judicial officials, advisors, intermediaries or diplomats. In the same sense that the slave as private property could be employed to

¹²⁴ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, 73-4; 83-4. Quoting Dapper p. 89, note 66

¹²⁵ Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic. Beyond the Silence and the shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), pp. 95-6

¹²⁶ John Thornton, “The Kingdom of Kongo ca. 1350-1678. The development of an African Social Formation”, *cahier d’études africaines*, vol. 22, n° 87 (1982), pp. 325-342

generate resources and revenue, they were also used to increase the political authority of their masters through their employment as soldiers in armies and reliable administrators. In short, they were employed in the domestic economy and administrative roles that contributed to economic production and the generation of revenues, as well as any task that could contribute to the reinforcement or enlargement of the political and social status of their owner and master.¹²⁷

The increase of activities linked to the private sector in the coastal societies in West Central Africa can also be linked to the commercial development of the slave trade, increasing the wealth of their rulers and their number of dependents in turn. Slaves to climb the social ladder, especially those who were born as slaves – unlike those who had been captured –, as the former could reach important positions despite their social role as slaves. An example of those groups of slaves were the *tendala* in Ndongo, who carried out duties similar to a viceroy or prime minister, and the *ngolambole*, judicial officials who collected taxes, and were able to gather great political power. Some African dynasties in West Central Africa claimed to be descendent from mythical heroes who were slaves themselves, once again displaying the malleability of the systems to integrate slaves into its cultures and societies.¹²⁸

An argument has been made that slavery was more tenuous in West Central Africa due to the aforementioned mechanisms and the social architecture of African societies, since it implicated a relative ‘freedom’ and the integration of the slaves into familiar structures. Some African scholars see this relationship, one that integrates the slave into a domestic environment as a ‘paternalistic’ relationship, rather than a violent and abusive one, and one that prevented social exclusion.¹²⁹ The word for slave in Kongo was the same as that for children (*nkele*), which hints at this philosophy of belonging to a household while still obeying the family elders.¹³⁰ Some of the slaves even married their masters and contributed to expand their familiar networks. Research by anthropologists and scholars of African history suggests that there was indeed more flexibility regarding the institution of slavery in Africa. On certain occasions, slaves enjoyed a relative freedom compared to the ones sold to European masters, and they even had some legal

¹²⁷ Henriques, *A rota*, pp. 91-6

¹²⁸ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 482

¹²⁹ Henriques, *A rota*, p. 90

¹³⁰ John Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo. Civil War and Transition, 1641-1718* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983) pp. 21-2

tools to escape the cycle of their captivity. The fact that sub-Saharan societies and cultures measured the wealth and prestige of individuals based on the number of their dependents (slaves) meant that the slaves were fully integrated, as they were as much of a physical representation of their master's power and wealth, as the generators of other revenues, through their employment in productive activities. Some voluntarily decided to become slaves themselves to avoid some dire situations and natural calamities that might have befallen them. The voluntary forfeiture of freedom due to hunger, war or poverty to ensure one's survival was an existing instrument in the African slave systems. Liberty could be regained later on. Those slaves were mostly employed in agricultural tasks, in order to ensure their economic sustenance and the political and military protection of their master. Slavery in Africa was not a closed system that socially excluded its people.¹³¹

Although a considerable number of slaves in West Central African societies might have been successfully integrated in familiar spaces and treated with relative dignity (and even affection), like in any place where slavery is institutionalised, slaves in Africa could also suffer a violent fate and they were forced to perform the harshest of tasks and demeaning work.¹³² Some Africanist trends contest the previous arguments of inclusion, arguing that the integration into domestic spaces, rather than acting as an inclusive aspect of African societies, served as a mechanism of social exclusion, ostracism and imprisonment. It kept criminals and undesirable elements from the public, while still incorporating and using them in the labour system without expelling them from their communities.¹³³

The first Portuguese missions in Ndongo witnessed the existence of two groups of people serving under the Mbundu, which they employed for their daily tasks, and their first assumption was that those groups were regular, normal slaves. After a couple of days of interaction, they noticed the existence of an apparent hierarchy among the two groups, with the individuals belonging to one of them enjoying the favour of their masters and performing soft labour, while the ones belonging to the other group were exposed to violent treatments by their masters. The former were the *ijiku* (*kijiku* sing.), slaves who were fully integrated into their communities and hardly ever sold, and the latter the *abika* (*mubika* sing.), captives of war, subjected to hard work, dangerous tasks, and promptly

¹³¹ Suzane Meiers, Igor Kopytoff, "African Slavery as an institution of Marginality" in Idem (eds.), *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological perspectives* (Madison, 1977) pp. 1-84

¹³² Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, p. 85

¹³³ Bailey, *African Voices*, p. 88

sold.¹³⁴ Even if this system had different characteristics than the European one, displaying greater flexibility and ensuring a more ‘temperate’ institution of slavery, there would always be individuals at the bottom of social ladder whose treatment was no different than the one received at the hands of the Europeans. They were constantly employed in productive economic activities and their workforce forcefully exploited, no matter how harsh those tasks were. In this sense, West African societies did not diverge from any other society in the World that employed slaves in productive and economic activities.¹³⁵ In short, even though slavery and captivity were important elements of African societies, different forms of coerced labour and freedom coexisted within its social and economic structures. Both West African and European used and traded slaves. Their different experiences led to a dissimilar socio-cultural evolution and perception of slavery, yet with similar forms of employment and economic goals. However, the institution of slavery in West and West Central Africa only came to register drastic changes when local elites could not fight the increasing European presence, and the transatlantic market began to dramatically impact Africa’s demographic core in the late eighteenth century.

The African Atlantic Slave Trade

The increase of the demand for slaves by European agents and their colonies had a major impact (with gains and losses) on the African societies that participated in this economic enterprise, and it was thus linked to the development of a common Atlantic economy and identity. The historiographies that portray the relationship between Europeans and Africans as unequal and destructive for Africa has proved to be oversimplistic and fairly anachronistic, especially for the earlier stages of this trade, relegating African agents to a subaltern position in the overall picture of the Atlantic economy.¹³⁶ The notion that the Europeans were able to control the African markets and exploit them for the acquisition of slaves and other commodities, while selling their own cheap products for extortionate prices is completely discarded after a thorough analysis of some

¹³⁴ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 29; Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 482-4; Heintze uses the Kimbundu form, while Anglophone literature pluralize the names by adding an ‘s’ to the end, calling them kijikus/os instead of ijiku; makotas instead of just makota (pl. of dikota); Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 73, 75, 78

¹³⁵ Almeida Mendes, *Esclavages et trates Ibériques*, p. 15

¹³⁶ David Eltis, “The relative importance of slaves and commodities in the Atlantic trade of seventeenth-century Africa”, *The Journal of African History*, vol. 35, n^o2 (1994), pp. 237-249

of the local African economies and their respective markets.¹³⁷ The societies on the Atlantic Coast of Africa were neither passive actors in the development of an Atlantic economy, nor forced into trade by the Europeans through the military and economic disparities between both continents as traditionally pointed out by dependency theorists and world-system scholars. The military organisation of local authorities to oppose early Iberian incursions on their coasts, the contact with more advanced and developed political structures on the Gold and Kongo coasts, in conjunction with the specificity of the different markets and intra-regional circuits, ensured that the European interactions in West Africa not only remained peaceful, but also had to be economically competitive, should they wish to continue this trade.¹³⁸

The Atlantic trade itself was not crucial for the livelihood of the African societies during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nor during a great part of the seventeenth century. Although West African kingships imported manufactured goods from the Europeans, such as textiles and iron tools, as well as some metal weapons, those were goods that already circulated on African markets. Sierra Leone had a well-developed iron industry, and the Kingdom of Kongo and Benin's textile production and manufacture were highly competitive with the European ones. As such, the goods that the people from the Atlantic Coast of Africa sought and bought in the slave trade were already integrated in their regional and continental economic circuits. European merchants had very little to offer that the African continent did not already produce, except materials manufactured with their superior technology, and firearms, which were forbidden at this point, but still found their way onto Africa's markets through smuggling activities. The products requested in exchange for slaves were no mere trifles or baubles but expensive commodities, without which the Portuguese would never have been able to compete on the African markets. They were very selective regarding the goods they requested, usually luxury items like the textiles (*panos*) that came from India and Asia, which had to be imported via Portugal, since ships returning from India were not allowed to anchor on the West African shores due to taxation.¹³⁹ Other requested commodities, such as jewellery,

¹³⁷ Toby Green, "Africa and the price revolution: Currency imports and socioeconomic change in West and West-Central Africa during the seventeenth century", *Journal of African History*, 57, n^o 1 (2016). pp. 1-24

¹³⁸ Ralph Austen, *African Economic History: International Development and external dependency* (London: James Currey, 1987); Walter Rodney, *A history of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980)

¹³⁹ Charles Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825* (London: Hutchison, 1969), pp. 206-220; Luis de Albuquerque, "Escalas da Carreira da Índia, *Revista da Universidade de Coimbra*, 26 (1978): 3-10

metal beads, mirrors, coloured cloths, copper or alcoholic beverages were neither essential for the economic prosperity of African societies, nor of a vital nature for their people. Rather, they were luxury goods with social value for the local elites. These commodities were never exchanged in order to fill a resource deficit or make up for economic shortfalls.¹⁴⁰¹⁴¹ For West African societies, the slave trade was above all a trade that reinforced the status of the local chieftains and their respective kingdoms. It could very rarely, disrupt their economies or overthrow the local industries during the sixteenth century. The trade was not grounded in necessity, it was one that the Africans engaged in on their own initiative.¹⁴²

While the Atlantic slave trade encouraged violent disruptions and intensified cycles of capture, powerful West African authorities felt neither pressure nor obligation to keep trading with the Europeans during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. They could limit, restrict or prohibit this trade at any time they deemed fit. The *Oba* (King) of Benin maintained full control over the trade with the Portuguese, dictating the terms and conditions on his shores, which left Europeans powerless to obtain slaves on a regular basis.¹⁴³ The Portuguese lacked the military means to coerce the African kingdoms to trade with them, and their military technology was often inefficient on the African shores and in the hinterland.¹⁴⁴ Without external pressure, the *Obas* of Benin would open and close the market at will, when they found it appropriate or when they felt slightly threatened. They would instruct their local merchants, who were organised in trade associations, whether to boycott all trade, even officially closing it to the Portuguese in 1540.¹⁴⁵ The Kingdom of Kongo highly regulated trading as well. Portuguese agents operating on its shores were tightly controlled, and all flow from their ports was closely monitored. Ports would be closed when they felt the Portuguese were overstepping boundaries.¹⁴⁶

Although the opening up of a new market through the Atlantic vector unquestionable brought about by the Europeans propelled a series of changes and

¹⁴⁰ Phillip Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade*, vol. I (Madison: Wiscosin, 1975) pp. 334-41

¹⁴¹ Anne Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) pp. 19-49

¹⁴² Thonrton, *Africa and Africans*, pp. 43-52

¹⁴³ Alan Frederick Ryder, *Benin and the Europeans* (London: Longmans, 1969) pp. 15-18

¹⁴⁴ John Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: University College Press, 2003)

¹⁴⁵ Bailey, *African Voices*, p. 63

¹⁴⁶ "Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III" (18-10-1526), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. I pp. 488-491

transformations in the West and West Central African societies, this trade continued to be controlled and dictated by the African authorities until the mid/late-seventeenth century. The African slave markets were far away from the coast, and the political and military organisations of their kingdoms and chiefdoms ensured that they would keep access to their resources restricted for the Europeans, and confirmed their hegemony in this specific commerce. Markets and fairs connected the coast to Central and East Africa, and were only visited by African intermediaries, and later by *pumbeiros*.¹⁴⁷ The only way for the Portuguese to directly acquire slaves on their own terms would be through warfare, which they had did not have the means for to wage on their own. In the period under consideration, West African and West Central African societies were thus not under any sort of military pressure to trade with the Europeans. The Portuguese lacked the proper military power to force African kingdoms to provide them with slaves, and they were incapable of creating any significant foothold in the African hinterland during the fifteenth and sixteenth century. The Portuguese establishment in Angola had to be negotiated with the Kingdom of Kongo, and the Portuguese were forced to be constantly on the defensive due to the forces of Ndongo for more than fifty years, before any sort of significant territorial foothold could be assured. The military technology of firearms was oftentimes inefficient in the African territories. In Europe, they were mainly used to penetrate heavily armoured enemies. Although they possessed great range, they had a very slow rate of fire, similar to cannons. Therefore, the military technology of the Portuguese, which was heavily employed across European battlefields at the time, was ill-guided when fighting dispersed enemies and in guerrilla warfare.¹⁴⁸ The small number of the Portuguese in Africa, even with a technological edge, could not match the military power of the Kingdom of Kongo, Ndongo, or other local territories ruled by local chiefs (*sobados* ruled by *sobas*) along the Kwanza River and in the Central highlands.¹⁴⁹ Even their ships could be seized if they did not accept or obey the trade rules established by African Monarchs. In 1525, Mvemba-a-Nzinga (Afonso I) of Kongo seized a French ship, and arrested its crew, because it was trading illegally on its shores.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ See chapter 6

¹⁴⁸ John Thornton, «The Art of War in Angola, 1575-1680». *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 30, n°2, (1988) pp. 361-362

¹⁴⁹ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, p. 105

¹⁵⁰ ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, I-33-44, "Alvará do Rei do Congo" (27-12-1525), transcribed in Brásio, MMA, Vol I, pp. 455-6

However, the incorporation of the Portuguese in the African slave trade significantly changed the incentives for local elites. African chieftaincies aimed to take advantage of the slave trade and the Europeans for their own political and economic agendas, as well as for the enlargement of their kingdoms. The Portuguese claimed a regime of exclusivity on the trade with the West African rulers, validated by the Papal bull in 1455. However, the Africans neither recognised nor accepted this position or Portuguese exclusivity, effectively trading with every European vessel that reached their shores, creating a competitive market for all Europeans. English and French ships had been trading in Africa ever since the fifteenth century, albeit on a much smaller scale than the Portuguese, and they were even offered the opportunity to build trading posts to rival the Portuguese.¹⁵¹ At the same time, the Kings of Kongo themselves attempted to establish a monopoly on the trade with the Portuguese, and placed restrictions on their trade with ports outside their direct administration.

Slaves' use in domestic societies meant that any increase in the rate of capture, even by warfare, would always raise the prosperity of the ruler who obtained this workforce. To some extent, this was independent from the existence of an Atlantic commercial branch, since their fortune and prestige was measured by their number of dependents. The capture of slaves was already intrinsically connected to the economic and political power of the African chiefdoms. Therefore, the opening of a new market, and the rise in the value of their slaves was welcomed and exploited by the African authorities. The Kingdom of Kongo would also welcome the presence of the Dutch in their coasts, especially after Portuguese attempts of using the *Imbangala* to raid his territory in the seventeenth century. The *Manikongo* invited the Dutch to trade in his shores, enabling a new foreign presence in the West African Coast. Thus, the African ruler managed to keep a certain leeway with both European powers, before engaging into an all-out war with the Portuguese, for which the Kongo ruler requested the aid of the Dutch. The Portuguese were afterwards forced to accept the existing African commercial circuits. Even after their military victories and conquests in Ndongo and Matamba, their attempts to directly access the markets in the hinterland in the second half of the seventeenth century were halted by their previous allies.

¹⁵¹ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 10-17

The increasing procurement for slaves by the Portuguese in the latter half of the sixteenth century played a vital role in the centralisation of political entities in Western Central Africa. This was the case for Kingdom of Kongo, which was originally a federation of aggregated states. Through the accumulation and concentration of slaves in one town (its capital Mbanza Kongo), Kongo managed to achieve political prominence and power in the region due to the demographic and economic value provided by the workforce of the slaves assembled there. Their concentration in one territory also drew other populations to it and aggregated multiple resources, not only gathered around their new political centre but also in its surrounding regions. A similar development took place in Kabasa and Mpungo a Ndongo (or Pungo Adongo) in Ndongo. The development of large urban centres in West Africa gave rulers a political and economic edge over their remaining rivals. On the Slave Coast, the *Obas* of Benin traded with the Portuguese for the commodities they desired, in order to gather as much resources as possible for their own political agenda. With a military campaign on the horizon, one of the embargos of Benin was issued to retain as much of a male slave population as possible to employ them in their own armies, in order to maintain the balance of power with regard to the trading associations who were growing prosperous with the European trade at the same time.¹⁵²

The arrival of Portuguese slave traders matched, and possibly encouraged the wars of expansion and centralisation of the West Central African spaces in the sixteenth century, as it will be explained below. The wars of not only Kongo, but also Ndongo and later Matamba, resulted in multitudes of slaves who would be shipped across the Atlantic. These wars were another reason why the Portuguese found a substantial slave population upon their arrival, and an existing slave market already highly articulated. The Monarchs of Kongo had much interest in the development of the slave trade with the Portuguese, as the new (and growing) European demand provided the perfect opportunity to continue to expand their political influence over the neighbouring regions and centralising the fragmented states. The *Manikongo* would bring those states under his rule through the assistance by Europeans in his wars, whose final product, the capture of slaves, would compensate and fulfil the European demands. Kongo supplied slaves to the Portuguese since the arrival of Diogo Cão in 1483, and the *Manikongo* himself regularly participated in the trade. Mvemba-a-Nzinga (Afonso I) sold slaves to Lisbon in 1510, and asked the Portuguese King Manuel I for a special exemption from paying custom duties

¹⁵² Bailey, *African Voices*, p. 63

in São Tomé in 1517.¹⁵³ He also wrote to the next Portuguese King, John III, requesting a personal ship so he could trade his own slaves.¹⁵⁴

Although West Central African elites undoubtedly profited from European commercial and military support, this does not mean that the same applies to the non-elites. European military aid, even when requested, might have had a limited impact on the wars due to the geographical constraints of the territories, the size of the Portuguese force and the limited employment of their technology. Yet they undoubtedly affected the lives of many Africans forced into bondage. At the same time, the economic incentives for African elites and kingdoms promoted an increasingly militarised policy from its monarchs.¹⁵⁵ After their military intervention in Kongo, where they helped defend the territory against the *Jaga* invasion, the Portuguese would come to rely more and more heavily on the aid from local African rulers and their armies of slaves, or acquired their own slave armies, which they called *Guerra preta*.

Local merchants also took advantage of the Europeans trading on their shores. Rather than selling slaves individually, they would often assemble a large number of captives, selling them in bulk or in groups, in contrast to the individual selection practiced in other ports. They would also take advantage of this mechanism to add old, sick and unfit slaves to group sales who otherwise would not be bought by the Portuguese merchants. They would then be forced to sell the slaves they could not employ back to local populations with considerable losses. When they would then resume the same employment in their previous households. Some of the merchants, called *guenzes*, were appointed by their rulers to sell these groups of slaves, even if that required them to travel considerable distances to meet the Portuguese. They would purposely locate the markets further inland to make the journey longer, increasing the value of the slave and the wait of the ships on the coast.¹⁵⁶ They would also deceive the Portuguese, asking exorbitant prices, arbitrarily playing with the different rates between supply and demand, which the Portuguese were powerless to change or contest.

It is important to stress that the African societies did not enslave their own kin. Despite military and judicial enslavement being the most prevalent of methods for the

¹⁵³ “Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I” (5-10-1514), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. 1, pp. 294-323 [303-312]

¹⁵⁴ “Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III” (26-5-1517), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. 1 pp. 404-405”; Carta de D. João III ao Rei do Congo” (c.1529), *Ibidem*, vol. 1, p. 527

¹⁵⁵ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, pp. 107-117

¹⁵⁶ Caldeira, “Angola and the seventeenth-century south Atlantic” p. 116

production of slaves for sale among the African rulers, they never sold their own kin, subjects, allies or free people into slavery, only the ones deemed alien or captured through warfare or in an uprising. In Ndongo, there were special overseers to control the slave trade to make sure that no free or unjustly captured people were sold.¹⁵⁷ on the people on the coast did not perceive themselves as a unified community against a foreign invader in the form of the European during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Western Central Africa was inhabited by people of multiple cultures, ethnicities, languages and heritages, who often shared the same territory. They had different allegiances, rivalries, and social and familial structures. One of the biggest shortcomings of Eurocentric narratives is precisely the generalisation of the different ethnicities and political entities on the coast as a common entity exploited by the Europeans in the slave trade. Rather, we should look into the different African dynamics, learning to understand what historical circumstances were behind their need to wage war and capture rival populations. African concepts of community were usually limited and restricted to a select number of small villages, sharing some link or a kinship network. The bigger states were aggregations or federations of chieftaincies which had to constantly be kept in check by their king. Should their own people suffer attacks or be victims of illegal captivity on their part, they would remove themselves from trading enterprises. Kinship networks were the bigger factor regarding the different behaviours of the local authorities, and how they engaged with slavery. Should those links be disrupted, the local rulers could and would cut all ties with the Portuguese.¹⁵⁸

Taking into account all the aforementioned structures and mechanisms regarding slavery and African's role in the trade, it becomes clear that those elements and the African captive markets cannot be overlooked in a study of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Analysis or understanding of the different structures, volume and capital of the Angolan slave trade is impossible without taking into account all the aforementioned African structures, be they of a social, cultural or economic nature, and their respective political constructions. They are of vital importance, since the vast majority of the slaves the Portuguese shipped across the Atlantic were captured by West and West Central African authorities, and later sold to the Portuguese. The Portuguese would regularly promote expeditions to capture slaves. However, they would only sporadically actively engage in

¹⁵⁷ Baltazar Barreira, "Informação acerca dos Escravos", Brasília, MMA, vol. III, pp. 227-8

¹⁵⁸ Meiers, Kopytoff, "African Slavery" pp. 1-84

all-out wars territorial wars in Atlantic Africa, and never without the help of native slave armies and local allegiances. Slave procurement through warfare was mostly conducted by African kingdoms and chieftaincies among their multiple fragmented states, containing several different ethnicities, cultures and languages. The number of slaves captured exclusively by the Portuguese, save for the years of intense conflict like the Ndongo wars (1592-1603, 1618-1622), was vastly inferior to the number obtained through cooperation with local authorities.¹⁵⁹

Considering the different socio-economic structures of the multiple and fragmented people that lived in Western Central Africa, and looking at the political landscape upon the Portuguese contacts, it is impossible to portray the Euro-African commercial relations dominated by the Portuguese. If we overlook the importance of the African markets, and the dynamics of political and cultural entities, we are ignoring various elements that display the African role in the evolution of the slave trade. Exploring their different socio-political backgrounds, and perceiving their change and continuity on account of the Euro-African Atlantic trade, enables the interpretation of the fluctuation of the trade in West Central Africa for the time period studied from a different perspective. It allows us to understand how the different local and regional powers in Africa influenced and affected the expansion of the trade, and to perceive the evolution of the inner trades and spaces dominated by those African authorities with whom the Portuguese had to constantly negotiate their presence.

2.3 West Central Africa – Kongo, Ndongo, Benguela, Loango, Kasanze and Matamba: Trade Relations, Rivalry and Warfare with the Portuguese

The Portuguese position in Africa had to be constantly negotiated and adjusted from an unfavourable position and according to the flow of the political and economic conjuncture of the West African Coast. The breakthrough and expansion in volume of the transatlantic trade around the dawn of the seventeenth century was not solely owed to the development, articulation, and cooperation of the vast Iberian merchant networks operating between both sides of the Atlantic. It also resulted from the political and economic transformations taking place in Kongo and Ndongo. Those transformations

¹⁵⁹ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 491-2

were influenced by a plethora of different factors, from the foundation of Luanda in 1575 to the interweaving of the Portuguese and Spanish royal contracts for the provision of slaves with the adjudication of the first colonial contract of Angola in 1587, the creation of the first Spanish *asiento* in 1595, the expansion of Spanish American colonial economies, the rise of Brazil's sugar production, and finally the wars in West Africa, in which slave capture rates were ultimately a result of the combination of all the aforementioned elements.¹⁶⁰ However, said factors, originating in an exclusively European source and market demand, fail to provide the whole picture for this particular shift. In order to perceive these specific transformations in the transatlantic trade, it is equally important to address the regions that supplanted Upper Guinea, their people, markets and share in the trade. The kingdoms on the coast had already had exchanges with the Portuguese since the fifteenth century, and actively engaged in trade with both formal and informal agents of the empire. Context and perception of the mechanisms of the kingdoms of the West Coast of Africa help shed some light on as to why the scope of the trade increased so much in such a short amount of time.

¹⁶⁰ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 77-116

Figure 1 – The Kingdoms of Kongo, Ndongo, and Matamba (c. 1615)



Source: Linda Heywood, John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2007) p. 50

The Kingdom of Kongo and its relationship with the Portuguese

The rulers of the ancient Kingdom of Kongo were called the *Manikongo*, their title stemming from the Kikongo word *Mwene* or *Mani*, which means ‘lord’ of Kongo.¹⁶¹ There were other ‘lords’ in Kongo that oversaw its main regions, like the *Mani Mbamba* or the *Mani Soyo*, but they were subject to the authority and favour of the *Manikongo*,

¹⁶¹ The term has been used by Portuguese Kings addressing the Kongolese Monarchs ever since the sixteenth century. John Thornton, “The Origins and early History of the Kingdom of Kongo, c. 1350-1550”, *International History of African Historical Studies*, vol. 34, n° 1, 2000 pp. 89-120

and their titles were dependent on his will. By the fifteenth century, the Kingdom of Kongo was a fairly centralised state, whose rulers enjoyed great wealth, control over and loyalty from a vast number of subjects across the Western Central African region, according to the description of chronicler Rui de Pina.¹⁶²

The capital, located in Mbanza Kongo, was the biggest urban centre in the Western Central African mainland prior to the arrival of the Portuguese, gathering a considerable demographic and economic force. The concentration of so many individuals in one place gave the Kongolese an edge in terms of military and economic supremacy.¹⁶³ Following several military campaigns, the Kingdom of Kongo, would become the biggest political entity of West Central Africa, consisting of a centralised core, divided in ‘provinces’, which were administrated by a *Mani* who was personally appointed by the *Manikongo*. *Manis* usually belonged to his family network, with the most relevant ones being Soyo (Nsoyo), Mbamba, Mpangu, Mbata, Mpemba, and Ndsundi. There also existed an outer rim of tributary chieftaincies, where the authority of the *Manikongo* was diminished and more abstract. The experience in administrating and controlling multiple neighbouring regions, as well as the wealth, power, and tributes that came with it, allowed the *Manikongo* to deal and negotiate with the Portuguese from a position of power from the outset.¹⁶⁴

The first contact between the Portuguese and the Kongolese was initiated somewhere between 1482-1483, when Diogo Cão arrived on the shores of the Soyo province along the Congo River, and was received by the lord of that region, the *Mani Soyo*. The Kongolese ruler, Nzinga-a-Nkuwu, sent an emissary to Lisbon on one of Cão’s ships. On his return two years later, the *Manikongo* engaged in commercial relations with the Portuguese, requesting goods and commodities for trade, farmers to teach the local population how to work the land, and carpenters and stonemasons.¹⁶⁵ The Portuguese King Manuel I sent priests as well as emissaries with the objective to establish not only a religious foothold on Africa, but also develop a commercial partnership with Kongo, and explore possible mineral resources in the region. After a decade of contact, the *Manikongo*

¹⁶² Carmen Radulet, *O cronista Rui de Pina e a “Relação do Reino do Congo”* (Lisbon, 1992)

¹⁶³ John Thornton, “Mbanza Kongo/São Salvador: Kongo’s Holy city”, David Anderson and Richard Rathbone (eds.), *Africa’s urban past* (London, 2000), pp. 67-9

¹⁶⁴ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 57

¹⁶⁵ Ilidio do Amaral, *O reino do Congo, os mbundu (ou Ambundos), o reino dos ngola (ou de angola) e a presença portuguesa de finais do século XV a meados do século XVI* (Lisbon, 1996), pp. 21-6

Nzinga-a-Nkuwu converted to Christianity. The royal family of Kongo and he received Christian names at baptism. Nzinga-a-Nkuwu thus became João I, and the first Christian King of Kongo, also starting a religious and cultural process in the Kingdom.¹⁶⁶

Kongo adapted and reshaped the religious aspects of European Christianity to its own society, and developed its own form of religious syncretism which in turn helped its own political agenda. There are countless theories and historical debates surrounding the sincerity of the Kongolese conversion, which will not be explored here.¹⁶⁷ The important element to retain from the cultural and religious exchange between Kongo and Portugal is that the *Manikongo* himself requested and initiated contact with the Portuguese. This ensured that the Monarchs of Kongo dictated the terms and the flow of this cultural and religious relationship. At the same time, the course and structures of the Church in Kongo would remain under their control and outside of the influence of the Portuguese. The elements of Christianity that were integrated into Kongolese society were in accordance with the pre-existing religious beliefs, which bred some problems with the clergy and the Bishops of São Tomé. Christianity and the Catholic Church were mostly used as a propeller of Kongo's external power over its neighbouring regions.

The Portuguese provided official military aid to the *Manikongo* as early as 1491, and between 1509 and 1512. They supported Mvemba a Nzinga against the 'anti-Christian' coalition of Mpanzu-a-Kitima, his rival. The Portuguese provided limited logistical support during this conflict for power, and labelled it a 'Crusade'. The chronicles describe how Mvemba-a-Nzinga witnessed 'a miracle' at the end of a battle, continuing (and consolidating) in this sense the religious and cultural policy initiated by his father.¹⁶⁸ The alliance established between the Portuguese and the *Manikongo*, and the consequent military help for Kongo's expansion during the reign of Mvemba-a-Nzinga (1506-1543), baptised Afonso I, resulted in a stable economic growth for the region as a slave provider to the Portuguese commercial posts in Cape Verde and São Tomé, due to the constant flow of war captives. The relationship established between the

¹⁶⁶ John Thornton, "The development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1491-1750", *The Journal of African Catholic Church*, vol. 25, n° 2, Cambridge University Press, (1984), pp. 147-167

¹⁶⁷ Wyatt J. MacGaffey, "The cultural roots of Kongo prophetism", *History of Religions*, vol. 17, n°2, (1977), pp. 177-93; John Thornton, "Religious and ceremonial life in Kongo and Mbundu Areas", Thornton, Heywood, *Central Africans*; Charles Boxer, "The problem of native clergy in the Portuguese and Spanish Empires, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries", J. S. Cummins (Ed.), *Christianity and Missions 1450-1800* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 1997), pp. 175-196 [186]

¹⁶⁸ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 57-68

Portuguese and the Kongolese was in this sense an alliance between two Catholic kings. The sovereignty of Kongo was never in danger during the diplomatic and economic exchanges of the sixteenth century.¹⁶⁹

The extensive expansion and military campaigns of Afonso I during the first half of the sixteenth century heavily influenced the establishment of different Portuguese slave trading networks in the Atlantic archipelagos. The military campaigns in the Kingdom of Kongo helped propel the economic development of the settlements in São Tomé, which economy was almost exclusively based on the use of slaves to grow sugar cane and taxation over slave exports to Spanish America or Brazil.¹⁷⁰ The Portuguese stationed in São Tomé would often provide assistance and participate in the African campaigns of Kongo in the service of their king, as the *Manikongo* commonly ‘payed’ the Portuguese who participated in his campaigns with the slaves captured in his wars. These slaves would be used by the Portuguese to buy commodities in Africa, or they would be shipped to the islands of São Tomé and Madeira to work in the sugar mills, or to Brazil and Spanish America.¹⁷¹ The rising profits and the development of the sugar industry in the Atlantic area, due to the easier access to slaves in greater quantities, together with the economic growth of merchant communities in São Tomé, contributed to the development and extension of Portuguese slave capture circuits on the southern coasts of West Africa.

São Tomé’s economic dependence on Kongo’s ability to provide slaves, the biggest slave market for the Portuguese at that time, would deeply impact their relations during the subsequent years, since the demand (and greed) for slaves from the Portuguese merchants could not always be filled by the rulers of Kongo. Their means to produce and acquire slaves were limited to commercial transactions following the end of the expansionist wars of Afonso I, which bred problems between both parties.¹⁷² Networks began to branch out towards the south of the Congo river, in order to not only respond to the rising demand for slave labour from the Atlantic sugar economies, but also to safeguard a more stable influx of captives, one that was independent from the fluctuations

¹⁶⁹ Andrea Mosterman, John Thornton, “A Re-interpretation of the Kongo-Portuguese war of 1622 according to new documentary evidence”, *The Journal of African History*, vol. 51, n^o2 (2010), pp. 235-248

¹⁷⁰ Iva Cabral, *A primeira Elite Colonial Atlântica. Dos “homens honrados brancos” de Santiago à “nobreza da terra”. Finais do séc. XV – início do séc. XVII* (Praia: Pedro Cardoso Livraria, 2015)

¹⁷¹ David Birmingham, *Portugal and Africa* (Lisbon: Documenta histórica, 2003), pp. 81-93

¹⁷² “Regimento do Feitor do trato de S. Tomé” (2-8-1532), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 14-5,

of the political conjunctures of the African kingdoms.¹⁷³ Kongo's stake in the relationship with the Portuguese was based on political motivations, namely the reinforcement of their military power and authority over the fragmented and fragile territories of the region, not only through the employment of Portuguese forces, but also thanks to the commodities they acquired from their trade which reinforced their prestige. For Portugal's part, on the other hand, the relationship initially stemmed from its desire to find a religious partner in Africa, but was mostly based on and integrated into economic strategy, gradually propelled by the community in São Tomé with growing interests and stakes in the slave trade. Slave trade activities intensified and numbers greatly rose during the 1530s. Worried by Kongo's growing market restrictions, the merchants based on the island started to explore other areas towards the south of the Zaire and Congo Rivers, to the great displeasure of the Kongolese kings.¹⁷⁴

This redirection of Portuguese and Luso-African merchants, seeking slaves and additional revenues at different routes and other markets when Kongo could not (or rather would not) satisfy their needs, infuriated the *Manikongo*. Afonso I complained multiple times about the activities of the Luso-African merchants on his coasts to the Portuguese King, declaring himself shocked by the way they were openly and directly trading with his rivals, who, unlike the Kongolese, had not converted to Christianity, and were promoting uprisings against him.¹⁷⁵ Earlier contact with Ndongo, a kingdom on the south of the Dande River, and a vassal of Kongo at the time, had not been well received by the Kongolese monarchs either, as it would reinforce the economic power of Ndongo's rulers, who would come to reject their vassalage status years later. The volatile behaviour of the merchant community in São Tome, which even the Portuguese Crown had problems to control or regulate due to their smuggling activities and constant fiscal evasion, but Kongo managed to keep the Portuguese agents in its territories under relative control. They monitored the flow at the ports, which they would close if they felt the Portuguese were overstepping their boundaries, reporting them to the Portuguese Crown.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Joseph Miller, "Angola in the sixteenth century – Um mundo que o português encontrou", Alfred Hower, Richard A. Preto-Rodas (eds.), *Empire in transition: The Portuguese world in the time of Camões* (Gainesville: Center for Latin American Studies, University Press of Florida, 1983), p. 122-123

¹⁷⁴ Caldeira, *Escravos*, pp. 85-6

¹⁷⁵ "Carta do Rei do Congo a Antonio Carneiro" (5-3-1516), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. I, pp. 359-360

¹⁷⁶ "Carta do Rei do Congo a D. João III" (18-10-1526), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. I, pp. 488-491

Kongo also controlled the access to the intra-African trade through the access to the routes to the regional markets and slave fairs (the *pumbos*) in the interior. The control of the *Manikongo* over slave supply centres along the coast only exacerbated the need for the merchants to sail to southern shores to search for other markets to obtain slaves themselves. One early Portuguese factory, sponsored by private and informal activity, had already been established on the shores of Angola by the middle of the sixteenth century. When it was discovered, the small settlement was immediately closed and forbidden by Royal Decree. The *Manikongo* expressed his displeasure with this outpost, since he was aiming to control and regulate the trade in the region. The rulers of Kongo tried to offer better trading and shipping conditions in their ports to concentrate the activities in the port of Mpinda in order to discourage the Portuguese merchants from trading with their powerful vassals.¹⁷⁷ However, the long delays in the shipments from Mpinda hindered the activities of the eager Portuguese. The slaves acquired in Mpinda were first gathered in Mbanza Kongo, and were only afterwards brought to the mouth of the Congo River, where the Portuguese ships would be the final stage of a long journey to the coast, and the first of another longer one across the Atlantic. The Portuguese attempts at clandestinely settling south of Kongo created great tension with the *Manikongo*, who recurrently denounced their actions to the Portuguese kings, and also accused them of illegally enslaving his own subjects on Kongolese shores and disrupting the peace within its borders.¹⁷⁸ The Portuguese King was forced to prohibit the capture of slaves in the region, and to impose heavy restrictions on the private shipment of slaves. These restrictions, along with future conflicts with the kings of Kongo, drove the merchants of São Tomé and Cape Verde to channel their investments into alternative circuits.

The rulers of Kongo managed to control the religious and political exchanges with the Portuguese with relative success since the beginning of their diplomatic exchange with the Portuguese. What Kongo could not control, however, were the commercial activities outside its ports, and contact taking place in the territories that were either outside of its jurisdiction, where their authority was barely existent, or the local chieftains aimed to promote this trade themselves so they could contest Kongo's authority. The merchants based in São Tomé constantly violated the jurisdiction and agreements

¹⁷⁷ "Regimento do Feitor", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 14-15

¹⁷⁸ "Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Manuel I (5-10-1514), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. I, p. 320

previously established with the *Manikongo*, evaded taxes, and visited rival nations to get better prices and a more steady influx of slaves in order to avoid the ‘monopolising’ policies of Kongo.¹⁷⁹ For this reason, the merchants from São Tomé continued to visit the territories south of Kwanza clandestinely, even after the Royal Decree of 1553 that forbade any merchant from trading on those shores under penalty of death.¹⁸⁰

The growing demand from Brazil, in conjunction with the closure of, or delayed shipments in, Mpinda in retaliation by the *Manikongo*, was the final straw for the private merchants. They felt encouraged to disregard the Crown’s orders, and visit other supply centres on the coast of Angola and the Kwanza River, ignoring the threat to their lives. Despite the initial complaints and attempts at sabotaging contact between the Portuguese and Ndongo, the merchants of São Tomé, or ‘Tomistas’, managed to gain the favour of the *Ngola* and exclusive trade benefits, even conspiring against the official representatives of the Crown.¹⁸¹ The political strife that scourged Kongo during the 1560s, together with the *Jaga* invasions that started in 1568, led to the displacement of many Portuguese who had been at the court of the *Manikongo*. This truly re-oriented the trade towards Angola, unofficially establishing activities around the bay Luanda. In a sense, the political turmoil paved the way for the intensification of Portuguese activity on the coast of Angola, even without any official decree allowing this trade.

Kongo’s Monarchs also had issues with the Portuguese on a political level. The royal succession in Kongo was usually disputed by numerous sons of the royal family. After the death of a ruling *Manikongo*, it was common for different factions supporting the different family members of the deceased ruler to clash with one other, resulting in skirmishes and localised conflicts that could sometimes escalate into civil wars. After Mvemba-a-Nzinga’s death (1543), which marked the end of a rule of over thirty years, three different rulers claimed the throne over a period of just two years: Nkanga-a-Mvemba, Mpudi-a-Nzinga and Nkumbi-a-Mpudi (baptised Pedro, Francisco and Diogo respectively). The new rulers would sometimes overrule the policies and alliances of the previous kings, and expel their entourage from any influential position. This unstable and volatile system was harmful for the Portuguese community in Kongo and São Tomé, who had commercial interests in the region and were dependent on the good will of the

¹⁷⁹ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 68-70

¹⁸⁰ “Alvará de el-Rei D. João III” (1553), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 323-4

¹⁸¹ “Apontamentos sobre Paulo Dias de Novais” (1560-1561), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 465-7

Kongolese. As such, they did not wish to see their commercial ventures subjected to unpredictable dynastic changes. This fact led the Portuguese community garrisoned on the coast and São Tomé to intervene in Kongo's civil conflicts by financing and supporting a candidate favourable to their interests.¹⁸² The conflict that followed the stability of the three decades during which Afonso I ruled, saw the emergence of Nkumbi-a-Mpudi, or D. Diogo (1545-1561) as the *Manikongo*, who triumphed over the forces of his rival Mpundi-a-Nzinga, who was allegedly supported by Portuguese interests. The interference of the European agents in Kongo's internal politics (and the fact that the candidate allegedly favourable to the Portuguese lost) led to the gradual deterioration of the relations between the Portuguese and Kongolese during this period, creating an environment of mutual suspicion and distrust.¹⁸³

D. Diogo later issued an inquiry into the level of Portuguese interference in the wars of Kongo, and involvement in a *coup* intended to place a rival in his place. This measure was received with great apprehension by the community living in Mbanza Kongo. The persecution added more fuel to the existing atmosphere of distrust.¹⁸⁴ The captain of São Tomé during this period, Francisco de Barros Paiva, retaliated with accusations against D. Diogo, and complained to the Portuguese King João III about alleged abuses of the Portuguese by D. Diogo. He claimed that the Jesuits and religious authorities of São Tomé were mistreated and disrespected, and reported abuses suffered by the Portuguese in Kongo. Captain Paiva proceeded to recount an episode where the *Manikongo's* Royal Guard beat up and mugged a group of Portuguese in broad day light in his capital. To make matters worse, among the victims was Fernão Lopes de Segura, the son of the *Corregidor* (judicial and administrative magistrate) of São Tomé, Bernardo Segura. He maintained that neither justice nor punishment was ever served. The captain extended his accusations to ill intent by the *Manikongo*, referring to the fact that he would open slave fairs in distant territories, "in places where our men get lost and get mugged on the way" as retaliation for the Portuguese involvement in Kongo's politics.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Ralph Delgado, *História de Angola: Primeiro período e parte do segundo de 1482 a 1607* (Lisbon: Banco de Angola, 1973) pp. 217-223

¹⁸³ John Thornton, "Early Kongo-Portuguese Relations: A New Interpretation", *History in Africa*, vol. 8, *African Studies Association*, 1981 pp. 183-204

¹⁸⁴ ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, II-242-121

¹⁸⁵ "Carta do capitão de S. Tomé a D. João III" (18-5-1549), Brasília, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 231-7

Taking into account the Portuguese interference in the Kongo succession, and the growing animosity between the São Tomé communities and Kongo regarding the provision of slaves and its market restrictions, those reports were produced in a context of extreme animosity. The reports are therefore obviously biased, with the goal of portraying D. Diogo as a tyrant. Diogo I had also arrested some Portuguese who were interfering with the fishing of the *nzimbu* (cowrie shells) in cooperation with local Kongo chiefs in the bay of Luanda, as those shells acted as currency in Kongo, and Diogo had exclusive rights over their fishing. This was yet another violation on the part of the Portuguese merchants.¹⁸⁶ A small Portuguese community in Kongo, including some New Christians, managed to garner the favour of D. Diogo. They would often obstruct the actions of Jesuits and the Portuguese Crown, since they would profit more from their positions in the private circle of the African Monarch than from the Portuguese administration.

Only with the invasion or uprising of the *Jaga*, nomadic warrior groups of unknown origins in 1568-70, as part of either a migratory movement or a rebellion coming from Central Africa, the Portuguese managed to establish a foothold in the African territory.¹⁸⁷ In the face of the *Jaga* invasions, Mpangu-a-Nimi Lukeni lua Mvemba (1568-1574, Álvaro I) was forced to call on King Sebastião I for military aid. The *Jagas* had defeated the forces of Álvaro, forcing the *Manikongo* to flee to an island in the River Zaïre and await for Portuguese reinforcements, while the *Jaga* burned and plundered the capital and other territory.¹⁸⁸ King Sebastião I ordered the Governor of São Tomé, Francisco de Gouveia Sottomaior, to support Kongo with an army of 600 soldiers in 1571, but not without obtaining some concessions and compensations from the *Manikongo*. A Portuguese settlement on the island of Luanda, as well as the official support of Kongo for the establishment of a Portuguese foothold, were allegedly among the concessions requested for the Portuguese aid.¹⁸⁹ Other clauses were included, albeit less known, such

¹⁸⁶ Jan Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966) p.58

¹⁸⁷ The origin and identity of the *Jagas* is still a great mystery. Even among Africanists, the *Jagas* are still the centre of much debate. For a more up to date summary on this question, see: Joseph C. Miller, "Requiem for the Jaga", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, XIII (1973), pp. 121-49; Beatrix Heintze and Katja Rieck, "The extraordinary journey of the Jaga through the centuries: critical approaches to precolonial Angolan historical sources", *History in Africa*, vol. 34, African Studies Association, 2007 pp. 67-101; The newest translation of Pigafetta's *Le royaume de Congo et les contrées environnantes* by Michel Chandeigne. Paris, 2002 pp. 291-95

¹⁸⁸ Anne Hilton, "The Jaga reconsidered", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 22, nº2 (1981) pp. 191-202

¹⁸⁹ Ilídio do Amaral, *O consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais: Angola no último quartel do século XVI e primeiro do século XVII* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação científica e tropical, 2000)

as mining rights in the territory and fishing of the *nzimbu* shells on its shores. The invasion immersed Kongo in a political and economic crisis, paid for with the intensification of slave production and its redirection towards the Atlantic economy through the Portuguese slave hubs in the Atlantic archipelagos. Due to Kongo's religious status and protection of its freeborn vassals, in combination with the tight monitoring of the legality of enslavement at the slave fairs, the new *Manikongo* promptly helped the Portuguese in their quest for slaves. He provided aid against one of his former vassals, Ndongo, located in the territory of today's Angola, next to the concession for the Portuguese foothold, but not without interest. As a new ruler, in the aftermath of the devastation of the *Jaga* invasions, the new *Manikongo* attempted to use the Portuguese to weaken his former vassal, and consolidate his position in the process. The conflict would deeply transform the geopolitical landscape of West Africa in the seventeenth century, and thereby the volume of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.¹⁹⁰

Ndongo or the 'Kingdom of Angola'

Information regarding Ndongo comes mostly from European sources. Initially, this consisted of short reports, descriptions, and memorandums from agents who visited Kongo or its surroundings and came into contact with the Mbundu, the people who inhabited the lands along the Kwanza. The sources are almost exclusively written by European eye witnesses and require careful interpretation, making it difficult to write a concise history due to the fragmentary state of its sources. The efforts of Miller, Heintze, Heywood, and Thornton to map the events that took place between Ndongo's 'independence' of Kongo and the establishment of the Portuguese in Luanda, in combination with their reading of the sources, are vital to provide us with a more accurate overview of the history and politics of Ndongo and its region. Although there exists no 'absolute' narrative about the history of Ndongo, their efforts and interpretation of the available sources give us a much more detailed picture of this region.

Ndongo was the region inhabited by the Mbundu people (sing. Ambundu) of the Bantu family, whose ruler and highest political authority was the figure of the *Ngola*. The Portuguese drew the name for this territory from this title, calling it 'the Kingdom of

¹⁹⁰ Linda Heywood, "Slavery and its transformation in the Kingdom of Kongo: 1491-1800, *The Journal of African History*, vol. 50, n^o1 (2009), pp. 1-22

Angola'. The word *aKiluanji* (meaning conqueror) often accompanied the title of *Ngola*, and was commonly added or featured in the names of their rulers. However, not all of the *Ngolas* shared this 'title' in their official names in the sources, and it is debatable if it indeed constituted a title 'awarded' during life, or if it was simply an onomastic feature derived from their lineages.¹⁹¹ Joseph Miller believes that there were actually two different 'ranks' of *Ngolas*, albeit with only one in power at a time. The *Ngola aKiluanji* would be the highest position, and the *Ndambi aNgola* a 'lesser' one.¹⁹² The *Ngolas* were believed to possess mystical powers for controlling the weather, revered by their people as the "lord of sun and rain".¹⁹³ The first mention of the Mbundu is found in a letter by the King of Kongo, Afonso I, in 1514, who includes lord of the "Ambundos" among his titles.¹⁹⁴ This reference is repeated in 1535, when he reinforced his lordship over the Mbundu people, to which he also adds the realm of 'Angola', bringing this chronology in line with Kongo's expansionary campaigns.¹⁹⁵ In this sense, it is possible to infer that the earlier *Ngolas* were tributaries of the *Manikongo* and part of the theoretical outer rim of 'states' incorporated in the political sphere of the Kingdom of Kongo.

It is difficult to concisely map the Kingdom of Ndongo, since its borders, more than geographical, cultural, or linguistic (the Mbundu spoke *Kimbundu*), were political, and based on the loyalty of their tributary chiefs. Ndongo had neither a centralised state nor 'core' regions like Kongo, since it was an aggregation of fragmented territories called *murindas*, each ruled by its own *soba* "who were like Dukes and Lords", who would recognise the authority of the *Ngola*. According to a local witness, the priest Garcia Simões, the "king of Angola has ten or twelve *sobas*", and each of them had absolute power over the lives of the vassals in their territories.¹⁹⁶ The borders of the Kingdom were unstable, since the *sobas* would recurrently rebel against, or declare their allegiance to the *Ngola*, which diminished or enlarged his sphere of influence. It was a space that was delimited by its people rather than land or geography, a mechanism that was in total accordance with the previously explored concepts of Western Central African prestige,

¹⁹¹ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 182

¹⁹² Miller, Joseph Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen: Early Mbundu states in Angola*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 82

¹⁹³ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 79

¹⁹⁴ "Carta de Jerónimo Coutinho a El-Rei" (1551), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. I, p. 272

¹⁹⁵ ANTT, *Corpo Cronológico*, I-48-45

¹⁹⁶ "Carta do padre Garcia Simões para o Provincial" (20-10-1575), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, pp. 129-142 [134]

power, and wealth.¹⁹⁷ The Dande River appeared to be the natural border with the Kingdom of Kongo, yet it was constantly disputed after the *Ngola* stopped recognising the *Manikongo*'s authority. Ndongo was composed of multiple 'regions', according to Portuguese sources. The most notable and mentioned were Ilamba, Hare, Dongo, Lumbo, Quissama (Kissama), Museke, and Libolo. Therefore, the regions 'covered' by the entity of Ndongo stretched inland along the most important river of the region, the Kwanza, also incorporating the highlands along the Bengo and Lukala. According to Portuguese sources, its 'capital' or Royal residence was located in Kabasa, between the Kwanza and the Lukala rivers, although the royal residence changed location multiple times over the years.¹⁹⁸

Ndongo appears to have originally been comprised of multiple chieftaincies headed by *sobas*, who deferred to (or at least recognised) the authority of Kongo, although its authority in the region was more nominal than effective. When writing about Portuguese activity in Ndongo in a document from 1582, the priest Baltasar Barreira mentions that "this Kingdom of Angola started with the great grandfather of the one that currently rules, because before, all were individual lords who did not recognise anybody as ruler among themselves".¹⁹⁹ This information has however been questioned by some scholars like Joseph Miller, who claims that the origins of the first *Ngola* were much older than the date estimated by Baltasar. Additionally, he maintains that the origins of this figure was a symbolic and mythical construction, rather than a concrete historical individual or entity, a common tradition across all of West Central Africa.²⁰⁰ The different chiefdoms of the region that came to form the Kingdom of Ndongo, and recognised the central authority of the *Ngola*, would have undergone a much longer and cumulative process of centralisation than three generations.²⁰¹ However, the letters of the kings of Kongo appear to corroborate that Ndongo itself was a recent political construction. The different chieftaincies surrounding this territory were fighting among themselves, but they had recently witnessed the military victory of one *sobas*, who originally came from a smaller region called Ndongo. His victory and emergence as a ruler over the remaining *sobas* of the region thus provided the name of his *sobado* of Ndongo as the basis for the

¹⁹⁷ Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, p.267

¹⁹⁸ Amaral, *Reino do Congo*, pp. 176-7

¹⁹⁹ "Informação acerca dos escravos", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, p. 22

²⁰⁰ Miller, *Kings and Kingsman*, p. 113

²⁰¹ Jan Vansina, *How Societies are Born: Governance in West Africa Before 1600* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004);

title of the leader of the region, *Ngola*. This appears to have taken place somewhere around 1515, although Heintze, Heywood, Thornton and Amaral offer different timelines, but they all trace the first *Ngola* back to the figure of Ngola Kiluanje (c. 1515-1556) or Angola Inene (the Great).²⁰²

During the first half of the sixteenth century, Ndongo was a tributary state of Kongo, as confirmed by Afonso I's title as "Lord of the Ambundos and Angola". However, this relationship changed in the wake of the establishment of clandestine trade relations between the Portuguese merchants from Cape Verde and São Tomé and Ndongo, for the increasing and steady provision of slaves.²⁰³ The benefits of this trade (and in order to ensure its development) stimulated Ndongo to start its own expansionist projects in its neighbouring regions. Thanks to the direct access to European products rather than being supplied via Kongo, Ndongo no longer felt the need to remain under the latter's tributary sphere. This independence would ensure the intensification of trade with the Portuguese, who were searching for other commercial partners due to the aforementioned supply problems in Kongo. Some early historians of Africa, like Ralph Delgado and Alfredo Felner, report a military conflict between the *Ngola* and the *Manikongo* somewhere around the 1550s, close to the Dande border, which allegedly ended with the victory of the Mbundu troops, but the existence of such a conflict lacks proper empirical evidence. Nevertheless, by the time Portuguese were officially contacted by the *Ngola* for religious missions in 1557, it was clear that Ndongo no longer fell under Kongo's authority.²⁰⁴ John Thornton believes that, by the time Ngola Kiluanji kia Ndambi was ruling Ndongo, the vast territory between the original centre of Ndongo and Luanda had already been conquered, and that Ndongo was firmly established as an independent realm.²⁰⁵

During this period, the *Ngola* became a very powerful ruler, receiving tributes from multiple chiefs who owed him allegiance. Those tributes were sometimes in the form of commodities and consumer goods, but more often slaves and salt, from the mines

²⁰² Beatrix Heintze, "Written Sources, Oral Traditions and Oral Traditions as Written Sources: The steep and Thorny Way to Early Angolan History", *Paideuma*, n^o 33 (1987) pp. 263-87. See also the recent work of Linda Heywood, *Njinga of Angola. Africa's warrior Queen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 74

²⁰³ "Inquirição sobre o Comércio de S. Tomé com Angola ordenada por D. João III", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 197-205

²⁰⁴ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 188

²⁰⁵ Thornton, "Early Kongo-Portuguese" p. 193

in the Kisama region. The local *sobas* answered his call when battle approached. The *Ngolas* were able to gather massive armies in a relative short amount of time during their wars with the Portuguese, something that surprised and terrified the European eye-witnesses of the time.²⁰⁶ The trade in slaves with the Portuguese developed steadily halfway through the first half of the sixteenth century, especially after the *Jaga* invasions in Kongo, also stimulating and developing the supra-regional markets that passed through Kabasa, one of the royal residences of the *Ngola*.

The first official interaction of the Mbundu with the Portuguese came as early as 1518, due to the (clandestinely) established contact by the merchants from São Tomé. The discovery of the “Regno d’Amgola” inspired great excitement at Court, as King Manuel I (1495-1521) hoped to find an equally valuable commercial ally and religious foothold in Africa as the one he did in Kongo.²⁰⁷ However, the Mbundu did not convert to Christianity, perhaps influenced by the interests of the commercial Luso-African communities of São Tomé and Cape Verde, who did not want any official Crown regulations in the region. A first Portuguese embassy was arrested and held hostage until the intervention of the King of Kongo.²⁰⁸ A new mission was requested by Ndongo around the 1550s. Following the economic development of the alliance with São Tomé, Ndongo asked for an embassy of the Portuguese Crown, and a priest in the mission. This official embassy sent by the Portuguese was headed by Paulo Dias de Novais, the grandson of Bartolomeu Dias, and the future founder of Luanda. It was composed of mostly Jesuits and missionaries, among them the Jesuit Baltasar de Castro and priest Gouveia, and it did not include any significant military personnel. The embassy, after lingering in São Tomé, and passing through Kongo (which surprised and displeased the *Manikongo* Bernardo I), arrived in Ndongo in 1558. In the meantime, the Monarch who had established official relations with the Portuguese and requested the embassy, Ngola Inene (c. 1515-1556), had already passed away. His successor, Ndambi aNgola (1556-1562), although receptive to conversion according to the Portuguese sources, died soon after. Ndambi aNgola’s successor, Ngola Kiluanje kia Ndambi (c. 1565-1575), “a giant (...) feared by his subjects”, did not share his predecessors’ interests. The first embassy led by Dias de

²⁰⁶ “Alvará proibindo o comércio para África” (13-3-1582), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV pp. 339-340

²⁰⁷ “Regimento de D. Manuel a Manuel Pacheco e Baltasar de Castro” (16-2-1520), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. I pp. 431-2

²⁰⁸ Amaral, *Reino do Congo*, pp. 75-82

Novais ended up as a failure.²⁰⁹ The new *Ngola*, had an interest in extending the commercial partnership with Portuguese merchants through the slave trade, but had no interest in the religious aspect of those contacts, counselled (and influenced) most likely by the Luso-African community already established in Ndongo, and under his patronage.

Private Portuguese merchants, many of them New Christians, developed extensive commercial activity with Ndongo during this period, although it is uncertain if they provided any assistance in the wars against Kongo. Often, Portuguese officials also found the patronage of African rulers like the *Manikongo* or *Ngola* more beneficial and profitable than any position they could hold in Portugal or in an European administration. As such, they would often become counsellors and advisors in West Central Africa, conspiring against the interests of the Portuguese Crown, and undermining its initiatives in those territories.²¹⁰ One of them, Francisco Barbuda d'Aguiar, appears to have cautioned the *Ngola* to be wary of the conquering projects and slaving ambitions of the Portuguese official embassies. He insulted and challenged Pedro da Fonseca, the official representative of the Governor Dias de Novais. Pedro da Fonseca reports that Aguiar insulted the Portuguese King in front of multiple witnesses, and refused to recognise any ruler other than the "King of Angola". Fonseca lectured Aguiar that "these were the words of no Christian", before proceeding to arrest him. The 'betrayal' of Barbuda d'Aguiar, according to Pedro da Fonseca, was owed to the fact that he received "*rendas*" (grants and privileges) from the *Ngola*, a practice that was apparently widespread in the Portuguese colonial community which was sponsored by the *Ngola*. This practice enabled the *Ngola* to gather and ensure the services and loyalty of many merchants in Ndongo against official Portuguese decrees. The experience and knowledge of those merchants regarding Portuguese affairs and strategies were highly beneficial for Ndongo. These men served as valuable advisors to the *Ngola* in his dealings with the Portuguese, making the official contacts and efforts by the Crown that much more difficult to establish (and exploit). Ndongo was not only aware of Portuguese intentions, but he was also influenced by the merchants' fear of competition from Lisbon.²¹¹

The *Manikongo* was suspicious of the Portuguese embassies as well. As previously mentioned, Kongo did not want Portuguese trading south of the Congo River

²⁰⁹ "Carta do irmão António Mendes ao Padre Geral", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 509-511

²¹⁰ "Apontamentos", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 465-467

²¹¹ "Auto do capitão Pero da Fonseca" (18-4-1579), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 308-9

outside its sphere of influence. The abuses perpetrated by the merchants outside the control of the Crown, who insisted on trading with Ndongo, were harmful for Kongo's authority in the region, especially at a time when Ndongo was gradually challenging Kongo's authority and no longer under the latter's official vassalage. The fact that Novais' embassy first passed through Kongo alerted Bernardo I to the true intentions of the Portuguese regarding their commercial strategy in Ndongo, generating a clever reaction on his part.²¹² Despite his alliance with the Portuguese, the *Manikongo* Bernardo I warned the *Ngola*, his former vassal and enemy, to "take care of his land" because the Portuguese would come "in search of silver and gold and the King of Portugal would conquer his domains". Bernardo's letter cannot be dissociated from his own political and commercial strategies, as the priest António Mendes explains, since the *Manikongo* "could not stand that we went to Angola, because [he thinks that] only he should be allowed to send gifts of products that come from Portugal to Angola".²¹³ At the same time, it displays the *Manikongo*'s own strategies regarding the inter-regional trade circuits and the control he had over the markets in the West Central African region. He wished for the situation to remain unchanged and under the authority of Kongo, preventing the trade between Ndongo and the Portuguese. Although officially an ally, Portugal could not trade with the neighbouring rivals of Kongo. The products obtained through the slave trade were vital for Kongo's own political and diplomatic strategies in West Africa, and for their relationship with neighbouring forces.

After the warnings of the private merchants who had won his favour, together with the 'warnings' of the *Manikongo*, *Ngola kia Ndambi* decided to hold some of the Portuguese representatives' hostage in Ndongo, including Paulo Dias de Novais and the priest Baltasar de Castro. Dias de Novais would only be able to leave Ndongo five years later, in 1565, after promising military support for Ndongo's expansion. He returned to Portugal with knowledge of the region and in search of financial support to conduct a "campaign against a rebel" and profit from the riches he "knew" to exist in the Kingdom of Angola.²¹⁴ The refusal of Ndongo to convert to Christianity gave the Crown, perhaps pressured by the Jesuits whose missionaries had been insulted by the multiple setbacks suffered in Kongo and Ndongo, an excuse for the 'conquest' and the 'colonisation' of Angola. Supported by the Kingdom of Kongo, in return for assistance against the *Jaga*,

²¹² "Apontamentos", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II p. 465

²¹³ "António Mendes ao padre Geral" Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II pp. 495-502

²¹⁴ Amaral, *O consulado*, p. 208-10

the Crown granted a charter to Paulo Dias de Novais to conquer the Kingdom of Angola, and to establish a captaincy there. By the time Paulo Dias de Novais arrived to establish the colony of Luanda, Ndongo had already overtaken Kongo as the main commercial partner of the Portuguese in the slave trade.

III – The Iberian Turn: Occupation and Territorialisation in Angola

The first Portuguese reports regarding the shores of Angola in the sixteenth century describe the existence of a small, yet pristine natural harbour, the bay and the small island of Luanda. It was visited by merchants and informal agents seeking alternative slave routes, who wanted to circumvent the increasing taxation in the regulated ports of Africa, and uncover new sources of trade and revenue. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the bay and port of Luanda were already referred to as the “most important frontier of slavery”, and the heart of the Atlantic slave economy. Angola is a unique case in the Iberian Atlantic. The transformations in the bay and the surroundings of Luanda since its foundation in 1575, and during its subsequent integration into the imperial sphere of the Spanish Monarchy, included a multi-stage and unique process of Iberian occupation and territorialisation in West Africa. The transformations were accompanied (and supported) by the development of vast and complex mercantile networks in multiple areas around the Atlantic, with a strong emphasis on Africa’s shores, where the presence of African intermediaries was essential for the conducting of the trade.

The establishment of an early privately-funded captaincy, aimed at settlement and exploring the territory’s resources and other economic activities, was soon followed by a formal conquest targeting the territory’s mineral resources, and by the creation of a colonial government commercially oriented. The acquisition of slaves eventually motivated a violent policy of relentless warfare, expanding slave capture circuits towards Angola’s inner regions, encouraged by local ambitions, but even more by economic interests across the Atlantic. All of those transformations in Luanda took place during the first few years of the integration of the Portuguese empire into the Habsburg imperial sphere, and characterised the Iberian imperial policy in this territory. The stages of the Portuguese presence in Angola were unlike any of the previous settlements and experiences on the West African Coast. Its subsequent expansion resulted from a composite and heterogeneous relationship between the different African societies, European agents, and above all, commercial exchanges. All revolved around the purchase

and sale of slaves, an economic activity that linked not only the coast, but also the Central African highlands to the Atlantic space.²¹⁵

The events taking place on the West Coast of Africa in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century are fundamental for understanding the growth and expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the seventeenth century, not only due to the increasing rates of captives being transported, but also due to the administrative, military, and most of all, financial apparatus that accompanied its evolution and consequent expansion. This chapter explores the historical processes that led to the foundation and settlement of Luanda, as well as the different policies implemented by the Spanish Monarchy in the territory. The Crown experimented with exploitative and commercial models, seeking to maximise the Royal revenue in this fringe of the empire, and to make Angola's administration self-sufficient, mostly through the duties over the slave trade. Those experiences were a prelude to the conquest of Ndongo, a turning point in the history of Africa and the slave trade. It brought this distant periphery of the empire under the broader imperial and economic policy of the Spanish Habsburg Monarchy. The conquest of Ndongo is still marginalised in many histories on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as well as in the imperial and financial narratives of the Spanish Monarchy. As will be shown, the conquest of Ndongo greatly transformed the Ibero-Atlantic slave trade during the first half of the seventeenth century, which reached a volume of captives during this period that would not be matched until the eighteenth century.²¹⁶

3.1 The Foundation of Luanda by Novais: Dawn and Failure of the Captaincy (1575-1589)

Paulo Dias de Novais was the man in charge of establishing a Portuguese position in West Africa. Leader of the previous Portuguese expedition to Ndongo in 1560, Novais was amongst the most knowledgeable officials regarding the geography and political landscape of West Central Africa. After his release from Ndongo's captivity, he returned to Portugal, and immediately began to gather political support and capital to finance an

²¹⁵ Isabel Castro Henriques, *A Rota dos escravos. Angola e a rede do comércio negreiro* (Lisbon: Cegia, 1996) pp. 86-127

²¹⁶ Alex Borucki, David Eltis, David Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 120, issue 2, 1 April 2015 pp. 433-461

expedition to Angola. In 1571, he received a charter from the Crown to establish a hereditary captaincy in a similar fashion to the settlement patterns that were already used in Brazil with the system of the *capitanias*. The site chosen for a new centre of operations in West Africa was the island of Luanda in the mouth of the Kwanza, “the best natural harbour in Atlantic Africa”. The location offered great conditions for mercantile activities, not only for Atlantic navigation, but also due to its access to the Kwanza River, which was navigable for the Portuguese ships, providing access to a wider range of slave markets in the West African hinterland.²¹⁷ The Portuguese settlement at the bay of Luanda was therefore officially established with the arrival of Paulo Dias de Novais in February of 1575, confirming his appointment as “Captain” and “Governor” of the newly founded settlement, four years after the official Decree by King Sebastião I.²¹⁸

However, Portuguese presence at the bay of Luanda preceded the “official”, founding of the settlement by Novais. As discussed before, private Portuguese initiatives were already taking place on the Angolan shores. Informal agents, mostly from São Tomé, had engaged in cross-cultural trade with the people of Angola since the first half of the sixteenth century. A clandestine trading centre was established on Ndongo’s shores to facilitate commercial exchanges, as the private businesses were conducted outside the Portuguese Crown’s jurisdiction, and against the will of the rulers of Kongo. The Luso-African population that resided in the Kingdom of Kongo at the time, had also fled from its capital (Mbanza Kongo) during the *Jaga* invasions, but continued to concentrate their investments in Africa and the slave trade. After abandoning Kongo, they redirected their business southward. When Novais disembarked in Angola in February 1575, it was with little surprise that he found that “on this island [already] lived forty rich men who had come from the Kingdom of Kongo because of the *Jagas*”. In the bay of Luanda, there were also anchored seven other merchant ships “from S. Thomé that had come to acquire slaves”.

To fulfil his mission of creating a Portuguese foothold in Africa, the Governor was accompanied by a military force of 700 men. Dias de Novais’ mission would also count on the logistical and military support of Kongo, partly due to the concessions made by the *Manikongo* to repay the aid provided by the Portuguese Crown in the fight against

²¹⁷ John Thornton, “The Portuguese in Africa”, in Francisco Bethencourt, Diogo Ramada Curto (eds.) *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion 1400-1800*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 150-2

²¹⁸ Amaral, *O Consulado*, p. 49

the *Jagas*.²¹⁹ The ruler Nimi a Lukeni lua Mvemba, Álvaro I of Kongo (1568-87), offered his support to the Portuguese enterprise, in order to rebuild and regain some of Kongo's control and authority over the region, opposing his former vassals in Ndongo.²²⁰ The collaboration of a local native African power was a fundamental requirement for any Portuguese attempt to establish a permanent foothold in Africa, one that was envisioned by king Sebastião I before authorising Novais' venture. Securing Kongo's military support for the Angola enterprise would, at the very least, assure that the new Portuguese settlement could safely establish a foothold during the first stage of their establishment, and later conduct their territorial incursions and fulfil the instructions of the Crown.

Novais' charter and instructions to establish a captaincy in Luanda were exceedingly similar to the colonising model used by the Portuguese on the Atlantic islands and the Brazilian donatary captaincies (*capitanias donatárias*). However, unlike the previous experiences in the Atlantic area, Angola's colonisation was aimed at neither developing a market-oriented agriculture, nor establishing a new settlement from scratch. The soil surrounding Luanda was not suitable for the practice of agriculture, making the colony unfit for the development of any plantation economy based on sugarcane like São Tomé and Madeira. The agricultural production was hardly sufficient to ensure the basic needs of its colonial population, let alone sustain an export-oriented economy/commodity. At the same time, unlike the deserted Atlantic islands, Angola's coast and its hinterland were already inhabited by local Mbundu people. Due to those limitations, Novais' charter had two special clauses that made his captaincy unique in the Portuguese Atlantic. The first clause stated that the captaincy should be divided in two different areas. The first area, between the Dande and the Kwanza rivers in the North, where the majority of the territories that constituted Ndongo were located, would be administered by Novais during his lifetime, and return to the Crown's administration afterwards. The second area, located to the south of the Kwanza, would be completely inalienable, irrevocable hereditary for Novais and his offspring. The second clause, and the most noteworthy in Novais' charter, contained Royal instructions for the military conquest of the African region, the first time that such a decree was issued since the beginning of the Portuguese overseas ventures. The orders of King Sebastião I for Novais to "conquer and subjugate the Kingdom of Angola" signalled a change in strategy of the

²¹⁹ "História da Residência dos padres da companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao Reino, e conquista" (1-5-1594), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 546-581 [554, 564]

²²⁰ John Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa 1500-1800* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 101

Portuguese regarding their settlement patterns and diplomacy with the African authorities.²²¹

The decision to conquer the region known as ‘Angola’ should be integrated in the remaining political and economic framework of the Atlantic in order to understand this change in Portuguese policy in Africa. Dias de Novais’ charter was given in 1571, but financial problems delayed the journey to Luanda until late 1574. Novais only arrived in the territory in early 1575. By this time, an Atlantic economy had already taken root and the slave trade was showing significant transformations, mostly propelled by the private initiative of the merchants based in São Tomé and Cape Verde. The increasing influx of slaves obtained at the markets in Upper Guinea and Kongo were already transforming the sugar industry in Brazil. The years 1570-1585 witnessed the highest annual growth rate for the production of Brazilian sugar. The massive investments and steady development of its sugar mills in the second half of the sixteenth century meant that the total annual production had now surpassed the production of the Atlantic islands of Madeira and São Tomé for the first time. The Brazilian mills produced around 350,000 *arrobas* annually, compared to the 40,000 and 20,000 *arrobas* of Madeira and São Tomé respectively.²²² This growth required a constant and steady number of slave imports in turn.

The cheaper markets found, first in Kongo, and then in Ndongo, greatly contributed to the increasing interconnection between both sides of the Atlantic, and offered an alternative route to the Guinean trade. The quests for mineral resources, which began in East Africa and Mozambique led by Francisco Barreto and Vasco Fernandes Homem, also fanned rumours of the existence of mineral resources in West Africa in the region of Cambambe.²²³ The Jesuits also influenced the decision to wage war in the African territory after their failed embassies. They were one of the most vocal groups concerning the need to subjugate the rulers of Ndongo by force, under the pretext of their rejection of Christianity, to avenge the abuses and mistreatments suffered by the priest Francisco de Gouveia in that territory, who had been held hostage in Ndongo together with Novais during the 1560s.²²⁴ King Sebastião I (1557-1578) was a minor at the time

²²¹ “Carta da doação a Paulo Dias de Novais” (19-9-1571), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, p. 36-51

²²² One arroba amounted to 14.5 kg or 32 lbs. Stuart Schwartz, “The Economy of the Portuguese Empire”, Bethencourt, Curto, *Oceanic Expansion*, pp. 19-48 [25]; Frederic Mauro, *Le Portugal et l’Atlantique au XVIIe siècle 1570-1670* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E 1960) pp. 182-200

²²³ Thornton, “The Portuguese in Africa”, Bethencourt, Curto, *Oceanic Expansion*, pp. 138-159

²²⁴ “Carta do Padre Francisco de Gouveia ao Padre Diogo de Mirão” (1-11-1564), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 527-30; “Estado religioso e político de Angola” (1588), *Ibidem*, vol. III p. 375

with dreams of military glory, who would later conduct a major expedition in North Africa with crusading aspirations. The King's desire for conquests coupled with Novais' belief in the mineral resources of Angola, as well as the latter's resentment towards Ndongo, all played their part in this new project and strategy of the Crown.²²⁵

Novais was made responsible for financing his own venture and in charge of establishing a functioning administration in Luanda, attracting a population of settlers, exploring the territory, ascertaining the productivity of the land, and building military outposts (called *presídios*, small forts), a town hall, and a Church in Luanda. In return, Dias Novais received the military and juridical status of Governor in addition to his duties as the Captain of Angola. He was responsible for enforcing his own fiscal policy, collecting taxes for the Crown, as well as having the juridical and military authority over the entire settlement. This way, the Crown profited from this colony and its future conquests without any risk or expenses, since Novais carried the enterprise all by himself, which would consequently leave him with a huge debt.²²⁶ At the same time, the Crown reserved monopoly rights over the most profitable economic products/taxable economic activities of that territory. In this case, that came to the collection of the royal duties over slave exports, in addition to any mineral resources that Novais might find. There was also a monopoly on ivory, which could be negotiated separately from the slave contributions, but was often included in the colonial contracts in later years after a parallel negotiation.²²⁷

In return, the Crown compensated Novais, or at least lowered the costs of his project by granting him extensive economic privileges in order for the Governor to have the means to attract settlers, pay for his soldiers, organise a functioning administration, and ensure a successful foothold in Angola. To pay for his soldiers and officials, Novais was allowed to allocate and donate some of his lands in Angola, charge fees over colonial commodities, administer the local taxes, and receive one-third of the Church's tithes. However, the most important economic source for Novais was his right to one-third of the profits from the customs and royal duties on the slaves leaving the port of Luanda. This privilege was granted to Novais to support his financial investment in the colonisation of Angola. The collection of the slave duties were exclusive rights of the

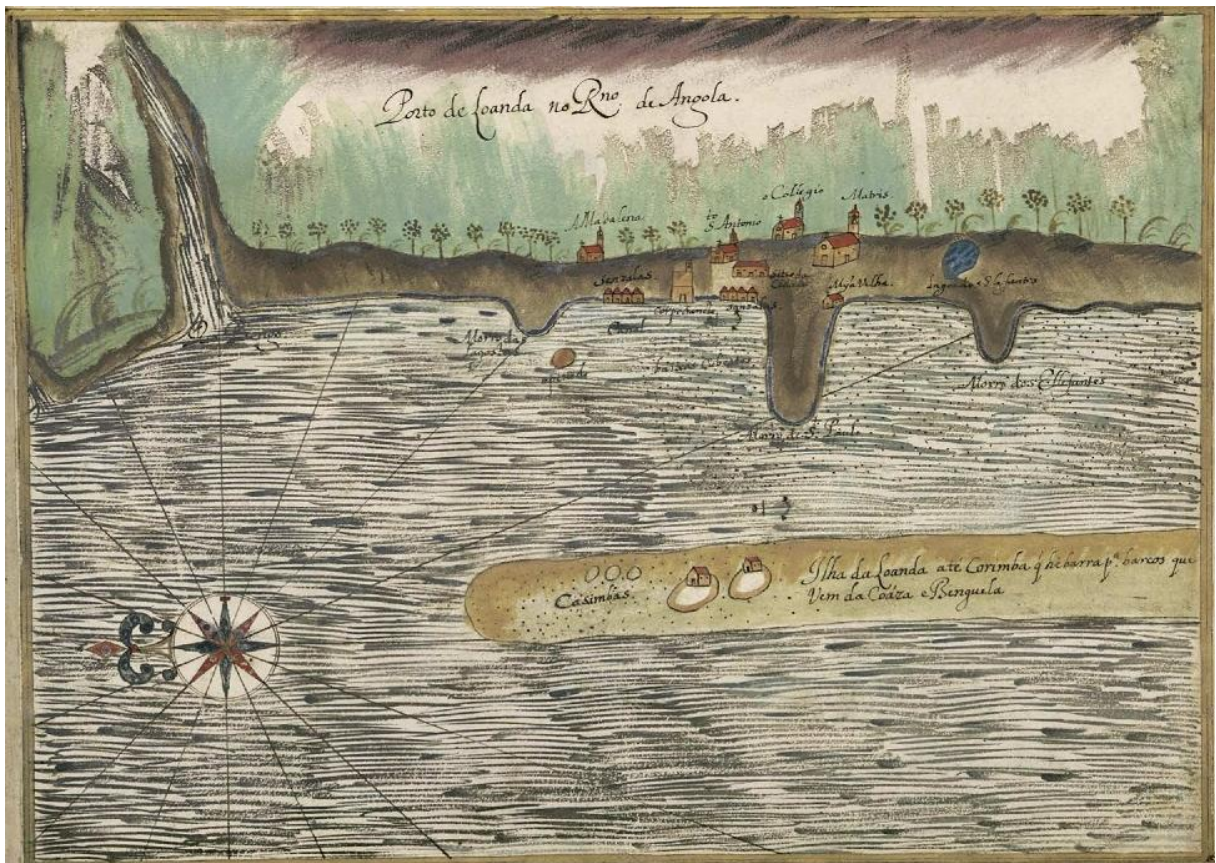
²²⁵ "Cartas de Paulo Dias de Novais a seu pai" (11-10-1575, 2-1-1584, 31-1-1584), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 285-303; 416-424; 425-430

²²⁶ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 249-50

²²⁷ AHU, *Consulta de Partes*, cod. 36, f. 140

holders of the colonial contracts of the African regions, in this case São Tomé. The Crown funnelled some of its revenues from the monopoly contract of São Tomé to Novais' enterprise, in order to safeguard the Portuguese position in Angola.²²⁸ Novais therefore received the rights to explore the land, and to enforce his authority over its government, administration, and jurisdiction, but not the property and ownership of the land itself.

Figure 2 - Illustration of the Port and Bay of Luanda (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Century)



Source: Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS/7121, *Atlas de las costas y los puertos de las posesiones portuguesas en América y África*, fl. 33

Despite the conquering and military nature of his mission, Novais' first years in Angola avoided major conflicts. He engaged in diplomatic relations with Ndongo instead, carefully working with the *Ngola* to establish a peaceful commercial environment, so that the Portuguese could safely conduct their business ventures at the inner slave fairs of Ndongo. Novais attitude during the first years of the establishment in Angola was perhaps driven by his need to cement his foothold in Luanda first, and build a proper stronghold in the port. Dias de Novais even offered his support and troops to the *Ngola* to help him

²²⁸ Ilídio do Amaral, *O consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais. Angola no último quartel do século XVI e primeiro do século XVII* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação científica e tropical, 2000), pp. 49-72; 216-8

fight against *sobas* who were rebelling against his authority and dissenting from Ndongo. The priests who accompanied Novais wrote that, in 1575, there was apparently “so much peace with the King of Angola that the Portuguese walk very safely in his Kingdom” with Novais “helping [the Ngola] in his wars”, and even sending one permanent Portuguese representative, Captain Pedro da Fonseca, to Kabasa.²²⁹

It is unclear if Novais’ strategy in Luanda was intended to remain strictly commercial, or if he was simply biding his time until he could gather the force and the necessary resources for an offensive. Dias de Novais encountered countless financial struggles, as he constantly had to fight the claims of the different holders of the colonial contract of São Tomé to ensure that he would keep the rights to one-third of the slave contributions. Only this revenue was able to ensure that Novais could pay his creditors in Portugal, and continue financing his enterprise.²³⁰ At the same time, Novais was knowledgeable about the landscape of power in the region after his long captivity in Ndongo, and he knew the dimensions of the forces of the *Ngola*. Tropical diseases, the search for mineral resources, and the fact that he was surrounded by numerous local war chiefs and rulers (*sobas*) loyal to Ndongo effectively prevented any sort of immediate military operation in the territory. Novais therefore dedicated his efforts to the economic opportunities of the region rather than its conquest. The Portuguese position in Luanda was very tenuous on its inception, and heavily reliant on the goodwill of the *Ngola*. As such, Novais had to present his mission to the African ruler as a ‘mercenary company’ that provided some political and economic advantages to Ndongo, as well as military help against the rebel *sobas*, as to avoid repercussions or the immediate retaliation of the Mbundu.²³¹

However, the early cooperation between Dias de Novais’ forces and Ndongo appears to have been doomed from the start. The different factions of merchants of Luanda and São Tomé constantly quarrelled with each other and attempted to influence and sway the African authorities against their commercial rivals, creating tension between the Portuguese in Luanda and the *Ngola* and his vassals. Novais attempted to attract those

²²⁹ “Residência dos padres”, Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 557-8

²³⁰ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 248-9

²³¹ John Thornton, “Firearms, Diplomacy and Conquest in Angola: Cooperation and Alliance in West Central Africa, 1491-1671”, in Wayne Lee (ed.), *Empires and indigenes. Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion and Warfare in the Early Modern World* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) pp. 167-192

Luso-African agents and their networks to Luanda with trading privileges, so he could later control them. When negotiations fell through, Novais attempted to prohibit all their economic activities in the area under his jurisdiction. The presence of a new authority in the region, besides his attempts to control the previously unsupervised commercial activities, infuriated the local Luso-African community.²³² Novais was also pressured for a stricter and more effective evangelisation in the territory by one of his most active benefactors, the Jesuits. The early settlement in Luanda also coincided with the death of Ngola kia Ndambi, with whom Novais had previously negotiated peace. The election of a new *Ngola*, Njinga Ngola Kilombo kia Kasenda (1575-1592), would require new diplomatic efforts from the Portuguese. This dynastic change signalled a shift in the early relations between the Portuguese and Ndongo.

The new *Ngola* was a descendent of a different and rival lineage of the founders of Ndongo, according to the report of the priest Baltasar Barreira, and was described as a ferocious and violent monarch, feared among his people.²³³ The Luso-African community (mostly New Christians), discontent with the presence of an official Crown foothold in Angola, its taxation, and with the growing influence of the Jesuits in the territory (Novais made hefty concessions to the Society), promptly sought the patronage of Kilombo kia Kasenda, in order to sabotage the Crown's control and the economic policies of Novais' enterprise. One of those men was the previously alluded to Francisco Barbuda d'Aguiar, arrested by the Captain appointed by Novais, Pedro da Fonseca. The same Barbuda had apparently escaped his captivity and offered his services to the new *Ngola*, informing him of the 'secret nature' of Novais' mission, and the Portuguese intentions to occupy and plunder his territory.²³⁴ The remaining adversaries of Novais, fearful of the loss of their commercial privileges, also tipped off the *Ngola* about the purpose of Novais mission and the contents of his charter. The tension between the Portuguese and the Mbundu in the following years escalated into an all-out war when the *Ngola* took preventive action in response to the various rumours regarding Novais' goals and the growing military contingent of the Portuguese in Africa. The men of the *Ngola* launched a surprise attack in 1579 and slaughtered a small Portuguese force (consisting of forty men), who were

²³² "Provisão de D. Álvaro II, Rei do Congo" (7-7-1587), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, p. 344

²³³ "Regimento dos oficiais das fazendas dos defuntos", (1-1-1561), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, p. 227

²³⁴ The "treason" of Aguiar is present in the extensive reports of Pero Rodrigues to the Society of Jesus. Even though he had a clear agenda regarding the need to justify a holy war against Ndongo, his information matches most of the other sources. "Relação", *MMA*, vol. IV, p. 558

trading in Ndongo and helping the Mbundu in their campaigns. The *Ngola* then proceeded to attack Novais' remaining forces. This offensive marked the beginning of the wars between the Portuguese and the Mbundu that would last into the next century.²³⁵

Paulo Dias de Novais was forced to flee with his force composed of "no more than sixty Portuguese and two hundred black Christians", and was under threat of losing the Portuguese foothold on the continent, until Kongo's army intervened to relieve the siege laid by the Mbundu forces.²³⁶ Kongo's intervention and reason to participate in the war against Ndongo was linked to a need to recover its supremacy in the region, more than actually supporting the Portuguese presence. The *Manikongo* took advantage of the Portuguese forces and campaigns to expand his own domains. Novais' contingent was incapable of facing Ndongo's forces by itself. Therefore, the Captain-Governor was forced to work multiple deals with the remaining African chiefs of the territory, and lure to his cause any possible dissident *sobas* of Ndongo who were unhappy with the rule of Njinga Ngola Kilombo kia Kasenda. A very similar strategy had been used by the Spanish in Mexico and Peru. The *soba* Songa Muxima Quitangonge of Kisama was the first among many local powers who would become official African 'vassals' in Angola, and would support the Portuguese army with his forces.²³⁷

The beginning of the wars with Ndongo in 1579-80 was also accompanied by another key global event, the integration of Portugal into the Spanish Monarchy, as well as its overseas empire. A direct result from this change was the integration of other Iberian agents and the injection of new capital into the enterprise. Novais was able to receive reinforcements and loans from the different Crowns: 400 men and weaponry in 1578; 200 soldiers in 1579; 200 soldiers in 1584; 90 soldiers in 1586; a contingent of 150 mercenaries in 1587.²³⁸ In addition to the Portuguese soldiers fighting in Angola, Spanish troops and European mercenaries began to appear in the African campaigns, lured by crusading ideals or hunger for potential riches and adventures similar to the experience of the *conquistadores* in America. The participation of Spanish officials in the conquest of Angola was recorded by contemporary Portuguese sources, Diego Herrera, Juan de Villória, and Jerónimo Castaño, who gained considerable status in Luanda's colonial

²³⁵ "Residência dos padres", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 571-3

²³⁶ "Carta do Padre Frutuoso Ribeiro para o Padre Francisco Martins" (4-3-1580), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, pp. 187-190

²³⁷ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 258-9

²³⁸ "Residência dos padres", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 564-5

society. In 1588, Kongo supplied 4,000 more soldiers to the European contingents operating in Ndongo to help Novais.²³⁹

With the support of the African forces, the small contingent of European troops obtained considerable results. It achieved various victories in the Ilamba, Kisama and Musseke regions, established a base and a fortress in Massangano in 1582, and penetrated more than sixty leagues inland.²⁴⁰ The war of attrition continued for an entire decade. Although the Portuguese claimed important victories over the years, they were incapable of effectively subjugating and conquering Ndongo, even if the *Ngola* himself had lost control over a considerable number of rebellious *sobas* that were progressively siding with the Portuguese.²⁴¹ At the very end of 1589, Luis Serrão, Dias de Novais' second in command, led "the most powerful force that Portugal had assembled in Angola, some 15,000 African archers supported by 128 Portuguese musketeers" to march on the central region of Ndongo, where the royal residence of the *Ngola* was located. Serrão would however suffer a crushing defeat close to the Lukala River in December 1589 (some sources claim early 1590) at the hand of the combined armies of Ndongo and Matamba. After the defeat, the Portuguese army was left in shambles, witnessing a massive desertion of the *sobas* that had accompanied and supported them up to that point.²⁴²

The dynastic change and the rise of the Njinga Ngola, together with the preemptive attack of Ndongo's army, forced Dias de Novais to fight a battle on two fronts: a military one in Africa, and a financial one in Lisbon. The only way to survive the onslaught of the Mbundu armies in Africa was by relying on the assistance of Kongo during a first stage, and later by associating with the many dissidents from the rule of Njinga Ngola Kilombo. Only through these alliances were the Portuguese able to face the military might of Ndongo, even though those efforts did not result in any significant territorial footholds or advances, since the area occupied could hardly be called a conquest or a colony. The alliances with the dissident *sobas* through vassalage agreements were tenuous at best. Multiple *sobas* abandoned the Portuguese after Luis Serrão's defeat, and the lands claimed by the Portuguese were impossible to retain. The Crown's lack of

²³⁹ Claudio de Miralles Imperial y Gomez, *Angola en tiempos de Filipe II y Filipe III. Los memoriales de Diego Herrera y de Jerónimo Castaño* (Madrid: Instituto de estudios Africanos, 1951)

²⁴⁰ John Thornton, "The Art of War in Angola, 1575–1680", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 30, nº 2 (1988), pp. 360–378

²⁴¹ Amaral, *O consulado*, pp. 132-58

²⁴² Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 82-92

interest in this periphery, in combination with the need to channel its resources to more pressing matters and problems of the Monarchy, such as the Dutch Revolt or the assembly of the Spanish armada, left the Portuguese contingent in Angola to its own devices.

On the other hand, Novais' attentions were constantly diverted towards Lisbon. His two main creditors, Rodrigo de Castro and Jorge da Silva, had disappeared in the battle of Ksar-el-Kibir (1578), which was a huge blow to Novais' finances.²⁴³ Moreover, he was constantly forced to wrangle with the contractors of São Tomé about his grant of the one-third of the slave duties, since without this revenue, it would be impossible to keep financing himself and the Angolan enterprise. This income was finally taken from Novais, as part of the conditions of the adjudication of the new contract of São Tomé in 1579, in order to offset the shortage of sugar production on the island.²⁴⁴ Novais could no longer fulfil the Crown's conditions after the loss of his most important source of revenue, becoming increasingly indebted. At some stage, he claimed he had spent "more than 100,000 cruzados" (40,000,000 réis) and had to mortgage "the goods and estate of his father and brothers" in Angola "without having received any benefit" from it.²⁴⁵ The failure to discover any mines in the Angolan territory, discovery of which had been Novais' last hope, left him bankrupt and deeply indebted by the time of his death in 1589, a few months prior to the disastrous battle of Luis Serrão. The Portuguese settlers were left in disarray and with only one small fort in Massangano, which did not even fulfil the infrastructure requirements envisioned in Novais agreement, as well as a narrow strip of land along the Kwanza (besides Luanda), as the only result of a decade of warfare, with no economic dividends to show for their efforts.²⁴⁶

3.2 The Iberian Turn: Governorship, Commerce, and Warfare

The Spanish Monarchy, following the incorporation of Portugal's imperial territory in 1581, and in the wake of the lack of successes booked in West Africa despite a full decade of relentless warfare, decided to employ a different strategy in this territory

²⁴³ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 250

²⁴⁴ "Inquirição sobre o arrendamento de Paulo Dias de Novais" (16-12-1580 a 31-1-1581), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 323-4

²⁴⁵ "Petição de Paulo Dias de Novais" (1588), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 480-484

²⁴⁶ Eunice Jorge da Silva, *A administração de Angola: Século XVII* vol. I (Lisbon: Unpublished dissertation in History, University of Lisbon, 1996) p. 10

after the death of Dias de Novais. King Phillip II revoked the donatary captaincy from his heirs, and incorporated Angola into the Crown's administration, under the pretext that Novais had neither honoured nor fulfilled his duties and obligations as Captain-Governor, also alluding to the massive debt he had contracted with the Crown to finance his enterprise.²⁴⁷ The non-fulfilment of the settlement clauses, the lack of payments regarding the forces sent to Luanda, as well as the considerable loans and credit that Novais had requested from the Portuguese, and later Spanish Kings, provided the juridical basis for the Crown to bring Angola back under its royal administration, according to the Decree of the *Desembargo do Paço* (Royal Supreme Court).²⁴⁸ Notwithstanding the protests of Paulo Dias de Novais' heirs, they lost all rights to Angola. The Crown then proceeded to implement a new system of Governors in Angola, personally appointed by special councils and for short term offices (3 to 6 years), although there were some exceptions. Furthermore, the Crown ordered Domingos de Abreu de Brito, a treasury official in Brazil and also a former *escrivão da feitoria* (clerk of the treasury), to go to Angola to write a concise report on the economic potential of that region and its respective revenues, as well as any other possible resources that could be attained in those lands, which he compiled between 1590 and 1591.²⁴⁹ Abreu's report was highly optimistic about the economic opportunities of the region, placing a great emphasis on the profitability of the slave trade during this early period, and encouraged the Crown to double its efforts in the search for the mineral resources that were "known to exist on this region".²⁵⁰

Despite the multiple problems and conflicts that the Habsburg Monarchy was facing at the end of the sixteenth century, the reports circulating at Court regarding the mineral resources existing in Africa, such as the gold mines in the Monomotapa (current day Zimbabwe) and the silver mines located in Cambambe (strategically backed by samples from America by groups interested in this conquest) at the heart of Ndongo, encouraged Phillip II not to give up on this foothold, and reinforce the efforts of conquest. This decision was also influenced by the growing demand for African slaves in the Americas, and the development of the transatlantic slave circuits after the establishment of direct routes between the Portuguese African outposts and the Spanish Circum-

²⁴⁷ "Consulta da Mesa da Fazenda" (1599), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 613-614

²⁴⁸ "Parecer jurídico de Jorge de Cabedo sobre a doação de Angola a Paulo Dias de Novais (8-1-1590), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III pp. 383-88; 391-6

²⁴⁹ ANTT, *Chancelaria Filipe I*, liv. 18, fls 94-94v

²⁵⁰ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 12-3

Caribbean in the wake of the Union of Crowns. The Union of the Iberian Crowns itself, although it was not the moment that signalled a total breakthrough regarding the cooperation of agents of both Crowns, contributed to the establishment of the Portuguese and Spanish economic systems and financial mechanisms surrounding the trade.²⁵¹ Matching the shift of the Crown's policy in Angola, financial reforms tackling slave activities and trade monopolies were put in place. This period saw the lease of the first monopoly contract of Angola (adjudicated in 1587), followed shortly after by the negotiation of special privileges to transport slaves from Angola to Spanish America in 1589 (similar to the monopoly of Guinea and Cape Verde), and the transition from a system of royal licenses to introduce slaves in America to first slave *asiento* (1595).²⁵²

Beginning of the Governorship

D. Francisco de Almeida was the first Governor officially appointed by King Phillip II, receiving clear instructions to continue the conquest and exploration of the territory in order to discover its mineral resources.²⁵³ Despite the ambitious ideas for a “conquest of Angola” circulating at Court in Madrid, which stressed the need to finance a force of “at least 1,000 soldiers” and 60 knights, including “mamelukes” capable of rallying a force of “1,000 more Africans warriors”, Francisco de Almeida only managed to gather a force of 600 men, paid by his own estate.²⁵⁴ Almeida was to be responsible for not only expanding the military control of the Portuguese over the territory, but also for regaining control of Luanda's administration and ensuring that the *sobas* who remained loyal to the Portuguese would pay their tributes (in slaves and commodities) to the Royal Treasury in Angola. However, his mission would be short-lived.

Dias de Novais, due to his financial problems and the lack of taxable resources in Angola, had paid his soldiers by ‘donating’ small pieces of land and the territories

²⁵¹ David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016) pp. 68-103

²⁵² Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos. Los asientos portugueses* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Americanos, 1977) pp. 24-8

²⁵³ Luciano Cordeiro, “Estabelecimentos e resgates na Costa Ocidental de Africa (1607)”, *Memórias do Ultramar: Viagens, explorações e conquistas dos Portuguezes. Coleccção de documentos* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881) pp. 21-2

²⁵⁴ Claudio de Miralles Imperial y Gomez, *Angola*, pp. 50-1; “Residência dos padres”, Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp 564-5

inhabited by the *sobas* that recognised the authority of the Portuguese. This practice became common occurrence after the death of Jorge da Silva, one of Novais' benefactors in Portugal.²⁵⁵ Since the lands in Angola were not suitable for agricultural activities, and slaves were the main economic force of the region, both as a producer of labour and as a commodity, Novais' donations included the allocation of African chieftains (*sobas*) and their entire *sobados* (territory controlled by the *soba*). This process was similar to the organisation of *encomiendas* and *repartimentos* in America. The subjugated Mbundu were individually administered by a Portuguese Captain, soldier or Jesuit, similar to the Amerindians in Mexico and Peru. A contract of "vassalage" would be established between the different parties. The tributes paid by the *sobas*, which would be in the form of consumer goods and (mostly) slaves, would be delivered to the person in charge of them, i.e., their new 'protector'.

The system was called the "*repartição dos sobas*" (distribution of *sobas*), and the protectors *amos* (masters). While it shared some characteristics with the model of the *encomiendas* used in Spanish America, there were also some key differences. Although the *sobados* of the *amos* could faintly imply land ownership, and be granted a hereditary status, the American *repartimientos* were neither land rights, nor hereditary after the mid-sixteenth century. Jesuits especially, despite the strict prohibition of its Society, regularly used and traded the slaves obtained in the lands that were assigned to them, as they were *amos* as well. The Society of Jesus used and abused slave labour in Angola under the pretext that slaves were the only 'currency' of the territory, and that without them the priests could neither obtain essential commodities nor ensure their livelihood. In 1590, the priests received at least 300 slaves as tribute from their *sobas* which could "be exported to Brazil free of taxes and sold for between 8,000 and 10,000 [*réis*] each".²⁵⁶ This source could be converted into a nominal profit of between 2,400,000 and 3,000,000 *réis* for the Society of Jesus. Due to the Jesuits extensive support of Dias de Novais, the Captain-Governor had incurred a massive debt with the Society, turning them into a very powerful and influential force in Luanda. By the time Governor Almeida arrived in Angola, the Jesuits were *amos* to multiple *sobas* and owned many slaves.

D. Francisco de Almeida, as a new external Crown authority in the territory who was in charge of removing the privileges from Novais' brothers-in-arms and returning

²⁵⁵ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 4

²⁵⁶ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 254-5; 260-4

them to the Crown's jurisdiction and treasury, was unsurprisingly met with a strong resistance by the *amos* in Angola. The Crown, perhaps wary of the growing power of the Jesuits, was adamant about removing those privileges, and Francisco de Almeida's royal instructions caused an open conflict when he attempted to enforce them in Luanda. In order for the colonial project of the Crown to succeed, the Angolan *sobas* had to become official vassals of the Crown, through diplomacy, commerce, or brute force. The conflict between the Governor attempting to impose the Crown's regulations and the local *amos* culminated in a riot in Luanda's streets, and in the consequent imprisonment of Francisco de Almeida by the local elites and the *capitães-mores* who were the masters of *sobas*. The appointed Governor was put in chains and deported to Portugal in 1593, just one year after the beginning of his term. The population appointed its own interim Governor, Jerónimo de Almeida, none other than the brother of Francisco de Almeida. Jerónimo had accompanied his brother to Angola, but unlike his sibling, he was eager to dismiss the Crown's instructions and establish a good partnership with the powerful Luanda elites in order to profit from it. Jerónimo de Almeida's first act after the imprisonment of his brother was to overturn the King's Decree regarding the termination of the system of *amos*.²⁵⁷

Upon receiving the news of the uprising, the Crown immediately appointed João Furtado de Mendonça as Governor and sent him to Angola to restore order. Conscious of the experience of the previous Governor, and with the discovery of the silver mines still on the horizon, Phillip II attempted to amend the relationship between the royal government and the *sambas* (veteran conquerors), and to join their efforts to conquer the Cambambe's silver mines. Furtado de Mendonça was still to put an end to the private ownership of *sobas*, but he was instructed to gradually reduce the power and privileges of those men first, and make some concessions along the way, such as allowing the current *amos* to persist, but removing their hereditary status, much like the Spanish had done in Peru years earlier.²⁵⁸ However, the Crown still displayed its discontent with this system. Jerónimo de Almeida was never forgiven for siding with the *amos* and 'usurping' the government from his brother, and he was refused the reward of any honours or payments for his services in Angola upon his return to Portugal.²⁵⁹ On the other hand, Francisco de

²⁵⁷ "Provisão de D. Jerónimo de Almeida" (10-6-1593), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III p. 466

²⁵⁸ The name *sambas* come the African word of "elephant", since they devastate every landscape they walk through. Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 24

²⁵⁹ Delgado, *Historia de Angola*, vol. I, p 379

Almeida was rehabilitated as one of the first members of the *Conselho da Índia*, inaugurated in 1604, owing his nomination to the experience in the overseas government.²⁶⁰

After receiving news of the imminent arrival of the new Governor Furtado de Mendonça in 1594 by a *navio de aviso*, D. Jerónimo de Almeida still attempted to gain some of the Crown's favour, engaging in an offensive to retake some of the former Portuguese positions in Angola's hinterland. He concentrated his military activities on the Kisama region in order to conquer and secure its salt mines for the Crown. However, the troops led by Baltazar de Almeida, his right-hand Captain, were wiped out by the forces of a *soba* called Cafuche Cambare, one of the most powerful warlords in the Kisama region, losing Almeida two of his main Captains in the battle, and countless other men.²⁶¹ The first Governors of Angola did not have much more success than Novais. They experienced not only struggles with the African authorities, but also with tropical diseases, "which would suddenly change the military landscape by decimating the number of soldiers overnight".²⁶² Between 1575 and 1594, more than 3,400 Portuguese soldiers arrived in Angola, of whom more than 3,180 died, a death rate of over 90 per cent, attesting to the harsh tropical environment and precarious military position.²⁶³ All the progress and advances achieved during Novais' lifetime had been lost following the disasters of Luis Serrão's and Baltazar de Almeida's battles. After fifteen years of relentless warfare, the Portuguese forces were constrained to the bay of Luanda and the fort of Massangano.

João Furtado de Mendonça was the Governor chosen to restore order in Luanda (1594-1601), and he was determined to change the Portuguese deadlock in Angola. Mendonça employed a very different strategy from his predecessors regarding warfare. Rather than venturing inland into the African jungle in the Ilamba region, his strategy consisted of controlling the Bengo River and the Icolo province much closer to the bay of Luanda, instead. The new Governor also founded a *presídio* (fort) much closer to the ocean, in Muxima, in order to ensure the proper supply of its defences. Mendonça's plan

²⁶⁰ Archivo General de Simancas (henceforth AGS), *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib. 1491, f. 64v.

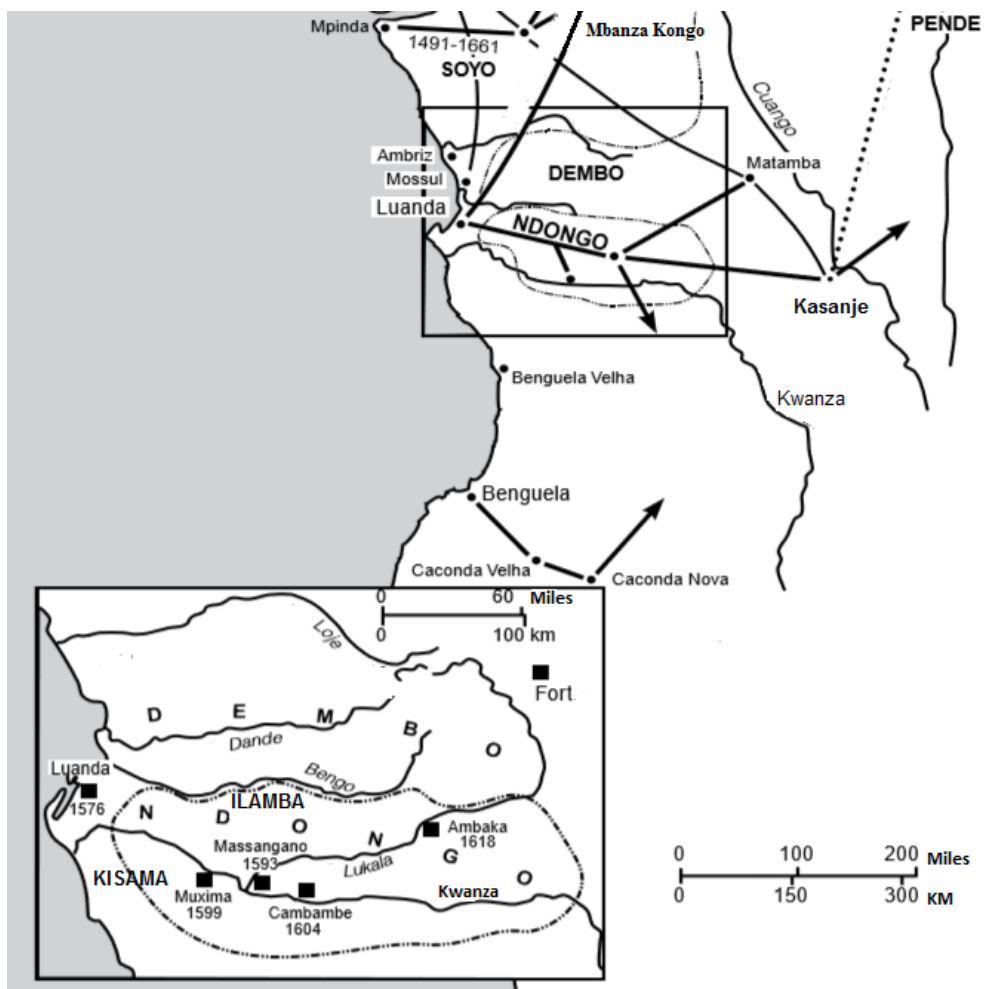
²⁶¹ "Residencia dos padres", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 576-8

²⁶² Delgado, *História de Angola*, vol. I, p.362

²⁶³ José Antonio Martínez Torres, "Politics and colonial discourse in the Spanish empire: The African Atlantic Possessions, 1575-1630", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, 51 (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2014) pp. 113-148 [126]

would ensure the protection of the port, and consolidate the Portuguese presence in the immediate territory next to mouth of the Kwanza River, rather than spreading it thin along its course. This would also allow the Portuguese to concentrate on the navigation of the Kwanza and the Lukala, and allow access to a wider range of African slaving routes and inner fairs. The change of strategy is a reflection of the growing Portuguese knowledge and perception of the Angolan territory, which was supported in turn by the multiple *sobas*, who had sided with the Portuguese in the meantime.

Figure 3 - Portuguese Positions and Campaigns in West Africa (XVI-XVII Centuries)



Source: Adapted from Jan Vansina, "The Kingdom of Kongo and its neighbours", B. A. Ogot (ed.), *General History of Africa. Vol. V - Africa from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century* (Paris: Heineman, Unesco, 1992) pp. 546-587 [560]

However, the campaigns against the *sobas* along the Bengo River had a negative side effect for Portuguese diplomacy: the deterioration of relations with the Kingdom of

Kongo. The *sobas* of this bordering region, due to the peripheral position between Ndongo and the Kingdom of Kongo, changed their allegiances between the *Ngola* and the *Manikongo* on a regular basis as best suited their interests. Though the aim was to hinder Ndongo's military force by attacking his loyal *sobas* in this region, Mendonça's forces also attacked and enslaved Kongolese vassals and forced them under Portuguese rule. The *Manikongo* Nimi a Nkanga (Álvaro II, 1587-1614) was in the process of consolidating his power in this region following the previous collapse in the 1570s. He was infuriated when news arrived of the Portuguese waging war in his territory, subjugating his vassals, and enslaving his people. As a result, the relationship between the Portuguese and the Kingdom of Kongo would seriously deteriorate in the following years, with countless abuses recorded by both parties, until the tension escalated into full-blown hostilities in the seventeenth century.²⁶⁴ During this time, the Portuguese Governors began to assemble the different *sobados* of the region under Luanda's sphere of influence by offering them military protection and economic partnerships, by taking advantage of their internal conflicts, or by subduing them through brute force. Through this strategy, the Portuguese government in Luanda was able to secure a relative form of 'indirect' rule in West Africa, which was rooted in a system of 'vassalage', while simultaneously establishing trade relations with Ndongo's neighbouring regions, Benguela and Matamba.²⁶⁵

The campaigns of Furtado de Mendonça, despite damaging the relationship with Kongo in the long run, generated a considerable number of war captives who could be sold into slavery. This increase in the number of slaves available for sale (and tax) translated in a growing relevance and value of the colonial contracts leased out by the Crown to private entrepreneurs regarding the monopolies of the trade on the West African coast. The influx of African slaves coming from Angola was additionally accompanied by the expansion and spread of Iberian commercial networks across the Atlantic, following the advent of the Union of the Iberian Crowns. The considerable increase in the supply of slaves coming from West Africa – and specially Angola – in turn encouraged the development of the Habsburg Monarchy's own financial mechanisms to properly regulate, tax, and profit from this economic activity. Those changes heralded the beginning of a new era for the transatlantic slave trade with the issue of the first slave

²⁶⁴ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 90-1

²⁶⁵ Beatrix Heintze, "Luso-African feudalism in Angola? The vassal treaties of the 16th to the 18th century", *Sep. Revista portuguesa de História*, v. 18 (1980) pp. 111-31

asiento in 1595, the same year that Mendonça's campaigns began to show its results, which was closely followed by various players in the main political and economic centres of the empire.

Conquest, Slaves, and Commerce

In order to ensure the preservation and development of this new prosperous branch of the slave trade, a certain level of stability in the region was necessary. As a result, the Governors of Angola were now instructed by the King to maintain the commercial improvement of the region, rather than seeking a military subjugation of Ndongo. The Portuguese were first to establish a firm control over the region surrounding Luanda, and secure the local commercial routes leading to the supply areas in Angola's hinterland where the main slave fairs were located. The policy of local alliances safeguarded the Portuguese position in Luanda, enabling the extension of their own slaving activities and capture areas towards the Angolan hinterland, following the first years of military setbacks and economic disappointment. It also created an auspicious environment for the development of the commercial relations between the Portuguese Captains and the local African authorities and commercial elites, securing the Luanda merchants regular access to the region's slave circuits through the use of local African intermediaries.²⁶⁶

The employment of different strategies regarding early slaving and military activities in Angola, alternating between policies of relentless warfare and local politico-economic alliances, was a reflection of conflicting interests stemming from the empire's decision centres. Powerful political and economic actors close to the Court, with a voice in the Kingdom's councils and institutions, frequently interfered in the discussions regarding the future of Angola. Those men had, more often than not, an active interest and share in the slave trade themselves. Jerónimo Castaño, a former Captain of Angola and companion of Novais, submitted a memorandum to the Crown in 1599 reporting the interference of political figures with the conquest of Angola, driven by their commercial interests in the slave trade.²⁶⁷ The discussions in the Crown's councils regarding the future

²⁶⁶ Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) pp. 189-190; José Carlos Venâncio, *A Economia de Luanda e hinterland no século XVIII: um estudo de etnologia histórica* (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1996)

²⁶⁷ Imperial y Gomez, *Angola*, pp. 69-74

of the Angolan enterprise witnessed constant meddling and interference by multiple groups involved in slave trafficking and other Africa's trades, who were attempting to sway its course. Jerónimo Castaño goes as far as reporting an apparent 'conspiracy' by one of those groups, in which he includes the holders of the monopoly of São Tomé (*contratadores*), who were allegedly attempting to sabotage the Crown's project in Angola. The conquest of Angola greatly interfered with the *contratadores*' business and limited their privileges and profits in that region. According to Castaño, the commercial elites of São Tomé were secretly helping the *Manikongo* disrupt the Portuguese mission in Angola in order to halt the Crowns' advances in West Africa, and hinder the Portuguese enterprise in Luanda. The interests of the slave merchants of São Tomé were represented in discussions at Court by António Moniz da Fonseca, the secretary of the Council of Portugal in Madrid. He was the brother of Manuel da Fonseca, who was a shareholder in the slave monopoly of São Tomé, and therefore sought to keep his privileges with regard to the trade on the Angola coast. The interference of the private agents of São Tomé with the establishment of a colonial government in Angola would only come to an end when Rodrigo Vázquez, president of the Council of Castile, ordered the recommencement of the conquest in 1600, following the verdict of the Portuguese institutions signed by Pedro de Barbosa.²⁶⁸

The multiple discussions at Court about the future of the conquest of Angola, more than stemming from a conflict between different councils or jurisdictions of different Crowns, were owed to the private interests of different groups and families vying for their own share in the slave trade. Therefore, it was in the Crown's best interest to attempt to conciliate its own project of the conquest of Angola with the capital and interests of the private agents and merchants interested in the slave trade. Similar to the Fonseca brothers, there were other men with political capital and prestige at Court, and with their own commercial interests in West Africa. Among those figures was João Rodrigues Coutinho. A Portuguese nobleman, businessman, and former Captain at the fort of Elmina, Rodrigues Coutinho was appointed as the successor of Furtado de Mendonça as Governor of Angola in 1600 (1601-1603).²⁶⁹ It was through his influence among the political and economic circles at Court that he achieved the unique feat of combining the role of Governor of Angola with that of the holder of both the colonial contract of Angola and

²⁶⁸ Diogo Ramada Curto, *Cultura Imperial e Projetos coloniais* (Campinas: Unicamp, 2009), pp. 335-6; Amaral, *O Consulado*, p. 187

²⁶⁹ ANTT, *Chancelaria de Filipe I*, Liv. 15, f. 287; *Chancelaria de Filipe II*, Liv. 7, fs. 174-174v

the *asiento de negros*, which he negotiated in 1601.²⁷⁰ Rodrigues Coutinho negotiated special privileges with the king in Madrid before departing to Luanda, where he received his *Regimento* (royal instructions). Coutinho was appointed to his office for nine years, securing the rights over the slave duties in Angola, and the slave licences for the ports in the West Indies. Besides those perks, the Crown also signed a six-year contract with Coutinho for the conquest of the silver mines in Cambambe, and the salt mines in Kisama.²⁷¹

The nomination of João Rodrigues Coutinho for a grand total of nine years (the only Governor to receive such a lengthy term), the concession of extensive economic privileges by the Crown to a royal official, together with the lease of both slave contracts for the transatlantic slave trade and the exploration of Angola's mines are highly illustrative of the Crown's strategy for this territory following the coronation of Phillip III. It was the Crown's aim to continue to finance and explore the two economic projects highlighted in the report of Domingos de Abreu de Brito, the mineral resources and the slave trade.²⁷² By securing those contracts with a wealthy and experienced nobleman, combined with the grant of extensive powers with the title of Governor, the Crown could aspire to fulfil its colonial and economic projects for the territory, i.e., the control of the mineral resources, Luanda's development and growth as an Atlantic outpost, and the control over the *sobados* and their tributes. At the same time, the Crown created a mechanism to answer the demand of its colonies in America, since the administration of the transatlantic slave trade and its revenues had been leased to the same man. It was for this specific reason that the Crown issued special orders to confirm the lease of the *asiento* to Coutinho in a private *junta* with Philip III's closest ministers, instead of through the usual procedure via the *Consejo de Hacienda* (Royal Treasury Council), which the King ordered not to interfere on this matter.²⁷³

These conditions clearly display the investment of the Monarchy in this territory, realised in the establishment of a public-private partnership between the Crown and

²⁷⁰ Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de Mexico* (Mexico City: Fuente Cultural, 1946) pp. 31-3

²⁷¹ "Relação da Costa da Guiné. E das capitánias e povoações portuguesas que nella há com os officios da guerra, justiça e fazenda e outras cousas para noticia das ditas partes" (Anonymous, c.1607), BA, 51-VIII-25, fls. 122-130. Published in Luciano Cordeiro, "Establecimientos e resgates Portuguezes na costa Occidental de Africa", *Memórias do Ultramar* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881)

²⁷² Domingos de Abreu e Brito, *Um inquérito à vida administrativa e económica de Angola e do Brasil*; published by Alfredo Felner (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1931)

²⁷³ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, leg. 409, 11-12 N1

Coutinho for the conquest of Angola and the continuous development of the slave trade. Rodrigues Coutinho was responsible for funding the enterprise – he had to pay his own troops and ships –, as well as the payment of annual lump-sums to the Crown's coffers for the lease of the monopoly contract of Angola's slave rights and the *asiento de negros*. In turn, Coutinho was granted complete control and authority over the enterprise by the Crown, gathering all political and economic powers in Angola, and holding more authority and influence than any of his previous or future peers.

Coutinho's duties and instructions were to find and conquer the silver mines of Cambambe and the salt mines of Kisama, stabilise the surrounding region and secure its slaving routes, subjugate the local *sobas*, and enforce the payment of their tributes. Besides his political responsibilities, Coutinho was encouraged to stimulate the trading of slaves through the expansion of the economic circuits to reach the slave fairs in West Africa's hinterland. At the same time, his campaigns of conquest would result in the acquisition of war captives, for whom he would later receive dividends when collecting the royal duties over the slave exports to Brazil and Spanish America. In order for the Governor to fulfil his instructions and reach the mines in Cambambe or Kisama, a policy of conquest and warfare was necessary. In turn, those wars would directly produce slaves for commerce and taxation. The instructions of the *asiento* had Coutinho deliver between 3,500 and 4,250 slaves to Spanish America on a yearly basis, over whom he owned the customs duties on both sides of the Atlantic (on leaving Luanda and reaching Spanish America).²⁷⁴ The Crown and the Governor's interests were synchronised and converged in perfect harmony in the Angolan enterprise. The fulfilment of the Crown's mission ensured economic dividends for Coutinho's estate, thanks to the collection of revenues of the colonial contract and the *asiento*. At the same time, the Crown would see its imperial project in Africa fulfilled and secure control over the region and its resources. The profits and successes of this partnership were intertwined and mutually beneficial, revealing a perfect balance between the royal and private interests in Angola.

The Crown confirmed Rodrigues Coutinho's office and contracts, fully conscious of the interconnection between warfare in the region (in the search of the mines) and the slave trade (through slave captives). Therefore, Phillip III gave Coutinho all the tools to make the enterprise successful, and make a final push for the control of Kisama's and

²⁷⁴ Germán Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio Negro en América Latina (1595-1640)* (Lima: Editorial Universitaria, 2005) pp. 80-1

Cambambe's mines, while satisfying the interests of the economic groups operating around the Atlantic, and increasing the value of future contributions from the monopolies of the slave trade, from which it could collect an additional source of revenue.²⁷⁵ As for Coutinho's private interests, even if he failed in his mission to find mines, he could still profit from the enterprise and supply the growing demand of Spanish America's ports by maintaining a permanent state of warfare and capturing slaves to flood the port of Luanda. As long as Coutinho kept fulfilling his duties as *asientista* to the Court (fixed payments and an annual supply of slaves), the Angolan experience could be lucrative on the basis of the slave trade alone. The profits of his enterprise were so obvious that his brother Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho kept honouring the slave contracts after Joao Rodrigues' death.²⁷⁶

By the time of Coutinho's arrival, the Portuguese had not a single *soba* under their rule as a result of the efforts of Furtado de Mendonça to annihilate the institution of the *amos*. His vicious campaigns and enslaving tactics removed a great deal of *sobas* and their tributes from the Jesuits' estate. This led to an apparent absence of tributes by the *sobas*, as they were now to deliver their tributes to Angola's Treasury, but the local administration had no way of enforcing their collection. According to Jesuit reports, the peaceful priests were "preferred" as *amos* over other "cruel" officials. Hence, the *sobas* fled their lands in fear, or simply refused to pay tribute to anyone who was not a priest.²⁷⁷ The fact that those reports were produced by the Jesuits, with great stakes in the tributes and privileges that were now being removed and redirected to the Crown's Treasury, raises questions regarding their authenticity, or – at least – hint at the possibility of the information being vastly exaggerated and biased. Even if the conditions and treatment by the Jesuits of the *sobas* while charging their tributes had been less violent than the *capitães-mores* and soldiers of the Crown, at best, they would still refuse to pay them if there was no military threat to enforce said tributes.

Nonetheless, Rodrigues Coutinho immediately began his campaigns in Angola, and launched himself into warfare with the Kisama region to bring the former allied *sobas* back under Portuguese rule. His military offensive resulted, as expected, in a significant increase in the number of war captives arriving at the port of Luanda, who were then dispatched to the Americas. Coutinho was owed the rights over all slave shipments

²⁷⁵ Cordeiro, "Estabelecimentos", p. 22

²⁷⁶ Archivo General de Indias (henceforth AGI), *Contaduria*, 261

²⁷⁷ Padre Fernão Guerreiro, *Relação anual das Coisas que fizeram os Padres da companhia de Jesus nas suas missoes*, vol. 1 (Coimbra, 1939), pp. 395-8

leaving Luanda and reaching Spanish American ports, through the payment of their customs duties and licences. He had also increased the value of slave duties before leaving Lisbon, raising them from 3,000 *réis* to 4,000 *réis* per slave to Brazil, and from 6,000 to 7,000 *réis* to Spanish American ports, securing a much higher profit margin for himself.²⁷⁸

Rodrigues Coutinho assembled the old *sobas* through negotiation, coercion, and subjugation, making some concessions to the powerful Jesuits and old *capitães* along the way to secure their support and the wealth of their estates. Although his *Regimento* (royal instructions) clearly ordered the Governor to abolish the *amos*, Coutinho did not act against them as he had to secure the support of the local elites for his conquest, attesting once again to the great difficulty of the Crown in enforcing its rule in the distant territories of the empire. Nevertheless, Coutinho still partly continued Mendonça's efforts, restricting some of the *amos*' privileges, and removing its hereditary status. Subsequently, Coutinho assembled his army and the Captains present in Luanda and marched towards Cambambe, subjugating one of the most powerful *sobas* of the region called Axila Mbanza, "feared even by the King of Angola" *Ngola* Mbandi Ngola Kiluanji (1592-1617). During his campaign, Rodrigues Coutinho would fall victim to a tropical fever, and die just days later without achieving his goal of seizing Angola's "silver mountain". It would only be through his second in-command Manuel Cerveira Pereira, who took charge of the campaign and later the interim government (1603-7) that the Portuguese would finally reach the site of Cambambe in 1604, and build a fort on that location.²⁷⁹

To the great disappointment of the Crown, who had such high expectations of the existence of vast mineral resources in Angola, there were no silver mines to be found in Cambambe. The mineral samples from the territory that had been fed to the Court proved to be either forgeries, or delivered from a different source (Peru). The numerous reports about the existence of extensive silver deposits protected by the tenacious *Ngola* were shown to be nothing more than fables. All that the Portuguese could find in this territory were small quantities of lead. In the face of such a setback, the Crown was forced to re-adapt its strategy, and halt its conquering ambitions. It would be the 'by-product' of those wars, the acquisition and exportation of slaves, combined with the development of the financial slave mechanisms on the Peninsula that would command the Iberian agents'

²⁷⁸ *Razões do réu Duarte Dias Henriques, contratador, que foi do trato de Angola* (Lisbon: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1619) Paragraph 25, 26

²⁷⁹ António de Oliveria Cadornega, *História Geral*, vol. I, pp. 67-70; Linda Heywood, John Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp 91-2

interests in the region during the following years. The Angola slave trade would emerge as the main economic activity in the Atlantic at the dawn of the seventeenth century.²⁸⁰ After the death of João Rodrigues Coutinho, his brother Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho stepped up to administer the slave *asiento* under virtually the same conditions.²⁸¹ The Crown accepted his proposal, since the King was interested in keeping the lump sums and taxes over the colonial contracts and slave activities for his coffers. At the same time, the councils of the Kingdom and Indies were flooded with requests regarding the ever growing demand for slaves from Spanish American ports, and they had to keep the quotas of the *asiento*. This demand from the economies of Brazil and Spanish America had been greatly boosted with the establishment of the Portuguese and Spanish financial mechanisms for the provision of slaves for this region in 1595, and by the fact that both contracts had been given to a single person for the first time. Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho would ensure the same conditions as his brother had, and the slave trade continued to fuel the expansion of the Atlantic trade.²⁸²

Over the years, warfare had provided the Portuguese with the opportunity to capture slaves. Yet, the number of slaves obtained via direct Portuguese military action was relatively small compared to the ones obtained through commercial alliances with the local Africans chieftains, either through direct purchase or taxation. Phillip III ordered the cessation of all military activities after the disappointment of Cambambe, instructing his Governors to focus on trade, taxation, and negotiating peace with the local *sobas* instead. Warfare would only be allowed when waged defensively.²⁸³ The purchase and sale of African slaves emerged as the main economic activity of the territory following the first conquest period. It was also the only profitable revenue which provided dividends for the Royal Treasury in Angola. Following the failure of the mining project, the Crown meant to use the payments from the colonial slave monopolies to finance the administrative and military apparatus of Angola. The policy of military aggression was to be substituted entirely by diplomatic and commercial relations, since warfare was detrimental to the establishment of long lasting commercial routes and stable diplomatic

²⁸⁰ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 279

²⁸¹ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829, "Ratificaciones del Asiento de Gonçalo Vaz Coutino en lo tocante a la renta de las licencias de los negros esclavos que se navegan a las Indias" (2-05-1605)

²⁸² Frederik Bowser, *The African slave in colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Pres, 1974) pp. 32-3

²⁸³ Biblioteca da Ajuda de Lisboa (henceforth BAL), 51-VIII-48, fl. 44-44v, "Carta do rei ao vice-rei" (16-08-1605)

relations with the African authorities. It was vital to consolidate the position and credibility of the Portuguese, severely damaged after twenty five years of war. The colonial government entered a new phase. Its strategy had to be readjusted from a 'conquest' to a commercial enterprise, as its main purpose had become to make Luanda a self-sufficient colony.²⁸⁴

Angola's administration had to reinforce the local alliances and guarantee an indirect government over Angola through the usage of allied *sobas*. The local conflicts in the regions close to Cambambe were frequent enough for the Portuguese not to need to fight to obtain a steady influx of slaves, as the African fairs were often full of captives from the neighbouring areas as a result of the wars among local political authorities. The project of establishing an effective administrative control in Angola based on a real conquest and the enforcement of vassalage connections was abandoned in favour of a different colonial project. This project focused on the commercial opportunities of the region, mostly the slave trade, grounded in the establishment of peaceful alliances and agreements with local *sobas*. Many of these changes were present in the royal instructions to Governor Pereira Forjaz in 1607.²⁸⁵ This strategy gave the Portuguese access to Africa's inner slave markets. Furthermore, it allowed the State to invest less in the colony: it was no longer required to sponsor military activities, as those could be paid for by increasing the taxation rates for the merchants trading in Angola.²⁸⁶

The Portuguese had to reinforce their positions in their three *presídios* (forts) established along the Kwanza, in Muxima, Massangano, and Cambambe, begin to expand their commercial influence towards the interior, and secure the allegiance of the neighboring *sobas*. Political alliances were struck with multiple African authorities to ensure the conservation and safety of those areas, and safeguard the respective "tributes" in slaves from their *sobas* as well. The capture of slaves through direct military action gradually transitioned into a steady and stable acquisition through commercial cooperation with African chieftains, although both strategies could be employed at the same time. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the overall acquisition of slaves by the Portuguese through trade exceeded that through warfare or taxation. The

²⁸⁴ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 267-8

²⁸⁵ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 4 "Regimento concedido por D. Filipe II ao capitao-mor e Governador do reino de Angola D. Manuel Pereira Forjaz" (26-03-1607)

²⁸⁶ Thornton, "firearms", p. 179

slaves obtained by any means other than trade represented “a relatively small part of the total of slaves exported” from Angola.²⁸⁷

Notwithstanding the attacks against its peripheral chieftains, the Portuguese led no attack against the heart of Ndongo (in Kabasa) after their defeat in the Kisama region in 1594-95, and peace was eventually achieved in 1599. The truce brought a relative security to the immediate surroundings of Luanda. It encouraged the circulation between the inner markets of Kongo and Ndongo, as well as the development of its slave circuits, linking Angola’s hinterland to the Portuguese coastal settlement. African captives gradually came to be acquired from West Africa’s inner regions, and brought to the Portuguese via Ndongo’s trading routes. At the same time, slave merchants extended beyond the immediate sphere of Luanda’s circuits, and began to regularly travel between the markets of Ndongo and Kongo, linking them back to the coast, case of the New Christian merchant Pedro das Neves.²⁸⁸ A community of Luso-African traders began to take form and to operate outside of Angola’s official supervision at the markets bordering Kongo and Ndongo, as well as in Mbumbi, Cafecuta, Pinganá, and even Massangano. Their presence helped establish an interconnection between the Ndongo and Kongo markets and the Portuguese settlements on the coast for the provision of slaves.²⁸⁹ Those commercial exchanges would tightly link Ndongo to the transatlantic slave trade at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The benefits obtained by West African societies with this new branch of the slave trade impacted the political and cultural landscapes of their respective regions, and was especially beneficial local African ruling class and elites. The slave trade with the Portuguese would gradually empower Ndongo as a political entity facing Kongo, and eventually Matamba and Kasanze as well.²⁹⁰

In spite of the wars and conflicts with the Portuguese over the course of thirty years, Ndongo remained independent and in full control of its sovereignty at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Following the internal strife in Kongo in the aftermath of the *Jaga* invasions, Ndongo gradually rose to the position of main commercial partner of the Portuguese in the slave trade, notwithstanding the conflict between the two parties. Navigation along the Kwanza River allowed the Portuguese to reach distant inner slave markets that intertwined with Ndongo’s own *pumbos* and slave fairs. Those positions

²⁸⁷ Caldeira, “Angola and the seventeenth-century Atlantic”, p. 114

²⁸⁸ ANTT, *Inquisição de Lisboa*, “Visitações a Angola”, l. 877 ff. 37-37v

²⁸⁹ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 96

²⁹⁰ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 277-80

along the river were fundamental for the establishment of routes that connected the coast with the markets deep in the Central African hinterland, giving the Portuguese access to slaves coming from regions as far as Matamba. Based on one of the factory books of Luanda, Domingos de Abreu de Brito reported that, between the establishment of Novais and the end of his mission to Angola (1575-1591), a total of 52,053 slaves had legally left the port of Luanda.²⁹¹ Two decades later, Angolan slavers exported somewhere between 10,000 and 13,000 slaves on a yearly basis, which attests to the evolution and dimension of the Angola axis in the Atlantic economy at the onset of the seventeenth century.²⁹²

The Governors of Angola soon began to embody this new ‘commercial shift’. Manuel Cerveira Pereira, the trusted Captain of João Rodrigues Coutinho and the conqueror of Cambambe, followed his predecessor’s ventures into the slave trade by associating with Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho, who held the *asiento* after the death of his brother. Cerveira Pereira negotiated the concession of multiple privileges in exchange for the collection of the duties over the slaves leaving Luanda, heading to the ports of Spanish America with the agents of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho.²⁹³ When a new Governor – D. Manuel Pereira Forjaz (1607-1611) – arrived, he arrested Cerveira Pereira following the various complaints from the local administration and displeased merchants, and shipped him to the Kingdom to stand trial for his illegal activities.²⁹⁴ Manuel Pereira Forjaz arrived to Luanda with orders to finally put an end to the donations of *sobas* and cut their links with the existing *amos*. Forjaz was also tasked with fortifying the Portuguese presence and influence in the region through the establishment of multiple vassalage contracts with the *sobas* that had previously been under the control of those *amos*.²⁹⁵ Through these vassalage links, the *sobas* were bound to help the official Portuguese colonial administration by providing military assistance, allowing trade on their lands, and paying an annual tribute (in commodities and slaves) – known as the *baculamento* – to the Royal Treasury, as well as converting to Christianity.²⁹⁶ In turn, the *sobas* became official vassals of the Iberian monarch. Pereira Forjaz was also ordered to build a fort close to the territory of the Dembo, so that the Portuguese could claim its salt mines and guarantee

²⁹¹ Abreu de Brito, *Inquérito*, pp. 30-1

²⁹² Heintze, *Angola*, p. 279

²⁹³ Alfredo de Albuquerque Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos sobre a ocupação e início do estabelecimento dos portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela extraídos de documentos históricos* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1933) pp. 421-6

²⁹⁴ Gastão Sousa Dias, *Manuel Cerveira Pereira* (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1940)

²⁹⁵ AHU, *Angola*, caixa 1, doc. 4

²⁹⁶ The *baculamentos* are discussed in a later section

that source of revenue, as well as construct public buildings such as a town hall, a royal factory, and a prison. Forjaz *regimento*, unlikely his predecessors was more focused towards a non-belligerent attitude on the region, in order to exploit the commercial resources of Angola, and generate revenues to build Luanda's colonial infrastructure through taxation and the return of old tributes to the Crown's estate.²⁹⁷

Despite the previously negotiated vassalage links, the *sobas* that were subjugated by Coutinho and Cerveira Pereira saw a perfect opportunity to escape the control and abuses of the *amos* in the new tentative policies of the understaffed and underfunded administration of Angola. The lack of human and financial means of Luanda's administration to enforce their obedience and the payment of the vassalage tributes (as opposed to the individual efforts of the Captains, often leading slave armies who could threaten their *sobado*), in combination with the royal instructions to avoid war, led to most of the previous vassals in Angola becoming completely free of Portuguese rule during Forjaz's time. With the elimination of the *amos*, the *sobas'* tributes should in theory have reverted to the Exchequer in Angola. However, the Treasury of Luanda lost considerable revenue as its official administration no longer had the military means to force the *sobas* to pay the tributes.²⁹⁸ The vassalage contracts became virtually unenforceable. The lack of their tributes and provision of slaves brought obvious losses to Angola's Treasury and resulted in a reduced number of slaves, further exacerbating the liquidity problem of the colony. The Crown attempted to offset some of the losses of the revenues linked to the capture of slaves that were traditionally acquired through the war via the implementation of multiple agricultural projects and a reinforced taxation system over the slaves leaving the port of Luanda.²⁹⁹

Diplomacy and peace, opposed to extortion and warfare, translated in losses for the Treasury in Angola. Those losses would be partly offset, at least according to the Crown's plan, by the reinforced and supervised taxation over the growing and now stable slave trade conducted by the merchants in Luanda. Phillip III's instructions to Forjaz to enforce peace and forbid the presence of Portuguese men at the inner slave fairs created a less dangerous environment along the Kwanza, and a favourable one for the development of slave networks towards the interior. This peace would ensure that

²⁹⁷ BAL, 51-VII-19, fls. 123-123v.

²⁹⁸ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 280-1

²⁹⁹ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 110-12

Luanda's slave merchants could now expand their operations inland, and increase the rates of the slaves brought to the coast through commerce, often secured by African middlemen or their African slaves (*pumbeiros*).³⁰⁰ Their transactions would subsequently be registered in Luanda, where the Crown employed officials and external overseers to supervise their commercial activities, thus padding the tax returns for Angola's Treasury. However, this strategy also resulted in very little revenue and next to no profit for the Crown's coffers. The local authorities were neither very receptive to new taxes nor zealous in the control of irregularities, since they were often involved in the slave trade as well, and the Crown's taxation would cut into their earnings. During his term, Governor Manuel Pereira Forjaz developed his own commercial venture with multiple agents spread out throughout the Atlantic. He easily eluded any fiscal control, while trading slaves, ivory, and wines, managing to amass a considerable fortune in the process.³⁰¹ Through the misappropriation of the slave duties alone, Forjaz had apparently earned "more than 60,000 cruzados in the West Indies and Brazil", that is, over 24,000,000 réis, thirty times his official salary in Angola!³⁰² The external overseers would fail to punish abuses, as they had very little means to enforce the Crown's authority, as the cases related to fraud were drawn-out and very slow to conclude.³⁰³ One of the first Royal overseers and investigators sent to Angola in 1605, Filipe de Butaca, was arrested by the then Governor Cerveira Pereira when he attempted to conduct a *residencia* (inquiry) on the Governor's procedure. When his scribe Jerónimo Pereira attempted to defend the overseer, he was reportedly beaten by the Governor's cousin and thrown into a cell.³⁰⁴

The prohibition to acquire slaves through the practice of warfare forced Angola-based Captains, soldiers, and merchants to expand their trading and capture networks deep into West African's *pumbos* (local slave fairs). The commercial operations in those fairs were a problem for the Portuguese fiscal authorities. The complicated system of barter exchanges and transactions that occurred in the African *pumbos* caused substantial losses for the Royal Treasury. Taxation and official regulation were impossible to enforce, as prices were unstable, and the exchange rate and market value of Portuguese

³⁰⁰ Linda Heywood, *Njinga of Angola. Africa's Warrior Queen* (London: Harvard University Press, 2017) p. 41; "Memoriais de Pedro Sardinha ao Conselho de Estado" (c.1612), Brásio, MMA, vol. 6, pp. 103-108

³⁰¹ For the commercial partnership between Manuel Pereira Forjaz and João de Argomedo, see chapter 6

³⁰² Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, doc. 30 (pp. 431-2)

³⁰³ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, Doc. 13

³⁰⁴ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib. 1476, fls. 176-7 "Consulta sobre o procedimento de Manuel Cerveira Pereira que injustamente prendeu o bacharel Phelipe de Butaca" (27-07-1606)

products in the African hinterland was only known to seasoned and veteran merchants. Commercial transactions were conducted through barter exchanges. The commodities were evaluated by the Europeans according to their value in *réis*, whereas the African slave dealers at the inner fairs sought an equivalence in the goods exchanged in those transactions, regardless of their monetary cost for the Europeans.³⁰⁵ The slave trade in the barter economies of Africa offered Portuguese merchants countless ways to deceive the royal officials and avoid taxation in the port of Luanda, not only due to the discrepancies in the evaluation of their respective commodities, but mostly due to the absence of a fixed and official currency.³⁰⁶ For instance, a piece of African cloth (called *pano*) had a nominal value of 100 *réis*, yet in Angola's *pumbos*, its market value doubled (200 *réis*). This allowed experienced merchants to purchase slaves at half their price through the transaction in *panos* or with less commodities, therefore with less taxation. Since this unit of equivalence was not officially recognised by fiscal authorities, it created great confusion when it came to taxation of barter goods in the port.³⁰⁷ The different rates used in the transactions of the barter economy of Angola, together with the discrepancy of the respective pricings of the various commodities exchanged in Africa, yielded very little revenue for the state, since the merchants had such an easy time avoiding the Crown's taxation, or at least avoiding to pay the full value of their commodities.

The Crown attempted to regulate the currency exchange in Angola. Pereira Forjaz was to ensure that all transactions were to be “dealt and calculated in slaves [one of the units of measure] instead of silver” so that the Treasury of Luanda could avoid further “damages to [the King's] Estate (...) and the lands where those revenues are taken from”. This would ensure that the merchants could not alternate between currencies (the local one in commodities and the official one in *réis*), circumventing taxation while profiting from price differentials. At the same time, Phillip III invested external overseers with powers to enforce the Crown's prerogatives, as well as to collect taxes and debts contracted by the merchants in Luanda. One of those overseers, André Velho da Fonseca, complained about the difficulties of collecting slave revenues and debts because “no silver or gold coins run in this port (...) There is only slaves and *panos* in this land”,

³⁰⁵ Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 191-192

³⁰⁶ For the system of barter exchanges and cross cultural trade see the section on the economy of Angola in Ch. 6

³⁰⁷ Linda Newson, Susie Minch, *From capture to sale. The Portuguese slave trade to Spanish south America in the early seventeenth century* (Boston: Brill, 2007), pp. 37-8

goods that could not be properly dispatched from Luanda's factory to the Kingdom. To dispatch the slaves Angola officials had to pay for their shipments, and levy the costs to the Royal Treasury on the mainland, which was impossible without "great losses due to the costs of their transportation". As for the *panos*, they were worthless outside of Luanda and African's inner markets. Although slaves could always be profitable, their transportation brought considerable costs to the Treasury, not to mention the loss on the ones who would not survive the trip, which would cut the Crown's profits in more than half.³⁰⁸

The attempts of the Crown to encourage the capture of slaves for the Atlantic trade after the collapse of the project of the silver mines, and to use the State's revenues from the taxation over the slave trade to finance the Portuguese enterprise in Angola, were far from successful. The Governors and State officials actively engaged in the slave trade, compromising the Crown's ability to make Angola's Treasury self-sufficient, and forcing the Monarchy to continue to finance this position with the contributions of the lease of the monopoly contracts of Angola. However, the Crown's policies had to assure at the same time that Luanda kept up its supply of slaves to America, which is confirmed in a report sent to Francisco Correia da Silva, the man chosen to succeed Forjaz as Governor of Angola (although he never managed to take up office). The slave trade was an economic activity that was fundamental not only for "these conquests that only sustain themselves by means of this trade" according to the information, but also to the "Indies due to the lack of slaves to work in the gold mines and work on the land" and as a result, their necessity and value "grows each day".³⁰⁹ Despite the losses of the Crown's revenues in this territory, and the lower number of slaves exported due to the absence of tributes and war prisoners, the slave fairs at which the Portuguese merchants purchased slaves, were apparently full. A parallel phenomenon, unrelated to the Portuguese actions in Ndongo, was taking place in West Central Africa, the appearance of the *Imbangala*, whose devastation and pillage in this region flooded the African markets with captives.

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³⁰⁸ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, Doc. 13

³⁰⁹ "Regimento do Governador de Angola", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, pp. 21-40 [39-40]

³¹⁰ Anne Hilton, "The Jaga reconsidered", *Journal of African History*, vol. 22, nº2 (1981), pp. 191-202;

A return to warfare

The absence of mineral resources in the Angolan territory made the preservation and regulation of the established trade circuits and slave fairs the main priority of the Crown.³¹¹ However, in spite of the royal prohibition to wage warfare, Governors and Captains were far from interested in maintaining a peaceful trade. Peace only benefitted merchants participating in long-distance trade in the inner fairs and engaged in cross-cultural trade. To ensure the peaceful trade at their fairs, numerous *sobas* barred ‘white men’ from their fairs. Trade was conducted through intermediaries or *pumbeiros* (slaves who visited the *pumbos*). The Captains and Governors could only act marginally in those markets, and thus employed different strategies for the acquisition of slaves in order to satisfy their interests. Ultimately, they turned to rapine and plunder. The Crown’s project aimed at limiting the ambitions of warmongering Captains. But the absence of tribute, taxable revenues, or of an effective administration capable of enforcing the Crown’s policies, greatly limited the King’s project of peace. Shortly after the arrival of a new Governor or Captain to Luanda, they would gather men and head towards Angola’s interior in search of booty. It became an increasingly common practice for the Governors and Captains of Angola to engage in small raiding expeditions towards the hinterland, in order to capture as many slaves as possible for personal use and gain.³¹² The short term of their formal mandates, usually restricted to three or four years, as well as their small salary and the lack of status of their posts, roused the Governors and Captains to actively organise small incursions, masked as ‘defensive wars’, to extend their influence over the region and acquire free slaves for their estate. The slaves captured would then be sold in Luanda or across the Atlantic to answer the growing demand from the West Indies and Brazil.³¹³

After a century of relations with the West African societies, the Portuguese had adopted a lot of African strategies regarding trade. The capture of slaves through the waging of war was an African practice and integrated in the socio-political structures of African societies, especially the Kingdom of Kongo, with whom the Portuguese

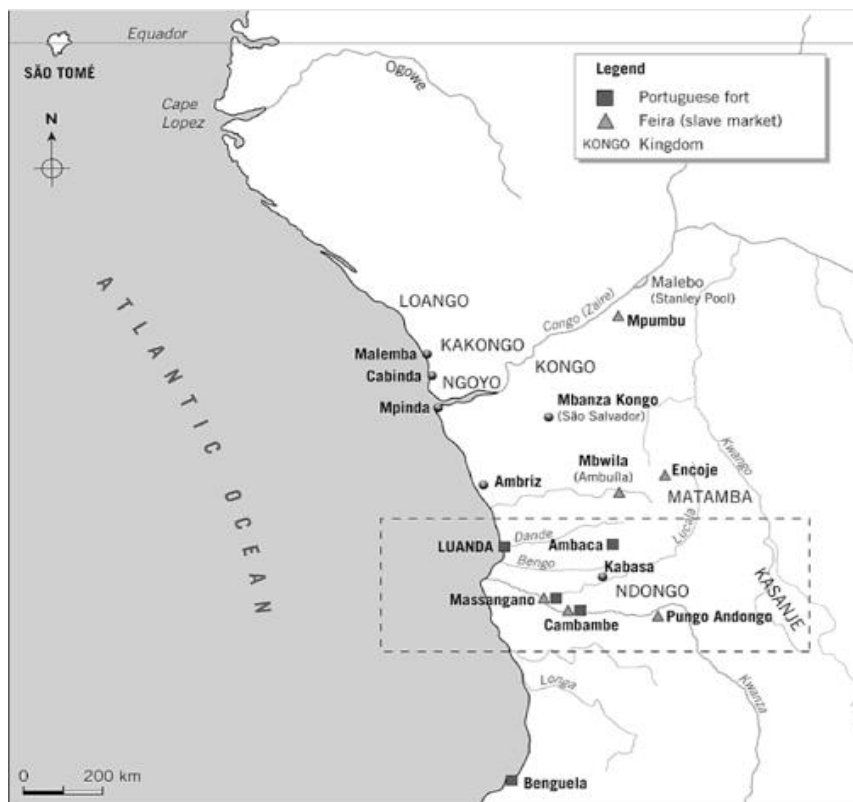
³¹¹ BAL, 51-IX-20 f. 13v.

³¹² BAL, 51-VIII-48, fl. 44-44v.

³¹³ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 280-1

developed an early partnership.³¹⁴ The support provided by the Portuguese during the military campaigns of mainly Mvemba-a-Nzinga (1506-1543, Afonso I) had been rewarded by the *Manikongo* with slaves taken from the conquered people. The Portuguese had witnessed and participated in military conflicts with the sole purpose of capturing slaves ever since the dawn of the sixteenth century, but only sporadically engaged in all out wars in West Africa. Those conflicts were never fought without the help of native slave armies (called *Guerra preta*) and local allegiances.³¹⁵

Figure 4 - Portuguese Fortifications and Slave Fairs in Seventeenth Century Angola.



Source: Arlindo Caldeira, “Angola and the seventeenth-century south Atlantic” in David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange. Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015) p. 107

The Governors had little to lose by directly interfering with the slave trade. Their lower status in comparison with other Portuguese overseas positions, the small wages, and the short term of their office often encouraged Angola-appointed officials to seek

³¹⁴ Isabel Castro Henriques, “A rota dos escravos. Angola e a rede do comércio negreiro (Sécs XV a XIX)” in *A Rota dos escravos: Angola e a rede do comércio negreiro*, eds. João Medina, Isabel Castro Henriques (Lisbon: Cegia, 1996) pp. 90-6

³¹⁵ David Birmingham, *Portugal and Africa* (Lisbon: Documenta histórica, 2003) pp.81-93

alternative forms of revenue, and thus engaged with Angola's most valuable activity, the slave trade. In doing so, they often compromised its sustainability in West Africa, and disrupted the long distance circuits established by local merchants and *pumbeiros*. Most Governors in Angola held little regard for the perseverance of the trade and the maintenance of established slave circuits. Rather, they attended to their private interests, attacking pacified regions and capturing slaves for personal gain, as well as stealing their revenues from the Treasury. Their actions and incursions greatly compromised most of the existing slave fairs, and the interests of the merchant community in Luanda. The peace desired by the Iberian monarchs, as well as the stabilisation of the trade and Angola's Treasury' self-sufficiency, were never achieved. The peace promoted by the Crown did not yield much revenue for the Crown's Treasury or its officials either, and was further aggravated due the financial problems of the port, mostly the lack of a stable currency and a proper maritime customs house, providing the Governors and merchants with an easy way to avoid taxation.

Bento Banha Cardoso was elected as the interim Governor in Angola (1611-15) after the unexpected death of Pereira Forjaz on 15 April 1611. He was one of the first officials to ignore the Crown's instructions, perhaps due to his local election and interim position, and initiated a series of military campaigns aimed at slave capturing that plagued the region. A veteran from the Angolan wars, Banha Cardoso was a soldier whose purpose in Angola had been nothing but conquest from the very beginning. For Banha Cardoso, the need to defend the commercial routes from which the Portuguese acquired slaves in no way interfered with the military subjugation of the dissident *sobas* who had been previously subjugated by Coutinho and Cerveira Pereira. For Bento Banha Cardoso, the *sobas* were enemies that he had himself fought and subjugated before. In his official inquiry after returning to Portugal, Banha Cardoso justified his actions as a "defensive response" to the *soba* Xilonga from Lukala, who had supposedly rebelled against the Portuguese and blocked the commercial routes to the markets in his region and the hinterland. After submitting the *soba*, Cardoso built a fort in Hango (1611), continuing the Portuguese strategy of fortifying positions along the Kwanza so that they could keep the communication and supply lines operational, and marched east of Cambambe into the Hari region.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 51

Bento Banha Cardoso's campaigns heralded the beginning of a new age for the Portuguese military conquest in Angola, heavily influenced by the alliance with and support of the independent African armies that were plundering Benguela, and filling the slave markets in Ndongo with war captives.³¹⁷ The alliance with those groups, the *Imbangala*, gave the Portuguese the tools previously provided by the Kingdom of Kongo – a strong local military ally – to plunge into the military conquest of the Kingdom of Ndongo. The *Imbangala* groups (or *Mbangala*) were mercenary groups, highly militarised and specialised in capturing slaves, which they later sold to the African markets or the Portuguese.³¹⁸ Although the *Imbangala* were often addressed as *Jaga* by the Portuguese sources due to their nomadic behaviour and fierceness, they shared no relation to the *Jaga* who invaded Kongo years before.³¹⁹ A nomad cast of warriors and raiders, the *Imbangala* were described by the sources as violent marauders and cannibals who moved in groups and “hordes”, and were feared across all of West Africa. The *Imbangala* assembled under tribal rituals and performed “barbaric traditions”, such as the common practice of anthropophagy, or kidnapping children from the plundered regions and indoctrinating them with their cultures until they were fully integrated in their societies.³²⁰ A great deal of the information regarding the customs of the *Imbangala* outside of Portuguese and missionary sources, originates in the tale of Andrew Battell, an English sailor captured in Africa, who lived with a *Imbangala* group for almost two years, writing down his adventures upon his return in 1625.³²¹

Composed of multiple independent armies “numbering several thousands” that shared no local allegiances in Africa, the *Imbangala* survived by plundering multiple territories and selling the people of the villages they destroyed as slaves, mostly exchanging them for wines that they used in their rituals.³²² They were highly proficient

³¹⁷ Mariana Candido, *An African slaving port and the Atlantic World. Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press) 2013, pp. 59-61

³¹⁸ Isabel Castro Henriques, *Percursos da Modernidade em Angola. Dinâmicas comerciais e transformações sociais no século XIX* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1977), pp. 153-157; Joseph Miller, “The Imbangala and the Chronology of Early Central Africa,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 13, nº 4 (1972), pp. 549-74

³¹⁹ The origins of the *Imbangala* are still subject to debate. Joseph Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, *Cahiers de Études Africaines*, vol. 13, nº 49 (1973), pp. 121-149; Paulo Jorge de Sousa Pinto, “Em torno de um problema de identidade. Os Jaga na história do Congo e Angola”, *Mare Liberum* 18-19 (1999-2000) pp. 193-246

³²⁰ Miller, *Kings and Kinsmen*, pp. 224-64

³²¹ Andrew Battell, *The Strange adventures of Andrew Battell in Angola and adjoining Lands*, E. G. Ravenstein (Ed.) (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1901)

³²² Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 93-5

at war and capturing slaves. Therefore, they were seen as powerful allies by the Portuguese, despite the multiple complaints of priests and officials in Luanda regarding their barbaric traditions. The Portuguese Governors soon recognised the value of the *Imbangala*, and they persuaded the warmongering groups to join them in an alliance by trading large quantities of alcohol, mostly wines from Madeira and Canary wine, which were not sold on the African markets.³²³ Later, a Brazilian spirit called *Jeribita* was also commonly exchanged for slaves. Avid consumers of palm wine, the *Imbangala* valued the usage (and drinking) of alcohol in multiple rituals of their culture. Due to their nomadic behaviour, they would use up palm trees without care, cutting them down instead of extracting their alcoholised juice by tapping them each year. They destroyed the trees of the regions they passed, and leave a landscape of destruction and desolation, one “of the worst atrocities belligerents could commit” in Africa.³²⁴

The alliance with the *Imbangala* gave Bento Banha Cardoso the tools to unleash a new phase of Portuguese warmongering enterprise in Africa based on the acquisition of slaves through military action, and the subjugation of previous vassals to Portuguese rule. Disrupting the Crown’s orders for peace, Cardoso’s military campaigns were mostly supported by African auxiliaries, and the individual actions of *Imbangala* groups, who later sold slaves to the Portuguese in exchange for European commodities. This alliance would benefit the interests of the old *capitães-mores* and soldiers present in Angola. The Crown’s peaceful project for Angola had prevented them from acquiring slaves at the same rate as before, since they did not benefit from commercial transactions as much as Luanda’s merchant community. The fact that most of the military personal worked outside the circle of Luanda’s merchant networks meant that they had little means to profit from regular commercial exchanges. The veteran Captains would take advantage of the *Imbangala* raids, since it allowed them to be active participants in slave capture wars once again. The devastation caused by the *Imbangala* in the neighbouring regions would leave otherwise well-defended areas in distress, and the annihilation of powerful *sobas* close to the Portuguese forts opened opportunities for plunder by the Portuguese troops. As Angola’s *capitães* lost their status as *amos* and the slaves received as tribute, they needed a new source of slave acquisition outside the commercial sphere. Therefore, they turned to conquest and plunder, once again enriching their estates with captives taken illegally

³²³ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, doc. 67

³²⁴ José Curto, *Enslaving spirits. The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and its Hinterland, c. 1550-1830* (Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 35-6

from their *sobados*, and extorting tributes directly from chiefdoms who were not under the Crown's vassalage.³²⁵ Some of the military personal in Luanda would eventually seek the help, and ally with, its overseeing authorities, supplying them with the slaves illegally acquired in the interior wars, circumventing the fiscal dues over their shipment. Bento Banha Cardoso's alliance with a local African force would once again transform West Africa's slave exports.

The campaigns of Bento Banha Cardoso in Libolo and Dembo brought back to the Crown "more than 80 *sobas*" whose tributes in slaves and opening of territories for commerce once more generated considerable revenue for the Treasury.³²⁶ Not only former *sobas* were subjugated, but newer territories were incorporated in their respective *sobados* and new markets were opened up to the Portuguese as a result of the campaigns of Banha Cardoso. Additionally, the collection of tributes could finally be enforced by Angola's authorities, which would represent new sources of income for the Crown's coffers, at odds with the fiscal evasion surrounding the trade and the lack of revenues from Angola.³²⁷ Perhaps the return of slave tributes (the *baculamentos*) to the Royal Treasury in Angola by the rebel *sobas*, in combination with the effective elimination of the *amos*, and the astonishing success of the Portuguese victories backed by the *Imbangala*, encouraged the Crown to turn a blind eye to the irregularities of their Governor. Despite the reported collection of the *baculamentos*, the Crown would still not see the tributes of the *sobas* enter its Exchequer, as the lax supervision of Luanda's authorities enabled the Governors and Captains to seize those tributes for themselves.³²⁸

Motivated by the successes of Bento Banha Cardoso, King Phillip III appointed Manuel Cerveira Pereira to return to Angola for a second term, after being cleared of all his charges in the Kingdom, and continue Banha Cardoso's campaigns.³²⁹ Manuel Cerveira Pereira would later receive a new mission, the leadership of the Crown's new colonial project in Africa, the conquest of Benguela, located southwards of Angola, and

³²⁵ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 51 "Auto de embargo a Bento Banha Cardoso" (21-08-1615)

³²⁶ "Processo de Justificação dos actos de Bento Banha Cardoso por virtude do sequestro de todos os seus bens, por ter feito despesas sem as justificar", Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, doc. 33 pp. 437-440 [438]

³²⁷ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 51

³²⁸ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 84

³²⁹ BNP, *Coleção Pombalina*, códice 526, f. 294 ss. "Treslado da sentença que absolveu Manoel Cerveira das acusações que lhe fizeram como governador interino de Luanda" (30-03-1609) *Apud* Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos* doc. 25, pp. 421-6

the exploration of its copper mines and the opening up of new slave routes.³³⁰ Cerveira Pereira's experience in the territory and his contacts at the Court made him the perfect choice for leading a new conquering enterprise in Africa. After landing in Luanda, the returning Governor immediately attacked the *soba* Kakulu ka Hango and pillaged the border with Kongo, using the profits of the campaigns to fund the new settlement in Benguela, where he relocated in 1617. However, after two years of unremitting campaigns, Cerveira Pereira failed to create a lucrative colony in Benguela, partly due to his failed negotiations with the nomadic *Imbangala* in that region. The lack of a local African party to guarantee the supply of slaves meant that the colony could not generate any significant revenues. The only viable economic activity developed in early Benguela was ranching, which made the region mostly an exporter of cattle.³³¹ After a streak of unsuccessful expeditions, and following a shortage of supplies in one of his campaigns, Cerveira Pereira was once again victim of a mutiny by his troops, ending up "beaten, gashed" and chained by his own men, surviving the attack only "by some miracle".³³²

The previous policy of enforced peace in Angola decreased the rate of slave exports from the port of Luanda during the first decade of the seventeenth century. The failure to establish a successful self-sufficient administration in Luanda, combined with the lack of revenues generated by the trade due to tax evasion, coincided with a crisis in the administration of the slave *asiento* (as will be demonstrated later on), partially halting the Iberian slave trade. The lack of licence sales during the administration of the *asiento* by the Sevillian-based entourage represented by the treasurer Melchior Maldonado, led to the gradual disinterest of the Crown in this periphery of its empire.³³³ Nonetheless, the captives obtained in the *Imbangala*'s raids and Bento Banha Cardoso's campaigns kept a lively trade towards Brazil, and eventually to Spanish American ports as well, mostly through bilateral voyages between Africa and America under smuggling and contraband initiatives.³³⁴

Looking to change this situation and revitalise the slave exports from Angola, the newly appointed Governor Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos (1617-1621) proposed an

³³⁰ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 31

³³¹ Candido, *An African Slaving Port*, pp. 42-8

³³² AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 110

³³³ Germán Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 93-109

³³⁴ Kara Schultz, "'The Kingdom of Angola is not very far from here': The South Atlantic Slave Port of Buenos Aires, 1585–1640", *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 36 (3) 2015, pp. 424-444

ambitious project to the Crown.³³⁵ Vasconcelos wrote a memorandum to the Crown immediately after his nomination in 1616, with the guidelines to turn Angola into a profitable colony again. Vasconcelos claimed to need “a permanent army (...) of 1,000 soldiers and 200 horses”, as well as one-hundred *quintais* (hundredweight) of musket gunpowder in order to conquer “the vast riches” of Africa, in reference to the fabled gold mines of the Monomotapa region, and the “silver mines of the Kingdom of Angola”. The fact that those mines had proved nothing more than a myth after the conquest of Cambambe in 1604 illustrates the complete ignorance of Vasconcelos regarding the reality of this region prior to his arrival. Less concerned with the economic dividends of Angola, his strategic vision and conquering project aimed at establishing a direct land connection between the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, which would supposedly enable him to “connect Angola with India without going past the Cape of Good Hope (...) connecting all the states of the Portuguese Crown”, linking “India to Angola, Angola to Brazil, and Brazil to the Kingdom.” Among the other revenues that his military project could bring to the Royal Treasury, Vasconcelos apprised the potential gains of the slave trade through the sale of war captives towards the “West Indies”, killing the two birds of supply and demand with one stone. As a reward for his extensive and ambitious project, Mendes de Vasconcelos expected to receive the title of “viceroy of Ethiopia”, and to rule “from Cape of Good Hope to the Red Sea, encompassing Kongo and Angola”.³³⁶

Vasconcelos’ plans were anything but peaceful, despite the royal instructions of the Crown in his *regimento* prohibiting him of waging war in the region. Even though he addressed the problems of the trade and lack of communications of a scattered empire while offering concrete solutions, the final project presented to the Crown was either a product of complete ignorance regarding the reality of West Africa in general (and Angola in particular) in the early seventeenth century, or pure delusion, not to say madness. The request for such a pompous title suggests a certain obliviousness on his part, although it was common practice for the nobility to receive great rewards from the Crown for the services in the different (and distant) territories of the empire. João Rodrigues Coutinho had already carried a Royal Decree equating the services in Angola to the rest of the empire upon his nomination back in 1600, and perhaps Vasconcelos attempted to expand

³³⁵ ANTT, *Chancelaria de Filipe II*, Doações, liv. 36, fl. 115

³³⁶ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 53 “Requerimento de Luís Mendes Vasconcelos” (1616)

this grant in order to attract more people to the conquest.³³⁷ Vasconcelos was an experienced military authority, belonging to the Portuguese nobility, and a member of the Order of Christ, who participated in the expedition to retake the Azores, and accumulated countless services under the Habsburgs in the Low Countries and Italian wars. He was also a former Captain-major of the *armadas* of India.³³⁸ Despite such a long career of service and dedication to the Iberian Kings, he did not receive any kind of significant reward, having been left without any respectable retirement position when he returned from India, as stated in his treatise *Arte militar* (1612), in which he reveals his disappointment with this reality.³³⁹ Despite the Royal Decree already equating the services in Angola to the more ‘prestigious’ territories in North Africa and India, Vasconcelos’ plea for such an illustrious title reveals the complete lack of prestige of a governorship on the periphery of the Portuguese empire, even for the lower ranks of the Portuguese nobility.

Still, the enormity of the request and the necessary investment for the Crown’s coffers to fulfil this project in a distant and not so prestigious territory of the empire, was far too optimistic, and disregarded in the Court. Vasconcelos went through the same steps of all noblemen who arrived in Angola, experiencing first-hand the ‘shock’ of landing in an ‘miserable colony’, poorly managed, with few to no resources to administer, no revenues, and highly unstable due to the minimal control and authority over the neighbouring native forces.³⁴⁰ Forgotten by the Crown in one of its distant peripheries, Vasconcelos soon realised that his demands regarding a title fitting his status, increased financial and military support, and a higher salary would never be heard in the halls of Madrid. With his ambitions disregarded and dreams of glory overlooked by the Crown, combined with the lack of means to exercise his functions, led Vasconcelos to decide to use his authority, military skill and experience, and forge his own fortune through the capture and sale of African slaves, acquired in great numbers due to a large scale military assault on the territories of the Mbundu.

³³⁷ António de Oliveira Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas: 1680* (anotado e corrigido por José Matias Delgado), vol. I, (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1972) pp. 68-9

³³⁸ *Dicionário bibliográfico Português. Estudos de Inocêncio Francisco da Silva aplicáveis a Portugal e ao Brasil. Continuados e ampliados por P.V. Brito Aranha. Revistos por Gomes de Brito e Alvaro Neves*, 1 vol. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional., 1858-1923) p. 276

³³⁹ Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos, *Arte militar dividida em três partes. A primeira ensina a pelejar em campanha aberta, a segunda nos alojamentos, e a terceira nas fortificações* (Alenquer: Vicente Alvarez, 1612)

³⁴⁰ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 289

Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos was no exception to the behaviour exhibited by his predecessors like Coutinho, Forjaz, Banha Cardoso, or Cerveira Pereira. The Governor aimed to make his own fortune through slave ventures like most of his predecessors in of Angola, abusing his powers to raid the neighbouring regions and obtain slaves for himself. However, Vasconcelos military campaigns differed from the ones led by the former Governors. The dimension of his military offensive far outstripped any of the previous punitive raids, to the point that it would completely destroy Ndongo as an independent and sovereign political entity. Upon his arrival, Vasconcelos had criticised the previous Governors of Luanda for using the *Jaga* tribes (who were in reality the *Imbangala*), as “war hounds [to] unjustly take slaves” to them, declaring himself shocked about the alliance with such barbaric people.³⁴¹ However, Mendes de Vasconcelos quickly understood and acknowledged their importance, since his small force had no means to enforce Portuguese authority over the region and the *sobas* subjugated by his predecessors, let alone orchestrate significant military incursions in the hinterland. Only through the aforementioned alliances with local *sobas*, the *Maniknongo*, or through the use of “*bandos Jaga*” were the Portuguese able to face the forces of Ndongo over the years.³⁴² The Portuguese presence on the West Coast of Africa at the time of Vasconcelos’ arrival, almost fifty years after Dias de Novais arrived (1575) with instructions to “conquer and subjugate” the Kingdom of Angola, was limited to the area of Luanda, parts of the Ilamba region and a small line of ‘fortifications’ along the Kwanza river.³⁴³

One year in Angola was sufficient for Vasconcelos to overlook his ethical constraints regarding the alliance with heathen cannibals, and he established an alliance with the *Imbangala*, the same people he insulted, scorned, and condemned just the year before. After forging this alliance, Vasconcelos proceeded to attack the neighbouring Kingdom of Ndongo in 1618. This was a crucial moment, as it overlapped with a political crisis among the Mbundu due to the death of Ngola Kiluanji the year before, presumably assassinated by his own *sobas*.³⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the constant wars between the Portuguese and the rulers of the Mbundu, extensive commercial routes had been established throughout the years, linking Luanda to the inner African slave *pumbos*. Through these inner circuits, a considerable number of goods were exchanged between

³⁴¹ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 84

³⁴² Miller, “Requiem for the Jaga”, pp. 121-149.

³⁴³ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 189

³⁴⁴ “Catálogo dos Governadores”, p. 362

Portuguese merchants and African chieftains, as well as information regarding the rulers, different *sobas*, and politics of the region. The process of succession between the rulers in Ndongo was disputed between the heirs and family of the deceased ruler and confirmed by royal advisers and influent officials, like the *tendala*, the *makutas*, and the *kilunda*, often creating violent conflicts between the factions of the candidates.³⁴⁵ During the four decades preceding, Ndongo had been led by only two yet powerful and authoritarian figures: Njinga Ngola Kilombo kia Kasenda (1575-1592), who humiliated the Portuguese armies of Dias de Novais and Luis Serrão in Lukala; and Mbandi Ngola Kiluanji (1592-1617), who battled the forces of the Portuguese led by Almeida and subjugated countless rebels with considerable success, inspiring fear, respect, and loyalty from his subjects. The military offensive of Vasconcelos strategically took place during a transitory period in Ndongo, when the new ruler Ngola aMbandi was still cementing his authority after eliminating some members of the opposing factions. By the time the invasion took place, the Portuguese were fully aware that the Mbundu people had a new, young and unproven ruler.³⁴⁶ The use of the internal turmoil that came with the dynastic succession, heavily encouraged by the Portuguese, was reminiscent of the Spanish usage of the Tlaxcala against the Aztecs, or the exploitation of the Incan civil war, displaying European forces' need for local alliances and taking advantage of internal strife among the Africans much like they did in America.³⁴⁷

Vasconcelos received notice of the dynastic changes in Ndongo, which was simultaneously plagued by a draught. Taking advantage of the favourable conditions, and confident in his own military expertise on account of years of experience on different battlefields, Vasconcelos began to move his forces.³⁴⁸ Together with his Captain Francisco Antunes da Silva, Vasconcelos provoked one of the most powerful *sobas* of Ndongo, Caita Calabanga (Kaita ka Balanga), declaring him a 'rebel'. The Governor and his Captain were fully aware that in answer to this move, the powerful *soba* would first need to ask for permission to wage war according to the traditions of Ndongo, which the fragile *Ngola* aMbandi would not only allow, but even sponsor, hoping to cement his loyalty and enforce his authority over the dissenting factions. With the full support of the

³⁴⁵ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 217-8

³⁴⁶ António de Oliveira Cadornega, *História das Guerras de Angolanas*, vol. I (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1940-2), p. 31

³⁴⁷ Thornton, *Firearms*, pp. 187-8

³⁴⁸ Miller, *Kings and kinsmen*, p. 200

Imbangala, among them the feared João Kasanje, as well as some of the Mbundu elites who opposed the new ruler, especially a *soba* called Mubanga (a relative of the *Ngola*), Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos moved his forces, but not against the ‘rebel’ *soba* Caita. Instead, he marched against Ngola aMbandi, ransacking his royal residence and town of Kabasa.³⁴⁹ The destruction of Kabasa quickly prompted a state of war, total chaos, lawlessness, and lootings in Ndongo. Slave fairs commonly visited by Portuguese and Luso-African middlemen were abandoned, urban centres were deserted, and multiple previously established routes were destroyed.³⁵⁰ After forty years of conflicts, the forces of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos, with the support of the *Imbangala*, destroyed and ransacked Ndongo, capturing the wives of the *Ngola*, and setting fire to Kabasa, forcing the *Ngola* into exile on the Quindonga islands in the Kwanza River, where he reportedly committed suicide in 1624.

3.3 The Destruction and the Numbers of Ndongo

According to testimonies from Angola, the wars of Vasconcelos (1618-1621) were extremely damaging for the region, leaving the Mbundu territories in huge turmoil and chaos. The state of destruction, in conjunction with the constant pillage, forced the closure of multiple fairs and slave markets, and completely destroyed the slave circuits established by the previous inhabitants of Angola and Luso-African communities. The movement in Angola’s interior of not only merchants but also missionaries and officials, became extremely conditional. Bandits, marauders, and mercenary groups soon multiplied in this region, assaulting and plundering any settlement, group, or slave cargo they came across. The campaigns and actions of Vasconcelos were severely condemned by his contemporaries, including the *Manikongo* Nimi-a-Mpanzu (Álvaro III), who criticised the Governor’s alliance with “barbaric tribes” whose actions in Ndongo were said to be motivated solely by personal interests and greed.³⁵¹

The Bishop of Kongo and Angola, Manuel Baptista Soares (1609-1619), denounced Vasconcelos’ association with the *Imbangala* groups as well, whom he

³⁴⁹ BAL, 51-IX-20 f. 414

³⁵⁰ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, p. 135

³⁵¹ “Carta do Rei do Congo a Paulo V” (25-10-1617), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI pp. 288-291

described as “cruel and scornful people”. In an extensive set of papers, the Bishop complained about the damage the wars caused to the stable provision of slaves for the merchant community in Luanda, and its consequences for the territory. According to Manuel Baptista, even Vasconcelos’ methods were questionable, since he had criticised the use of the *Imbangala* by his predecessors upon his arrival yet “aligning himself with them” afterwards, “bringing them to war, killing, plundering and capturing countless innocents”. The Bishop also condemned the fact that Vasconcelos deceived the authorities of Luanda, “tricking countless inhabitants, soldiers and loyal *sobas* (...), pretending to gather forces to fight Cayta Calabalanga, a *soba* he labelled rebel”, when his true intentions were simply “to go to Kabasa and subjugate the King of Angola”. The carnage and violence of his campaigns reached such a state that countless reports describe rivers running red and full of diseases due to the number of corpses that were thrown into its streams, forcing the closure of the slave fairs and paralyzing the trade in the entire region. In the Bishop’s opinion, the war and devastation was caused “solely to satisfy the ambitions of our Governor”, who kept a great number of the captured slaves to himself.³⁵²

Baltasar Rebelo de Aragão, another long-time resident and Captain in Luanda since the days of Novais, also described the “terrible state” of the Kingdom of Angola during the years of Vasconcelos. In Aragão’s opinion, the “absence of fairs” was owed to the constant wars in the province “with profits for only the Governor and his officials, leaving the inhabitants and merchants with no trade, and his Majesty ill served (...) with nothing to add to his Treasury”.³⁵³ The reports from both officials are highly informative regarding the chaotic state of the territory during the years of the wars with Ndongo, and emphasise the disastrous consequences of this conflict. However, they also reflect the narrative and personal interests of two men representing their respective factions in this region, since they too had their own stake in the slave trade. Their economic ventures were directly harmed by the campaigns of Vasconcelos: therefore, this element cannot be dissociated from their testimonies.³⁵⁴

The military campaigns of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos had devastating consequences, primarily on a demographic scale, but also at the political level in West

³⁵² AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 112

³⁵³ BAL, 51-VIII-25, fls. 42-44v.

³⁵⁴ Miguel Galdes Rodrigues, *Do Reino a Angola. Agentes, arbítrios e negócios na rede familiar de João Salgado de Araújo* (Lisbon: Unpublished M.A. dissertation in History, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, 2012) pp. 66-92

Africa, since they prompted the destruction of Ndongo as an independent entity, and caused the displacement of its royal family into Matamba in the long run.³⁵⁵ Despite destroying the stability of the slave markets and leaving Ndongo in chaos, Vasconcelos managed to greatly profit from this state of generalized warfare, thanks to the numbers of slaves captured as prisoners. The large number of captives taken in the war, and the taxes imposed on the slaves sold, had huge benefits for Vasconcelos and his allies, especially over other agents operating the trade concentrated in Luanda. As a Governor, Vasconcelos was entitled to a “tyrannous tribute” of precedence in the choice of slaves captured, appropriating the slaves owed to the Crown’s tithe, and reserving one slave in every ten for himself. He equally reserved the best slaves for himself before they went to public sale in Luanda’s square: they were handpicked by his *meirinho* (sheriff), followed by his personal shopper, and then by a judicial official (nominated by Vasconcelos) and his personal secretary. This highly limited his competition in their ability to obtain ‘quality slaves’, according to a report from the town hall of Luanda. The Governor also kept the vast majority of the *sobas*’ tributes for himself instead of storing them in the Treasury of Luanda.³⁵⁶

Despite the multiple complaints by different merchants, officials and overseers from Angola regarding the absence of slave fairs, and stable supply and trading circuits, the flow of the trade did not halt during the term of Vasconcelos: quite the opposite. The volume of the Iberian slave trade during the years of Vasconcelos reached historic numbers, represented by a wave of Angola slaves flooding Spanish American ports during this period. The very large number of captives generated by the Ndongo wars matched the huge demand by the merchants established not only in Brazil but also in the Caribbean ports. This period witnessed the most flourishing years of the trade, both legal and illegal. Alonso de Sandoval, a Spanish missionary in America, reported in his *De instauranda Aethiopum Salute* (1627), the arrival of 12 to 14 slave ships annually to the port of Cartagena de Indias alone, carrying around 300-600 slaves each.³⁵⁷ Recent data on slave voyages from port records gathered by contributors of the *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, suggests that Sandoval actually underestimated the number of ships arriving to Cartagena. The period of 1616-1625 witnessed more than 150 ships arriving

³⁵⁵ Heywood, *Njinga of Angola*.

³⁵⁶ BAL, 51-VIII-25 fls. 42-44v

³⁵⁷ Alonso de Sandoval, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud*, in Enriqueta Vila Vilar (ed.) (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987), p. 151

at Cartagena at an average of 15 per year, with at least 80 coming from Luanda, disembarking close to 25,000 slaves. At least 100 more Angola ships went to New Spain carrying more than 30,000 slaves.³⁵⁸ In 1621, Luanda records a maximum of 29 voyages to Spanish American ports. Those numbers would then lower to 9-10 ships until 1640.³⁵⁹

Table 1 - Estimates of number of slaves exports from Angola (1591-1640)

	Embarkation numbers		Disembarkation numbers		
	West Central Africa	Annual Average	Spanish Indies	Brazil	Total
1591-1595	19,413	3,883	8,086	6,635	14,721
1596-1600	49,490	9,898	26,699	9,577	36,276
1601-1605	31,075	6,215	10,257	13,866	24,123
1606-1610	49,846	9,969	18,210	20,126	38,336
1611-1615	44,323	8,865	6,761	29,289	36,050
1616-1620	92,034	18,407	28,556	43,470	72,026
1621-1625	102,876	20,575	31,682	49,430	81,112
1626-1630	69,252	13,850	11,326	45,489	56,815
1631-1635	55,915	11,183	17,295	26,530	43,825
1636-1640	52,890	10,572	14,636	27,035	41,671
Total	567,114	11,342	173,508	271,447	444,955

Source: Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, *Estimates*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/K2uUzgAp>

While the numbers offered by the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database are extremely useful for providing a broader picture of the slave trade on a global scale, and trace the movement of ships in the Iberian Atlantic (particularly for Spanish American ports), they still offer general projections based on numbers reported in scrappy records, and calculate numbers based mostly on metropolitan sources. This leaves bilateral trade and contraband, two important circuits for Angola slave exports outside of the final

³⁵⁸ Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (henceforth TSTD), *Voyages*, accessed 10 May 2017, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/xkHKGtdE>. See also David Wheat, "The first great waves: African provenance zones for the transatlantic slave trade to Cartagena de Indias, 1570-1640", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 52, 2011, pp. 1-22

³⁵⁹ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 78-81

assessment, since they are extremely difficult to access due to the lack of sources. As a result, one must be aware that the overall picture presented by the TSTD for the Luanda exports is useful for comparative exercises, but still underrepresented.³⁶⁰

Various authors have attempted to estimate the volume of Angola during the Union of Crowns based on fragmented records. The loss of the Luanda's factory books, as well as the copies of the book of the *avenças* (commercial licences for slave exports) stored in the *Casa da Mina* (House of Trade) in Lisbon during the earthquake of 1755 complicates this exercise. Clues can be found in individual reports by some of Angola's officials and visitors. Domingos de Abreu e Brito, the clerk visiting Luanda, registered a total of 20,131 slaves leaving Luanda in the accounts of the contract from late 1587 to early 1591, averaging 5,000 a year.³⁶¹ Another clue is provided by the notebook of Cerveira Pereira, who in 1606 reports that a number between 12,000 and 13,000" slaves depart from Angola every year.³⁶² Similarly, Friar Luís Brandão wrote to the dean of the Jesuit's college in 1610 that between 10,000 and 12,000 Angola slaves departed from Luanda every year.³⁶³ Those numbers appear to be confirmed through the calculation of a local tax on slave exports from Luanda of two *tostões* (100 *réis*) per slave. Baltasar Rebelo de Aragão informs the Crown somewhere in 1618 that this tax generated around 5,000 to 6,000 *cruzados* a year, which translates to an average of 10,000-12,000 legal exports from Angola per year.³⁶⁴

However, during the peak of Vasconcelos military campaigns in Ndongo, the numbers would be far surpass that average, and hover close to 20,000 slaves exports. During Vasconcelos term of office (1617-1621), Beatrix Heintze estimated the total number of slaves transported to America to have been around 50,000 slaves from Luanda alone, an astonishing number compared to the average of the first half of the seventeenth century (table 3.1). Regarding the exports to America, she reaches an estimate of around 4,900 slaves per year for Vasconcelos years, mostly based on data contained in Pierre Chaunu.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ Caldeira, "Angola and the seventeenth century Atlantic" p. 103

³⁶¹ Felner, *Um inquérito*, pp. 30-4

³⁶² "Caderno do Governador Manuel Cerveira Pereira" (27-10-1606), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. V, p. 224

³⁶³ *Apud* Sandoval, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud*, pp. 142-9

³⁶⁴ BAL, 51-VIII-25, fls. 42-44v "Carta de Baltasar Rebelo de Aragão" (1618), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, pp. 332-343

³⁶⁵ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 294-296, p. 295, note 68

Table 2 - Estimates of number of slaves leaving Angola on Iberian ships during Vasconcelos' term

	Embarkation estimates in Western Central Africa	Disembarkation estimates in Spanish America	Disembarkation estimates in Brazil
1617	16,376	4,938	7,878
1618	20,054	6,405	9,234
1619	19,336	5,942	9,160
1620	21,231	6,796	9,886
1621	19,631	5,675	9,886
Totals	96,628	29,756	46,053
Annual Average	19,326	5,952	9,211

Source: *Voyages: Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/bEhyskwZ>

The combination of Henriqueta Vila Vilar's numbers for slaves entering Spanish America, coupled with the estimates of the transatlantic slave trade database (based mostly in António de Almeida Mendes' study), hint at an even larger numbers however. Vasconcelos' term began mid-1617 and ended in June 1621. Those numbers almost double her estimate of 50,000, which are mostly based on the revenues of the contract, diminishing the impact of contraband. If we take into account that Heintze counted Vasconcelos' term only from 1618 onwards, the overall number is closer to her estimate, although still significantly higher (70,000). The fact that overall contraband is difficult to assess might justify the discrepancies in numbers of slaves leaving Angola.³⁶⁶ The closer control in the ports of the West Indies helped to trace voyage records with much more accuracy than in Africa. Therefore, it is not surprising that the estimate for Spanish America (5,900) is much closer to her estimate (4,900). The numbers from Angola during this period were equally boosted by the fact that the holder of the *asiento* António Fernandes de Elvas, also had a stake in the monopoly contracts of Angola and Cape Verde. After his death in 1623, his widow Helena Rodrigues Solis attempted to settle his

³⁶⁶ António de Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations of the system: A reassessment of the slave trade to the Spanish Americas", David Eltis, David Richardson, *Extending the frontiers*, pp. 65-67. Vilar adds 1/3 of the total value to account for contraband, while Almeida Mendes adds ¼

debts from the Angola monopoly. In one document, it is recorded that the Angola slave trade generated around 232,035,000 *réis* in revenues between 1616 and 1622, which represented a minimum of 33,147 slaves (if all destined to Spanish America at a rate of 7,000 *réis*) and a maximum of 58,008 legal exports over 5 years.³⁶⁷ The Angola contracts were estimated to have generated “between 60,000,000 and 80,000,000” *réis* every year by the Crown judge and overseer António Bezerra Fajardo, who revealed himself shocked with the fact that they were leased for far less (25,000,000) in the Kingdom.³⁶⁸ Taking into consideration the revenues from the slave duties for the years of 1624 and 1626 generated 78,565,674 *réis*, corresponding to 18,500 legal ‘slave pieces’, the average of 19,000 slaves exported from Angola annually for the period 1616-1621 appears to be a viable estimate following the campaigns of Vasconcelos, as well as Fajardo’s estimate of the real value of the contract.³⁶⁹

The legal exports exposed in the contracts would be further exacerbated by smuggling and large-scale contraband. During this period contraband and illicit trade reached its absolute maximum levels. According to an official inquiry carried in Cartagena in 1620, it was concluded that two-thirds of the slaves arriving to that port did not pay taxes. The *visitador* Diego de Medina Morales illustrates the level of illicit arrivals by providing the example of three ships arriving to Cartagena that year carrying more than 900 slaves combined, despite only having permission to land 167.³⁷⁰ Although Cartagena and Veracruz were the major slave ports in Spanish America during the first half of the seventeenth century, a significant illegal trade was conducted in Buenos Aires and the Rio de la Plata, thanks to its vicinity with Brazil, and the access to the Potosí circuits.³⁷¹ Despite various efforts, the Crown was incapable of controlling the activity in this port, leading to the closure of Buenos Aires to all slave activities. The only exception was a small concession during the *asiento* of Elvas, allowing the yearly entrance of 450 slaves for a three year period (for a grand total of 1,350), in a highly supervised environment. Nevertheless, more than 4,052 slaves made their way into Buenos Aires between the years of 1619 and 1623.³⁷² From the sixteen ships that are recorded to have

³⁶⁷ AHU, Cx. 2, doc. 136

³⁶⁸ BAL, 51-VIII-25, fls. 29-32. Also transcribed in Brásio, *MMA*, Vol. VII, pp. 205-214

³⁶⁹ AHU, Cx. 2, doc. 219

³⁷⁰ Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, p. 64

³⁷¹ Kara Schultz, “‘The Kingdom of Angola is not very far from here’: The South Atlantic Slave Port of Buenos Aires, 1585–1640”, *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 36 (3) 2015, pp. 424-444

³⁷² AGI, *Audiencia de Charcas*, Leg. 132

arrived to this port in 1621, only three had some sort of licence, according to the data gathered by Alice Pifer Canabrava.³⁷³ These numbers are highly illustrative of the volume of the trade, alluding to the estimates of the official Domingos de Abreu e Brito, who claimed that at least a third of the slaves leaving Luanda towards Brazil or the Spanish ports were transported without a license.³⁷⁴

These numbers reflect the dimension of the traffic from Luanda during and immediately after the campaigns of Vasconcelos, even more so when compared to his predecessors, hinting at the very large enterprise developed by the Governor. The successful campaigns of Furtado de Mendonça (1595-1601) were responsible for the first big 'peak' in numbers, stabilising the slave exports around that volume (between 10,000 and 13,000 captives) in the following years. A quick glance at the numbers of slaves exported by the Portuguese from the West Coast of Africa since the beginning of Novais' campaigns contextualizes the volume of the trade during the years of Vasconcelos, and how it far surpassed any other period during the first half of the seventeenth century, almost doubling the volume of the previous lustrum. In the following years, the trade suffered an obvious setback, but stabilized once again around the 12,000 annual exports according to a later inquiry from the Portuguese Council.³⁷⁵

Although the samples provided by some of the previous reports were not exclusive to the port of Luanda (some included slaves from Loango and Kongo), the numbers presented by local observers and the revenues from the slave trade contradict the reports of the Angolan merchants who complained about the commerce of slaves coming to a standstill during the years of Vasconcelos, due to the destruction and closure of the inner slave fairs. From the 1617s onwards, the volume of African captives embarked in Luanda increased dramatically, with more than twice the number of captives transported than during the previous decade. These numbers were further increased in the beginning of the 1620s.³⁷⁶ In spite of the great numbers transported in such a short term period (mainly during the 1617-1625 period), the reports and concerns from the merchants and agents in Luanda were neither unreasonable nor baseless. The most glaring consequence of these

³⁷³ Alice Pifer Canabrava, *O comércio Português no Rio da Prata, 1580-1640*. (São Paulo: Universidade São Paulo, 1944) p. 83

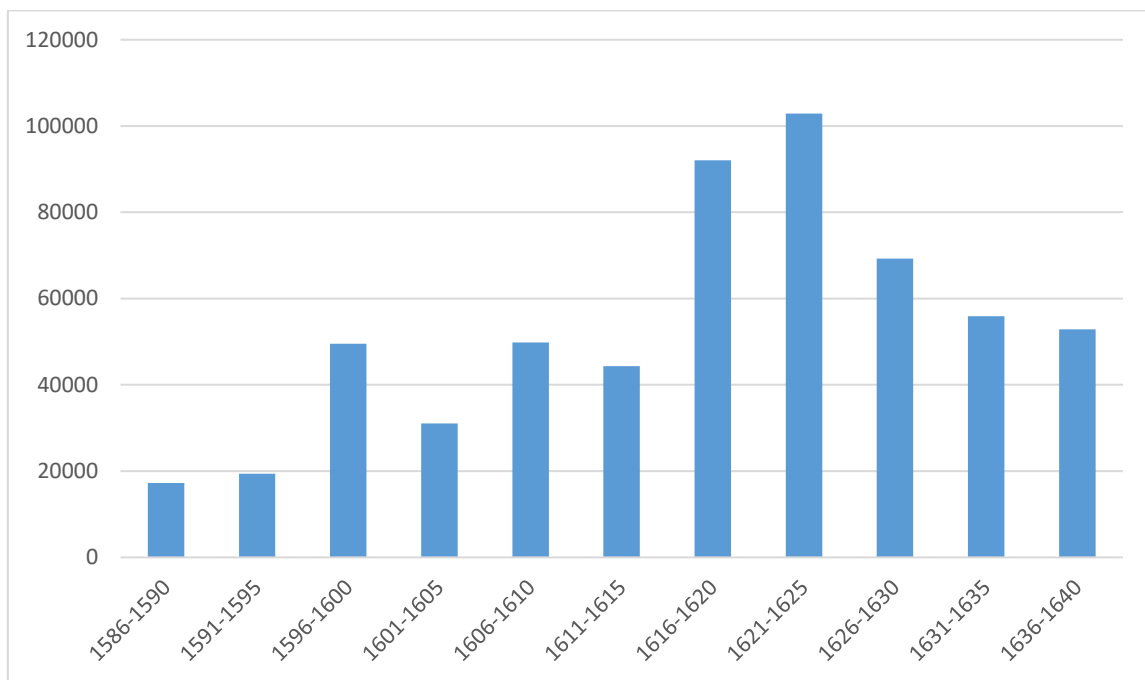
³⁷⁴ Domingos de Abreu e Brito, *Um inquérito à vida administrativa e económica de Angola e do Brasil*. Edited by Alfredo Felner. (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1931) p. 37

³⁷⁵ Caldeira, "Angola and the seventeenth century Atlantic", p. 110

³⁷⁶ David Eltis, David Richardson, *Extending the frontiers: Essays on the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)

active years was the stagnation, and then sudden drop of exports halfway through the decade of 1620. This was the result of the destruction of the pre-established circuits and inner slave fairs, and the withdrawal of the African entities involved on the trade, leading to a growing shortage of slaves, and the consequent inflation of their value in the following years. Despite the enormous impact that the numbers of enslaved Africans from Ndongo and its surroundings had on the development and expansion of the transatlantic trade, those numbers were mostly a product of the military incursions of Vasconcelos, and lacked any strategy regarding the sustainability of their supply in the medium/long-term.

Figure 5 - Number of slaves leaving Angola on Iberian ships 1585-1640



Source: *Voyages: Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/DLR0A6Z6>

A report originally from Luanda, signed by the priest Gonçalo de Sousa in 1633, is highly illustrative of the long-term consequences of Vasconcelos' campaigns. According to the priest, "the trade of this land yields little, because the fairs that used to exist (...) are no more, and the neighbouring provinces are completely deserted, requiring the acquisition/ransom of slaves through massive inland incursions, a journey of many months, making the capture of slaves very costly". The shortage of, and difficulty in

attaining slaves in the years following the governorship of Mendes de Vasconcelos motivated a considerable rise of slaves' prices and duties, which according to the priest rose to 7,000 *réis* for Brazil, and to 19,800 in the Spanish Indies.³⁷⁷ This was a very significant increase compared to Vasconcelos' time, during which those same duties were evaluated around 4,000 and 7,000 *réis* per slave for Brazil and the West Indies respectively.

The wars in West Africa were continued by João Correia de Sousa (1621-1623), whose warmongering spirit and desire for slaves earned him the nickname of "Portuguese Attila".³⁷⁸ Correia de Sousa focused initially in Kasanze, a safe haven for runaway slaves and with fertile land, who were occupied by a dissident from the Portuguese alliance. After his victory over the *Mani* Kasanze and his public execution in Luanda, Correia de Sousa assembled a vast number of Kongolese Christian *sobas* and their dependents (some belonging to the nobility) under the pretence of holding an election for a new ruler of Kasanze. However, Sousa illegally enslaved the more than 1,200 Africans that answered the call, which he then shipped to Brazil.³⁷⁹ Defying the will of the city council and population of Luanda, Correia de Sousa launched a disastrous campaign in Ndembu and Kongo as well, which ended in a crushing defeat. When news of his crimes reached the Crown, Correia de Sousa had long fled from Angola due to the anger of Luanda's residents, departing with slaves to Spanish America, where he was eventually apprehended.³⁸⁰ In the meantime he had established relations with the three sisters of the *Ngola*, and was allegedly the godfather of the baptism of the future Queen Njinga, Ana de Sousa.³⁸¹ After his exile and two interim governors, Governor Fernão de Sousa (1624-1630) arrived to the Kingdom with instructions to restore peace, as Angola would enter a new stage of the Portuguese establishment in Africa, experiencing a downturn in the slave trade, as they now encountered new threats: the rise of Queen Njinga in Matamba, the hostility from Kongo, and the Dutch presence in the Atlantic and West Africa.

³⁷⁷ AHU, Angola, Cx. 2, doc. 242

³⁷⁸ "Carta de Brás Correia a Mons. Vives" (10-12-1623), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, pp. 166-170

³⁷⁹ José Curto, "A restituição de 10.000 súbditos Ndongo 'roubados' na Angola de meados do século XVII: Uma análise preliminar", Isabel Castro Henriques (Ed.), *Escravidão e transformações culturais: África-Brasil-Caraíbas* (Lisbon: Editora Vulgata, 2002) pp. 185-208. Original document in: AHU, Angola, cx. 2, doc. 125

³⁸⁰ Thornton, "Firearms", pp. 181-3; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 85-6

³⁸¹ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 297-234

Warfare and European competition soon began to affect and hinder Portuguese slave trade ventures, especially from the second decade of the seventeenth century onwards. Despite the Union of Crowns offering numerous opportunities and projects for a closer inter-imperial collaboration, and a complementarity between Portuguese and Spanish overseas territories, it also presented new challenges for both empires. Under Habsburg political rule, Portugal was eventually dragged into the various conflicts of the Spanish Monarchy, which carried clear military and financial consequences for the kingdom and its colonial settlements in Asia, America, and Africa. Notwithstanding the vast territories and resources controlled by the Monarchy, its empire could be compared to a giant with clay feet. Iberian territories were scattered across the globe and often poorly articulated between them, complicating the Crown's ability to answer to all the problems plaguing its borders. English, French, and Dutch forces soon began to target Portuguese positions and oceanic shipping alongside Spanish ones. The political configuration spawned by the Union of Crowns meant that for the Northern European powers it had become fair game to attack Portuguese vessels and conduct small raids in its coasts.³⁸²

As a result, warfare eventually extended towards the Portuguese overseas empire, which was in most cases, ill-equipped to deal with the presence of foreign competition and military power, raising in turn the costs of the Portuguese Crown for protecting its empire. Although French and English privateering in Brazil and West Africa preceded the official Union of the Iberian Crowns, the new political framework exacerbated the frequency of those attacks. The English targeted Portuguese ships in the Atlantic returning from Guinea and Brazil carrying sugar and slaves. From 1588 to 1591 at least 34 Portuguese vessels and their respective cargo were captured by English ships.³⁸³ The French as well had financed a series of projects for settlement in Brazil. After a previous failed attempt at establishing in the bay of Guanabara in Rio de Janeiro in 1555, a newer state-sponsored project focused in northern Brazil in Maranhão during the Union of Iberian Crowns, which required a combined Portuguese and Spanish effort to eradicate in

³⁸² Joaquim Romero Magalhães, "Filipe II", *História de Portugal*, vol. 3, pp. 563-570

³⁸³ Schwartz, "Luso-Spanish Relations in Hapsburg Brazil, 1580-1640", *The Americas*, vol. 25, nº1 (1968)", pp. 43-4

1615.³⁸⁴ In West Africa, the French often raided Portuguese outposts along the Slave Coast and attacked its ships.

The Dutch too began to challenge Iberian exclusivism and attack its colonial positions, and ultimately presented the biggest challenge to both the Portuguese and Spanish empires. In the Indian Ocean, the establishment of the chartered company *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) in 1602 received direct support from the States General and acted not only as a commercial rival the Portuguese and Spanish in Asian markets, but also as an extra armed force against the Habsburg monarchy.³⁸⁵ Its fleet grew from 76 ships in 1602 to 117 in the following decade, displaying the range of the military and financial power of the VOC in Asia already in the 1610s.³⁸⁶ By this time the Portuguese pepper monopoly was nothing more than a mirage, although it had been mostly hindered by the revitalization of the Levantine trade and the expansion of the Mogul Empire.³⁸⁷

In the Atlantic, the Dutch undertook multiple expeditions as a reaction against Iberian commercial embargos years before the creation of the *West Indische Compagnie* (WIC) in 1618, establishing commercial outposts in Guinea, at Bezequiche (Senegal), and finally in Loango in 1594, just north of Kongo.³⁸⁸ After establishing footholds throughout West Africa, the Dutch began to target Portuguese positions, conquering São Tomé in 1598. Although they could not keep control of the Island, the attack and plundering of such an important possession was a sign of the vulnerability of the Portuguese settlements on the West Coast of Africa, whose slaving ships were now under constant threat, especially after the Dutch founding the fort of Nassau at Moure, very close to São Jorge da Mina (Elmina) in 1612. Manuel de Andrada Castel Blanco, a Portuguese cleric with services on both margins of the Atlantic, wrote a memorial to the Crown as early as 1590, alerting for the urgent need to fortify its poorly equipped coastal defences in Cape Verde, Senegal, Elmina, and even Kongo, as those places lacked

³⁸⁴ Harold Johnson, Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *O Império Luso-Brasileiro 1500-1620. Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa*, vol. VI (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1992) pp. 190-8

³⁸⁵ Michael N. Pearson, "Merchants and states", James Tracy (ed.) *The Political economy of Merchant Empires. State power and world trade, 1350-1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) pp. 41-116

³⁸⁶ Ernst Van Veen, *Decay or Defeat? An Inquiry into the Portuguese decline in Asia, 1580-1645* (Leiden: University of Leiden, 2000) p. 408

³⁸⁷ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Portuguese Empire in Asia*, pp. 210-12

³⁸⁸ António Correia e Silva, "Cabo Verde e a geopolítica do Atlântico", *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, vol. II, pp. 1-16

“people to populate, farm and defend”, following the increasing reports of French and English raids on its coasts.³⁸⁹ Another experienced captain, Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco, also alerts for the presence of Dutch vessels trading slaves and ivory in the Zaire (Congo River) as early as 1603, urging the Crown to build a fortress in the port of Pinda (or Mpinda) in order to remove the Dutch peril from Angola’s coasts, and boost Portuguese trade. This would be a difficult endeavour, as the stronghold had to be built in absolute secret, since the *Manikongo* would never authorize the Portuguese to build a fortress in its coast, advising Garcia Mendes to keep this project under the utmost secrecy.³⁹⁰ The building of a Portuguese fortress in the port of Pinda is one of the most discussed topics by *arbitristas* and governmental figures regarding Angola in the first two decades of the seventeenth century.³⁹¹

Dutch incursions along the Loango Coast eventually reached the port of Pinda, where they established commercial relations with the Kingdom of Kongo. The Portuguese sighted Dutch ships trading in the Congo River in 1606 and chased them away, and later inquired the *Manikongo* on the nature of their trade.³⁹² Portuguese documentation accused the rulers of Kongo of ignoring the Portuguese warnings, and continuing their trade with protestant heathens, despite their supposed “Christian zeal”. The bishop of Congo and Angola Frei Manuel Baptista (1609-1620) visited the port of Pinda to conduct an investigation over the religious state of Kongo, and was shocked to find “four different [Dutch] factories” there, alongside the circulation of numerous forged bibles “articulated against the Catholic Church of Rome”. When the Bishop urged the responsible for the province, the count of Mani Sonho (*Mani Soyo* or *Nsoyo*) to expel the Dutch “heathens”, he was refused by the Kongo Lord, who claimed it was impossible to maintain his port activity and trade without the commodities brought by the Dutch. Enraged, Manuel Baptista excommunicated and cursed the *Many Soyo* before going back to Luanda. Upon returning to Lisbon, Manuel Baptista claimed to have received an information from

³⁸⁹ Paul Hair (ed.), *To Defend your empire and the faith. Advice on a global strategy offered to Philip, King of Spain and Portugal by Manoel de Andrada Castel Blanco* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1990) pp. 211-257

³⁹⁰ Luciano Cordeiro, “1574-1620, Da Mina ao Cabo Negro, Segundo Garcia Mendes Castello Branco”, *Memórias do Ultramar*, pp. 7-33 [10-11]

³⁹¹ Curto, *Cultura Imperial*, pp. 307-352

³⁹² Klass Ratelband, *Nederlanders in West-Afrika 1600-1650: Angola, Kongo en Sao Tome* (Zutphen: Walburg pers, 2000), pp. 37-9; Peter C. Emmer, “The First Global War: The Dutch versus Iberia in Asia, Africa and the New World, 1590–1609”, *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 1 (1), 2003, pp. 1-14.

Angola officials that the *Manikongo* himself had expelled the Dutch from Pinda, to honour his catholic conscience, and promised to deny them further entry.³⁹³

Despite the Bishop's optimism and beliefs of being successful on expelling the Protestants with his authority alone, the Dutch continued to hover and trade in Loango and Kongo during the following decades. The ruler of Kongo welcomed the Dutch with open arms as a viable commercial alternative to the Portuguese, especially after the deterioration of the diplomatic relations following the campaigns of Furtado Mendonça (1595-1599).³⁹⁴ The *Mani Soyo* later received orders from Nkanga a Mvika (Pedro II, 1622-1624) to negotiate a secret alliance with the Dutch to provide military assistance against the Portuguese in the region, following the abuses of João Correia de Sousa's slave campaigns, in exchange for slaves and ivory. This resulted in two failed assaults to Luanda in 1624 led by Filips van Zuylen and later by Piet Heyn. The later fleet came directly from its conquest of Bahia in 1624, which gave time to the Portuguese in Luanda to fortify the city and successfully repel the attack.³⁹⁵ But Portuguese and Spanish activities were increasingly threatened in the Atlantic, and despite the retaking of Bahia by a joint Iberian armada, the Dutch were ever present. Piety Heyn managed to capture the returning Spanish silver fleet in 1628, and occupy Olinda and Recife in Brazil in 1630. The slave trade revenues suffered losses during this period due to the increasing perils in both margins of the Atlantic, and the Portuguese would eventually suffer its biggest blow when the Dutch finally occupied Luanda in 1641.³⁹⁶

From the first project for the establishment of a European foothold in Africa, headed by Novais, to the conquest of Ndongo by Vasconcelos, the transformations Angola underwent from a political, military, and above all economic standpoint are highly illustrative of the different phases and stages faced by the Portuguese in their establishment in Africa. Each one of those elements requires a different analytical exercise, such as the perception of the political landscape of West Africa and the division in its territories, with different inner strives that were effectively explored by the European during the years of conflict with Ndongo. While the political and military

³⁹³ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, l. 1473, ff. 365-9 "Informações de Frei Manuel Baptista vistas no Conselho de Portugal" (11-11-1620)

³⁹⁴ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 90-1

³⁹⁵ Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch-Indigenous alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595-1674* (Leiden: Boston, 2012) pp. 193-7

³⁹⁶ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 145-7

strategies were severely affected or driven by characteristics of the African continent, the economic policies regarding the slave trade were heavily influenced by external factors from three different continents.

Originally regarded as an extra form of revenue associated with the military campaigns aimed at the discovery of mines and military conquest of the territory, the acquisition of slaves through purchase, rather than warfare, proved to be the most profitable, sustainable and reliable method of fuelling the transatlantic trade at the dawn of the seventeenth century. The changes regarding the royal instructions for their acquisition and capture were accompanied by the articulation of the fiscal mechanisms for the provision of slaves by both Iberian Crowns. The later alliance with a local military power in Africa allowed for an overlap between capture and commercial acquisition strategies. This overlap provided an increasing number of slaves for departure from Angola, a volume highly impacting on the overall rates of the trade across the Atlantic. The economic and political agendas were developed side by side, as the wars in Angola were driven just as much by imperial ambitions as by the capture of slaves. In this sense, despite the contradicting instructions and strategies of the Crown, the wars in Angola resulted in a contribution to the economic development of this colony, and subsequently, the Atlantic trade.

After the setbacks suffered during the captaincy of Dias de Novais, the breakthroughs in the conquest of Angola were made only after the establishment of the Union of Crowns in the mid-1590s, when Luanda was placed under royal instruction and the system of Governors was implemented. Despite the initial military offensive, significant conquest would only be achieved by means of the alliance with a belligerent native ally, the *Imbangala*. The earnings of the conquest were not only territorial, but also economical. The use of the *sobas*, and later the *Imbangala*, was fundamental for the consolidation of the Portuguese foothold in Africa, as well as for the increase and steady supply of slaves from the Angola region. The search for the fabled silver mines of Cambambe, proven not to exist in 1603, put the official project of conquest on hold. Yet, the economic dimension of Luanda came to drive its development through the slave trading activities resulting from an increased capture rate of slaves, as well as the expansion of their military and commercial circuits. The military offensive in Africa matched the development of the economic mechanisms surrounding the slave trade, with the adjudication of the first colonial contract for the slave rights of Angola (1587-1593)

and the establishment of the Spanish system of the *asientos* (1595) in the Atlantic. At the same time, the failure to establish an administrative commercial model in Luanda, mostly due to private activity in violation of the State's regulation, as well as the actions and personal ambitions of its officials regarding the slave trade, gradually led to the transition of a commercial pattern into a period of warfare. This transition was enabled, not only by an alliance with the mercenary *Imbangala*, but also on account of the internal strife in the societies of the two most powerful African authorities.

The global events faced by Habsburg Monarchy at the time were not unrelated to this fiscal-military (and imperial) turn in Angola were not unrelated the. Although Angola was but a distant and secondary periphery of the Habsburg Empire, it was soon integrated in the Monarchy's conflict and struggle with the Dutch Republic for supremacy in the Atlantic waters, as the slave trade was connected on a fundamental level to the economic development of both Brazil and the Spanish American colonies, and consequently, to the finances of the Monarchy and its ability to tax and extract revenues from its Indies fleets.³⁹⁷ The year of 1624 witnessed the Dutch conquest of Bahia alongside two repelled attempts at seizing Luanda. The rivalry in the Atlantic and Africa was felt not only through piracy and attacks to Portuguese slave vessels, but equally through commercial competition, by the French, English and Dutch in Upper Guinea.³⁹⁸ Dutch ventures eventually reached Elmina, and the Loango and Kongo Coasts, where they established agreements with local rulers, and rivalled the Portuguese's interests even further in Angola.³⁹⁹ Another global conflict that was parallel with the Iberian wars in Ndongo was the beginning of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) in Europe, which increased the demand for copper by the Spanish Monarchy, fundamental for its military as it was used in the production of pieces of artillery. The discovery of new sources of copper in Benguela and later in the province of Wembu in Kongo, motivated an increased investment from the Crown in this periphery, present in multiple decrees, correspondence and legislation ordering the governors and administration of Angola to research and develop a proper mining industry in those regions.⁴⁰⁰ The fiscal and financial situation of

³⁹⁷ Charles Boxer, *Salvador de Sá and the struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686* (London: The Athlone Press, 1952)

³⁹⁸ Phillip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975) pp. 99-100

³⁹⁹ Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms*, pp. 83-8

⁴⁰⁰ Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a História de Angola do século XVII, I: Memórias, Relações e outros manuscritos da colectânea documental de Fernão de Sousa (1622-1635)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlaag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985) pp. 4-10

the Crown equally impacted the demand for copper, as it was the metal used in the coinage of the *vellón*, whose circulation multiplied during the reign of Phillip III and became widespread in the *asiento* payments, collecting the Crown considerable portions of its rents in the copper-based coin, while bankers and crafty merchants attempted to exchange vast quantities of the *vellón* coin for silver.⁴⁰¹

At this juncture, the trading of slaves, originally a by-product of the wars, arose as the most profitable activity in Angola. Two different models of producing slaves became prevalent in Angola, warfare and trade, capture and acquisition, headed by different groups respectively. The first one was practiced by the soldiers, Captains and Governors, who attempted to plunder the territory and profit from the trade through the establishment of local allegiances with local African elites. The second one was practiced by local settlers, administrators, and merchants, all in some way connected to vast networks and economic circuits spread throughout the Atlantic. They had interests in the steady provision of slaves to Brazil and Spanish America, as well as in different industries related to this activity such as freighting, shipment, licence selling or tax-farming, and relied on commercial contacts in the African settlements, intermediaries with direct access to the inner African markets and local administration to get better prices and rates for the slaves captured. Despite divergent strategies and approaches, the slave trade was the common element between those different groups living in Angola.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Carmen Sanz Ayán, *Los banqueros y la crisis de la Monarquía Hispánica de 1640* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, Historia, 2013) pp. 68-70, 112-116; Alberto Marcos Martín, "Deuda Pública, Fiscalidad y Arbitrios en la Corona de Castilla en los siglos XVI y XVII" pp. 345-375

⁴⁰² Diogo Ramada Curto, *Cultura Imperial e Projetos coloniais* (Campinas: Unicamp, 2009) p. 326

IV – Slavery in the Americas: The Transatlantic Slave Trade to Spanish America, and Angola’s Role in the Iberian Atlantic

In the fall of 1612, King Phillip III held several hearings in the Court, in order to properly evaluate the urgent requests arriving from the *Real Audiencias* (Spanish High Courts) in the Americas. From Santo Domingo, to Mexico, Panama, Lima, Santa Fe, Quito, and Buenos Aires, colonial administrators in Spanish America shared a similar concern: they needed more slaves, and they needed them urgently. The increasing demand from Hispano-American colonies for coerced labour was owed to problem of supply, as the Iberian slave trade registered its first significant contraction since the Union of Crowns in 1581. The root of the problem could be traced to the turbulent dispute in the Kingdom between the Portuguese commercial elites and Seville’s merchant guild, over whose faction should be in charge of the exclusive supply of African slaves to Spanish America. The Portuguese leaseholders of the royal monopolies of Africa’s trade had completely monopolized the shipment of slaves to Spanish America’s ports ever since the introduction of the *asientos de negros* in 1595. After years of complaints from Seville’s elites and institutions denouncing Portuguese illegal trade, tax evasion, and contraband in the Americas through the slave trade, the King decided to entrust the management of this *asiento* to the *Consulado* (merchant guild) of Seville in 1611. This administration would prove disastrous, and ultimately result in the lowest numbers of legal slave exports registered to the Americas over the course of the sixty years of the Union (1611-1615).⁴⁰³

Among the enquires, reports, and official discussions produced by Portuguese and Spanish institutions over the state of the slave trade that were evaluated at Court, the severe drop in the supply of enslaved Africans to the New World under Spanish management, and its disastrous economic consequences for Spanish colonial societies and the King’s Treasury were the key points highlighted by the reports of the *Audiencias*. Those arguments were echoed by the former Portuguese *asentistas*, who attempted to

⁴⁰³ For various discussions on the lease of the *asientos*, see the papers in AGI, *Indiferente General*, leg. 2795, 2829. For an overview of the chronology of the *asientos* during the Iberian Union, see Enriqueta Vila Vilar, “Los asientos portugueses y el contrabando de Negros”, *Anuario de estudios americanos*, n^o 30 (1973), pp. 557-599; Germán Peralta Rivera, *El comercio negrero en América Latina* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Federico Villareal, 2006). For the Portuguese administration of the *asientos* and number of licences sold, see chapter 5

sway the discussions exchanged between the Councils of the Indies and Portugal in their favour. They attacked the new Spanish administrators by listing all the harms resulting from their lacklustre management, while calling for the return of the trade to Portuguese hands. In those reports, African slaves were described as “essential for the basic functioning” of Spanish American society, so much that their trade could be considered a “public service” for the Monarchy. Since “all tasks in the Indies” were performed by slaves, the inadequate supply of enslaved Africans left the Spanish colonies and port-cities in a precarious situation, and only the Portuguese could safeguard “*el bien público de las Indias*”. The slave shortages were extremely harmful not only for Spanish *Audiencias*, but also for the King’s own revenues collected from the royal fifth over the gold and silver mined in America, as well as from other taxes like the *avería* (duty on shipment) and the *alcabala* (duty on imports) paid in the customs’ houses of the empire. The inadequate supply of slaves resulted in a lower production of the ‘fruits of the land’ like cacao, dyes, tobacco, or sugar, all used in America’s own regional trade circuits, as Spanish colonists did not work on the fields themselves and without a slave workforce, there would be no one left to “cultivate and stimulate the commerce that sustains and ennobles those Kingdoms”.⁴⁰⁴ Among the several judgements brought for appreciation into one of the Council’s discussions, one was signed by a former leaseholder of a Portuguese monopoly of Angola, João Nunes Correia. According to the former *contratador*, the “fastest way to weaken the Indies is to take away its means of sustenance, the slaves”. The businessman argued that the future of the Americas was rooted in the colonial trade and the exploitation of its natural resources, “and slaves are the ones who work the land and the mines”, and should their supply stop, “so would everything else”.⁴⁰⁵ Correia’s memorandum highlighted, like many others, the fundamental role of enslaved Africans in the Spanish Indies.

By the time the Portuguese empire was integrated into the Habsburg Monarchy in 1581, African slave labour was already a vital element for the economies and everyday life of Spanish American colonial societies. In the wake of Spanish conquest of America and the consequent collapse of Amerindian populations during the second half of the sixteenth century, the colonies in the Caribbean and American mainland progressively

⁴⁰⁴ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “inconvenientes del asiento que se tomó el ano pasado de 1611, consulta del consejo de Portugal” (1612)

⁴⁰⁵ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Parecer de João Nunes Correia sobre a navegação para as Indias” (c. 1611-1612)

relied on the importation of slaves from Africa to support the colonization of the new continent, and exploit its resources. This demand matched the growth of the Portuguese's own colonial entrepôts in Atlantic Africa over the second half of the sixteenth century. Contacts between both shores gradually intensified on the heels of the dynastic union, and the subsequent expansion of the transatlantic slave trade would directly intersect the Portuguese military campaigns in Angola, and Spanish imperial ventures in America.

This chapter focusses on the importance of African slavery and the Iberian slave trade in the foundation and development of the Spanish imperial project in America. It explores the origins and dimension of this trade to the New World from the foundation of the first Spanish settlements in the Caribbean, until the twilight of the Union of Crowns, and links the previously described stages of the Portuguese occupation in Angola with the changing patterns in the volume and direction of the transatlantic slave trade to Spanish American colonies. It also explores similar practices, identities, historical processes, and overlapping experiences between the Portuguese and Spanish empires, and how those common patterns influenced their respective colonial societies. Portuguese advances in Angola, and the development of Spanish colonies in America were contemporary, intersected, and complementary ventures during the Union of Crowns. During this process, capital, commodities, practices, knowledge, institutions, and people circulated between both empires, and strongly influenced and shaped their respective societies on different sides of the Atlantic.

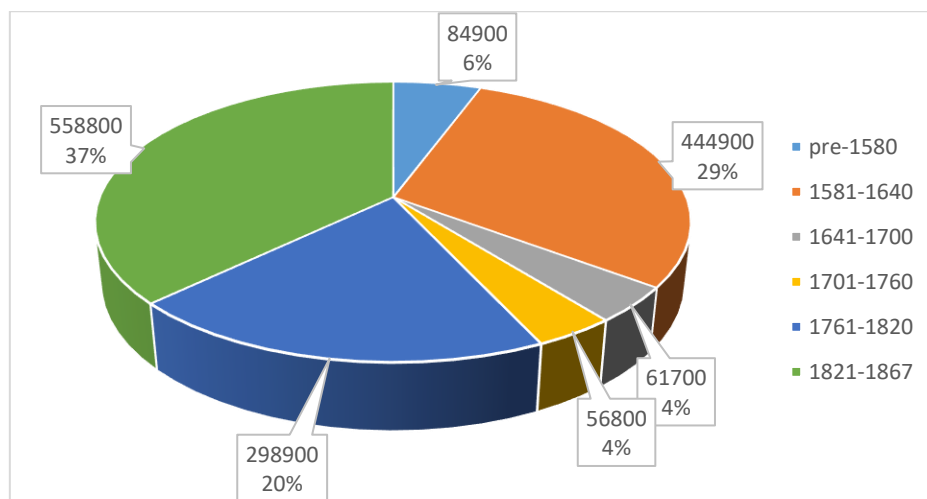
4.1. The Overlapping Nature of the Iberian Empires: The Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Foundations of the Spanish Americas

Recent estimates based on new archival sources and voyage data gathered by the *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (TSTD), hint that least 82,000 enslaved Africans arrived in Spanish America before the integration of the Portuguese Crown and its empire in the Spanish Monarchy in 1581. The same research also shows that close to 450,000 captives are estimated to have been shipped during the period of the Iberian Union (1580-1640). This figure could still be subject to an increase, as it fails to account for contraband or slaves shipped directly from the Iberian Peninsula and the Canary islands.⁴⁰⁶ It

⁴⁰⁶ Alex Borucki, David Eltis, David Wheat, "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 120, issue 2, 1 April 2015 pp. 433-461 [440-444]. The numbers of the

represents a spectacular growth rate of more than 400 per cent of slave imports over the course of the sixty years of the Union of Crowns, benefitting not only from the legal interconnection between slave regulations of both Iberian Crowns, which ultimately resulted in the implementation of a system of *asientos* controlled by Portuguese entrepreneurs (1595-1640), but also by the growing connections and shared experiences by the Portuguese and Spanish in the Iberian Atlantic. The numbers presented by the TSTD, and compiled by Eltis, Borucki, and Wheat now show that more than one third of all African slaves that disembarked in the era of the transatlantic trade in Spanish American colonies arrived during the early colonisation of the Americas in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, matching the years of the Union with the Portuguese Crown, long before the establishment of Northern European powers in the Caribbean or the development of any sort of major plantation economy.⁴⁰⁷

Figure 6 – Estimate of Slave Arrivals in Spanish America 1500-1867



Source: Borucki, Eltis, Wheat, “Atlantic History” pp. 440-444, table on 440; TSTD, accessed 12 April 2018, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/hBeAA1ly>

2015 article include 583 more voyages for the 1581-1640 period. It also includes a rough estimate of an additional 556,300 slaves resulting from the trans-imperial Intra-American trade, from Brazil to Río de la Plata until the late 1830s (and Curaçao, Barbados, and Jamaica for later chronologies). The distribution of those numbers is difficult to establish, like the volume of contraband coming from these circuits, especially the Brazil-Platine trade.

⁴⁰⁷ Alejandro de la Fuente, “Sugar and Slavery in Early Colonial Cuba”, in Stuart Schwartz (Ed.), *Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004) pp, 115-157

The new data published in the TSTD invites a re-examination of Africans' historical role in, and economic impact on early Spanish American colonies, as it contests most sugar-centred narratives that exclusively associate the advent of slavery in Caribbean societies with the development of large plantation complexes.⁴⁰⁸ Not only the Spanish colonies failed to develop any sort of large-scale plantation economies before the late eighteenth century (in Cuba), but slaves played a very different role in the Spanish Caribbean than their counterparts in the British Caribbean. The colonisation of regions like Panama, Colombia, or Venezuela, where no plantation industries were founded, are completely neglected in the traditional Anglophone historiographies. The same premise is also applied to the role that Africans and the advent of slavery had in shaping and developing early Latin American colonial societies.⁴⁰⁹ Africans were not only present but also essential for the Spanish settlement and colonisation in the Caribbean and the American mainland. The transatlantic slave trade would serve as a bridge that connected and overlapped different elements of the Iberian, American, and African worlds, with one another, and would help to shape the nature of the Iberian colonial experiences and identities in the Atlantic.

Slavery in Early Spanish Overseas Ventures

The role of the Portuguese in the exploration of the African coast and in the inception of transatlantic slave ventures is widely acknowledged today, but the same cannot be said for Spain's own imperial endeavours in Atlantic Africa.⁴¹⁰ During the Middle Ages, the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon shared similar experiences with slavery in Iberia, and participated in slave trading ventures almost an entire century before Columbus' first voyage to America in 1492. Contemporary with early Portuguese voyages of exploration and the commercial enterprises on the northern coast of Atlantic Africa, merchants and sailors from Andalusia also sailed to North Africa's shores, and

⁴⁰⁸ Alberto Abello Vives, Ernesto Bassi Arévalo, "Un Caribe por fuera de la ruta de la plantación" in Alberto Abello Vives (comp.), *Un Caribe sin Plantación. Memorias de la cátedra del Caribe colombiano* (San Andrés: Universidad Nacional de Colombia (sede Caribe) - Observatorio del Caribe Colombiano, 2006) pp. 11-14

⁴⁰⁹ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 8-9

⁴¹⁰ Emily Berquist Soule, "From Africa to the Ocean Sea: Atlantic slavery in the origins of the Spanish Empire", *Atlantic studies*, vol. 15, issue 1, 2018, pp. 16-39

even travelled all the way to Upper Guinea on some occasions.⁴¹¹ North African markets had always attracted Spanish merchants searching not only for Morisco textiles, but also grain, gold, and other goods supplied by the trans-Saharan caravan routes. Over time, they extended their interests to the Atlantic coast of Africa, and their commercial transactions would come to include African slaves as well.⁴¹² The cities of Seville, Ayamonte, and Cadiz were home to the biggest concentration of African slave population in Castile in the fifteenth century, despite the regular acquisition of Moors due to the (ongoing) conflicts of the Christian conquest (*Reconquista*).⁴¹³ Valencian merchants were actively engaged in the Mediterranean slave trade, where they acquired great numbers of Muslim captives not only through purchase on Italian and Portuguese markets, but also from corsair activities. However, their commercial exchanges in North Africa and with Portuguese slave traders resulted in an equally significant concentration of “black sub-Saharan slaves” in the city. By the end of the fifteenth century, forty per cent of Valencia’s sizeable slave population was already composed of blacks.⁴¹⁴

Besides the private commercial incursions of Andalusian merchants in North Africa, the Crown of Castile also turned its sights to Africa. It began to contest Portuguese exclusivity in Atlantic Africa during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, mostly challenging the sovereignty over the Canary archipelago, as it was considered an extension of the *Reconquista* in Castile’s lawful rights (*de jure*) to the conquest of Morocco. In 1344, the right to exploration and conquest of the archipelago was donated to D Luís de La Cerda by Castile. However, its exploration would only officially commence in 1402, and its conquest was only achieved between 1478 and 1493.⁴¹⁵ In the meantime, the Portuguese had attempted to secure exclusive access to the African shores through a series of Papal Bulls in 1452 and 1455 respectively. In exchange for the levy of Church taxes, the Pope recognised not only the Canary Islands, but also Guinea’s coast

⁴¹¹ Antonio Rumeu de Armas, *España en el África Atlántica*, vol. 1 (Madrid, 1956–1957) pp. 71–75, 101–104, 185–214; John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast, 1469–1682* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 10–18

⁴¹² Rumeu de Armas, *España en el Africa*, pp. 103–107

⁴¹³ Leo Garofolo, “The shape of the diaspora: The movement of Afro-Iberians to Colonial Spanish America” in Sherwin Bryant, Rachel Sarah O’Toole, Ben Vinson III (Eds.), *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012) pp. 27–49

⁴¹⁴ Debra Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars: Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-century Valencia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) pp. 2–6

⁴¹⁵ J. H. Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966 p. 40; Kenneth Andrien, “The Spanish Atlantic System” in Jack Greene, Phillip D. Morgan (Eds.), *Atlantic History: A critical appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) pp. 55–79

as legitimate Portuguese possessions. The Castilian ruler Juan II dismissed the Bulls, and sent a trading fleet to Guinea to challenge Portuguese exclusivity in the region in 1453. Thus, the Iberian Crowns were rivals on the African waters since the early stages of their overseas expansions.⁴¹⁶

The commercial and political rivalry between the Iberian Kingdoms in the Atlantic eventually escalated into full-on military hostilities after the death of Enrique IV of Castile in 1474, which caused a succession crisis in that Kingdom. The Portuguese interfered in the process by supporting the claim of Enrique's daughter Juana (married to the Portuguese King Afonso V) over Isabel, Enrique's half-sister. The conflict on the Peninsula spread out throughout the Atlantic Ocean as well, where Portuguese and Spanish fleets clashed close to the African shores. Unlike the inconclusive outcome of the battle of Toro (Zamora), the Portuguese were clearly victorious in the Atlantic conflict as they were far better organised and better equipped for naval warfare than their Iberian counterparts. Portuguese superiority was owed not only to their experience in trading and navigating along the African coast, but also to the early privatisation of the monopoly of the Guinean trade by the Crown, and its lease to a wealthy businessman, Fernão Gomes. With the private administration of the exploration voyages, the leaseholders of Guinea's monopoly (backed by Genoese capital) helped the Portuguese authorities build and establish an annual trading fleet from Guinea, as well as recruit the best pilots and masters involved in the discovery and navigation of the African coast. The ability to anticipate capital from this trade, combined with the familiarity with the African coast and its currents gave the Portuguese a clear edge, and played a considerable role in repelling Castilian attempts at establishing any sort of trading factories in Guinea, Cape Verde, or Mina. The conflict on the seas of Atlantic Africa culminated in 1478 with the capture of thirty five Castilian ships carrying a considerable cargo of gold from Mina.⁴¹⁷ In the following year, the treaty of Alcáçovas (1479) confirmed the end of hostilities and established a truce between the two Iberian kingdoms. Portugal recognised Isabella's rights as a ruler of Castile, and relinquished any claims to the Canary Islands. In return,

⁴¹⁶ Florentino Pérez Embid, *Los descubrimientos en el Atlántico y la rivalidad castellano-portuguesa hasta el Tratado de Tordesillas* (Seville, 1948)

⁴¹⁷ Malyn Newitt, *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400-1668* (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2005) pp. 35-38

the Portuguese would see their sovereignty over the Guinea trade recognised, and the trade in Atlantic Archipelagos of Madeira, Azores, and Cape Verde.⁴¹⁸

At the same time, Castile also had its own share of experiences with slavery and colonisation in the Atlantic. Portuguese expeditions capturing and exchanging slaves in Guinea, and employing them in the cultivation of sugar-cane in Madeira and later in Cape Verde, were contemporary with Spanish's own enterprises in conquering and enslaving the native Guanche and Gomero populations of the Canary archipelago. Those early experiences and first-hand knowledge of slave practices would prove fundamental in shaping Spain's own imperial strategies regarding the slave trade, and its future policies in the Caribbean and the American mainland. Castile's motivations for conquering the Canary Islands, besides a natural progression of the *Reconquista*, were mostly tied to the search for African gold, and the archipelago's strategic position close to the Barbary Coast and the Moroccan markets. Castile hoped either to find gold on the Islands, or to secure it through the control of the maritime routes that connected to the sub-Saharan region of the *Río do Ouro* (current day Senegal River) from where the trans-Saharan caravans were believed to get the precious metal.⁴¹⁹ However, no deposits were found in the archipelago, and the conflict with the Portuguese had quelled Castile's ambitions in Upper Guinea and Senegambia. In the absence of gold, Castile turned its attention towards colonisation instead, searching for ways to turn the settlement on the Canaries into a profitable enterprise. The economic exploitation of the Islands was leased to private investors, who attempted to introduce technology employed in the Mediterranean and the other Atlantic archipelagos, but without much success. In the end, it would be through the capture and sale as slaves of its native populations to Iberian and North African markets that the colonisation of the archipelago netted its biggest profits.⁴²⁰

The Castilian rulers eventually realised that the conquest and colonisation of the archipelago was an enterprise that could be financially supported through the subjugation and enslavement of Guanche populations. The Canary Islands would be transformed into commercial entrepôts and slave hubs, and later into common stopovers for slave journeys

⁴¹⁸ Bailey W. Diffie, George Winius, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580*, vol. I (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1977) pp. 152-3

⁴¹⁹ Carlos Riley, "Ilhas Atlânticas e Costa Africana" in Francisco Bethencourt, Kirti Chaudhuri, *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, vol. I (Lisbon: Circulo de Leitores, 1998) pp. 142-145

⁴²⁰ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *A Economia dos Descobrimentos Henriquinos* (Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1962) pp. 311-348

to African and Spanish American ports.⁴²¹ Castilian merchants actively began to engage with the African slave trade, and brought slaves from its coast to the Canary Islands, at the end of the fifteenth century, making the archipelago fulfill a similar role to the Portuguese slave factories of Cape Verde and São Tomé. The Canary Islands thus represented Spain's first imperial experience at settlement and colonisation in the Atlantic region, and concurrently, with the commercialisation of slavery. The subjugation and enslavement of the native Guanche populations served a double purpose – political and economic, conquest and colonisation –, effectively displaying how slavery could be employed as an instrument of empire building, and how it stood at the very foundation of the Spanish imperial enterprise.⁴²² Slavery and the trade of slaves was therefore embedded in the Spanish imperial expansion from a very early stage. Not only did it challenge Portuguese ventures on the African coast, but the colonisation of the Canary Islands also served as a testing ground for the later occupation in the Indies. Spanish experiences in the Canary archipelago would be transposed to the circum-Caribbean, and replicated in Hispaniola after the arrival of Christopher Columbus. Slavery had proven a viable strategy in sustaining Spanish settlement in the Canaries, and soon assumed a centre stage in supporting the colonisation in America as well.⁴²³

The profits generated by the Portuguese trade in slaves on Africa's markets, especially the Mina gold, no doubt inspired the early Spanish enterprises in the Americas, and the perspective of finding a new source for supplying slaves encouraged the early policies of violence and exploitation towards the Taíno in the Caribbean. Christopher Columbus himself was rather familiar with the African slave trade when he arrived in America, since he had spent considerable time in Portugal and participated in various expeditions to Africa's coast during the 1470s and 1480s.⁴²⁴ Columbus sailed to Guinea many times, visited the Portuguese fort of São Jorge da Mina on the Gold Coast, and displayed an extensive knowledge of the Upper Guinea regions in his journals, comparing the flora, fauna, and geography of the Caribbean with the ones he had observed in Africa.⁴²⁵ The discourse used in Columbus' logs and correspondence contains a

⁴²¹ Manuel Lobo Cabrera, *La esclavitud en las Canarias orientales en el siglo XVI* (negros, moros y moriscos) (Las Palmas, 1982), 103–104

⁴²² Soule, "From Africa to the Ocean Sea"

⁴²³ Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 186-7; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 6-9

⁴²⁴ P.E.H. Hair, "Columbus from Guinea to America", *History in Africa*, vol. 17 (1990), pp. 113-129

⁴²⁵ William D. Phillips Jr., "Africa and the Atlantic Islands meet the Garden of Eden: Christopher Columbus' view of America", *Journal of World History*, Vol. 3, nº2 (1992) pp. 149-164 [153-156]

significant ‘African element’, according to Toby Green. Columbus not only employed the same strategies used by the Portuguese in the exploration of West Africa, sending presents to “a nearby king” upon landing in Cuba, but also mimicked the language and nomenclature used on the African coast (naming places after Cabo Verde and Santiago, adopting African words like *almadía* in his writings), and compared the indigenous trade in cloth to the one “brought from Guinea, from the river of Sierra Leone”.⁴²⁶ One of the first letters of Columbus to the Catholic Kings after his first voyage described precisely how to best profit from the newly discovered territories. According to the explorer, the outpost in La Isabela could easily be sustained through the enslavement of the local Taínos, and the island could be turned into a slave colony, mimicking the early experiences in the Canary archipelago.⁴²⁷

However, contrary to the Canaries’ colonisation, the Spanish did find gold in the Caribbean. The first settlers were met by Amerindians wearing gold jewellery and ornaments, and were soon guided to its deposits. The Spanish began to explore early placer mining in Hispaniola (San Cristóbal, Cibao, Buenaventura, and Concepción de la Vega), and as the exploration of the Caribbean continued, in Puerto Rico and Cuba as well. Thereby, the Caribbean Islands became the biggest gold production areas in America during the first two decades of the sixteenth century.⁴²⁸

The existence of gold deposits in the New World, combined with the apparent demographic collapse of its indigenous population, encouraged a military occupation of the islands for the exploitation of its mineral resources. The enslavement of the local population would not only fulfil the labour needs of the Spanish regarding gold mining and basic sustenance through agriculture, but also generated profits via the creation of a new slave route based in America to supply the Atlantic archipelagos or the Iberian slave markets, as there was a seemingly abundant Native American population upon Spanish arrival. The profits generated from selling them as slaves would finance the continuation of Columbus’ voyage expeditions, as the small deposits of gold in Hispaniola did not produce sufficient output to cover its costs.⁴²⁹ It is not surprising that the first shipment

⁴²⁶ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave*, pp. 181-2

⁴²⁷ Kathleen Deagan, José María Cruxent, *Columbus Outpost among the Taínos: Spain and America at La Isabela, 1493-1498* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013)

⁴²⁸ John TePaske, *A New World of Gold and Silver* (Boston: Brill, 2010) pp. 23-4, 30-4

⁴²⁹ John Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World. Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 19-20

to Castile by Columbus was precisely “three savage Caribs” to be presented at the Court, together with some gold samples. However, the proposal for the creation of a new slave colony based on the subjugation of the local Caribbean natives, and their respective sale on the markets of Seville, was promptly rejected by the Catholic Kings. The Amerindians were covered by the clauses of the Papal Bull *Inter caetera*, and should (in theory) be exempt from slavery. Despite the Crown’s refusal and prohibition of enslavement, Columbus continued his raiding and plundering campaigns against Cacique Guatiguana in Hispaniola, and sent 550 of his healthiest slaves to Castile in 1495. In 1498, he sent five more ships carrying 800 slaves to be sold in the Atlantic archipelagos of Cape Verde and the Canary Islands. As evidenced by his personal agenda, slavery was fundamentally embedded in Columbus’ enterprise, and consequently, in the early colonisation of America. He would continue his slave trading activities until he was summoned back to the Kingdom, and removed from office.⁴³⁰

The chronicles of early Spanish voyages and the beginning of the colonisation in America showcase how slavery was actively present from the beginning of the Spanish exploration of the New World. The familiarity with the economic structure of the Portuguese slave trade, and the previous Castilian and Portuguese experiences in the Atlantic archipelagos influenced and shaped Columbus’ vision when settling in the Caribbean.⁴³¹ The knowledge collected during his previous African voyages was present in his discourse, and shaped his policies for exploiting the territories and financing the Caribbean enterprise. Although the Spanish had previous experience with dealing with slavery in the Canary Islands and with the subjugation of the Guanches, Portuguese slaving practices and an African element were present in the early Spanish colonial policies, as seen in Columbus’ actions and discourse. The subjugation of the native populations in Hispaniola, the exploitation of their labour, and the profits of shipping them across the Atlantic as slaves displayed a clear interconnection between slaving practices in Africa and America since the very beginning of the Spanish colonisation.

The earliest phases of the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and its economic exploitation relied heavily on previous Iberian experiences with slavery in Africa, especially in Upper Guinea. The emergence of an early Modern Iberian Atlantic was

⁴³⁰ Peter O. Koch, *To the ends of the Earth. The Age of European explorers* (London: McFarland & Company Inc., 2003) pp. 118, 126, 129-130

⁴³¹ William D. Phillips Jr., “Africa and the Atlantic Islands” pp. 163-4

supported by Portuguese and Spanish experiences in Africa, and gained a renewed significance after the catastrophic annihilation of the Taíno in Hispaniola, which greatly raised the demand for slave labour in the Caribbean and opened the door for the creation of a new direct branch of the slave trade. The mass shipment of African captives from Guinea in the following century contributed to the inception of what Toby Green describes as a “pan-Atlantic space”. Therefore, the foundation of a transatlantic slave trade at the onset of the sixteenth century was owed to two separate processes: the expansion of Portuguese commercial enterprises on Africa’s coast, and the extermination of the local Amerindian populations by the Spanish in the Caribbean. Those events would be directly interconnected in the creation of transatlantic slave ventures and, according to Green, show how “slavery was fundamental to early Spanish undertakings” in America.⁴³²

African Slavery in the colonisation of the Spanish Caribbean

Pillaging, looting, and the pursuit of gold and silver were the main driving forces behind Spanish early incursions in America. As the river deposits of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and Cuba began to die out, the gold output of the Caribbean fell at an accelerated rate. The expedition to Mexico led by Hernán Cortés offered Spanish conquerors and colonizers a new avenue to continue their search for riches and precious metals, and thus the majority of settlers moved from the extraction economies in the Caribbean to the mainland. The movement of people to New Spain and Peru, where Cortés and Pizarro ran a plunder economy in the Aztec and Incan empires, drained the Caribbean Islands of most of its settlers, and was partly responsible for the eventual decimation of the native populations.⁴³³ However, precious metals were not the only booty available to the conquistadors. The prospect of seizing and exploiting the indigenous labour force and local tributary systems offered an extra incentive to colonists looking to profit from the American conquest. Spanish *conquistadores* swiftly replaced the former authorities on the American mainland, and after the initial period of *entradas* and plundering expeditions, took over the local economic industries for sources of income. To this purpose, indigenous populations were forcefully employed in multiple productive tasks,

⁴³² Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 180-89

⁴³³ TePaske, *Gold and Silver*, p. 34

from agriculture to mining. Their labour force was exploited through the implementation of a labour system, the *encomiendas*, and overseen by the conquistadores. The *encomenderos* (grant holders) collected their economic benefits, which would then be redirected and invested in the development of Spanish colonies.⁴³⁴

Therefore, early Spanish Caribbean settlements relied first and foremost on the forced labour of local Amerindian populations for the economic development of their colonies. The first major coerced migrations registered on the Caribbean Sea were actually native Amerindians, transported from Central America to Cuba, and later to Panama, Honduras, and the South American mainland. Amerindian slave trafficking was one of Nicaragua's main trades by the mid-1530s, registering a yearly movement of close to 10,000 Indian slaves at the peak of its trade. The preference for Amerindians for coerced labour was linked to economic reasons, as local populations were far easier (and cheaper) to move around and replace by the European conquerors.⁴³⁵ This movement of forced indigenous labour accompanied the Spanish process of conquest in New Spain and Peru, since the production of staple commodities was dependent on the existence of a native force, and the Indian captives could be distributed among the *conquistadores* and employed in their respective *encomiendas*. Close to 200,000 Indians were enslaved or forced into labour by the mid-sixteenth century, more than twice the number of African slaves who arrived in America by legal means between 1500 and 1580.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Kenneth Andrien, "Spanish Atlantic System", pp. 58-62

⁴³⁵ Seymour Drescher, "White Atlantic? The choice of African slave labour in the Plantation Americas" in David Eltis, Frank D. Lewis, Kenneth L. Sokoloff, *Slavery in the development of the Americas*, pp. 41-42; Figure 4.1

⁴³⁶ Murdo J. Macleod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History 1520–1720* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 48–56

Figure 7 – The Spanish Caribbean c. 1600



Source: Taken from David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), p. 13

The exploitation of forced Indigenous labour, combined with the takeover of the pre-Columbine imperial architecture, enabled a quick establishment and an early consolidation of the Spanish rule on the American mainland.⁴³⁷ Following the conquest period, the effects of warfare, displacement, and pathological diseases became painfully apparent among the native Amerindian populations across several regions, and had catastrophic results. In Hispaniola, the Taíno population, estimated to have been around 300,000 before the arrival of Columbus, had dropped to less than 10,000 by 1515, and continued to decline until its eventual collapse in the mid-1550s.⁴³⁸ In Mexico, the population is estimated to have dropped from 20 million inhabitants before European arrival to just under 1.5 million at the dawn of the seventeenth century.⁴³⁹ As the Spanish imperial conquest continued to advance through the plunder and devastation of the continent, the demographic collapse of the indigenous populations left Spanish colonizers

⁴³⁷ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic*, pp. 90-1

⁴³⁸ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 185-6

⁴³⁹ Woodrow Borah and Sherburne Cook, *The Aboriginal Population of Mexico on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963) *apud* Kenneth Andrien, "The Spanish Atlantic System" p. 60

under strain and incapable of answering their colonies' labour demands, especially in the production of foodstuff and staple commodities for local consumption and domestic markets, leaving them in dire need of a workforce.⁴⁴⁰ The solution would be found in the introduction of an alternative source of forced labour, this time coming from West Africa, where the Portuguese had established slave factories and commercial outposts, and had accumulated much experience with the slave markets on its coasts.

The collapse of the Taíno populations in the Caribbean led the Governor of Hispaniola, Nicolás de Ovando, to be the first authority to search for new sources of forced labour, in order to continue the economic exploitation of the new continent at the dawn of the sixteenth century.⁴⁴¹ The solution for the developing economies in the regions of the New World experiencing labour shortages would be found in the introduction of African captives. The first shipment carrying African slaves from Iberia arrived in Santo Domingo as early as 1502, thus marking the beginning of the Atlantic trade. King Fernando himself sponsored the shipment of African slaves to Hispaniola to explore its gold mines: one shipment in 1505, carrying 100 captives, and another one with 50 more slaves in 1510.⁴⁴² Africans were effectively among the very first individuals to arrive to the New World, accompanying Spanish soldiers as auxiliaries, domestic servants, settlers, seamen, cooks, and artisans. However, the first Africans that disembarked in America did not come directly from Africa, but rather travelled from the Iberian Peninsula. In most cases, they had lived in the Iberian cities for some time and were completely familiarised with Portuguese and Spanish language and culture. They were called *ladinos* (Hispanicised Africans). In later decades, the direct routes from Africa to America would carry 'non-cultured' or 'unacculturated' slaves, described as *bozales* by American colonial authorities.⁴⁴³ Some of the first Africans in America even participated in the exploration and conquest of the mainland, Mexico, Florida, and the Antilles, and even received rewards for their services as 'black conquistadores'.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁰ David Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

⁴⁴¹ Antonio Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias y la region histórica del Caribe, 1580-1640*. (Sevilla: CSIC, 2002) pp. 117-118

⁴⁴² Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God. Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1670* (London: Harvard University Press, 1976) pp. 7-8; Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 187-88

⁴⁴³ Leo Garofolo, "The shape of the diaspora: The movement of Afro-Iberians to Colonial Spanish America" in Sherwin Bryant, Rachel Sarah O'Toole, Ben Vinson III (Eds.), *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012) pp. 27-49

⁴⁴⁴ Mathew Restall, "Black conquistadors, Armed Africans in Early Spanish America", *The Americas*, vol. 57, issue 2, 2000 pp. 171-205

Much like Portugal, Spain's vicinity to North Africa and early experiences battling Islamic forces during the *Reconquista* had familiarised its inhabitants with the enslavement of 'infidels'. The precedents set in the cities of the Iberian Peninsula and in the Canary archipelago helped legitimise the enslavement of thousands of sub-Saharan Africans. Similar to Portuguese narratives that justified the capture of slaves in Upper Guinea, Spanish's enslavement of black Africans was linked to a Catholic premise of 'Just War'.⁴⁴⁵ As the Native American populations began to wither, and the public discussions and theological debates regarding the abuses and enslavement of the Indians multiplied, the support for the importation of African slaves to America increased exponentially. The 'defence of the Indians', led by Francisco de Vit3ria, Juan de Zum3rraga, and Bartolom3 de las Casas culminated with the prohibition of the enslavement of the Amerindians, and the implementation of the *Leyes Nuevas* in 1542. The combination of those factors forced the American settlers to turn to the next richest source of coerced labour available: West Africa. Bartolom3 de las Casas himself recommended the introduction and employment of African slaves in the Americas to relieve the local Indian labour force. During his earlier years in the Caribbean, Las Casas himself encouraged Charles V to grant a licence for 4,000 African slaves to be shipped to Hispaniola, displaying the importance of the transatlantic slave trade for Spanish imperial undertakings in America from a very early stage.⁴⁴⁶

African slaves would come to be regarded as the economic answer to the labour shortages of Spanish colonies in America from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards. The high death rate of the native populations on the Caribbean Islands and the mainland, victims of warfare, displacement, and the lack of immunity to European diseases, caused alarm for Spanish colonists, who could not explore the agriculture, fishing, and mining industries of the New World without a native labour force. The migratory movement of Europeans (mostly Castilians) from Iberia to Spanish America was not significant enough to secure its economic sustenance and basic needs.⁴⁴⁷ The number of Iberian migrants that arrived in Spanish America from 1579 to 1600 was still

⁴⁴⁵ See Chapter 2

⁴⁴⁶ Francisco R. Calder3n, *Historia econ3mica de la Nueva Espa1a en tiempo de los Austrias* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura econ3mica, 1988) pp. 151-66

⁴⁴⁷ Linda Newson, "The demographic impact of colonisation", in Victor Bulmer-Thomas, J. H. Coatsworth, Roberto Cort3s Conde (Eds.), *Cambridge Economic History of Latin America*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) pp. 152-163

vastly inferior to the number of African slaves that disembarked in the port of Cartagena alone during same time period.⁴⁴⁸

The Crown initially sent African slaves to Spanish colonies from the Iberian Peninsula, but a direct legal route was opened shortly after 1513, and legally extended to Portuguese merchants in the 1520s.⁴⁴⁹ Following the example of Governor de Ovando, Spanish high officials in America began to request the King for grants to carry African slaves to other Caribbean settlements as well. The judge of the *Real Audiencia* of Santo Domingo, Alonzo Suazo, officially requested slaves to be sent from Seville in 1517, and in the following year, the King issued a royal permit allowing the residents of the Spanish Caribbean to bring slaves from Africa. By the mid-1520s, the route from Cape Verde to the Spanish circum-Caribbean was already fully established, regulated, and taxed by both Iberian Crowns.⁴⁵⁰ The demand for African slave labour became especially pronounced in the areas where the devastating effects of pathogens and warfare were most visible, with the circum-Caribbean witnessing a considerable influx of African slaves from Guinea in the following decades.⁴⁵¹ The Bishop and the Governor of Fernandina (Cuba) received orders of the Crown in 1531 to gather all of the Island's yearly revenues generated from custom taxes (*almojarifazgo*) and gold production, and employ them in the purchase of "black slaves". Across the Caribbean, Crown officials were to use the royal revenues to negotiate slave shipments with private agents who could bring "slaves from the Kingdom of Portugal, or other parts" to their cities, and distribute them among the local inhabitants to help populate and colonise the Island. The returns generated from the employment of the slaves by the settlers, through mining, agriculture, commerce, or other productive industries, were to be deposited in the Royal Treasury, until the King's initial investment was covered in full. The officials of Fernandina followed the Royal Decree, and received confirmation of an incoming shipment of 700 African slaves for 7,000 gold *pesos* two years later.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁸ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, p. 7

⁴⁴⁹ Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, *Negreiros Portugueses na Rota das Índias de Castela (1541-1555)* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 1999) p. 23

⁴⁵⁰ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 187-92

⁴⁵¹ David Eltis, Frank D. Lewis, Kenneth L. Sokoloff, "Introduction", *Slavery in the development of the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 1-27; David Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

⁴⁵² AGI, *Santo Domingo*, 1121, L.1, f. 78-78v "Compra de esclavos negros con las rentas del almojarifazgo" 4-4-1531; f.157-160v

The Spanish authorities in the *Audiencias* and *cabildos* (city councils) progressively turned to African slave labour in the face of the diminishing Amerindian populations. In 1534, an official envoy in Honduras, Francisco de Barrientos, evaluated the mineral deposits of the region, and advised the King to exploit its mines through the shipment and employment of African slaves.⁴⁵³ A year later, the Governor of Castilla del Oro (Region of Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua) asked the Crown for a grant of 200 African slaves to work on the roads and buildings of Panama City.⁴⁵⁴ In a similar fashion, the royal accountant of Hispaniola, Alvaro Cavallero, organised a private partnership with the merchant Cebrian de Caritate in 1541 to act on behalf of the island's Treasury, and ship 2,000 slaves directly "from the Kingdom of Portugal, Islands, Cape Verde or Guinea", for a grand total of 10,000 *ducados* (5 *ducados* apiece). De Caritate was allowed to use Portuguese ships and crew for his operation, and even his factors could be Portuguese. All his requests and demands were catered to, since there was "a great need for black slaves" to work on the farms and estates of the Island.⁴⁵⁵ The importation of enslaved Africans presented itself as a perfect solution with clear financial advantages for the regions in need of coerced labour, as the short-term returns from their employment would be enough to cover their acquisition and transportation costs, supporting the development of their colonial economies in turn.⁴⁵⁶

Correspondence from the royal officials and city councils in America show that African slaves were already prevalent and commonplace among the Caribbean societies as early as the 1530s. According to George Scelle, the Africans slave population in Cuba doubled between 1532 and 1534, and the price of slaves in Cape Verde skyrocketed as the demand for African slave labour increased in America.⁴⁵⁷ In the same year (1534), the members of the *cabildo* of San Juan in Puerto Rico voiced their concerns regarding the island's large black population and the town's complete reliance on captives for their day-to-day operations. At the same time, the members acknowledged that they could not survive without them, describing African slaves almost as a "necessary evil", as they performed all the labour that supported Spanish colonisation in the region.⁴⁵⁸ In 1540,

⁴⁵³ AGI, *Guatemala*, 49, N10 "Cartas de oficiales reales de Honduras" 25-7-1534

⁴⁵⁴ AGI, *Panama*, 234, L.5, f. 189-189v "Registro de oficio y partes: Tierra Firme. Respuesta a Francisco de Barrionuevo" 1-3-1534

⁴⁵⁵ AGI, *Santo Domingo*, 868, L.2, f. 60

⁴⁵⁶ Bowser, *African Slave*, pp. 27-30

⁴⁵⁷ George Scelle, *La traite négrière aux Indes de Castille: contrats et traités d'assiento*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie de la Société du Recueil J.-B. Sirey & du Journal du Palais, 1906), vol. 1, p. 202

⁴⁵⁸ Quoted from Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, p. 5

there was such a great number of African slaves in Spanish American colonies, that multiple officials across all *Audiencias* explicated their fear of potential slave uprisings and revolts. By the end of the first half of the sixteenth century, multiple communities of *cimarrones* (escaped slaves) wandered Central America and caused great apprehension in Spanish authorities.⁴⁵⁹

African slaves were progressively taken to the settlements in Central and South America as well, and even participated in Spanish's early exploration and military campaigns in Mexico and Peru in the 1520s and 30s.⁴⁶⁰ Later, they would partake in the Spanish colonisation itself. In 1540, the Viceroy of the Indies, María de Toledo, received a grant of 100 slaves "free of duties" to be taken from "Cape Verde or Guinea", and to be specifically employed on the farms and estates of Hispaniola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.⁴⁶¹ In the same year, the Governor of Cartagena, Pedro de Heredia, was also authorised to bring 100 African slaves to work on the farms and help the authorities with the colonisation of the region.⁴⁶² Another shipment of 165 slaves disembarked at Puerto de Caballos in Honduras in 1542, and was distributed by the inhabitants of San Pedro, Gracias a Dios, and Comayagua, to help with the local food production and mining activities.⁴⁶³ Following the attacks of French pirates which devastated Santa Marta in 1547, the members of the *cabildo* of the province of Magdalena (northern Colombia) requested the King to send settlers – *pobladores* and *labradores* – to help rebuild the city and colonise the surrounding land. Each of those settlers were to be accompanied by at least "two black slaves", so they could be employed in "farming and cattle raising". At the same time, they should help with the city's rebuilding and work on the construction of a fortress that would defend the port against future piracy attacks.⁴⁶⁴ When the city of Coro (in the province of Venezuela) suffered a large epidemic crisis at the end of the century, the city officials urgently requested the *Audiencia* of Hispaniola for a shipment of 200 Guinea slaves to mitigate the situation since there was virtually "no one left" to

⁴⁵⁹ María Cristina Navarrete, *Cimarrones y Palenques en el Siglo XVII* (Cali: Facultad de Humanidades, 2003)

⁴⁶⁰ Frederick F. Bowser, *The African slave in colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974) pp. 5-9

⁴⁶¹ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 423, L.19, ff. 364v-365

⁴⁶² AGI, *Santa Fe*, 987, L.2, ff. 119v-120 "Real Cédula a Pedro de Heredia" (14-8-1540)

⁴⁶³ Paul Lokken, "From the 'Kingdoms of Angola' to Santiago de Guatemala: The Portuguese Asientos and Spanish Central America, 1595-1640", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 93, nº2 (2013) pp. 171-203

⁴⁶⁴ AGI, *Santa Fe*, 66, N9 "Carta del cabildo de Santa Marta" (27-4-1547)

work on its farms and feed the population. Through their employment in the fields, the city's food stock could be replenished and ensure the basic sustenance of its population.⁴⁶⁵ Across the various territories of the Circum-Caribbean, African slavery was vital for the success of the Spanish colonisation.

Slaves were present in all main economic industries of America and played a pivotal role in the development of Spanish colonial societies. They were initially employed in tasks linked to economic production, especially in the exploitation of natural resources such as the gold mining in the placers of the Caribbean Islands and Central America, in Cuba, Hispaniola, or Honduras. African slaves were also extremely valuable in pearl fishing. The pearling industry in the Caribbean employed a great number of African slaves, especially on the Islands of Cubagua and La Margarita, off the Cumaná coast of Venezuela.⁴⁶⁶ Even after some of the pearling fisheries registered a gradual decline in production from the 1550s on, African slaves were still requested and brought to Isla Margarita and Rio de La Hacha at the end of the sixteenth century to continue their extraction.⁴⁶⁷ Pearls remained a prominent commodity in the *Carrera* shipments to Seville during the early seventeenth century, and it was shortly revitalised after the discovery of new fisheries of the coast of Panama and in the Gulf of California.⁴⁶⁸

In spite of the employment of African slaves in specialised extraction industries during the first half of the sixteenth century, they would gradually assume a plethora of labour roles and activities across multiple economic sectors that were fundamental to sustaining the Spanish colonisation of America. The vast number of African slaves transported to Spanish America contributed not only to the economic vitality of its colonies, but also to the repopulation of the circum-Caribbean and the coastal mainland in the wake of the Columbian exchange and the Amerindian demographic collapse.⁴⁶⁹ Slaves were gradually employed in other economic sectors such as food production through agriculture and animal husbandry. Staple products, such as cacao, flour, and tobacco in Venezuela, sugar in Puerto Rico, hides in the Río de la Plata, pork and maize

⁴⁶⁵ AGI, *Caracas*, 1 L.3, ff.39v-40 (13-10-1600)

⁴⁶⁶ Kenneth R. Andrews, *The Spanish Caribbean: Trade and Plunder, 1530-1630* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978) pp. 31.3; Michel Perri, "'Ruined and Lost': Spanish Destruction of the Pearl Coast in the early sixteenth century", *Environment and History*, XV (2009) pp. 129-161

⁴⁶⁷ AGI, *Caracas*, L.1, f. 71-71v; *Indiferente General*, Leg. 1952, L.2, f.35v-36

⁴⁶⁸ Molly Warsh, "Adorning Empire: A history of the Early modern pearl trade, 1492-1688" (Ph.D. diss., John Hopkins University, 2009)

⁴⁶⁹ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 3-5

in Cartagena, and wine and wheat in Peru, were all produced by African slave labour, and exchanged on America's own colonial markets.⁴⁷⁰ Slaves also worked on some plantations, not only in sugar cane cultivation in New Spain and Cuba, but also on Indigo plantations in Central America, and in the production of its dyes, "the greatest industry" of Nicaragua according to the reports of the *cabildo* of León.⁴⁷¹ Slaves were a common sight in the rural hinterlands, working on the farms and *haciendas* producing foodstuffs that sustained the growth of urban populations. The *cabildo* of Buenos Aires, in need of improving its food stocks, pleaded with the Crown to introduce "negros from Brazil and Angola" due to the "illnesses and plagues" that had wiped out the native Indian populations at the end of the sixteenth century. According to the city officials, not only was the native force scarce, but Africans were also more resistant to the warm climate than the Amerindians. Across the circum-Caribbean and the American mainland, slaves were seen as the perfect solution to replace the Amerindians in tasks that were necessary for the basic functioning of the colonial societies.⁴⁷²

Thus, African slaves progressively assumed tasks that once had been performed by Amerindians in all of those territories. However, their presence would not be limited to economic sectors or rural hinterlands, but also extend to the main urban centres of Spanish colonial society.⁴⁷³ African slavery was far from limited to the production sector and the countryside, and Africans operated as skilled labour in many cities of Latin America, working in the urban construction sector, domestic service, and artisan work in the workshops of New Spain and Peru. Even though African slaves were a common presence in the productive labours and farms in the hinterland, slavery was as much of an urban phenomenon as a rural one in the Spanish colonies. In the large urban centres of Cartagena, Santa Fe, and Mexico City, slaves constituted somewhere between 10 and 25 percent of their total populations, and in Lima, they reached as high as 50 percent.⁴⁷⁴ In those cities, slaves worked as artisans and produced textiles and clothes in the various *obrajes*, which would subsequently be sold across the Spanish empire and feature in the intra-American trade, some of African-made *paños* travelled as far as Manila, through

⁴⁷⁰ Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, pp. 171-180; María del Carmen Borrego Plá, *Cartagena de Indias en el siglo XVI* (Seville, 1983), 42-43, 63-66

⁴⁷¹ AGI, *Guatemala*, 43, N21

⁴⁷² Carmen Bernand, *Negros esclavos y libres en las ciudades hispanoamericanas* (Madrid: 2001) pp. 21-2

⁴⁷³ Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God. Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1670* (London: Harvard University Press, 1976)

⁴⁷⁴ Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 5-6; Bernand, *Negros esclavos*, p. 11

Acapulco.⁴⁷⁵ Urban slaves worked at the port-cities' docks and warehouses, as sailors on ships, as blacksmiths, and as carpenters, stonemasons, and every day workers in the construction sector. African slaves also served as household and domestic servants, cooks, and entertainers. They were regarded as symbols of prestige and distinct social status for their owners, who could own up to twenty slaves.⁴⁷⁶

As the Spanish colonisation continued to advance onto the American mainland, so did the need to develop an effective administrative network that could connect the sources of wealth in the interior to its main coastal urban centres. The discovery of vast silver deposits in the highlands of Zacatecas and Potosí in the late 1540s, called for an improvement of the road network between those mining sites in the mainland and the cities on the coast, as well as some changes in the Spanish shipment system. Those changes were realised in the institution of the *Carrera de Indias* (Royal convoy fleets), a renewed concentration on the silver production districts in the highlands of New Spain and Peru, and in the transformation of Spanish America's port-cities into administrative centres and naval fortresses, whose network could efficiently connect and patrol the Caribbean sea lanes and defend them against foreign threats. The transportation of precious bullion required adequate storage and collection bases in the Caribbean, which were now supplied by a network of strategic collection centres and defensive bases which could assure its shipments and protect them from increasing piracy activities of corsairs like Le Clerc and Hawkins in the Caribbean Sea.⁴⁷⁷

The building and renovation of adequate fortresses and strongholds across the circum-Caribbean once again relied on the workforce of African slaves. Throughout all of the Spanish colonies, official documentations stressed the need for slaves to work on the fortification of Caribbean port-cities' defences. Official authorities negotiated the multiple slave grants of the Crown, and contracted Spanish and foreign merchant consortiums to bring slaves to work on the fortifications of Nombre de Dios, Havana, San Juan, Cartagena, Santo Domingo, Veracruz, and Portobello.⁴⁷⁸ On many occasions, it was the Crown who covered the costs of the operations in order for the various *Audiencias* to

⁴⁷⁵ Frank T. Proctor III, "Afro-Mexican Slave Labor in the Obrajes de Paños of New Spain, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *The Americas*, 60, n^o1 (2003): 33-58

⁴⁷⁶ María Cristina Navarrete, *Génesis y desarrollo de la esclavitud en Columbia siglos XVI y XVII* (Columbia: Progamma Editorial del Universidad del Valle, Cali, 2005)

⁴⁷⁷ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, p. 10

⁴⁷⁸ AGI, *Santo Domingo*, 869, L.5, f.25-25v, 196-197v, 2280 L3 F34V-35V; *Panama*, 236 L9, F330-330V; *Santa Fe*, 62 N35; *Mexico*, 19 N97

bring the necessary slaves from Africa, either by pledging future revenues, or by commissioning special contracts or ‘mini-*asientos*’ with private agents in Iberia to secure regular slave shipments with fixed market prices to supply the colonies in need.⁴⁷⁹

Colonial mining therefore reoriented the Spanish enterprise in America in the second half of the sixteenth century, and became its most crucial economic sector for the Crown’s revenues. African slaves were once again fundamental for its exploitation. Slaves had been employed in mining activities since the beginning of the Spanish expansion, in the river creeks and placer sites of the Caribbean, especially in Cuba and Hispaniola, collecting gold and copper samples. The very first shipment of slaves was precisely intended to explore those mines, as previously described. In the Isthmus of Panama, slaves were present in the mines of Veragua and Honduras, at Nueva Segovia in Nicaragua, and in Venezuela. Alonso de Maldonado, the president of the *Real Audiencia* of Guatemala and Nicaragua, employed up to 1,500 African slaves in the mining sites of Olancho in 1543, while local observers claimed that their number actually surpassed 2,000 individuals. Crown officials in Santo Domingo noted that almost all the slaves that had been employed in the mines of Hispaniola, were simply shipped to either Honduras or Peru to continue this activity.⁴⁸⁰ The region where the presence of African slaves in colonial mining would be more lasting and impactful was the New Kingdom of Granada (Colombia), where from roughly half of the total gold exported from Spanish America to Seville originated.⁴⁸¹

Unlike the gold extraction experiences in the Caribbean Islands, Central America, and Ecuador later on, whose industries were short lived and deposits quickly exhausted, the gold rush of New Granada lasted well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in the mining sites of Mariquita, Antioquia, and Popayán. Scholar Germán Colmenares identified two separate gold cycles for New Granada: the first one from 1550 roughly to 1620, and the second one from 1680 to 1820. During the first cycle, the districts of New Granada relied on multiple sources of coerced labour for the mining of precious metal.⁴⁸² The gold output of New Granada was somewhere around 5,500 kilogram in the

⁴⁷⁹ AGI, *Mexico*, 24 N40, f.2 “Carta del virrey conde de Monterrey” (20-4-1600). On the early slave licence grants and preliminary *asientos* see chapter 5

⁴⁸⁰ Lokken, “Santiago de Guatemala,” pp. 171-203

⁴⁸¹ TePaske, *Gold and Silver*, p. 29

⁴⁸² Germán Colmenares, “La formación de la economía colonial, 1500-1740”, José Antonio Ocampo (Ed.), *Historia económica de Colombia*, 4th Edition (Bogotá: Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, 1996) pp. 2-22

1550s, its yearly production almost tripled (14,000 kilogram) during the first decade of the seventeenth century, when the transatlantic slave trade to Spanish America reached its most active years.⁴⁸³ This massive increase was owned not only to the richness of the mineral districts in New Granada, but also to the massive influx of African slaves who were employed in its extraction. The aggregation of the Portuguese empire with the Spanish Monarchy in 1581 would help transform the colonial economies in Spanish America, and the proliferation of New Christian merchant networks across the Atlantic helped bring an increasing numbers of Africans slaves to Spanish America. Many Portuguese slave merchants took residence in key points of South America, and Cartagena became the main door through which African slaves were introduced into the mining industries, carried southwards to the mineral districts of New Granada, or west to Peru via the Isthmus.⁴⁸⁴

During the first stages of Spanish colonisation, the gold and emerald mines in Caceres, Zaragoza, Velez, Pamplona, and Santa Fe relied on the coerced labour of Amerindian populations organised in *encomienda* and *repartimento* systems. As the occupation of the American territory continued to advance, the need for coerced workers progressively increased, especially after the discovery of new mineral sites in the 1580s, which coincided with a growing scarcity of Indian labour in the region, due to the devastation caused by pathogens introduced by the Europeans.⁴⁸⁵ The decline of the native population forced the miners of the city of Caceres in New Granada in 1581 to plead with the Crown to ship large numbers of African slaves to offset the loss of the local Amerindian force. The slaves could cost “no more than 30 *ducados*” each, so that the miners could acquire them without incurring significant losses, and properly work the mining sites, since there were “very few naturals left” to work on them.⁴⁸⁶ The shortage of Amerindian labour without any backup workforce threatened the revenues of the Treasury House in New Granada, according to visiting notary Lorenzo del Mármol. The notary wrote a memorandum to the Crown describing how “vital” the gold deposits in

⁴⁸³ TePaske, *Gold and Silver*, p. 37

⁴⁸⁴ Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, pp. 120-2; Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru ao tempo da União Ibérica: Mobilidade, cumplicidades e vivências*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2005)

⁴⁸⁵ Anthony McFarlane, *Columbia Before Independence. Economy, Society, and Politics under Bourbon Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp. 18-20

⁴⁸⁶ AGI, *Santa Fe*, 65 N4

New Granada were for the King's royal fifth, and its declining workforce could only be compensated with the direct shipment of African slaves to work in its mines.⁴⁸⁷

Answering the request of del Mármol, an inquiry (*consulta*) from the *Junta de Contaduría Mayor* acknowledged the severe shortage of native Amerindians in New Granada due to the heavy workload and abuses suffered at the hands of Spanish colonists, and authorised the shipment of 500 African slaves as requested by Mármol. The *Junta* gave orders to the president and judges of the *Casa de Contratación* (House of Trade) in Seville to advertise a public contract to take the slaves to New Granada, and arrange it with a private party.⁴⁸⁸ The deal was negotiated with one of the richest slave merchants of Seville, the Portuguese doctor Simão de Tovar, who cooperated with captain Juan de Mendonça de Camelau, and acquired 750 slave licences in January of 1589. From that concession, at least 500 were destined for Cartagena, and to be taken to New Granada from there in order to be employed in its mines.⁴⁸⁹ Native Indians were still present and employed in the mines whenever possible during the seventeenth century. The bishop of Cartagena denounced the Spanish settlers for greatly abusing and overworking the Amerindians in 1627, accusing them of “looking only after their black slaves and their estates” while the Indians “were left to the dogs”.⁴⁹⁰

African slaves were also present in Spain's main source of imperial revenue, silver mining. However, their employment in this particular economic activity was on a much smaller scale than in the gold mining industries of New Granada and Ecuador. Slaves could be found in the silver mines in Potosí and Huancavelica, but they constituted a small minority of its labour force. Colonial silver mining in Spanish America functioned through a *mita* system in the highlands of Peru, which was an adaptation of the Quechua system of conscripted Indian labour (enforced by the Spanish).⁴⁹¹ African slaves were precious and expensive investments for the men in charge of exploring the mines, and unlike the Amerindians employed through the *mita*, their death would have a significant financial impact on their owners. Royal officials of the *Audiencia* of Charcas (with

⁴⁸⁷ Josep Delgado Rivas, “The slave trade in the Spanish Empire (1501-1808)”, in Josep M. Fradera, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (Eds.), *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire* (New York: Berghan Books, 2013) pp. 17-18

⁴⁸⁸ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 741 N157 “Consulta de la Junta de Contaduria” (Madrid, 20-10-1587)

⁴⁸⁹ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 (Madrid, 8-01-1589)

⁴⁹⁰ Gabriel Martínez Reyes, *Cartas de los obispos de Cartagena de Indias durante el período hispánico, 1534-1820* (Medellín: Editorial Zuluaga, 1986) pp. 223-4

⁴⁹¹ Jeffrey A. Cole, *The Potosí Mita, 1573-1700. Compulsory Indian Labour in the Andes* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985)

jurisdiction over the mines at Potosí) refused to assign funds to bring African slaves to the silver mines, arguing that the *mitayos* “die and sicken quickly and if it were black slaves [it would] (...) cost the [miners] a lot of money”.⁴⁹² The hazardous environment of the mineral sites in the highlands discouraged the importation and employment of a costly slave force. The heavy workload often resulted in fatal accidents among the workers. The bad conditions were aggravated by the cold and humidity of the mines’ tunnels, where diseases like silicosis were a common result of inhaling dust, not to mention the effect of mercury. Friar Alonso de la Mota y Escobar described those and many other perils as the main problems of the mines, and claimed that they “were no place for Negros” since slaves would acquire “a thousand illnesses” in those sites and die, resulting in massive losses for the *Audiencias* and *cabildos* that purchased them. While the silver mines used some African slaves, they were vastly outnumbered by the *mita* Indians, and never exceeded more than 10 to 20 per cent of the labour force in those mines.⁴⁹³ Their cost also led miners to keep them away from the tunnels, and use them as a workforce in the mills, in transport of the ore to its refineries, and labour on the *Haciendas* next to the mines or in minting, rather than working the mines *per se*. Consequently, Indians and free labourers composed the largest fraction of the workforce at the silver mining sites of the highlands.⁴⁹⁴

As for New Spain’s mines, the Indians employed through *repartimiento* also represented the majority of its workforce, while African slaves were generally brought in to address localised population shortages or to cover the regions where Indian labour was scarce and impossible to relieve. On special occasions, agreements were negotiated with the *asentistas* in the Kingdom to secure a minimum supply of slaves at fixed and accessible prices, as was the case for Pedro Gomes Reinell in 1600. A similar deal to explore the mines in Zacatecas and Nueva Vizcaya was made years later, for which the viceroy asked 500 African slaves at fixed and accessible prices for its miners.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Nicholas Robins, *Mercury, Mining and Empire: the Human and Ecological cost of colonial silver mining in the Andes* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011) pp. 45-6

⁴⁹³ Peter J. H. Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain: Indian Labor in Potosi, 1545–1650* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico, Zacatecas, 1546-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Richard Garner, “Long-Term Silver Mining Trends in Spanish America: A comparative analysis of Peru and Mexico,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 39, n^o4 (1988) pp. 898-935

⁴⁹⁴ Peter Bakewell, *Silver Mining*, pp. 122-34

⁴⁹⁵ AGI, *Mexico*, 22 N32 “Carta del virrey Luis de Velasco” (22-12-1590); 24 N40 “Carta del virrey conde de Monterrey” (20-04-1600); 33 L2 “Carta del virrey marqués de Cadereyta” (22-07-1637)

Therefore, in spite of the fact that some African slaves were present at the silver sites of Potosí and Zacatecas, their employment in those areas was nowhere near as significant or impactful as in the gold mines of Popayán and Antioquia. Not only was the demographic collapse of native populations more felt in New Granada, but its mining sites were easily accessible, close to rivers, and located at fairly reasonable altitudes, thus presenting ideal conditions to bring slaves from Africa. In the highlands of the interior, the importation of a costly slave force who still had to undergo a long journey inland, simply did not offer any financial advantage for the miners over the employment of free and waged *mita* or *repartimiento* Indians, a fixed and reliable source of labour with little cost or risk to their employers. Where native populations remained abundant, African slaves offered neither a cheaper nor more a viable labour alternative.⁴⁹⁶

The occupation of the American territory over the course of the sixteenth century and the development of early Spanish colonial societies via the exploitation of different economic activities, from mining to agriculture, relied on the exploitation of a native workforce at a first stage, and gradually on the importation of a forced labour force from West Africa. By the second half of the sixteenth century, Spanish colonies had already moved on from the early plunder and extractive economies in the Caribbean to effective settlement and colonisation on the American mainland. Following the reform of the shipping system of the *Carrera de Indias*, and the silver mining boom enabled by the introduction of an amalgamation refining process in Mexico and Peru in the 1560s, Spanish American colonies and economies underwent significant transformations. Caribbean port-cities became governmental centres, and began to function as commercial hubs, stopovers, and redistribution centres for regional markets and intercolonial trade, as well as warehouses for the bullion brought from the mainland. The naval bases of the Caribbean secured the transshipment of the American treasury to the *Carrera de Indias* by offering a safe haven to its fleets and logistical support to inter-oceanic navigation.⁴⁹⁷ Accompanying this evolution, economic activities that sustained the livelihood and everyday needs of their populations, like agriculture, cattle breeding and other foodstuff productions, became increasingly important for local consumption in the Spanish empire. The fields that provided the sustenance for urban consumption were mostly located in the

⁴⁹⁶ Cole, *The Potosi Mita*, p. 4

⁴⁹⁷ Christopher Ward, *Imperial Panama: Commerce and Conflict in Isthmian America, 1550-1800* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 3rd ed, 2011)

rural areas of the mainland interior, and were almost exclusively worked by slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave labour was also vital in the production of other goods and colonial commodities that were shipped not only across the Atlantic, but also between America's regional markets. The presence of enslaved Africans was also important in urban centres, where they worked as artisans producing goods for domestic markets, and as construction workers, household servants, and everyday workers performing a plethora of tasks.⁴⁹⁸

Thus, the transatlantic slave trade not only supported economic activity in Caribbean societies, but enabled the occupation and colonisation of the American mainland, and the consolidation of its urban centres as well. African captives gradually replaced the diminishing native populations and supported the Spanish enterprise not only with their labour force but also with their numbers, serving as America's "de facto settlers".⁴⁹⁹ Their demographic impact became remarkably prominent not only in the rural hinterlands but also in the urban centres, where they performed countless regular day-to-day tasks that supported the Spanish enterprise in America. The employment of an African labour force in the early colonisation of America proved essential for the development of the Spanish imperial enterprise, and Africans (free and enslaved) virtually acted as Spain's "surrogate colonists" in the Caribbean.⁵⁰⁰ The exception to their fundamental economic impact appears to be in the silver mining industry, especially in the mines located at the Cerro Rico de Potosí, where a combination of coerced Amerindian work and the dangerous and often fatal environment in the Andean highlands resulted in an inauspicious (and financially disastrous) employment of African slave imports.⁵⁰¹

African slavery was therefore fundamental for Spanish colonisation of America. The shipment of an absolute minimum figure of 84,000 slaves across the Atlantic in less than a century from Columbus' first journey had a decisive impact on the inception and development of Spanish American colonial societies, and helped shape different settlement patterns, commercial policies, and consolidate urban centres in those same

⁴⁹⁸ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Aspectos Sociales en América Colonial. De extranjeros, contrabando y esclavos* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro Y Cuervo, 2001)

⁴⁹⁹ Borucki, Eltis, Wheat, "Atlantic history and the slave trade to Spanish America", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 120, nº2 (2015) pp. 433-461

⁵⁰⁰ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 3-14)

⁵⁰¹ Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain; Silver Mining*

territories.⁵⁰² This vibrant trade to the Spanish Caribbean colonies was in turn enabled by the Portuguese expansion and settlement in West Africa, whose businesses in, and experience with purchasing and capturing African slaves for more than a century was crucial in assisting the supply of the markets of the Spanish Indies.⁵⁰³ Taking advantage of this new branch of the slave trade, Portuguese merchants filled the role of brokers and intermediaries with the West African Coast and expanded the Atlantic slave business, by establishing new transatlantic routes linking Africa's slave markets with Spanish America. Thus, they laid the foundations for the inception of an 'Iberian cultural Atlantic' where different elements of Portuguese, Spanish, African, and American backgrounds intertwined.⁵⁰⁴ The inception and development of a trans-imperial and trans-Atlantic slave trade enterprise was crucial for shaping the overseas economies of the two different Iberian imperial spheres, integrating different commercial circuits, creating new colonial markets, and connecting the Spanish Caribbean settlements in America with the Portuguese commercial outposts on the West Coast of Africa.

4.2 The Volume of Iberian Slave Trade and Angola's Links to Spanish America

Founded on the site of a former Amerindian village next to the Bocagrande Peninsula (in current-day Colombia) to take advantage of its bay's exceptional natural conditions in 1533, the small commercial establishment of Cartagena de Indias would grow to become "the principal and most visited port" in the entire Spanish Circum-Caribbean by the end of the sixteenth century. Historical actors such as Captain Juan Díaz Vallejera described the port as "one of the best of America, if not in the entire World" in the 1570s, while the treasurers of the *Audiencia* of Santa Fe Alonso de Tapia and Juan de Yturrieta Alcibia considered Cartagena one of the three major cities of the Indies by the end of the century, together with Lima and Mexico City.⁵⁰⁵ Cartagena's geostrategic

⁵⁰² António de Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations of the System: A Reassessment of the Slave Trade to the Spanish Americas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," David Eltis, David Richardson (Eds.), *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) pp. 63-94; Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 177-189

⁵⁰³ Franklin W. Knight, "Slavery and lagging capitalism in the Spanish and Portuguese American Empires, 1492-1713" in Barbara Solow (Ed.), *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 62-74

⁵⁰⁴ Harald Braun, Lisa Vollendorf (Eds.), *Theorising the Ibero-American Atlantic* (Leiden: Brill, 2013)

⁵⁰⁵ María del Carmen Borrego Plá, *Cartagena de Indias en el siglo XVI* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1983) pp. 3-8; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 10-11

position transformed the city into the biggest commercial centre in the South Atlantic, connecting the inland mining sites and urban centres of South America in New Granada, Quito, Chile, and Charcas with the remaining colonies in the Spanish Caribbean, such as Panama, Guatemala, Cuba, Jamaica, and Hispaniola. Through the isthmus, it connected the Atlantic coast to Upper Peru. Cartagena was chosen as a home base for the fleet of Tierra Firme (together with Portobello) after the *Carrera* reform in the 1560s, solidifying its status as a collection point for the treasury mined in the mainland, and as a redistribution market for Spanish Atlantic shipping to the colonies in the South Atlantic. Over time, the city's commercial activity would also come to include the supply of the most requested 'commodity' of the time in America: African slaves. The growing demand for coerced labour by the mining districts, rural hinterlands, and urban centres of South America and the Caribbean, combined with the establishment of foreign slave merchants and commercial houses in Cartagena seeking American bullion, consolidated the city's role as a slave hub in the South Atlantic, and as the main port of call for slaves in America during the Iberian Union.⁵⁰⁶

Official accounts from Cartagena document the presence of just over 1,000 slaves in the city in 1570, yet this demographic landscape would drastically change in the following decades. After the aggregation of the Portuguese Crown to the Spanish Monarchy in 1581, the testimonies of royal officers and local observers stationed in Cartagena attest to the arrival of countless African slaves to Spanish America on an unprecedented scale. According to a report by Don Luis Tello de Eraso, *oidor* (judge) of the *Audiencia* of Santa Fe de Bogota, since the mid-1580s, many slaves" from Angola, Cape Verde, and Guinea were reported to arrive in Cartagena every year, "and many more" were smuggled in without a licence by Portuguese merchants.⁵⁰⁷ The Governor of Cartagena, Pedro de Lodeña, ordered the city's treasury accountants to compile a list of all slave arrivals between 1585 and 1590, which recorded that at least 6,870 slaves had made their way to Cartagena during those years, signalling the beginning of a new surge in the Iberian slave trade.⁵⁰⁸ By 1603, the new Governor Pedro de Acuña already considered "the slaves brought from Guinea and Angola" by the Portuguese to be the "biggest and most profitable trade" of the city, since close to 30,000 Africans

⁵⁰⁶ Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, pp. 35-133

⁵⁰⁷ Borrego Plá, *Cartagena*, pp. 55-6; Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, p. 125

⁵⁰⁸ AGI, *Santa Fe* 37, N 103a/b, N104 "Carta del gobernador Pedro de Lodeña" (15-07-1591) *apud* Borrego Plá, *Cartagena de Indias*, pp. 58-61

disembarked in that port between 1585 and 1600.⁵⁰⁹ Further reports confirm this massive rise in the number of slaves and slave ships arriving not only in Cartagena, but in other Spanish colonies as well. Friar Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa who visited the Indies between 1608 and 1622 wrote that Mexico's 'black population' was composed of some 50,000 African slaves.⁵¹⁰ In Panama, the president of the *Audiencia*, Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco, voiced his concerns over the "great numbers of black and mulatto" slaves living in the region, raising concerns over potential rebellions as they dwarfed the European population.⁵¹¹ In 1620, the accountant of the Court of Auditors (*Tribunal de Cuentas*) of Cartagena, Pedro Guiral, confirmed the sustained growth and expansion of the slave trade in relation to the previous years, reporting that a number between 12,000 and 14,000 slaves landed in that port every year (many illegally). Those slaves were then redirected to inland markets in South and Central America, and to the port-cities in the Caribbean.⁵¹² Parish records of Lima in 1636 also attest to the large presence of African slaves in that city as well, where they outnumbered the Spaniards (13,620 slaves to 10,758 colonizers), but were still a minority compared to native Amerindians.⁵¹³

The demographic impact of the large-scale introduction of African slaves in Spanish America during the sixty years of the Iberian Union was described by Fernando da Silva Solís, a well-travelled captain in the Americas and Brazil, some years later. He projected a number close to 329,000 of slaves or individuals of African descent living in the territories of the Spanish Empire in America in the middle of the seventeenth century. By his estimate, approximately two-thirds (206,000) remained in South America, arriving mostly through Cartagena *en route* to Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru, while Mexico was home to some 80,000 slaves (entering through Veracruz). The rest was distributed between the Caribbean Islands and Central America.⁵¹⁴ While Silva Solís' numbers lack actual sources and might well be an exaggeration, at the very least they hint at a demographic landscape in the Spanish Indies that was heavily populated by Africans

⁵⁰⁹ AGI, *Santa Fe* 38, R2, N70 "Carta del gobernador Pedro de Acuna" (1-8-1603); David Wheat, *The Afro-Portuguese Maritime World and the foundations of Spanish Caribbean Society, 1570-1640* (Vanderbilt University, PhD dissertation, 2009) pp. 252-256

⁵¹⁰ Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, p. 6

⁵¹¹ AGI, *Panama* 17, R6, N91 "Carta del presidente Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco" (15-01-1622)

⁵¹² AGI, *Santa Fe* 52, N157 "Carta del contador de cuentas del Tribunal de Santa Fe, Pedro Guiral" (10-03-1620)

⁵¹³ Bowser, *The African Slave*, pp. 340-1

⁵¹⁴ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2796 "capitán de silva solís", reproduced in Vila Vilar, "La sublevación de Portugal y la trata de negros," *Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* n^o2 (3), 1976, pp. 175-77

(albeit still inferior to indigenous), a sentiment that was shared by local observers and authorities across the different colonies of Spanish America during the Iberian Union. The true extent of the size, scale, direction, and the nature of African slave trade to Latin America remains an ongoing debate in Atlantic historiography to this day, especially for the earlier chronologies of Iberian colonisation in America. While quantification is neither the aim nor the purpose of this thesis, it is nonetheless important to evaluate the latest figures regarding the volume and composition of the Iberian slave trade during the Union of Crowns, in order to measure the links between the Portuguese enterprise in Angola, and the economic development of Spanish America. This section will identify the main patterns and trends of the Iberian slave trade, trace the origins and evolution of capture rates in the main African regions from where the captives were taken, and finally, link the growth of Spanish American colonial societies to the different phases of the Portuguese settlement in Africa, and to specific stages of warfare in Angola. Although the colonisation of America preceded the occupation of Angola, the founding and expansion of Luanda held a significant impact in the development of Hispano-American colonial societies, as it will be seen below.

Origins and structure of the Iberian Slave Trade: Guinea's early predominance

The publication of Phillip Curtin's trail blazing monograph, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (1969), inspired a new wave of research in the study of the Atlantic slave trade. Combining data gathered by different scholars working on the trade with his own research, Curtin's book presented the first serious effort to estimate the volume and scale of the entire transatlantic slave trade to the Americas, which he estimated to number around 9.5 million slaves until 1870.⁵¹⁵ Curtin's quantitative approach and comparative Atlantic methodology inspired many scholars to engage with numerical analysis, and adopt large-scale comparative frameworks in their studies on the trade. The assessment of overall figures – the 'numbers game' – inspired many debates, with counter proposals, adjustments, and new projections framed by scholars such as Inikori, Lovejoy, Manning, or Klein.⁵¹⁶ The works of Bowser, Mellafe, and Palmer were among the first to emulate

⁵¹⁵ Phillip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969)

⁵¹⁶ Joseph Inikori, "Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade: An Assessment of Curtin and Anstey", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 17, Nº 2 (1976), pp. 197-223; Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Paul Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis", *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 23 nº4

Curtin's methodological framework specifically for regions of Latin America, albeit limited to Peru, Chile, and Mexico respectively.⁵¹⁷ Quantification studies are nowadays epitomised by the collaborative project led by David Eltis, the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. This digital tool assembled data on thousands of slave voyages collected from different archives, combining research from several scholars covering different chronologies, regions, and nations involved with the slave trade, and organised all in one massive database. Initially launched as a CD-ROM in 1999, the database has since been updated and published online in 2010 under the name *Voyages: the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (TSTD). This version includes newer figures, revised estimates, and considerable new data linked to the Iberian slave trade during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A recent update also includes a section for intra-American trade. This tool has since revolutionised studies of the transatlantic trade, as scholars now have access to a databank of immense proportions, offering a global and trans-imperial overview of the slave trade. The database currently presents a figure of 12.5 million slaves shipped during the entire era transatlantic slave trade, and detailed information of numerous individual voyages spread out over almost four centuries.⁵¹⁸

For the period under study, during the first 140 years of Spanish colonisation in America (1501-1641), the *Voyages* dataset documents the shipment of at least 445,600 African slaves to Spanish American territories over 1,564 individual voyages, while the section of the database designated to projections (*Estimates*) raises that number to around 479,000 slaves. The data shows that as many as 347,000 slaves of the latter (72 percent of the total) were shipped to Spanish America during the sixty years of the Iberian Union (1580-1640) alone. This period represents one of the most intense streams of slave exports in the entire history of the slave trade, and would only be surpassed with the foundation of large-scale plantation economies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁵¹⁹ While the early Iberian slave trade to Spanish American colonies remains

(1982) pp. 473-501; Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990

⁵¹⁷ Bowser, *The African Slave*; Mellafe, *Negro Slavery*; Palmer, *Slaves of the White God*.

⁵¹⁸ Including more than 35,000 documented slave voyages between 1501 and 1866, the database can be publically accessed online at <http://slavevoyages.org/>.

⁵¹⁹ TSTD, *Voyages*, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/p1fuWqUi> accessed 20 April 2019. The *Estimates* section offers far higher numbers than the *Voyages* data as it works with input information and projections, and can be consulted at <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates>. Estimates are rounded off and also include a calculation for actual unloaded slaves: 335,000 for 1501-1641, and 243,000 for 1581-1641. Another figure that includes slaves introduced through the intra-American trade (via Brazil), which exceeds 520,000, can be found in Borucki, Eltis, Wheat, "Atlantic History" pp. 440-4. See graph 4.1

one of the least studied and known branches of the trade, the recent contributions of Atlantic scholarship, combined with the revised numbers presented by the TSTD call for a closer examination of the evolution of this inter-imperial enterprise, in order to understand the historical processes behind this massive surge in the trade during the Union of Crowns.⁵²⁰

The Spanish were the first Europeans to bring African slaves to the New World. As previously described, ever since the very first voyages to America, soldiers, settlers, and adventurers were accompanied by personal servants and aides, which were often sub-Saharan Africans living in Iberian cities (*ladinos*). By the first decade of the sixteenth century, Spanish King Fernando I ordered an official shipment of African slaves from Seville destined to exploit the economic potential of his colonies in the Caribbean. However, the Spanish were faced with a pressing problem: they could not access the African markets where the slaves were acquired, as this trade was an exclusive prerogative of the Portuguese Crown following the treaty of Alcáçovas (1479). Castile had disputed the Portuguese claims to the African trade, but renounced any rights to the territories south of the Sahara and the Cape Verde Islands, in exchange for the Portuguese recognition of Castile's rule over the Canary archipelago and rights of conquest to North Africa.⁵²¹

In turn, the Portuguese involvement in the slave trade far preceded the Spanish expeditions in America. After reaching the Senegal River in the 1440s, the Portuguese regularly began to acquire slaves during their commercial exchanges on Africa's coast, as they found a small market for African captives in Iberian and Mediterranean cities. After establishing an early trading factory in Arguim (southeast of Cap Blanc) and a regular trade with Mauritania, merchants and settlers in the archipelagos of Madeira and the Canary Islands began to employ African slaves in Atlantic sugar cultivation.⁵²² The Portuguese continued to explore Africa's coast and tap into new markets, venturing into the Senegambia and reaching as far as the Gambia River in 1455, from where they took slaves not only to Portugal, but also to Spanish markets in Seville and Valencia.⁵²³

⁵²⁰ Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations of the System"

⁵²¹ James Rawley, Stephen Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History, Revised Edition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009) p. 9, 19

⁵²² Alberto Vieira, "The Sugar Economy of Madeira and the Canaries, 1450-1650", Stuart B. Schwartz (Ed.), *Tropical Babels. Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) pp. 42-84

⁵²³ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 77-84

Portuguese slave activities in Africa continued to thrive in the second half of the fifteenth century, as they expanded their commercial activities to the ‘Rivers of Guinea’, bartering slaves all the way to Sierra Leone (trading along the Casamance, Cacheu, Nunez, Sherbro, and Pongo Rivers). Further south, they arrived to the Gold Coast in the 1470s, began trading with Benin in the 1480s, and made contact with Kongo at the very end of the fifteenth century.⁵²⁴

Portuguese demand for slaves increased throughout the fifteenth century, as slaves were valuable ‘commodities’ on African markets where they could be exchanged for gold, ivory, salt, Melegueta pepper, or wax. The commercial outposts in Cape Verde and the Sao Tomé archipelagos were established between the 1460s and 1480s, and would later develop into slave stations and prime centres for connecting the European markets with local exchanges in Africa.⁵²⁵ Trade factories (*Feitorias*) and forts like Arguim and especially São Jorge da Mina operated as Portuguese collection centres on the African coast. Elmina became the major commercial fort in the African mainland, where the Portuguese stored African gold before shipping it back to the Kingdom. Slaves acquired in the Gulf of Guinea were either taken to Elmina to be exchanged for gold, or shipped to the Atlantic archipelagos to support and finance the development of the sugarcane economy in Madeira and São Tomé. A small number was brought to Iberia.⁵²⁶

By the time Spanish colonisation in the Caribbean began, the Portuguese were deeply involved with the slave trade already, motivated by their search for gold on African markets and for a workforce to expand the production of sugar in the Atlantic region. The official administration of this trade was transferred to Lisbon’s *Casa da Mina e Tratos da Guiné* (House of Trade) in 1486. By 1512, every slave brought from Arguim or Guinea had to be registered and taxed in the Portuguese capital, reflecting the growing importance of this activity for the empire’s revenues.⁵²⁷ Thus, Spanish rulers first had to purchase their desired slaves in Lisbon, bring them to Seville, and only then could they be shipped

⁵²⁴ Philip Havik, Toby Green, “Introduction: Brokerage and the Role of Western Africa in the Atlantic World”, Toby Green (Ed.), *Brokers of Change. Atlantic Commerce and Cultures in Pre-Colonial Western Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) pp. 1-26

⁵²⁵ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *A Expansão Quatrocentista Portuguesa*, 2nd edition (Lisbon: Edições Don Quixote, 2007) pp. 329-52; Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-Betweens* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), pp. 160-1

⁵²⁶ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, “The slave trade and the development of the Africa port system 1400-1800s”, *International Journal of Maritime History*, vol. 29 (I), 2017 pp. 138-154; Linda Newson, Susie Minchin, *From capture to sale. The Portuguese slave trade to Spanish America in the Early seventeenth century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) pp. 2-3, 38-9

⁵²⁷ Caldeira, *Escravos*, p. 30

to America. The exclusion of the Spanish from the African slave trade was reinforced with the treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, where the division set in Alcáçovas underwent some changes to accommodate the discovery of America, but kept the same demarcation of the Iberian imperial spheres in Africa. Those two treaties were key elements of the history of the Iberian slave trade, as they defined the terms of the relationship between the two Crowns for the upcoming centuries: one as a provider of slaves due to its control over the African trade (Portugal), and the other as a consumer with jurisdiction over its introduction in a brand new American market (Spain).⁵²⁸

After the treaty of Tordesillas, the Iberian Atlantic empires progressively assumed different, yet complementary roles in the transatlantic slave trade. With no access to the source of slaves, Spanish officials and merchants were forced to negotiate the shipment of slaves with Portuguese agents to answer the requests for coerced labour from colonies in the Caribbean. The Spanish Crown still exerted control over, and collected profits from the slave trade, with the King implementing a small tax on all slave imports into Spanish American ports in 1513, beginning the trade's official regulation. African slaves were first brought to Seville by Portuguese merchants returning from Africa, and were only afterwards re-exported to America on Spanish ships. However, the growing demand for slave labour from the developing colonies in the Caribbean, combined with the proliferation of illegal and unsupervised voyages carrying slaves to Spanish settlers directly from Africa, forced the Crown to authorise a direct trade route from Africa to America in 1518.⁵²⁹ After this Royal Decree, slave voyages were gradually organised from Seville and Lisbon, setting sail for the archipelagos of São Tomé, Cape Verde, or the Canary Islands to collect the slaves brought from Africa, and would then travel directly to the Circum-Caribbean.⁵³⁰ The first documented transatlantic voyage took place in 1524: Captain Pedro Monteiro sailed from Lisbon to São Tomé to collect slaves, and departed to Hispaniola, where he unloaded 287 enslaved Africans.⁵³¹ However, there is

⁵²⁸ Soule, "From Africa to the Ocean Sea", pp. 17-8

⁵²⁹ Manuel Lobo Cabrera, *La esclavitud en las Canarias orientales en el siglo XVI (negros, moros y moriscos)* (Las Palmas, 1982) pp. 103-104

⁵³⁰ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, "Os portugueses e o trato de escravos de Cabo Verde com a América Espanhola no final do século XVI. Os contratadores do trato de Cabo Verde e a coroa, uma relação de conveniência numa época de oportunidades (1583-1600)", Pedro Cardim, Leonor Freire Costa, Mafalda Soares da Cunha (Eds.), *Portugal na Monarquia Hispânica: dinâmicas de integração e conflito*, (Lisbon: CHAM-FCSH/UNL, 2013) pp. 93-106

⁵³¹ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 13 April 2018, voyage ID 46473

evidence of slaves ‘coming directly from Guinea’ disembarking in San Juan (Porto Rico) as early as November 1520, which hints at the existence of earlier voyages.⁵³²

With the inception and legal endorsement of an inter-imperial commercial route to America, the slave trade acquired its transatlantic configuration in the early sixteenth century. The Iberian empires collaborated closely with one another in this enterprise, placing customs agents at the Portuguese factories in Africa, and royal factors at the Spanish Caribbean ports, to oversee the commercial exchanges carried out along imperial borders. The Portuguese and Spanish empires moved from their earlier rivalry and competition on Africa’s shores in the fifteenth century to collaboration and joint-partnership in the Atlantic region during the sixteenth century. A “symbiotic relationship” developed, which was “largely defined by their mutual interest in the profits to be gained from providing, purchasing, and utilising African slaves”.⁵³³

This early interconnection between the Portuguese and Spanish empires through slave trading ventures would, in turn, help finance the Portuguese colonial outposts in Africa and transform them into large commercial stations for the Atlantic region, and generate new sources of revenue for the Portuguese Crown.⁵³⁴ Accompanying the Spanish Crown’s celerity in taxing and profiting from the new branch of the trade, Portuguese Kings negotiated new clauses during the lease of the monopoly of the Guinea trade. While previous administrators like Fernão Gomes, Bartolomeu Marchione, and Francisco Martins negotiated contracts aimed to explore the African coast and oversee commercial transactions in Upper Guinea, the new contracts were specifically designed to tax slave exports in the Atlantic region.⁵³⁵ The Portuguese had developed long-distance commercial routes between Europe and Africa through the Atlantic archipelagos, especially the Cape Verde Islands, which connected the intra-insular trade to the markets in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Petite Côte, and along the Gambia River. With the opening of a direct route to the Americas, the merchants and inhabitants of Cape Verde found themselves in a prime position to connect the previously established Euro-

⁵³² AGI, *Patronato* 175, R9 “Relación de los esclavos negros descargados en Puerto Rico, a descontar a Francisco de Cardona 1519-1520”

⁵³³ Soule, “From Africa to the Ocean Sea”, pp. 16-39

⁵³⁴ Alencastro, “Economic Network”, pp. 109-111

⁵³⁵ António Carreira, *Notas sobre o tráfico Português de escravos* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova, 1978), pp. 16-23

African circuits with the Americas, and profit from a new intercontinental route for the slave trade in the process.⁵³⁶

The foundation of a new transoceanic circuit encouraged Portuguese slave merchants to expand their slaving business and search for new markets along Africa's Atlantic coast. The growth and commercial expansion of a colonial city and its community like Ribeira Grande in Cape Verde was a direct result of this new inter-imperial venture, as the Island of Santiago emerged as the most important slaving factory in the Atlantic, and the main gateway for slaves shipped to Spanish America for most of the sixteenth century. By 1525, the circuit of Seville-Santiago-Hispaniola was fully operational, and Spanish residents in the Caribbean could import slaves directly from Cape Verde. This route rapidly took precedence over the longer shipments via Seville, so in the 1530s, a Portuguese royal factor (André Ferreira) was specifically placed in Santo Domingo to oversee slave arrivals from Cape Verde. By 1534, slaves could be shipped directly to Nombre de Dios in Panama as well.⁵³⁷ As a result, the revenues from the slave trade recorded in the maritime customs house of Santiago doubled in the mid-1540s according to the royal treasury of Guinea, rising from 5.000 to 10.000 *cruzados*.⁵³⁸ This spectacular increase was a clear reflection of the investment in the Afro-American route, and it was further reinforced by the Spanish Monarchy's negotiation of exclusive contracts for supply of the Caribbean colonies with consortiums of private merchants. One of those contracts was negotiated with the Torres brothers, who shipped a total of 10,699 slaves from Upper Guinea to Spanish America via Santiago between 1544 and 1550, averaging 1,700 a year.⁵³⁹ The economic expansion of Cape Verde, and the rise of colonial entrepôts like Santiago, was therefore directly connected to the expansion of the slave trade, and the integration of Spanish American markets within this circuit.

During the sixteenth century, the majority of slave voyages to Spanish America were conducted from Santiago. Portuguese slave merchants acquired their slaves in the 'Rivers of Guinea', along the Gambia, São Domingos, Geba, and Casamance Rivers, as

⁵³⁶ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, "Actividade comercial externa de Cabo Verde: Organização, funcionamento, evolução", Luís de Albuquerque, Maria Emília Madeira Santos (Eds.), *História Geral de Cabo Verde*, vol. I, (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1991), pp. 237-346 [305-311]

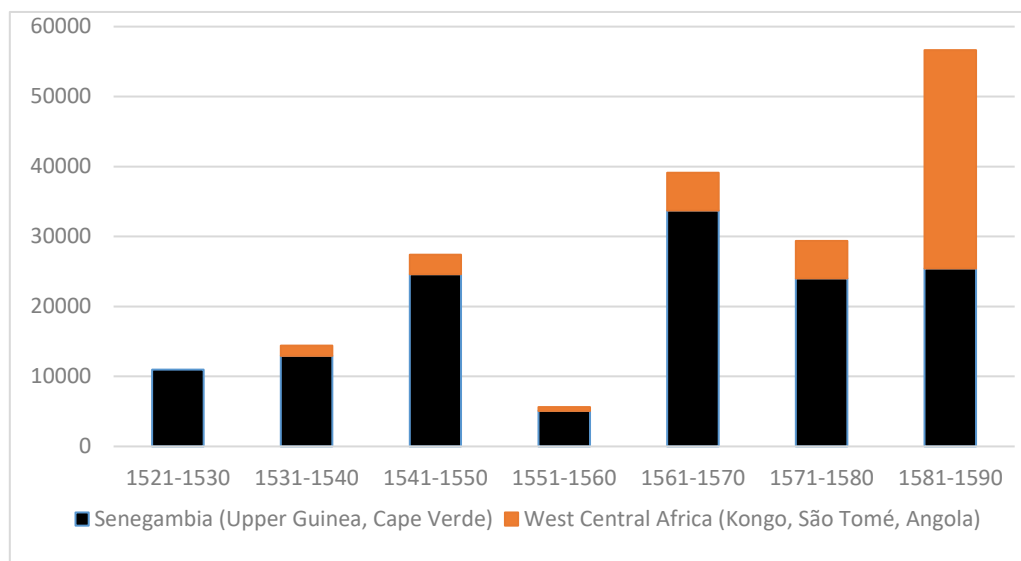
⁵³⁷ Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 96-116, 191-2

⁵³⁸ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, "O comércio: do resgate no litoral africano ao comércio transatlântico", Artur Teodoro de Matos (Coord.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa. A colonização Atlântica*, vol. III, t.2 (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 2005) pp. 84-119 [99]

⁵³⁹ Mendes, "The Foundations", p. 71

well as the Sierra Leone estuary; their operations covered most of the greater Senegambia and Upper Guinea coast.⁵⁴⁰ Slaving ventures critically supported and financed the Portuguese settlement in Cape Verde in the first half of the sixteenth century. Its increasing returns would in turn stimulate an investment in new markets on the African coast, and encourage further economic enterprises and attempts at colonisation in the second half of the century, as was the case with São Tomé's sugar industry, and the military occupation of Angola.

Figure 8 - African slave exports to Spanish America and Brazil (1521-1590)



Source: TSTD, *Voyages*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/biSoAACS>

The current estimates of the TSTD confirm the complete supremacy of the Guinea trade (via Cape Verde) during most of the sixteenth century. Those figures are in line with some of the existing inventories for Peru and Mexico, which indicate that approximately 80 per cent of slaves imported in the 1540s and 1550s originated from the Upper Guinean Coast. While some records from Hispaniola feature slaves from the Gulf of Guinea brought via São Tomé, they were still a minority compared to the Africans brought from the greater Senegambia. An inventory from a sugar estate in Mexico in 1549 appears to confirm this scenario, as, from a total of 83 slaves working on that plantation, 78 were identified to have ethnonyms from Upper Guinea (Wolofs, Brans, Mandingas, Biafaras, Zapés, and etc).⁵⁴¹ It is even possible that the figures presented in the database for slaves

⁵⁴⁰ Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) pp. 80-2

⁵⁴¹ Curtin, *Census* p. 97; Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 38-41

coming from Upper Guinea are low estimates, as Portuguese port records between 1544 and 1550 document that, from a grand total of 252 ships that were licenced to sail to Africa, 247 sailed to Cape Verde (98 per cent).⁵⁴²

The numbers presented in the TSTD show that the transatlantic trade experienced a sustained growth from its inception until the beginning of the decade of 1550, when it suffered a significant drop. After registering more than 27,000 exports in the previous decade, only around 5,500 slaves are actually estimated to have legally disembarked in America during the 1550s according to the database. This downturn can be explained by the considerable inflation registered in the price of the licences in Seville (which rose from an initial fee of 2 *ducados* per slave to 8 in 1552), as well as by the high acquisition costs for slaves on Guinea's coast.⁵⁴³ Merchants and settlers of Santiago also began to experience increasing competition on Guinea's markets from individual agents who settled on the coast and conducted their business outside the Crown's jurisdiction (the *lançados* or *tangomaos*). Those agents lived next to local African populations as guests, and were gradually integrated into their communities through marriage. Their offspring would soon specialise as middlemen on Guinea's markets, and conduct slave trade between the African chieftains and European merchants without paying duties in the maritime customs houses of Cape Verde.⁵⁴⁴ The 1550s also witnessed the first incursions from English and French corsairs in the Atlantic, who preyed on the slave ships operating along the African coast.⁵⁴⁵ Their attacks affected the shipment costs and the profits of slave merchants in Africa. All those factors contributed to a significant drop in the number of legal slave exports to America during this period.

The transatlantic trade would recover its early vitality in the following two decades, when close to 68,500 slaves are estimated to have arrived in the Americas. The effects of the Amerindian depopulation due to conquest and European pathogens were progressively felt on the continent, with the Spanish losing a large portion of their workforce across their American colonies. To answer their ever-increasing labour demands, Spanish settlers requested several licences authorising the importation of large numbers of African slaves. The discovery of new mines in South America (in both Peru

⁵⁴² Ventura, *Negreiros Portugueses*, pp. 121-33

⁵⁴³ Torrão, "Actividade comercial", pp 275-6. On the rising costs of licences and duties see chapter 5

⁵⁴⁴ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in West Africa. Empires, merchants and the Atlantic System 1580-1674* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) pp. 144-160, 184-5; Metcalf, *Go-betweens*, pp. 58-9

⁵⁴⁵ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 10-17

and Colombia), combined with the growth of the port-cities in the Circum-Caribbean, translated into a considerable increase in the number of slaves arriving to the Spanish colonies, so that its colonizers could exploit the new deposits, improve the construction works and the fortification of the cities, and secure the production of foodstuffs on the rural *haciendas*.⁵⁴⁶ Those two decades also witnessed some changes in the overall composition of the ethnic origins of the slaves shipped to America, as Africans from the region of the Gulf of Guinea (including the coast of what is nowadays Liberia, Benin, Gabon, Ghana, and Cameroon) began to appear more frequently in records of shipping to America. Portuguese slave traders attempted to bypass the Eurafrican middlemen in Upper Guinea by establishing new southward routes, extending their enterprises to the Loango and Kongo coasts. Those slaves were shipped to São Tomé and Príncipe, which operated as a collection centre for slaves and a platform for their redistribution to the Atlantic region, similar to Cape Verde. However, unlike the former, São Tomé absorbed a great number of African captives entering its ports for its own plantation economy. At the same time, a great number of the slaves acquired in Kongo were re-exported to other African markets to be exchanged for gold or ivory, which meant that this trade was not destined for Spanish America in significant numbers for most of the sixteenth century.⁵⁴⁷ Another significant change in the pattern of the trade was the establishment of a regular route to Brazil, receiving its settlers Royal incentives and an increasing number of slaves to work in the colony's promising sugarcane economy.⁵⁴⁸

Upper Guinea therefore played a major role as a supplying region for Spanish American labour demands until at least 1580, covering a minimum of 70 to 75 per cent of all transatlantic voyages in every decade up till then.⁵⁴⁹ Based on the study of Lutgado Garcia Fuentes on the number of slave licences for America registered in Seville, António de Almeida Mendes calculated that close to 131,000 African captives were shipped to Spanish America between 1510 and 1595.⁵⁵⁰ The most recent estimates from the TSTD

⁵⁴⁶ Navarrete, *Génesis y desarrollo*, pp. 145-191

⁵⁴⁷ Cristina Maria Seuanes Serafim, *As ilhas de São Tomé no século XVII* (Lisbon, 2000), pp. 15-9; Joseph C. Miller, "Central Africa During the Era of the Slave Trade, c. 1490s-1850s", Linda Newson (Ed.), *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 21-69

⁵⁴⁸ Joaquim Romero Magalhães, "Açúcar e Especiarias", Bethencourt, Chaudhuri, *História da Expansão*, vol. I, pp. 298-306

⁵⁴⁹ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 22-3; Mendes, "Foundations" p. 87

⁵⁵⁰ Mendes, "Foundations", pp. 74-9; Lutgado García Fuentes, "Licencias para la introducción de esclavos en Indias y envíos desde Sevilla en el siglo XVI," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von Staat, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerikas*, vol. 19 (1982) pp. 1-46

significantly increase Mendes' earlier assessment, presenting a global figure of 194,000 slaves shipped during this period instead, with 141,000 coming from the Upper Guinea region (72 per cent), representing an annual average of just over 2,000 slaves from 1501 to 1595.⁵⁵¹ Some scholars of African History like Toby Green still consider those numbers to be low estimates, since they excessively rely on Iberian metropolitan records and fail to factor in smuggling and localised political events on the coast of Africa. Following a similar estimate to Rodney's, Green claimed that is not unreasonable to argue for an annual average of 5,000 slave exports from 1550 onwards.⁵⁵²

The rise of the Angola trade and its links to Spanish America

The absolute predominance of Upper Guinean slaves in the transatlantic trade would only begin to be challenged at the very end of the sixteenth century, following the foundation of the Portuguese colony of Luanda. Portuguese merchants and captains from São Tomé had extended their slave enterprises to further south of Kongo, and promoted the creation of a commercial factory on Angola's coast in the 1530s. Although this early trade was interdicted by Royal Decree on account of the *Manikongo's* protests, clandestine networks were still active in the region occasionally.⁵⁵³ When São Tomé's merchants began to register shortages of slaves in the 1550s (due to the inadequate supply of Kongo's markets and the massive delays in the provision of ships on the Congo River), they intensified their visits to Angola's shores in spite of the interdiction.⁵⁵⁴ Early commercial exchanges with the Mbundu were soon followed by official diplomatic missions to the heart of Ndongo in the 1560s, and finally by the establishment of an official foothold in Luanda in 1575. The official Portuguese presence in Angola would mark the beginning of a stable and systematic trade from West Central Africa to the Americas. The slave exports from this region would begin to rival, and gradually surpass,

⁵⁵¹ TSTD, *Voyages*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/L7dcnM0o>, accessed 20 April 2019. The number of unloaded slaves is considerably lower: 138,500. If the decade of 1580 is disregarded, the estimate drops to around 138,000 shipped and 97,500 arriving.

⁵⁵² Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 205-16; Walter Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) p. 98

⁵⁵³ "Regimento do feitor do trato de S. Tomé" (2-08-1532), Brásio, *MMA*, Vol. II, pp. 14-5

⁵⁵⁴ "Inquirição sobre o comércio de São Tomé com Angola ordenada por D. João III" (12-11-1548), Brásio, *MMA*, Vol. II, pp. 197-205

the previously dominant trade from Upper Guinea during the first decades of the seventeenth century.⁵⁵⁵

The causes behind the surge in the number of captives from Angola and the development of transatlantic slave networks in Luanda have been addressed in the previous chapter. In summary, the transformations in the patterns of the slave trade from West Central Africa were mostly owed to the decline of São Tomé's sugar production (due to slave revolts on the Island and pests in the sugarcane fields), growing foreign competition and piracy in the gulf of Guinea, and the decay of Kongo's markets, following the devastation caused by the *Jaga* invasions. Soon after the foundation of Luanda, the relationship between the Portuguese and the Mbundu deteriorated into an all-out war in Ndongo and its neighbouring region. Although the Portuguese military campaigns against the *Ngolas* did not result in significant territorial gains in Angola, it generated massive numbers of captives and prisoners of war to be later sold as slaves on the other side of the Atlantic. Luanda merchants gradually associated with local African interlopers, engaged in cross-cultural trade and established long-distance trade networks, linking the Atlantic coast to the slave markets in Angola's hinterland. Those events were accompanied by external economic factors and fiscal reforms on the Peninsula, which impacted the Portuguese and Spanish taxation of the slave trade during the Union of Crowns – such as the separate lease of the monopolies of São Tomé and Angola, and the introduction of the Spanish *asientos* in 1595.⁵⁵⁶

The separation of the monopoly contracts, combined with the slave revolts that disrupted the economy and the trade of São Tomé, meant that the slaves acquired in Angola and West Central Africa were now redirected to American markets instead. During an early stage, those slaves were primarily shipped to the emerging sugar colonies in northeast Brazil: Pernambuco and Bahia. Portuguese settlers had previously attempted to use native Amerindians to harvest sugar cane in Brazil, but quickly turned to African slaves as an alternative labour force due to their history of success on the plantations of Madeira and São Tomé. A combination of ideal natural conditions for the growth of sugar cane, royal incentives, and a favourable market for sugar in Europe quickly turned Brazil into a prosperous colony in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. A financial

⁵⁵⁵ Miller, "Central Africa", pp. 68-9

⁵⁵⁶ Ilídio do Amaral, *O Consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais: Angola no último quartel do século XVI e primeiro século XVII* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação científica e tropical, 2000) pp. 194-202; Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, vol. IV, pp. 161-181; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 24-32

investment was registered by New Christian merchants in the towns of Olinda, São Vicente, Recife, and Bahia, doubling the number of the sugar production mills of Brazil in a matter of fifteen years (from 60 in 1570 to 120 by 1585). At the onset of the seventeenth century, Brazil's sugar production had quadrupled in relation to 1570 and long overshadowed the production of São Tomé and Madeira. On the eve of the Dutch occupation, Brazil possessed 349 sugar mills, with this economic activity relying almost exclusively on forced labour brought from West Africa.⁵⁵⁷

Thus, Brazil emerged as a magnet for African slaves roughly at the same time that Spanish American colonies were experiencing major labour shortages, thereby making both territories increasingly dependent on Portuguese slaving activities on the other side of the Atlantic. Brazil became a major destination for Angola's and Kongo's slaves from the foundation of Luanda on, not only due to the proximity of this port to Brazil (a voyage averaging between 35 and 50 days for Pernambuco, Bahia, or Rio de Janeiro), but also due to their cheaper prices in comparison to Upper Guinea. Cape Verde merchants mostly conducted trade with Spanish America, since Guinea slaves were regarded as the "best quality" slaves (*negros de ley*) and therefore more expensive, in contrast to the 'Congos', 'Ardas', and 'Angolas', who had a worse reputation (and value) in Spanish territories. Cape Verde merchants looked to sell their slaves with the highest possible margin, which explains their preference for the more lucrative markets of Spanish America, whereas Brazil's sugar economy absorbed the cheaper exports from Angola and São Tomé.⁵⁵⁸ While the rise of the Brazilian market helped finance and expand slave ventures from Angola during the first stages of Portuguese settlement, West Central African slaves were not exclusively shipped to Brazil. For the longest time, scholars have underlined the foundational links between the Angola slave trade and the 'inception' of colonial Brazil.⁵⁵⁹ However, it is vital to highlight that a considerable share of the slaves captured in the Angola wars spilled over to the Hispano-Caribbean ports as well, and profoundly shaped much of the Spanish colonisation of America as well.

⁵⁵⁷ Stuart Schwartz, "A Commonwealth within itself. The early Brazilian sugar industry, 1550-1670", *Idem, Tropical Babels: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004) pp. 158-200; Gustavo Acioli Lopes, "Brazil's Colonial Economy and the Atlantic Slave Trade. Supply and Demand", *Networks and Trans-cultural*, pp. 31-70

⁵⁵⁸ Frédéric Mauro, *Portugal, o Brasil, e o Atlântico: 1570-1670*, vol. I (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1989) pp. 111-115. For differences in slave prices between Guinea and Angola, see AGI, *Santa Fe*, Leg. 56 N172 "Cartas y expedientes: Tribunal de cuentas de Santa Fe" (27-06-1622)

⁵⁵⁹ Charles Boxer, *Salvador de Sá and the struggle for Brazil and Angola, 1602-1686* (London: The Athlone Press, 1952); Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes*, pp. 247-326

The first record of slaves identified as originating from the ‘Angola land’ arriving in the Spanish Caribbean took place in 1575, with a ship from São Tomé unloading a total of 243 Angola slaves in Santo Domingo. While ships from São Tomé were somewhat of a common sight in Caribbean ports since the 1560s, slave voyages departing directly from Luanda only began to appear in Spanish records from the late 1580s, their arrival corresponding to the first advances of the Portuguese military enterprise in Angola, as well as the growing relaxation of the imperial borders following the Union of Crowns. The first official voyage from Luanda to Spanish America documented in the *Voyages* database only took place in 1592, but some fragmented records attest to earlier journeys. David Wheat has recently identified “the first Iberian slaving voyages to sail directly from Angola to the Caribbean” to have taken place in 1585 and 1587, with two ships unloading over 160 slaves each in Santo Domingo (Hispaniola) and La Guaira (Venezuela) respectively, while en route to Brazil.⁵⁶⁰ Another earlier Luanda voyage is found in the list compiled by the Governor of Cartagena, Pedro de Lodeña, alluded to earlier, which recorded all slaves disembarking in Cartagena between 1585 and 1590. Among the 36 ships that visited the port during that period, it documents the arrival of one vessel from ‘Angola’ in 1588, carrying 241 slaves, while the remaining ships came from Cape Verde, Guinea, São Tomé, and Seville.⁵⁶¹ After 1590, slave voyages from Angola to Spanish America became increasingly regular, with the database identifying a minimum of nine voyages sailing directly from Luanda: four to Cartagena (1591, 1592, 1593, 1594), and one to La Guaira (1595), Havana (1596), Buenos Aires (1596), Hispaniola (1598), and Caracas (1598) respectively.⁵⁶² However, if the search is broadened to encompass all of territories in the field ‘West Central Africa’ (including Congo, Loango, São Tomé, and Angola without specifying a port), 85 slave voyages from this region are recorded to have reached the Spanish Indies before 1600, with Cartagena as its major destination with a total of 40 voyages. The remaining ships unloaded in different ports in New Spain, Cuba, Jamaica, Colombia, and Venezuela.⁵⁶³

Contrary to their scarce appearance in Spanish American records until the 1580s, West Central African slaves became increasingly prominent in Caribbean port registers

⁵⁶⁰ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 75-7

⁵⁶¹ Borrego Plá, *Cartagena*, p. 58

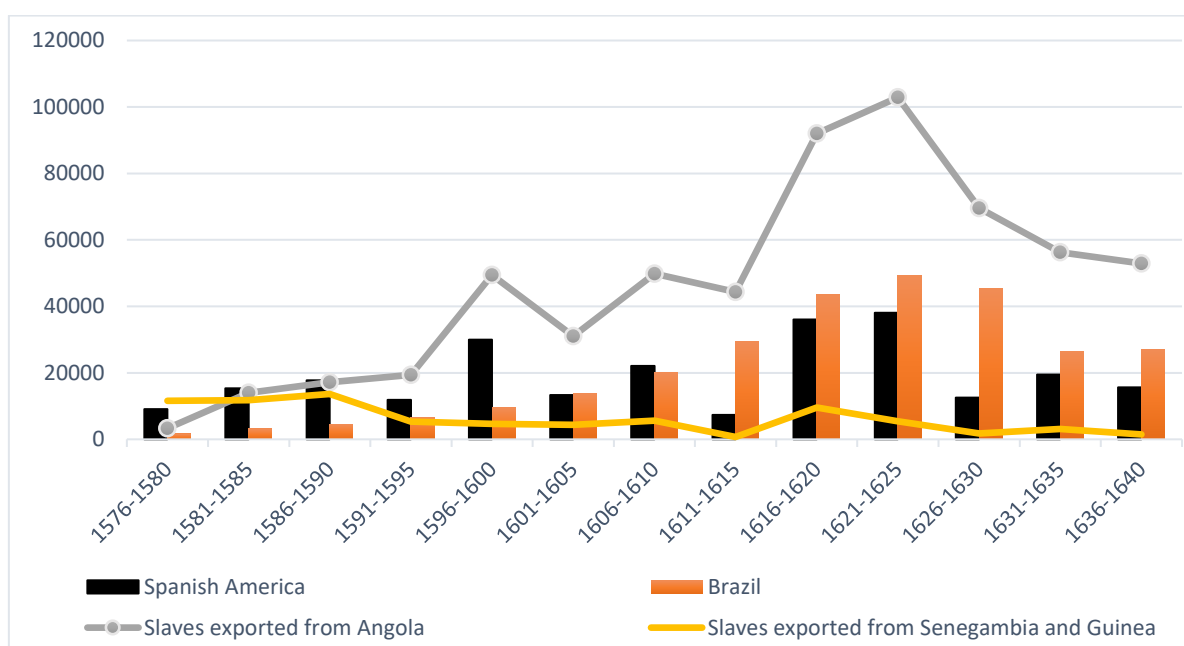
⁵⁶² TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 22 April 2019, voyage ID 28098, 280109, 29161, 29793, 29789, 41954, 41955, 42912, 42913

⁵⁶³ Ibidem, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/TwKc7GqX>.

following the aggregation of the Portuguese empire into the Habsburg Monarchy. The slave trade from Angola to Spanish ports like Cartagena, Veracruz, and Buenos Aires experienced a massive growth in the last decade of the sixteenth century, especially after the introduction of the first *asiento de negros* in 1595, with 63 out of the 85 identified voyages from West Central Africa for the sixteenth century taking place during this five-year period (1595-1600). At the dawn of the seventeenth century, slave voyages departing from Angola became exponentially more frequent in Spanish American port records, easily surpassing the trade from São Tomé, and matching the volume of Upper Guinea as well. The TSTD currently documents a minimum of 362 Luanda voyages to Spanish American ports between 1592 and 1640, placing the average of this branch of the trade at an absolute minimum of between 7 and 8 slave ships per year. This figure can be heightened to a maximum of 691 voyages if the label is broadened to include all traffic from West Central Africa to Spanish America between 1585 and 1640, averaging between 10 and 11 ships a year.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 22 April 2019, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/Px8ID55W>; <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/DeWVXB1W>.

Figure 9 - African slave exports to Spanish America and Brazil (1575-1640)



Source: TSTD, *Voyages*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/ZbGfcAA4>

From the 1580s until the mid-1620s, the number of African slaves forcefully shipped to the Americas registered a substantial increase, which was tied to the growth of the Portuguese colony in Luanda and the expansion of slave activities in this region. The dimension of the Angola trade gradually began to match the one of Guinea in the late 1580s, as slave exports were boosted by the rise of the Brazilian sugar production. After 1595, however, this trade became increasingly significant for Spanish America as well. This shift overlapped not only the adjudication of the first *asiento de negros* to a Portuguese merchant (Pedro Gomes Reinel), which facilitated the access of Lisbon and Luanda-based merchants to Spanish American markets, but above all the resuming of the Portuguese military offensive in Angola. The conquest and consequent destruction of Ndongo, more than any other factor, contributed to the rise of Angola as a major slave exporting region in the transatlantic trade, which overtook Guinea's leading role during the first decades of the seventeenth century. Large-scale warfare between the Portuguese and the Mbundu in Angola stretched out over various years, and the different stages of this conflict were intrinsically connected to individual mandates and actions of Angola's Governors.⁵⁶⁵ The data until 1640 presented in the TSTD, here displayed in five-year

⁵⁶⁵ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 281

intervals, shows two different peaks in the flow of the slave trade to Spanish America and Brazil: the first between 1596 and 1600, and the second between 1616 and 1620. After exploring the history of the Portuguese establishment in West Africa in the previous chapter, it is possible to associate those shifts in the data presented by the TSTD with specific campaigns led by Angola's Governors.

The first big surge in slave exports from Angola shown in Graph 4.2 matches the beginning of the violent campaigns of João Furtado de Mendonça along the Bengo River and in Angola's interior (1594-1601). Mendonça's founding of the fort of Muxima in the Kisama region greatly supported the Portuguese presence along the Kwanza and the Lukala Rivers, as it enabled the Portuguese to secure the supply of their troops through riverside navigation, and reach a wider range of slave fairs located in the interior, which resulted in the capture and shipment of more Angola slaves than ever before.⁵⁶⁶ Due to the actions of this Governor, Angola's exports rose to around 50,000 slaves between 1596 and 1600, with more than 80 documented ships arriving in Spanish America during this Governor's tenure.⁵⁶⁷

Following the premature death of Governor Rodrigues Coutinho (1601-1603) and the lack of mines in Cambambe, Angola's trade registered a drop in its total exports in the following decade, as the King ordered to cease all military campaigns in Ndongo. The pacification of the immediate territory next to Luanda during Manuel Pereira Forjaz's governorship (1607-1611), combined with the expansion of Luso-African trade networks in Angola's hinterland, allowed the Portuguese to regularly withdraw slaves from the inner markets in Mpundu or Songo in the following years, making the trade experience a small rebound during Forjaz' government. Even though Brazil registered a sustained growth in its total imports, the problems registered in the Kingdom with the administration of the *asiento* of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho, and the subsequent disastrous' management of the *Casa de la Contratación*, impacted the volume of legal exports for Spanish America negatively. Despite Bento Banha Cardoso's (1611-1615) raids in the Hari province and the imposition of extortive tributes in slaves to more than 80 *sobas*, the numbers of the Angola trade dropped in comparison to the previous lustrum.⁵⁶⁸ Despite the apparent decline of capture through warfare during Cardoso's years, the devastating

⁵⁶⁶ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 90-1

⁵⁶⁷ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 24 April 2019, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/qQYXv7GP>.

⁵⁶⁸ "Processo de Justificação dos actos de Bento Banha Cardoso" (31-10-1616), Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, pp. 437-40; Heintze, *Angola*, p. 288

wars waged by Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos against Ndongo (1617-1621) would be directly responsible for “flooding the Spanish Indies with captives”, causing the biggest upsurge of slave exports from Angola during the Union of Crowns. Allying himself with predatory and ruthless *Imbangala* armies, Vasconcelos succeeded where his predecessors had failed. His military campaigns pillaged and ransacked the heart of Ndongo, forcing the Ngola aMbandi into exile. Mendes de Vasconcelos’ personal agenda encouraged him to extend his plundering campaigns into the surrounding regions, moving his private army and *Imbangala* mercenaries against Kasanze (Casanze), and to pillage the region of Mbwilla (Ambuila) and Kabonda, in the south of Kongo.⁵⁶⁹

The large number of West African slaves resulting from Vasconcelos’ wars has been explored in the previous chapter. While the *Voyages*’ data appears to confirm Beatrix Heintze’s assessment of 50,000 slaves departing from Luanda’s port during the Governorship of Luís Mendes (at a rate of 12,500 per year), the database’s numbers are limited to Spanish American ports alone, and do not properly account for Brazilian voyages, nor smuggling.⁵⁷⁰ The section for the *Estimates* presents a larger figure to account for those variables, estimating that close to 80,000 slaves (around 44,000 for Brazil and 35,000 for Spanish America) left Angola during Vasconcelos’ tenure, which means that the peak years of the Angola trade counted close to 18,000 annual exports, while Angola’s average during the Union of Crowns stayed between 10,000 and 12,000, as previously stated.⁵⁷¹ The devastating effects of the destruction and general chaos in Angola therefore resulted in an unprecedented number of captives shipped from Luanda to both Spanish and Portuguese America, and were directly responsible for the biggest spike in the Iberian slave trade during the Union of Crowns. Angola registered over 160,000 slave exports in just ten years (1616-1626), averaging more than 15,000 a year during the peak of the Iberian slave trade. More than 150 slave ships are now recorded to have departed from Angola during this period, witnessing its absolute peak in 1621, when 29 voyages from Luanda alone are documented to have unloaded slaves in Spanish American ports.⁵⁷² This massive ‘wave’ of forced migration from Luanda to Spanish

⁵⁶⁹ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 116-122

⁵⁷⁰ Borucki, Eltis, Wheat, “Atlantic History”, pp. 433-461

⁵⁷¹ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 24 April 2019, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/jkUJkORO>. For Estimates, see <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/DhfQ7nDI>; Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 295-6; Caldeira, “Angola and the Seventeenth century”, p. 110. See also chapter 3.3. On the underrepresentation of Brazilian voyages in *Voyages*, see Domingues da Silva and Vieira Ribeiro’s essays in Eltis, Richardson, *Extending the Frontiers*, pp. 95-154

⁵⁷² Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 78-81

American ports cemented Angola's position as the principal slaving region by 1620, a position it would retain for years to come.

In the aftermath of the Ndongo wars in the mid-1620s, the slave trade underwent a recession, from which it would not recover until the end of the Union. Although the violence in Angola generated thousands of slaves for the Portuguese over a short period of time, the side effects of warfare were extremely damaging for the slave trade in the long-run. The closure and abandonment of slave fairs close to the coast and *presídios*, the disruption of established commercial circuits, and the forced movement of many *sobas* and local chieftains inland, forced the Portuguese to rely even more on their *Imbangala* allies, spend more time on inland trips to reach far more distant markets, and expend far more resources to acquire slaves from African merchants who visited the distant *pumbos*.⁵⁷³ Foreign interference by the Dutch on the Atlantic, who visited Loango and Kongo at the time, also affected the Portuguese ability to conduct slave trade operations. The commercial competition in West Africa was accompanied by military aggression, with the Dutch attacking Portuguese positions in Brazil and Angola. The loss of Pernambuco in 1630 carried major losses for the Portuguese monopoly of the Angola slave trade and the Spanish *asiento*, and its leaseholders were forced to negotiate adjustments to recover their investments.⁵⁷⁴ Despite the drop in the overall volume of the transatlantic trade to both Brazil and Spanish America, Angola remained the principal African slaving region until the end of the Iberian Union, registering a total of 152 slave voyages to Spanish America between 1626 and 1640.⁵⁷⁵ While the start of the Dutch competition and the effects of warfare and displacement in West Africa were surely felt during the 1630s, the trade continued to operate, even if on a smaller scale.

The figures presented in the TSTD clearly show that Spanish American territories were a major destination for African slaves, whose imports not only matched, but for a long time surpassed those of Brazil. But how were those slaves distributed in Latin America? The arrival of thousands of Angolan forced migrants in Caribbean ports during the Iberian Union was uncovered by Enriqueta Vila Vilar more than three decades ago.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷³ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, pp. 259-263; Caldeira, "Angola and the seventeenth-century Atlantic", pp. 115-8

⁵⁷⁴ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp 47-54

⁵⁷⁵ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 24 April 2019, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/OmkeaRp1>

⁵⁷⁶ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "The large-scale introduction of Africans into Veracruz and Cartagena", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 292 (1977), pp. 267-280

Following the works of Scelle and the Chaunus who tackled the organisation of the Spanish slave trade, Vilar pursued the shipping records in the Archive of the Indies (*Registros de Esclavos*) issued by Seville's *Casa de la Contratación*, which tracked the number of slave ships (and licences) leaving Seville towards America under the *asiento*.⁵⁷⁷ Vilar built a chronology for the slave trade to Spanish America between 1595 and 1640, identifying 474 Iberian voyages spread out mostly over the ports of Cartagena, Veracruz, and Buenos Aires. Of the 132,000 licences pertaining to the *asientos* between 1595 and 1640, Vilar estimated a total number of 269,000 slaves (factoring in contraband) arrived in Spanish America. While collecting data series for various Caribbean ports and Cartagena (1595-1600 and 1622-1640), she presented a continuous list for the slave trade to Veracruz (1595-1640) with 173 voyages, with Angola as its main supplying region, covering 80 per cent of the ships.⁵⁷⁸

Building on Vilar's work, António de Almeida Mendes drew a similar conclusion on the trade of Veracruz and Angola's leading role in its supply, but lowers the estimate to 203,000 slaves.⁵⁷⁹ The recent estimates of the TSTD have projected the number of slaves unloaded in Spanish America during this period (1595-1640) to have been around 243,000 (reaching as high as 340,000 if all nations, intra-American trade, and incomplete records are included).⁵⁸⁰ The information presented in Graph 4.2, based on data of the TSTD, confirms Vilar's assessment that the vast majority of slaves exported to America during this era primarily came from Angola. Fiscal records of slave ships during the *asiento* of Reinel (1595-1600) show that Angola covered close to 50 per cent of the total slaves arriving in the Spanish Indies. This share would further increase and represent over 70 per cent (7,124) of Veracruz' legal slave imports between 1604 and 1614 (9,683).⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁷ Scelle, *La traite*, vol. I-II; Pierre Chaunu, Huguette Chaunu, *Séville et l'Atlantique: 1504–1650*, t. I-VIII (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N, 1955-60)

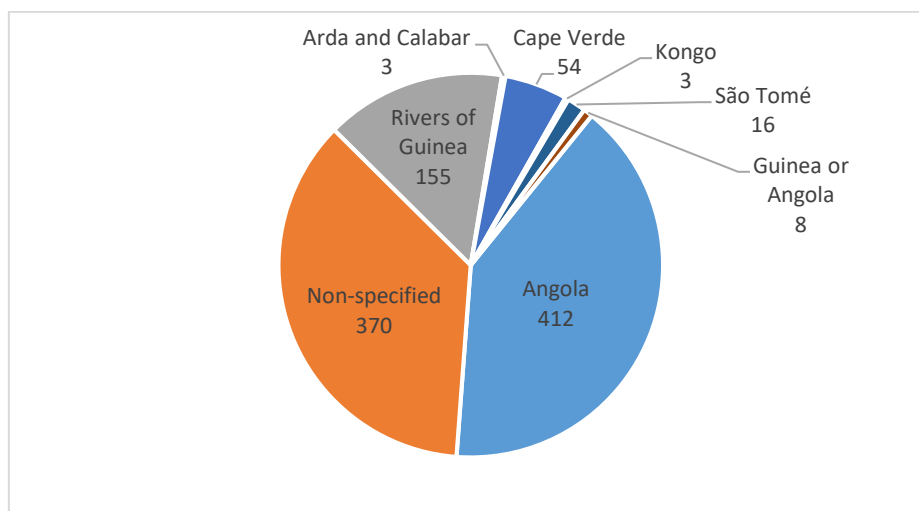
⁵⁷⁸ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 209, 252-67

⁵⁷⁹ Mendes calculates this adjustment for illegal voyages and smuggling activities by multiplying the total exports by one-fourth, instead of Vilar's one-third. Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations", pp. 80-1

⁵⁸⁰ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 20 April 2019, <https://slavevoyages.org/voyages/p1fuWqUi>

⁵⁸¹ Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, Appendix 2 and 3, pp. 252-67

Figure 10 - Slave capture regions declared for ships departing from Seville and Lisbon
(1595-1640)



Source: Adapted from Germán Peralta Rivera, *El comercio negrero en América Latina* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Federico Villareal, 2006) p. 164, pp. 319-23

According to the *Registros* of Seville's Indies Archive, between 1616 and 1622, Angola covered 73 per cent of all slave arrivals (22,851) in Spanish America, while Upper Guinean expeditions only accounted for 15 per cent (4,760), with the remaining 5 per cent (1,655) originated in São Tomé, Arda and Calabari. Of these figures, around 70 per cent of the slaves were shipped to New Spain (21,256), while the remaining 30 per cent (9,950) were destined for Cartagena, as those two ports were the only legal gateways into the Spanish territories of America after 1615.⁵⁸² The abundance of sources and published material for Veracruz has led scholars of the Iberian slave trade to conclude that Angola supplied "at least two-thirds of the slaves" during the Union, with "eight or nine out of every ten slaves" arriving in America from this region. Angola claimed a "near monopoly" of the slave exports to Spanish America during the seventeenth century, as its proportion went as high at 90 per cent.⁵⁸³ While those records appear to emphasise the predominance of Angola's slave exports for Veracruz, its share was far less significant for Cartagena. Based on samples of Lima's notarial records published by Frederik Bowser, combined with their research in Seville's archives, Linda Newson and Susie

⁵⁸² Newson, Minchin, *From capture to sale*, p. 66; AGI, *Contratación*, "Registros de Esclavos" Legs. 2878-2884

⁵⁸³ Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations", p. 67, 85; Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 30, 161

Minchin argue that the trade to Cartagena was mostly composed of slaves from the Upper Guinea region, and not so much from Angola. While Bowser calculated that approximately 55 per cent of the slaves sold on Peru's markets originally came from Upper Guinea, Newson and Minchin show, by means of a sample of the *Registros* of Seville, that slaves brought from Guinea and Cape Verde represented a total of 60 per cent of all of Cartagena's arrivals (6,295), while Angola only accounted for 34 per cent (3,290), with São Tomé and Arda representing the remaining 6 percent (365).⁵⁸⁴

However, the sources used by Vilar, Mendes, Newson, and Minchin to calculate slave arrivals in the American ports rely heavily on metropolitan fiscal records linked to the accounts of the *asiento*, which were drafted in the Kingdom before the departure of ships to America. Not only did not all of them reach their destination, but some did not even made full use of the licences, while others exceeded them. Vilar herself acknowledged some of the most glaring gaps in the examined records, since only 173 of the total 487 voyages listed contain departure data. Voyages that are known to have arrived in America, but were not registered in Seville (through *arribadas* or smuggling) are also not covered by those records. Furthermore, as Midlo Hall has argued, some of Vilar's entries contain errors regarding the geographic origins of the slaves coming from the 'Rivers of Guinea'. This resulted in a significant undercount of slaves from Greater Senegambia during the Iberian Union, and undermines their impact as a "major formative African regional culture" in the Americas, opposed to the Bantu from West Central Africa.⁵⁸⁵ This oversight of the origins of slaves from the *Rios da Guiné* is also registered in the data of the TSTD. Although the database provides a far more complete picture and more reliable projections than the works of Vilar, it still places many slaves and voyages from this region into 'unknown' or blank fields. This is also visible in Graph 4.2: Despite the numbers for Brazil lowering the impact of Guinea slaves in the overall patterns of the Iberian trade, they are still greatly underrepresented.⁵⁸⁶ The *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* is an invaluable tool for scholars of the slave trade, and greatly facilitates comparative exercises between different regions, but it is not without its faults. A project of large dimensions working with input variables is bound to offer figures that will remain open to debate. The categorisation and regional separation for Africa's coast is also far from optimal, as it follows Curtin's model by dividing the Senegambia region in Sierra

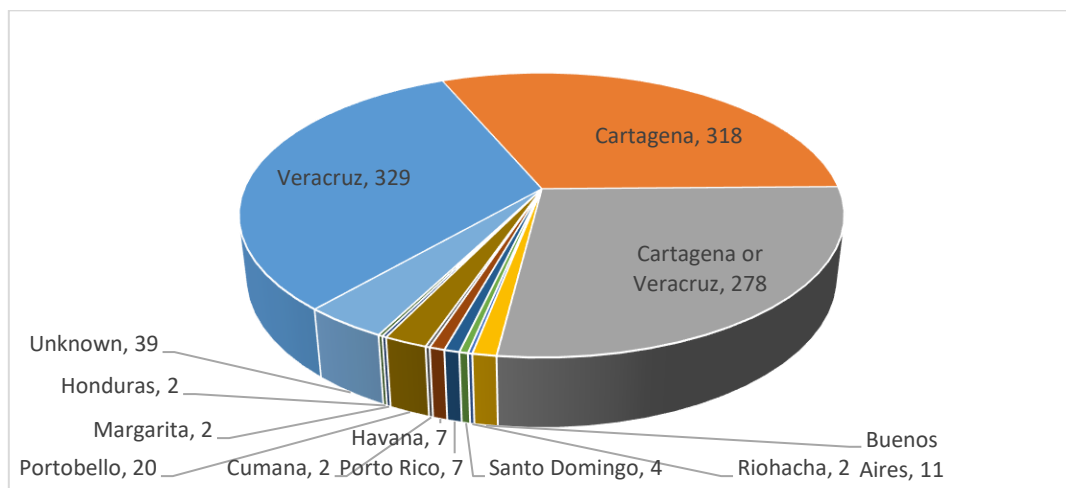
⁵⁸⁴ Bowser, *The African Slave*, pp. 38-44; Newson, Minchin, *From capture to sale*, p. 66

⁵⁸⁵ Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities*, pp. 84-6

⁵⁸⁶ Almeida Mendes, "The Foundations", p. 69

Leone, Guinea, and the Windward Coast, overlaps the Bights of Benin and Biafra, and considers West Central Africa to stretch from the north of Congo to the Cape of Good Hope. The database does not include undocumented voyages, especially the ones to Brazil resulting from bilateral routes (rather than triangular), which were registered in neither Lisbon's nor Seville's records, which in turn greatly contributes to the under-representation of Brazil's voyages during this era. Incomplete data on voyages also greatly exaggerates or undermines the numbers presented in the database according to the search field, as more than 100,000 exports during this period are added/lost depending on the user specifying ships coming from Portugal or Spain, as they do not account for the 'blank' field, even if ships have Portuguese or Spanish names, crew, and captains.⁵⁸⁷

Figure 11 - American port of arrival declared for slave ships departing from Seville and Lisbon (1595-1640)



Source: Adapted from Germán Peralta Rivera, *El comercio negrero en América Latina* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Federico Villareal, 2006) p. p. 164, pp. 317-23

The numbers drawn from the *Registros* of Seville by Vila Vilar have since been re-evaluated by Germán Peralta Rivera, who offers a far larger sample, accounting for 1,021 slave ships (opposed to 474).⁵⁸⁸ This revision shows that, while Angola maintains

⁵⁸⁷ For criticism on the Slave Trade Database, see Paul Lovejoy, "The Upper Guinea Coast and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database", *African Economic History*, vol. 38 (2010) pp. 1-27; Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, Stacey Sommerdyk, "Reexamining the Geography and Merchants of the West-Central African Trade: Looking Beyond the Numbers, Idem, pp. 77-105; Green, *Rise of the Trans-Atlantic*, pp. 195-6

⁵⁸⁸ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 330-55

its position as the most predominant region in the Iberian slave trade (over 40 per cent of shipments), its share is not as monolithic as Vilar's numbers suggest (Graph 4.3). They also show a much more prominent role for Cartagena as a port of call for African slaves, matching the previous descriptions and reports of historical actors. The share of slave voyages is much more balanced between the two main slaving ports of Spanish America (31 vs 32 per cent), as displayed in Graph 4.4. At the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge that a very significant share of the voyages (27 per cent) were not specifically declared for either port, and can massively tip the scales in favour of either Veracruz or Cartagena. The reason for the existence of such a large number of ships traveling without declaring for either port is that Spanish accountants and scribes stopped recording the destination of ships after the cancelation of the *asiento* in 1623. For seventeen years, slave ships were simply recorded as departing to either of the two legal gateways of America (Veracruz or Cartagena) in Seville's *Casa de la Contratación*.⁵⁸⁹

However, Rivera's figures are still tied to fiscal records in Iberia, which offer only partial information, as they cover only one side of the trade. While shipping records for Early Modern Caribbean ports are difficult to uncover, David Wheat has recently shed light on voyage data for Cartagena. Wheat used the old data of Vilar and gathered new information from fragmented port entry records, judicial records of government officials reporting illegal arrivals in America, parochial records of the Caribbean, as well as slave sales present in local notarial archives. Through this exercise, he was able to present a broader picture of the Iberian slave trade that places the port of Cartagena at its vanguard. Wheat identified a total of 487 voyages carrying 78,453 slaves to Cartagena alone between 1573 and 1640, almost three times as much as Vilar's series for Veracruz (140 ships).⁵⁹⁰ Rather than an absolute dominance of Angola, Wheat's port data for Cartagena shows an equal importance of Angola and Guinea as slave supply regions for this city. While Angola accounted for the largest share of the total voyages with 45 per cent (218), it was closely followed by the combination of Guinea and Cape Verde with 40 per cent (195), and its rise was much later than previously estimated. Wheat managed to draw a consistent chronological series of slave arrivals in the port of Cartagena, which he divided into five different 'waves' (1570-1590; 1593-1601; 1602-1616; 1617-1625; 1626-1640).

⁵⁸⁹ Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531-1706* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) p.110

⁵⁹⁰ David Wheat, "The first great waves: African provenance zones for the transatlantic slave trade to Cartagena de Indias, 1570-1640", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 52 (2011), pp. 1-22

Following this chronology, Angola is shown only to truly surpass Guinea during the ‘fourth wave’ (1617-1625), which coincided with the military campaigns of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos. This data places Vilar’s and other authors’ earlier evaluation of Veracruz’s and New Spain’s prominent role as a slave region into “a broader transatlantic context”. The absolute predominance of Angolan slaves seen in Veracruz (80 per cent of voyages) was not mirrored in Cartagena (less than 50 per cent). The 487 voyages identified for the latter port paint a far more complete picture of the Iberian slave trade, which effectively shows that Cartagena received more slaves than Veracruz, benefiting from its position as the main transatlantic port in the South Atlantic. Some of the slaves unloaded in Cartagena even found their way to Veracruz afterwards through intra-American trade.⁵⁹¹

Combining the data of both authors for Cartagena and Veracruz, Angola did in fact cover the majority of slave voyages (54 per cent), but the difference in comparison to other regions was far from as immense as initially suggested by Veracruz’s data. While Cartagena may have initially presented itself as a preferential port for the more expensive (and more valued) Guinea slaves, the numerous slaves from Angola obtained during the destruction of Ndongo gradually found their way into New Granada and South America through this port, even if at a much later stage than initially suggested. Angolan slaves only started to account for half of Cartagena’s imports between 1617 and 1625, and later for two-thirds of the shipments until the end of the Union in 1640. Even then, Guinea was still a significant region for Cartagena, accounting for 30 per cent of its voyages.⁵⁹²

In summary, the fiscal records of Seville provide valuable information on the slave journeys, but cover just one side of the trade. While voyage data, port records, and notarial market sales are harder to trace, they offer a far more valuable and complete picture of the structure of the Iberian slave trade. Following Wheat’s study for Cartagena, authors such as Lokken, Sierra Silva, and Borucki have successfully identified prominent secondary markets in Santiago de Guatemala, Puebla de los Angeles, and Caracas, while Newson and Ventura have identified extensive and complex slaving networks linking the Atlantic slave trade to the markets of Peru through merchant letters, accounting books,

⁵⁹¹ Borucki, Eltis, Wheat, “Atlantic History”, pp. 433-461; Wheat, “Great Waves”, pp. 13-15, 17; Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery*, pp. 110-11

⁵⁹² Wheat, “Great Waves”, p. 22

and private journals.⁵⁹³ Further research is necessary for Brazilian ports, the voyages to which were mostly organised directly from (or to) Africa, and intermingled with the trade along the Rio de la Plata. The studies of Canabrava and Schultz are invaluable to shed light on the bilateral connections between Buenos Aires, Brazil, and Angola, and their role in the creation of a South Atlantic system.⁵⁹⁴ At the same time, a lot of valuable information is to be uncovered in the Portuguese notarial records in Lisbon. A small sample of contracted voyages and shipping destined for Angola during the Union appears to show the same patterns, as 26 per cent of voyages recorded to Luanda from Lisbon were destined to end in Cartagena, while 12 per cent were intended for Veracruz. Voyages identified as destined to the ‘Spanish Indies’ via Angola accounted for 38 per cent, while Brazil accounted to close to 22 per cent).⁵⁹⁵

Therefore, the Portuguese had two major markets for slaves between 1580 and 1640: Brazil and Spanish America. While Brazil is known to have had long-lasting connections with Africa throughout the entire era of the transatlantic trade, the territories of the Spanish empire in America were intrinsically linked to the Portuguese African territories through the slave trade as well. The data of the TSTD suggests a far more composite picture than strict bilateral relations between the two sides of the Portuguese Atlantic. It reveals that the legal volume of the slave trade to Spanish America not only rivalled, but actually surpassed the one to Brazil until at least the 1611-1615 period when the *asiento* was removed out of the Portuguese hands. Although Brazil would keep this position after the *asiento* returned to Fernandes de Elvas, Spanish America still outstripped the trade to Brazil in terms of the cumulative volume of slave exports. Between 1501 and 1641, Spanish America received close to 332,500 African slaves from the Portuguese African ports, while Brazil only received around 283,500 according to the database’s figures. Only in the decade of the 1670s, Brazil’s cumulative trade finally surpassed the one to the Spanish Indies.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ Lokken, “Santiago de Guatemala”; Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery*; Alex Borucki, “Trans-imperial History in the Making of the Slave Trade to Venezuela, 1526-1811”, *Itinerario*, vol. XXXVI: 2 (2012) pp. 24-54; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*; Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru*, 3 vols.

⁵⁹⁴ Kara Schultz, “‘The Kingdom of Angola is not Very Far from Here’: The South Atlantic Slave Port of Buenos Aires, 1585–1640”, *Slavery & Abolition*, vol. 36: 3 (2015) pp. 424-444; Canabrava, *O comércio Português no Rio da Prata*

⁵⁹⁵ ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa* 1, 2, 15. See also Chapter 6

⁵⁹⁶ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 25 May 2019, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/kfoc1wUu>; <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/qJfvj4YR>

These numbers confirm Filipa Ribeiro da Silva's argument that Brazil's sugar industry was not "the driving force" behind the growth of Portuguese shipping from Africa. This role was reserved for the Spanish mining system, as well as the labour demands related to the development of massive urban centres in the viceroyalties of Peru and New Spain, which dwarfed the role of the cities in Brazil. According to Ribeiro da Silva, an analysis of the increase of Portuguese shipment from West Africa and the production of the Spanish bullion demonstrates similar trends, which hint that the African slaves "mainly landed in Spanish American colonies" between 1590 and 1630.⁵⁹⁷ This conclusion is also confirmed by one of the few surviving copies of Luanda's factory books. According to the royal factor in Luanda, Estevão do Carvalhal, Luanda's factory dispatched 79 slave ships with 18,507 *peças de escravos* (slave 'pieces') between December 1624 and October 1626. While Brazil received more ships than Spanish America (37 vs 31), the total number of slaves shipped to American territories was still greater than the ones destined for Brazil (9,400 vs 7,923).⁵⁹⁸ Therefore, the slave trade from Angola to Spanish America was fundamental for the Spanish enterprise in America, and in no way less important than the trade to Brazil. The effects of the Angola warfare echoed far beyond the Portuguese Atlantic World during the Union of Crowns, illustrating how this activity transcended imperial borders, and relied on complex trans-imperial networks that helped shape much of Spanish America's colonial societies at the onset of the seventeenth century.⁵⁹⁹

4.3 Overlapping Experiences in the Iberian Empires: The Interconnected Histories of the Portuguese and Spanish Imperial Enterprises

On 16 January 1620, Luanda's long-time resident Captain Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco appeared in Madrid to propose an extensive project for the tenure and taxation of 200 indigenous Angolan warchiefs (*sobas*) to the Council of Portugal, entitled "*projecto de aforamento e tributação dos Sobas*".⁶⁰⁰ As one of the leading *capitães-mores* that accompanied Paulo Dias de Novais since the very beginning of the Angolan

⁵⁹⁷ Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 259-70

⁵⁹⁸ AHU, Cx. 2, doc. 219

⁵⁹⁹ TSTD, *Voyages*, <http://slavevoyages.org/estimates/mVvf5chp>

⁶⁰⁰ "Relação de Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco," 16-1-1620, António Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, p. 446-452.

enterprise in 1575, Garcia Mendes presented the Crown with an overview of the state of the conquest in Angola, and offered a solution for the precarious financial sustenance of the troops stationed there, while enabling a more effective Iberian presence in the territory. His strategy consisted of releasing the *sobas* from their vassalage links and taxation duties to the Portuguese Crown, and place them under the direct tutelage of the *capitães-mores* of Angola instead. The Portuguese conquistadors would pay the King an annual fee for the ‘lease’ of their respective *sobas*, and would be responsible for their protection. This would free the Crown from any expenditures in the conquest of Angola in the process. In exchange, the *capitães* would be the ones entitled to collect and receive the tribute from the *sobas* previously designated to the Crown, tributes that could be paid in the form of consumer goods, cattle, *panos* (cloth used on Africa’s slave markets), or slaves. However, those tributes traditionally came almost exclusively in form of the latter, as slaves were regarded as the strongest ‘currency’ of the land. Those tributes would allegedly earn the Crown the considerable sum of 15,000,000 *réis* per year for Angola, which, according to Castelo Branco, would cover the salaries of the administration of Luanda and the soldiers garrisoned in the fortresses along the Kwanza River, as well as help finance the building of a new fortress in Anzele. This project was accompanied by other proposals and descriptions regarding trade, religion, fortifications, and the natural resources of the hinterland, all with the goal of safeguarding the Portuguese position in Angola and expand its conquest.⁶⁰¹

The inspiration behind the proposal for a system of taxation and exploitation of the local Mbundu people in Africa by Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco is found not only in his long forty-six years of experience in the conquest of the Angolan territory, but mostly in the increasing administrative and financial reforms registered across the Iberian overseas empires, especially after the integration of the Portuguese empire into the Spanish Monarchy. Influenced not only by Portugal’s fiscal and administrative practices in *Estado da India* and East Africa, Castelo Branco’s ideas drew heavily on Spanish imperial experiences in America as well. His project for a system of taxation and exploitation of the indigenous people in West Africa was somewhat reminiscent of *encomienda* and *repartimiento* experiences in Mexico and Peru. According to Garcia Mendes, Portuguese colonial rule in Africa could be secured and reinforced by mirroring the practices of the first conquistadors in the Americas, and through the adaptation of

⁶⁰¹ For the full set of proposals of Garcia Mendes see: *Ibid*, pp. 437-478

Spanish imperial institutions. These notions were not exclusive to the Luanda captain, as they were present in earlier writings of two different Spanish soldiers who also participated in the conquest of Angola with Castelo Branco: Diego Herrera (1588) and Jerónimo Castaño (1599).⁶⁰²

The events on the West Coast of Africa described in the previous chapter were contemporary with the Spanish imperial ventures in the Americas. The economic, military, and administrative policies undertaken by the Portuguese in Angola were closely intertwined with the development of Spanish Caribbean colonial societies, with the period of the Union of Crowns witnessing a gradual dilution of barriers and increasing movement between its respective imperial spheres, especially in the Atlantic space. The transoceanic links between the Portuguese conquest of West Africa and Spanish colonial economies in the Americas are further evidenced by Garcia Mendes' hidden agenda and activities outside of Luanda. As a reward for his project, Castelo Branco wished to receive the title of "*comissário geral*" (leading commissioner) in the collection of the *soba* tributes, and the 'ownership' of one of the richest and strongest *sobas* of the region, Caculo Quehacango, and his entire *sobado*, from whom he could expect to extort considerable tribute, undoubtedly in the form of slaves.⁶⁰³ As one of the leading participants in the conquest of Angola and one of Novais' most trusted *capitães*, Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco certainly misappropriated many more during his tenure in Luanda. The slaves he captured and extorted as tribute would then be shipped to Spanish American ports for his personal gain. Castelo Branco had developed a considerable transatlantic business venture, and established commercial partnerships in Spanish America with the merchants Duarte Nunes de Seia in Lima, and Fernando de Guzmán in Cartagena de Indias as early as 1590, selling numerous slaves from his Angolan enterprises to his associates thirty years before writing his memorandum.⁶⁰⁴

In addition to being an active participant in the Angolan wars, Garcia Mendes can also be traced across multiple ports of the Atlantic, as he is found to have captained at least three other trans-Atlantic slave voyages departing from Angola towards the West Indies, unloading close to 500 Angolan slaves. In 1599, he captained the ship *Nuestra*

⁶⁰² Claudio Miralles de Imperial y Gómez, *Angola en tiempos de Felipe II y Felipe III: Los memoriales de Diego de Herrera y Jerónimo Castaño* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Africanos, 1951)

⁶⁰³ Diogo Ramada Curto, *Cultura Imperial e Projetos coloniais* (Campinas: Unicamp, 2009) pp. 307-9

⁶⁰⁴ Gonzalo de Reparaz, *Os Portugueses no Vice-Reinado do Peru (séculos XVI e XVII)* (Lisbon: Instituto de Alta Cultura, 1976) pp. 50-52

Señora del Rosario with destination Cartagena de Indias, making a short stopover at Rio de la Hacha, before unloading his shipment of 226 slaves at the final destination. In 1612, the ship *San Agustín* made illegal stops in Havana and Jamaica, where he illegally smuggled some slaves before ending his voyage in Veracruz. Castelo Branco's vessel *Santa Catalina* unloaded his last known shipment of 140 slaves in 1618, again in the fort of San Juan de Ulloa in Veracruz.⁶⁰⁵ There are records of two more voyages captained by one 'García Méndez' to Cartagena, in 1596 and 1601 respectively, although it is unclear if it concerned the same individual as both journeys are registered to have departed from Guinea, instead of Angola.⁶⁰⁶ In 1600, he is described as a *vecino* (resident) of Cartagena during the settlement of a financial dispute with his partner Nunes de Seia, regarding a debt of 8,400 *pesos* from one of his slave shipments.⁶⁰⁷ Castelo Branco is later found in Madrid in January 1620, seeking rewards for his extensive services in Angola and the approval for his project. He hovered around the Habsburg Court for seven months in hope of gathering support for his proposal.⁶⁰⁸ Garcia Mendes finally returned to Angola in 1621, where he died shortly after, without ever seeing his proposals come to fruition.⁶⁰⁹

This section seeks to contextualize and overlap the stages of the Portuguese occupation in Angola, as well as the evolving patterns of the transatlantic slave trade into the broader political framework of the Habsburg Monarchy during the Union of Crowns. Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco's military actions in Angola and commercial activities in the Americas illustrates how the Portuguese military occupation of Angola and the growth of Spanish colonies in the Americas were inherently connected and supported one another. It also displays the growing relaxation between the Iberian imperial borders during the period of the Union of Crowns (1580-1640), which witnessed an increasing circulation of people, information, commodities and capital between their respective imperial domains, as well as the development of trans-imperial commercial circuits and business networks between agents of both Crowns.

⁶⁰⁵ David Wheat, "Garcia Mendes Castelo Branco, fidalgo de Angola y mercader de esclavos en Veracruz y el Caribe a principios del siglo XVII", in Maria Elisa Velásquez, *Debates Históricos contemporáneos: Africanos y Afrodescendientes en México y Centroamérica*, (2011), pp. 85-107

⁶⁰⁶ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 11 April 2018, voyage ID 29013, 29217

⁶⁰⁷ Reparaz, *Vice-Reinado do Peru*, pp. 50-2

⁶⁰⁸ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib. 1517, f. 23, 32

⁶⁰⁹ Ilídio do Amaral, *O Consulado de Paulo Dias de Novais: Angola no último quartel do século XVI e primeiro século XVII* (Lisbon: Instituto de Investigação científica e tropical, 2000) p. 74

Garcia Mendes' enterprises showcase how Iberian agents circulated freely in the Atlantic World, allowing the Luanda captain to develop a significant business venture based on the capture of African slaves in the military campaigns in Angola, and their sale in Spanish American ports, connecting Iberia, Africa and America into one single, unified system. The ventures of Castelo Branco also demonstrate how the evolving policies of warfare and slave production undertaken in Angola were motivated not only by Luanda's growing links with colonial Brazil, but also by its ties to the Spanish American world as previously explained. The vast number of African slaves acquired through the Angolan wars that entered Spanish American ports and integrated into the Hispano-Caribbean societies during the Union of Crowns profoundly reshaped the Early Modern Atlantic space. The sale of slaves from Africa to America during the Iberian Union therefore operated as a bridge between the Caribbean colonies in America and the commercial entrepôts on the West African Coast, making the Portuguese occupation of Angola and the colonisation of America by the Spanish not only a contemporary but also a mutually reinforced enterprise.⁶¹⁰

The enterprises of Castelo Branco in both Angola and America highlight a certain interconnections between the military and economic sectors on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as the flexibility of movement between Iberian seaports in the Atlantic during the Union of Crowns, where the slave trade coming from Portuguese Africa played a pivotal role in the development of the American economies and in the integration of its intra-regional circuits and markets into a wider Atlantic economy.⁶¹¹ At the same time, they also reflect a world of blurred borders and a stable communication and interaction between agents of both Crowns. The transatlantic slave trade portrays a clear and key example of Iberian collaboration, through which Spanish American port cities and Portuguese African settlements reciprocally supported and strengthened each other. The Portuguese expansion in Angola through warfare supplied the development of the Spanish Caribbean colonies with a considerable slave force, while the economic growth of those settlements offered agents like Castelo Branco opportunities to profit and extend his ventures which blended African, Iberian and American elements. The changing

⁶¹⁰ David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016) pp. 71-2

⁶¹¹ Paul Lokken, "From the 'Kingdoms of Angola' to Santiago de Guatemala: The Portuguese Asientos and Spanish Central America, 1595-1640", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 93, nº2 (2013) pp. 171-203; Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru no tempo da União Ibérica: Mobilidade, cumplicidades e vivências*, vol. I, t.1 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 2005)

policies regarding slave acquisition in Portuguese West Africa and slavery in Spanish America were clearly “complementary aspects of a single, unified history”.⁶¹² Therefore, the histories of the Iberian imperial ventures cannot be studied separate from each other.

The ‘Connected Histories’ of Iberian empires

The sale of African slaves to America was just one of many collaborative enterprises between the two Iberian empires. While this partnership around the slave trade provides the clearest and most expansive example of collaboration and inter-imperial exchange between Iberian empires, this economic activity was not the only enterprise in which the Portuguese and Spanish imperial spheres overlapped. Communication, interactions, and exchanges between the Portuguese and Spanish imperial spheres were neither limited nor restricted to an economic level. The lack of clearly defined and well-enforced borders invited an active circulation of Portuguese and Spanish agents throughout the Atlantic, and their integration and involvement in each other’s overseas ventures. The Portuguese were active participants in the Spanish exploration of America since its very beginnings, as some Portuguese sailors could be found among Columbus’ crew during his very first voyage to America. One of his most trusted pilots, Juan Rodriguez de Guinea, was also a Portuguese natural, with whom Columbus himself had shared many voyages to the Upper Guinean Coast during the 1480s. From the discovery of America in 1492 to at least 1557, more than 400 Portuguese can be traced in the discovery of the new continent.⁶¹³ Some even participated in official expeditions, like the case of João Dias Solis, the first man to explore the Rio de la Plata, or João Rodrigues Carbilho, who participated in the conquest of Mexico.⁶¹⁴ Although non-Castilian naturals were forbidden to enlist in the *Carrera de Indias*, there is ample evidence of Portuguese pilots, navigators, cartographers, and settlers officially enrolled in the maritime enterprise of Seville.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹² Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 72-3

⁶¹³ Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, *Portugueses no descobrimento e conquista da Hispano-América: Viagens e expedições (1492-1557)* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2000) pp. 52-4

⁶¹⁴ Francisco Bethencourt, “Iberian Atlantic”, pp. 15-36

⁶¹⁵ Amélia Polónia, “O Porto nas navegações ultramarinas quinhentistas. Embarcações e náuticos”, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras-História*, 3ª Série, 1 (2000), pp. 29-52

Portugal and Spain shared the same geographical, cultural, and diplomatic background, which promoted the circulation and flow of subjects between the borders of the Iberian Kingdoms ever since the Middle Ages. Merchants travelled between markets and fairs of the different Iberian Crowns on a regular basis, and established commercial trading circuits on a regional level, connecting them to other economic centres across the Peninsula; Portuguese and Spanish scholars regularly crossed the border to study at the universities of Salamanca or Coimbra, were bilingual and often published their works in print workshops outside their country of origin; noblemen and social elites traditionally travelled between different Courts and made matrimonial alliances with every Iberian Kingdom. Those pre-existing patterns would further manifest and flourish during the expansion of both imperial enterprises in the Atlantic. The Iberian empires promoted a space in which different agents, ideas, cultures, and goods circulated with relative ease across different territories, which encouraged the reproduction of similar patterns in both the Portuguese and Spanish imperial ventures.⁶¹⁶

Portuguese and Spanish imperial strategies often times emulated, borrowed from, or simply copied their Iberian counterparts' administrative or fiscal solutions, and integrated those experiences in their respective colonial domains since the beginning of the sixteenth century. As Sanjay Subrahmanyam highlighted, Portuguese rulers and chroniclers were fully aware of Spain's successful expeditions in America, and he speculated whether the early territorial approaches in the colonisation of Brazil during the first half of the sixteenth century could have been influenced by Spanish advances in Mexico under Cortés. Subrahmanyam wonders whether the choice for a system of *capitanias-donatarias* (used in the Atlantic archipelagos) for the settlement in Brazil, in stark contrast with Portuguese practices of empire-building in Asia, could have been an attempt at replicating a similar form of Spanish imperial policy in America. Certain elements of Spanish imperialism, such as territorial expansion and military occupation, were also replicated by the Portuguese in the second half of the sixteenth century. Francisco Barreto, a former Governor of the Portuguese *Estado da India* (1555-1558), was ordered to secure a Portuguese territorial foothold in East Africa by King Sebastião I, founding factories in Matatana and Quelimane in 1569. Barreto was later accompanied by Vasco Fernandes Homem, who took charge of the expedition after the death of the former, and founded a fort alongside the Zambezi River to serve as an outpost for the

⁶¹⁶ Francisco Bethencourt, "Iberian Atlantic", pp. 15-36

Portuguese search for the mythical mines of King Solomon. Although the quest for precious metals in East Africa was ultimately fruitless, and both Fernandes Homem and Barreto's enterprises ended in failures, they display a certain pattern of territorial occupation in the Portuguese empire in the 1560s and 1570s. This renewed search for precious metals in Africa by the Portuguese Crown coincided with the mining boom in the American silver production, and was equally present in Novais' charter to conquer Angola and in the instructions of his successors.⁶¹⁷

A similar process of territorial expansion in the Portuguese empire had already taken place in Asia, and can be seen in the earlier conquest of the *Provincia do Norte* (Northern Province) in the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* (the coast of Daman to Chaul), and later in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The Portuguese empire was gravitating towards what Subrahmanyam called a model of 'territorialisation', reminiscent of Spanish experiences in Peru and Mexico long before the aggregation to the Habsburg Monarchy. At the same time, the quest for mineral deposits in the Portuguese empire during the second half of the sixteenth century was greatly inspired by the discovery of the extremely rich silver deposits in Potosí. The example of the wealth found in the Cerro Rico was constantly present in the military projects of multiple Portuguese *arbitristas* (public projectors), encouraging a more active conquest of the African territory.⁶¹⁸ Likewise, Portuguese's own imperial enterprises influenced Spanish policies and ambitions for the Atlantic region, as previously described by the early settlement patterns in the Caribbean and Columbus' slave policy, but also commercially in Asia. The search for a direct route through the Pacific, sponsored by the vice-royalty of New Spain and led by Miguel López de Legazpi, appears to have been motivated by the profits acquired through the Portuguese royal monopoly on the pepper trade in the *Carreira da Índia*. Not only that, but the revenues generated from taxing the private activity of its merchants on the Indian and South-East Asian markets as well, no doubt inspired the establishment of an annual convoy fleet between Manila and New Spain through Acapulco in 1565.⁶¹⁹

Although traditional literature often emphasises the Union of Crowns as the crucial moment that signalled the integration and collaboration between the Portuguese

⁶¹⁷ Thornton, *Portuguese in Africa*

⁶¹⁸ Subrahmanyam, "Holding the World", p. 1371

⁶¹⁹ Rafael Valladares, *Castilla y Portugal en Asia (1580-1680): declive imperial y adaptación* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001) p. 3; Alfonso Mola and Martínez Shaw, *El Galeón de Manila* (Madrid: Ministerio de educación, cultura y deporte, 2000) p. 3

and Spanish imperial territories, a comparative approach shows that various political, economic, and cultural interconnections between the territories of the Iberian empires had been established long before the advent of the Habsburg Monarchy. King João III (1521-1557) implemented the first institutional reforms to the Portuguese empire's administrative and economic structures, but it was under King Sebastião's rule (1568-1578) that a certain reconfiguration of the empire became visible. The Crown divided Brazil into two different States in 1572, and projected a similar division of the *Estado da Índia*. At roughly the same time, the search for silver and gold mines in Monomotapa through the incursions in the Zambezi valley of East Africa, and the establishment of coastal settlements in Mozambique in the 1560s, show that the Portuguese were already gravitating towards territorial expansion before the Union of Crowns. It was also within this new territorial policy that Paulo Dias de Novais received his charter to conquer the kingdom of Angola a few years later, in 1571.⁶²⁰ Therefore, the first years that followed the aggregation of the Portuguese Crown did not witness any radical changes in the Portuguese imperial policy or colonial architecture, and Phillip II's policies revealed a great deal of continuity with the imperial lines drawn by the previous Portuguese Kings.⁶²¹ The advances in the conquest of Angola, albeit actually taking place under Habsburg administration, had been ordered by the Portuguese King, and were in line with the Crown's strategy for other territories in Africa and Asia, resurfacing later in Ceylon.⁶²² Other institutional and economic changes, such as the commercial overhaul of the shipping system of the *Carreira da Índia*, the reconfiguration of its imperial structure in Asia, and the expansion of the South Atlantic economy based on Brazil's sugar production also took place during Sebastião's rule.⁶²³

Whether inspired by Spanish imperial ventures in New Spain and Peru, or simply the result of a natural evolution of the Portuguese administrative and fiscal matrix, the Portuguese empire was already undergoing structural changes that are often associated

⁶²⁰ Martínez Torres, "There is but one World", pp. 1-14

⁶²¹ Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, 'Introducción. Entre el Imperio colonial y la monarquía compuesta', *Idem* (ed), *Las Redes del Império. Elites Sociales en la articulación de la monarquía hispánica, 1492-1714* (Madrid: Marcials Pons, 2009, p 30)

⁶²² Jorge Flores, *Hum curto historia do ceylan: quinhentos anos de relações entre Portugal e o Sri Lanka* (Lisbon: Fundação do Oriente, 2001) pp. 69-70, 73-7

⁶²³ Luis Filipe Thomaz, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Evolution of empire: The Portuguese in the Indian Ocean during the sixteenth century", James Tracy (Ed.), *The Political economy of merchant empires* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 298-331; Leonor Freire Costa, Pedro Lains, Susana Münch Miranda, *História Económica de Portugal 1143-2010* (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2011) pp. 132-141

with the advent of Habsburg rule.⁶²⁴ Rather than heralding the beginning of a new age for Portuguese imperial administration and joint-Iberian commercial partnerships, the Union of Crowns marked what Vitorino Magalhães Godinho defined as a “point of arrival”, since most of the transformations and exchanges that took place across the Portuguese overseas territories during this period had in fact, been adopted and fostered for most of the fifteenth and sixteenth century.⁶²⁵

Considering all of those overlapping elements from different political, economic, and cultural backgrounds, it makes little sense to frame Portuguese and Spanish imperial ventures in complete isolation from one another, or as contrasting examples of ‘empire models’ and European expansion. This historiographical division has diverted historians’ attention away from actual links and processes of assimilation, communication, and cross-cultural exchange between the Iberian empires. Ultimately, the differences between the imperial policies of conquest, trade, and settlement employed by the two Iberian empires stemmed, more often than not, from the local contexts encountered by the Portuguese and the Spanish. The existing dynamic commercial system and strong political government in Asia, as opposed to the lack thereof in America coupled with the existence of plentiful natural resources and a feeble native population, ultimately resulted in different imperial agendas: one based on commerce through taxation, and the other through conquest and exploitation.⁶²⁶ The different strategies, or ‘models’ employed in the colonisation or exploitation of their respective colonial domains were therefore mainly influenced by the local contexts encountered by Iberian colonial agents. Yet, in the territories where the imperial spheres of the Portuguese and Spanish empires overlapped, the political and commercial strategies employed did not differ much. The case of Angola, and the different policies employed for the occupation of this territory and its commercial exploitation displays a clear integration between the Portuguese and Spanish imperial Worlds.

⁶²⁴ Francisco Bethencourt, “O Complexo Atlântico”, *História da Expansão*, vol. II, pp. 320-25

⁶²⁵ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, “1580 e a Restauração”, *Idem, Ensaios II*, 2nd edition (Lisbon: Livraria Sá da Costa, 1978), pp. 379-421

⁶²⁶ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic*, 153-178

Overlapping Iberian imperial experiences in the Atlantic: The case of Angola

The Portuguese settlement in the bay of Luanda was officially established with the arrival of Paulo Dias de Novais in February 1575, a couple of months after Cartagena de Indias, the most important Spanish American slave port in the South Atlantic, was officially awarded the title of city.⁶²⁷ By the end of the sixteenth century, early Caribbean economic activities, such as the pearling fisheries and the gold mining sites in Panama, Cuba, and Venezuela, and the sugar industries of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, had long faded. Following the exhaustion of the initial placer and fishing sites, Spanish settlements in the Caribbean gradually transformed into administrative capitals and commercial centres, which linked the silver extraction sites in the highlands of Peru and New Spain with the royal fleets crossing the Atlantic Ocean.⁶²⁸ The evolution and transformation of the early economies of Caribbean port cities like Havana, Santo Domingo, San Juan, and later Cartagena, and their consequent reorganisation as commercial hubs, fortified seaports, and strategic bottlenecks for the Caribbean Sea was not a natural result of “failed mining colonies or sugar islands”. Instead, as David Wheat suggests, Hispano-Caribbean ports’ organisation greatly resembled the Portuguese Atlantic colonies and commercial factories off the Coast of Africa, especially the slave entrepôts in Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Luanda, and served a similar economic purpose.⁶²⁹ This position echoes the writings of contemporary observers such as Alonso de Sandoval, who compares Cartagena’s role as a commercial hub to Cape Verde’s trading factories, both operating as collection points for merchandise in transit.⁶³⁰

The relationship between Portuguese factories in Africa and Spanish ports in the Caribbean transcended simple resemblance: it would directly intertwine the Spanish and Portuguese imperial ventures in the Atlantic. The construction and fortification of the Spanish Caribbean ports was supported by large-scale importation and employment of African slaves, thanks to the allocation of special slave charters by the Spanish Crown,

⁶²⁷ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, “Extranjeros en Cartagena (1593-1630)”, *Jarbuch für Geschichte von Staat Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Lateinamerika*, n° 16, (1979), pp. 147-184

⁶²⁸ Kenneth Andrews, *The Spanish Caribbean: Trade and Plunders, 1530-1630* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978); Ida Altman, “Key to the Indies: Port Towns in Spanish Caribbean, 1493-1550”, *The Americas*, vol. 74, issue 1 (2017), pp. 5-26

⁶²⁹ David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), pp. 15-16

⁶³⁰ Alonso de Sandoval, *Un tratado sobre la esclavitud*, trans. Enriqueta Vila Vilar (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987) p. 139

which were brought to the Americas from the outposts of Portuguese Africa. The commercial and administrative organisation of the Portuguese factories on the West Coast of Africa and the Spanish ports towns in the circum-Caribbean, even though operating under different imperial frameworks, became deeply interconnected through transatlantic slaving ventures. In the process, they would come to witness other similar patterns as a result of those exchanges, which resulted in varying levels of cultural adaptation and institutional hybridisation on opposite sides of the Atlantic.⁶³¹ Portugal's settlement and colonisation in Brazil for instance, resembled Spanish Imperial practices in America much more than Portuguese ones in Asia, and this territory embodied the Portuguese hopes of recreating "another Peru".⁶³² Although the adaptation of a military and territorial strategy more akin to Spanish imperial policies in Angola was not an isolated occurrence in the Portuguese empire (since it had precedents in India and East Africa), the growing links between Atlantic Africa and Spanish America, forged through the mutual partnership in transatlantic slave ventures, ultimately drove the conquest of Angola. The importance of this trade and of the slave revenues in sustaining Portuguese enterprises in Africa were highlighted in Novais' charter, and display a certain coordination between Portuguese advances in Africa and the growth of the Spanish American colonies.⁶³³

The settlement in Luanda and the conquest of Ndongo should be framed within the global framework of both Iberian empires, and cannot be analysed separately from other Portuguese and Spanish global experiences. The Atlantic slave trade experienced its first expansion roughly at the same time that Paulo Dias de Novais received his charter in 1571, following the first major surge of African forced migration towards the Americas in the previous decade. The instructions in this charter differed from previous settlement patterns contained in the Portuguese *capitanias* in Brazil and the Atlantic archipelagos, as Novais received orders from King Sebastião I "to conquer and subjugate the Kingdom of Angola".⁶³⁴ The order to launch a military campaign against the *Ngola* was issued in direct conjunction to the publication of the first indigenous laws regarding the freedom status of native Indians in Brazil (1570), which prohibited the coerced employment of their labour force, in turn increasing Brazil's reliance on African slaves and thereby the

⁶³¹ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 15-16

⁶³² Schwartz, "Economy of the Portuguese empire", p. 25

⁶³³ Amaral, *O Consulado*, pp. 49-72; 216-8

⁶³⁴ "Carta da doação a Paulo Dias de Novais", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, p. 36-51

relevance of Angola's conquest.⁶³⁵ In spite of Brazil's colonial economy considerable growth, and its increasing reliance on African slave labour, the overall number of imported slaves to its ports around 1575 was still considerably inferior to those transported to colonies in Spanish America (see table 4.2), which highlights the role of Caribbean colonies in the sponsorship of slave trading ventures in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁶³⁶

The introduction of the mercury amalgamation refining process in New Spain in the mid-1550s greatly increased the output of precious metals and stimulated the growth of the silver extraction industry in the American mainland. Therefore, a new system was developed to sustain the economic needs of colonial silver mining, which transformed the economies of the Spanish port cities in the Caribbean, and their reliance on African slaves.⁶³⁷ The remittances brought by *Carrera de Indias* nurtured the imagination of the Portuguese merchants and officials regarding the untapped potential mineral resources of their empire, particularly in Africa. Those aspirations led to the emergence of dubious reports of mythical gold deposits in East Africa, and suspicious rumours from West Africa reporting the existence of mountains "covered in silver".⁶³⁸ Contemporary with those rumours, the military campaigns led by the viceroy of Peru Francisco de Toledo against the last Inca also inspired Portuguese soldiers, captains, and adventurers calling for the military occupation of Angola. Other voices also influenced the decision to wage warfare on African territory, such as the Jesuits' and their project of the conversion of the territory, as well as the avenging of the abuses suffered by one of their priests, Francisco de Gouveia, held hostage with Novais in Ndongo during the 1560s.⁶³⁹ All of those factors, together with the gradual turn to a more effective military presence in Portugal's imperial domains and the proliferation of multiple projects of conquest in America, Asia, and Africa, were all intertwined and contributed to this new strategy of the Portuguese Crown. Therefore, the Portuguese decision to conquer 'the kingdom of Angola' should be

⁶³⁵ Georg Thomas, *Política indigenista dos Portugueses no Brasil 1500-1640* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 1981) pp. 221-222

⁶³⁶ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O trato dos viventes. Formação do Brasil no Atlântico colonial* (São Paulo: Companhia das letras, 2000) p. 33

⁶³⁷ Harry Cross, "South-American Bullion Production and Export 1550-1750", J. F. Richards (Ed.), *Precious Metals in the Later Medieval and Early Modern Worlds* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1983) pp. 397-423

⁶³⁸ Imperial y Gomez, *Angola*, pp. 69-74

⁶³⁹ "Carta do Padre Francisco de Gouveia ao Padre Diogo de Mirão" (1-11-1564), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 527-30; "Estado religioso e politico de Angola" (1588), *Ibidem*, vol. III p. 375

interpreted as a result of an accumulation of commercial interests, political ambitions, missionary proselytism, and other global factors, common to not only the Portuguese, but also the Spanish empire. Those events suggest a certain coordination between Portuguese advances in Africa, and the development of the Spanish colonial economies as a contemporary and mutually supportive initiative.

Thus, the Portuguese military and slaving activities in Angola need to be interpreted within this broader Iberian imperial framework. It cannot be dissociated from Spanish experiences in America, as this enterprise found multiple overlaps on both sides of the Atlantic, and was far from restricted to commercial slave ventures. Novais' military project in Angola registered considerable parallels with the Spanish campaigns of Hernan Cortés in Mexico fifty years earlier. Both expeditions were a combination of state-sponsored and privately funded enterprises for the conquest and exploitation of new territories and resources for the Crown. Both Cortés and Dias de Novais took on the financial and military responsibilities of their enterprises in the name of the Crown. In exchange for shouldering the financial burden of their missions, they were rewarded by the allocation of lands, the exploitation of indigenous populations, and economic privileges in the new territories.⁶⁴⁰ The similarity between the expeditions can be traced back to Iberian practices during the *Reconquista*. The Portuguese and Spanish expeditions in America and Africa therefore displayed a similar tradition of conquest and settlement rooted in their shared Medieval past.⁶⁴¹

The Portuguese and Spanish forces also shared the experience of heavily relying on indigenous forces for the fulfilment of their military expeditions. The negotiations with the *sobas* and later the *Imbangala* in Angola, with whom the Portuguese secured a strategic military alliance against Ndongo, was also reminiscent of previous experiences of the Spanish using the Tlaxcala against the Aztecs, and the exploitation of the Incan civil war.⁶⁴² The small numbers of the Iberian contingents on opposite sides of the Atlantic meant that they both experienced a necessity to negotiate local alliances and explore political strife's among the indigenous forces. Much like the Spanish did in the conquest of America, the Portuguese also employed vast numbers of indigenous forces,

⁶⁴⁰ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 249-50

⁶⁴¹ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic*, p. 20-1

⁶⁴² John Thornton, "Firearms, Diplomacy and Conquest in Angola: Cooperation and Alliance in West Central Africa, 1491-1671", in Wayne Lee (Ed.), *Empires and indigenes. Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion and Warfare in the Early Modern World* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) pp. 167-192

African auxiliary forces (called *Guerra preta*), and slave armies in order to enforce their imperial authority and collect the fruits of their campaigns: access to the territories' resources, and their inhabitants' labour force.⁶⁴³

Both Portuguese and Spanish military expeditions and settlement were closely accompanied by Catholic proselytism.⁶⁴⁴ The Church went to considerable effort to oversee and accompany Iberian expeditions, and granted special privileges and financial support to the Portuguese and Spanish in the new territories via the Church's taxes, and by sending missionary missions, mostly spearheaded by the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits offered considerable political and financial support to Iberian enterprises in America and West Africa. They granted Portuguese and Spanish troops the religious authority to realise their conquering ambitions. In remote and distant places where missionary embassies met resistance, Iberian troops saw their failed religious missions as proof of tyranny of native rulers, whose rejection of Christendom justified military intervention. This would place their conquests under the banner of a 'Just War' much like during the *Reconquista*, and safeguard the moral authority during the conquest and plundering of those territories, as well as the enslavement of its indigenous people. The cases of Portuguese Africa and Spanish America were once again strikingly similar. Iberian authorities used the missionary missions in Ndongo and Vilcabamba as cover-ups to justify the brutality and exploitation of indigenous populations in the eyes of the Church. Missionaries that clashed with local rulers and met their end during their missions were celebrated as martyrs, and their deaths prompted Iberian military intervention.

Francisco de Toledo, the viceroy of Peru (1569-1581), invoked the failed embassies of Gabriel de Oviedo and the martyrdom of Friar Diego de Ortiz, killed at the hands of Tupac Amaru in Vilcabamba, to justify his conquest of the last Inca.⁶⁴⁵ The Spanish had been growing restless in Peru during the *status quo* with the previous Inca Titu Cusi (1560-1570), and saw the death of the priest at the hands of a new ruler in the Incan capital as a perfect excuse to expand their authority in the region.⁶⁴⁶ At the same

⁶⁴³ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Portuguese Empire Building and Human Mobility in São Tomé and Angola, 1400s–1700s", Darshan Vigneswaran, Joel Quirk (Eds.), *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, pp. 37–58); Green, "Baculamento or Encomienda", pp. 310-336

⁶⁴⁴ Schwartz, "Economy of the Portuguese empire" pp. 21-51

⁶⁴⁵ Brian S. Bauer, Madeleine Halac-Higashimori, Gabriel Cantarutti, *Voices from Vilcabamba: Accounts chronicling the fall of the Inca Empire* (Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2016) pp. 3-19

⁶⁴⁶ Catherine Julien, "Francisco de Toledo and His Campaign against the Incas," *Colonial Latin American Review* 16 (2007), pp. 243-272

time, on the opposite shores of the Atlantic, the Jesuits' missions were equally frustrated in Ndongo, whose authorities requested missionaries but never accepted conversion. As financial partners of the Governor, the Jesuits pressured Novais to help establish Christianity in the territory, by force if necessary. Their appeals were especially pronounced after receiving news of the death of priest Francisco de Gouveia, who visited Ndongo upon request of the *Ngola* during the first diplomatic mission of Novais in 1560, and was held hostage in that territory until his dying breath.⁶⁴⁷ The abuses that were allegedly suffered by the priest contributed to the environment of distrust and the deterioration of the diplomatic relations between Ndongo and the Portuguese, which culminated in a display of tyranny by the *Ngola* when he, according to the priest Baltasar Afonso, slaughtered a Portuguese force of forty men in his territory, instigating Angola's wars.⁶⁴⁸ The *modus operandi* of the Portuguese in Angola displayed striking parallels with Spanish enterprises in Peru ten years earlier, and also those in Mexico, showcasing more evidence of how Iberian practices were replicated and experiences were shared across different imperial and colonial backgrounds.

Thus, the transformations that took place in Angola during the different phases of the Portuguese occupation, as well as the changing economic policies for the provision of slaves coming from this territory become much clearer when framed within the global imperial framework of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁶⁴⁹ Although Luiz Felipe Alencastro has brilliantly explored the Atlantic links between “the continuous destruction of Angola” and the “simultaneous construction of Brazil”, a trans-Imperial Iberian perspective shows that those same links extended to the Hispano-American colonies.⁶⁵⁰ Portuguese advances in Angola, and the Spanish economic expansion in America were contemporary, intersected, and mutually beneficial enterprises. This close relationship would in turn, influence and shape the commercial, military, and imperial strategies undertaken by the three different Habsburg Monarchs in Angola during the period of the Union of Crowns.

⁶⁴⁷ “Francisco de Gouveia”, Brásio, *MMA*, vol. II, pp. 527-30

⁶⁴⁸ “História da Residência dos padres da companhia de Jesus em Angola, e cousas tocantes ao Reino, e conquista” (1-5-1594), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. IV, pp. 571-7

⁶⁴⁹ Charles Boxer, *Portuguese Society in the tropics: the municipal councils of Goa, Macao, Bahia, and Luanda, 1510-1800* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965)

⁶⁵⁰ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, ‘The economic network of Portugal's Atlantic world’, Francisco Bethencourt, Diogo Ramada Curto, *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion*, pp 109-137 [122-3]

Cross-cultural practices and colonial institutions: the repartição dos sobas and the baculamentos.

The examples of overlapping Portuguese and Spanish influences in the Atlantic would reverberate beyond the commercial, military, and religious patterns, and would extend to cross-cultural exchanges. This showed particularly in the adaptation and transformation of indigenous legal institutions for the taxation of local populations on both the American and African continent. Early Spanish practices for the exploitation of native coerced labour in the Americas would once again echo in Portuguese Africa, albeit under different political circumstances. The employment of different systems for the exploitation of the indigenous populations in Africa and America respectively was justified by the differing needs of Iberian colonial agents to negotiate and integrate local administrative, legal, and cultural practices in their respective settlements. Through the accommodation of native legal and economic structures, Iberian institutions could better connect with, and be recognised by the local native populations. Iberian systems for revenue collection and resource exploitation were therefore influenced and transformed by the colonial contexts in which they were employed. The partial (or total) adoption of local indigenous practices and the degree of legal, cultural, and institutional hybridisation were ultimately negotiated in accordance to the different levels of Iberian colonial authority. In America, the Spanish conquest of its urban centres enabled the transposition of its own institutions on the American territory, only partially maintaining previous Nahuatl institutions.⁶⁵¹ In contrast, the Portuguese had to adapt to Mbundu practices to fulfil their policies in Luanda and its hinterland due to their weak and precarious position in Angola, supported by an indirect rule with the help of local African allies and *sobas*. Those transformations and adaptations were realised in the employment of *encomiendas* and *repartimientos* for the organisation of indigenous labour in Spanish America, and through the system of *amos* and the *baculamentos* tributes in Angola.⁶⁵²

Angola was far from a prestigious or an attractive destination for Portuguese soldiers and captains. Slave trafficking was by far the most profitable activity of the territory, and a large percentage of its profits was controlled by a select group of capitalists residing in Lisbon. The lack of mineral resources, and unfavourable conditions

⁶⁵¹ James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after conquest: A social and cultural history of the Indians of Central Mexico, sixteenth through eighteenth centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992)

⁶⁵² Green, "Baculamento or Encomienda", pp. 310-336

for any sort of commercial-oriented agriculture like the ones in São Tomé or Brazil, hindered the ability of the governor to gather more troops to join and participate in his expedition. In the absence of proper pickings, Paulo Dias de Novais rewarded his men in Angola in a similar way to the first *conquistadores* in America, i.e., through the ‘donation’ or allocation of land and its local inhabitants. Novais took advantage of the extensive juridical powers of the charter granted to him by the King, and began to distribute land in *sesmaria* grants to his men. *Sesmarias* were mostly employed in Portugal to explore the soils and agriculture in deserted areas or untilled lands. As for Angola, not only was the territory and the soil not productive, but the land was already occupied by local Mbundu inhabitants. Dias de Novais never intended fully to transpose and implement *sesmarias* in Angola, but rather to use them as a pretext to pay for his troops, as his personal financial situation worsened.⁶⁵³

Besides land, Novais also granted his men ‘control’ over the local conquered populations to help keep them in check. Each captain or soldier would receive rights to a subjugated indigenous chief (*soba*), and take charge of him and his entire clan and territory (*sobado*), from whom they could collect an annual tribute, mostly in the form of *peças* (slave pieces). The ‘donations of *sobas*’ were negotiated through a specific contract of vassalage between both parties, and the *sobas* would confirm their vassalage links to their new ‘masters’ through the payment of an annual tribute. This system was called the “*repartição dos sobas*” and the owners called “*amos*” (masters). Similar to the Amerindians in America, who were organised in *encomiendas* and *repartimentos* and allocated to the different captains, soldiers, and Jesuits, the *repartição* brought multiple *sobas* who had previously sworn allegiance to the *Ngola* under the individual ownership of Luanda’s military and religious authorities. Much like in Mexico and Peru, countless abuses and infringements of the colonial authorities were registered, which forced the Crown to attempt to remove the privilege from Luanda’s settlers.⁶⁵⁴

The system employed by Novais in Angola appears to have been borrowed from Spanish influences with the system of *encomiendas*, albeit with some significant differences (most notably its hereditary status).⁶⁵⁵ If the *encomienda* blended labour

⁶⁵³ On the *sesmarias* and the attempt of implementing them in Angola, see Amaral, *O Consulado*, pp. 215-225

⁶⁵⁴ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 60

⁶⁵⁵ Timothy J. Yeager, “Encomienda or Slavery? The Spanish Crown’s choice of labor organization in sixteenth-century America”, *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 55, n^o4, (1995), pp. 842-859

requirements with local indigenous labour organisation in colonial America, in Portuguese Africa, the tribute and taxation of the local indigenous leaders was rooted in a system of tributary vassalage.⁶⁵⁶ The vassal tributes imposed on local Mbundu chieftains in Angola to collect a slave force were more than likely influenced by previous Iberian experiences across the Atlantic. At least the actors present in Angola seem to hint at that. One famous *capitão-mor* of Angola, Diego Herrera, had served in both the Portuguese and Spanish armies for twenty-two years, spending “14 in Brazil and Africa, and 8 in Peru”.⁶⁵⁷ Based on his previous experience in America, Herrera proposed a reproduction of a model of *encomiendas* in Angola as early as 1588.⁶⁵⁸

Two other agents, the priests Pero Rodrigues and Baltasar Barreira, also referred to the *encomiendas* in attempting to defend the allocation of *sobas* to religious authorities in Angola. The Jesuits had also become masters of multiple *sobas*, and received their tributes directly in the form of slaves. This situation resulted in the Society owning multiple slaves in Angola, which was apparently against the orders of their superiors in Rome and Lisbon.⁶⁵⁹ However, Barreira defended the need of priests to own slaves from the *sobas* tributes, as the prices of supplies in Luanda had risen considerably, and their salaries could not cover their own sustenance. Claiming that “all conquerors owned *sobas*”, the priest saw no reason to condemn the priests for doing the same. At the same time, if one of Novais’ goals – the building of the College of Luanda – was to be realised, the priests needed the money from slave tributes. Barreira concluded his defence by arguing that the priests owning *sobas* and making a living by selling slaves from their tributes was nothing new in the empire, and was an accepted practice in the Spanish Indies, where priests “sustain[ed] themselves in similar manner” by using the tributes of “the *encomiendas* [...] and identifying themselves [as] *encomenderos*”.⁶⁶⁰ Although the priest argued that the ownership of slaves was only supposed to cover their living expenses, a set of papers by a Crown overseer dating from 1615 and 1623 reports that the priests of the College of Luanda owned as many as 1,080 slaves in Angola, which he

⁶⁵⁶ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 254-5; 260-4

⁶⁵⁷ Imperial y Gomez, *Angola*, pp. 49-54

⁶⁵⁸ Curto, *Cultural Imperial*, pp. 325-6

⁶⁵⁹ Amaral, *O Consulado*, pp. 227-8

⁶⁶⁰ “Fundação de um colégio em Angola dos padres da companhia”, Brásio, *MMA*, vol. XV, pp. 333-339

evaluated at more than 26,000,000 *réis*, a small fortune which was more than enough to cover the colony's annual administrative budget.⁶⁶¹

Other accounts of the *repartição* can be found in the Crown's instructions to the officials in Angola. King Philip III had been informed that Novais "gave sobas to the Portuguese who had accompanied him, so they could collect the tributes for themselves that they usually paid to the king of Angola."⁶⁶² These grants were clear violations of Novais' charter, and one of the reasons invoked by the Crown in removing the captaincy from his heirs. Since the incorporation of Angola into the Crown's estate, the Habsburg Kings repeatedly attempted to retrieve those tributes for the Crown's Treasury. However, Luanda's captains actively resisted the Crown's efforts to remove their privileges, and met the Governor appointed by Philip III, Francisco de Almeida, with active resistance, sending him back to Portugal in chains just one year after his appointment (1593).⁶⁶³ The Crown was forced to negotiate and make concessions with Angola's soldiers, and the system of the *amos* would only be abolished after the arrival of Governor Forjaz in 1607.

In his *Regimento* (royal instructions), Manuel Pereira Forjaz (1607-1611) had received direct orders to end the abuses of the *amos* and abolish this system, and bring the *sobas* and their tributes back under the Crown's jurisdiction. This measure would expand Portuguese influence in the region through the renewal of the vassalage contracts with the *sobas* that had previously been controlled by the *amos*. Through these agreements, the *sobas* would provide the Portuguese with military assistance, allow trade in their lands, and pay their tributes (in commodities and slaves) to the Royal Exchequer, known as *baculamentos*. The *sobas* were also obliged to convert to Christianity, and would receive protection as vassals of the Iberian monarchs in return, which had not been the case under the *amos*. Pereira Forjaz was instructed to record the number of *sobas* previously owned by the *amos*, register their tributes and entrust the sale of the slaves to the royal factor and officials of the factory of Luanda, with the proceeds reverting to the Crown's Treasury of Angola.⁶⁶⁴ The Crown expected that those tributes could at least assist in the payment of its administration and expenses in Angola, while keeping the

⁶⁶¹ "Relação dos rendimentos certos e incertos que no collegio desta cidade de loanda do reino de angolla tinhao os padres da companhia de Jesus", Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, doc. 42, pp. 462-469

⁶⁶² AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 2

⁶⁶³ Jorge da Silva, *A Administração*, vol. I pp. 22-7

⁶⁶⁴ "Regimento do Governador de Angola", Brásio, *MMA*, vol. V, pp. 264-79

slave trade operational at the same time, a reflection of the policies of self-sustainability and financial reform employed in all realms of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁶⁶⁵

The earliest known reference to a document mentioning the number of *sobas* under vassalage appears to be an official request signed by Angola's 'conquistadors', and quoted by the priest Baltasar Barreira and Diogo da Costa. The request was signed and approved by Governor Novais in 1588, confirming the distribution of *sobas* through Luanda's captains. Although he does not specify the exact number of *sobas* subjugated, the priest claims that "all conquerors had *sobas*" in Luanda, and they would have "up to fifteen or twenty *sobados*" each in some cases.⁶⁶⁶ It is within a different set of papers, sent by Afonso de Mexia to the Council of Portugal in Madrid in 1604, where the earliest list of the number *sobas* paying the vassalage tributes can be found. In a document entitled "Relación de lo sucedió en el Reino de Angola" of the previous year (1603), Mexia had compiled multiple papers and gathered information on the state of conquest of Angola during the governorship of João Rodrigues Coutinho (1601-1603). Among reports on the state of the mines, warfare, and Portuguese garrisons along the Kwanza, there is also a list entitled "Nombres de los sobas de vassalos que an dado la obediencia a SM en el Reino de Angola", containing the names of all the *sobas* that had sworn vassalage to the Portuguese by 28 September 1603.⁶⁶⁷ The total number of *sobas* on this list was just thirty-eight, a number considerably lower than the one reported in the letter of Diogo da Costa, according to which every captain owned various *sobas*. This decrease was most likely the result of the death of Novais, and the defeat of his right-hand Luís Serrão and the Portuguese army at the hand of a combined force of Ndongo and Matamba in 1590, which led to the desertion and withdrawal of most *sobas* from the Portuguese alliance. Following the death of Governor Coutinho (1603), the number of *sobas* paying the tributes continued to diminish, and by the time of the arrival of Forjaz (1607), the new Governor noted that no *soba* was under Portuguese authority.⁶⁶⁸ The *sobas* would only return after the renewal of the military offensive in Angola initiated by Bento Banha Cardoso in 1611. By the end of the latter's governorship in 1614, 80 different *sobas* had

⁶⁶⁵ Antonio Feros, *El duque de Lerma: realeza y privanza en la España de Filipe III* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2002) p.299

⁶⁶⁶ Ilídio do Amaral, *O consulado*, p. 234

⁶⁶⁷ British Library, *ADD MS*, 28427, fls. 323-326v. I want to thank Bruno A. Martinho for providing me with a copy of this document.

⁶⁶⁸ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, pp. 89-90

been subjugated and had sworn fidelity to the Crown.⁶⁶⁹ During Fernão de Sousa's tenure (1624-1630) in the next decade, his instructions reported that, through Mendes de Vasconcelos' campaigns in Ndongo, 109 more *sobas* had been subjugated to the Crown's authority, and their tributes could finally be incorporated in the Treasury of Angola, which were expected to generate around 45.000 cruzados in slaves (18,000,000 *réis*).⁶⁷⁰

The Portuguese failure to expand the conquest of Angola outside of the coastal region due to the fierce resistance from Ndongo and Matamba, resulted in a very limited and indirect control exerted by Luanda over the hinterland around the Kwanza. If the Portuguese were to be accepted and recognised by the *sobas*, with whom they had contracted vassalage agreements in the past, Portuguese colonial authorities had to negotiate and incorporate existing African hierarchical and legal institutions to collect tribute from their populations with any success. In order to integrate the Angolan *sobas* and their tributes into the Crown's Treasury in Luanda, the Portuguese had interwoven their own Iberian tributary and vassalage system with local Mbundu practices. They created a new hybrid colonial tributary system in the process, which would be recognised by both the local population and Portuguese colonizers. The integration of this tribute and tax in the Crown's Treasury was known as the *Baculamento*, a term originating from the Kimbundu word *bakulu*, and the Kikongo *vakula*. The Portuguese adapted the vernacular form of the word *bakula* to describe the act of a *soba* paying a tribute, creating the neologism '*bacular*'. This led to the tributes becoming known as the *baculamentos*.⁶⁷¹

Official Portuguese documentation from Angola attests to the pluralism of those cross-cultural adaptations and overlays of Portuguese and Mbundu legal structures. Descriptions of ceremonies of vassalage contain countless African elements and traditions, such as the *undamento*, a ritual of succession through the spreading of flour over the *sobas*' bodies (to undar) by the Portuguese Governor or captain, confirming the links of their vassalage established by their predecessors.⁶⁷² This overlay of pluralistic and cross-cultural linguistic elements is also extended to describe the different types of tributes requested from the local elites, such as the *futa* (a small present given to the captains by the *soba*), the *vestir* (tribute in cloth and slaves), the *ocambas* (small presents

⁶⁶⁹ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, pp. 438-440

⁶⁷⁰ BAL, 51-IX-20 fls. 13v.-14v.

⁶⁷¹ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, p. 114

⁶⁷² Mariana Candido, *An African slaving port and the Atlantic World. Benguela and its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press) 2013, pp. 50-3

with future returns given to the *sobas* by the captains), or the *emfuca* (small loans with native bonds).⁶⁷³ All of those tributes and ceremonies display a colourful blend of Portuguese and Mbundu worlds in Angolan colonial society. During the seventeenth century, Luanda blossomed into a colonial city where multiple European and African influences intermingled that cannot be viewed separately.⁶⁷⁴

Toby Green has made an extensive study of the intersection and similarities between the legal frameworks of both Iberian tributary systems, arguing that the structure and organisation of the *baculamentos* were almost identical to the first *encomienda* grants in early colonial America. The similarities between two different colonial backgrounds of two different empires stem, according to Green, from a similar conceptual and legal framework forged during the shared medieval past of the Iberian Kingdoms. During their process of expansion, the Iberian empires' porous borders and overlapping spheres in the Atlantic region helped shape and influence their respective imperial enterprises through the constant flow of, and contact between its agents. The circulation of, interactions between, and collaborative efforts of Iberian subjects would gradually intensify over the years, especially after the Union of Crowns in 1581. The employment of similar Iberian administrative and legal frameworks on both sides of the Atlantic would only help perpetuate those inter-imperial exchanges, especially with the growing overlap between commercial interests.⁶⁷⁵

However, those experiences were not limited to the Atlantic area. Although Asia was much further away than America, and the Indian Ocean integrated in a completely different commercial (and cultural) system than the Atlantic one, some of the experience gained in Asia still reverberated on the West Coast of Africa and Atlantic waters. The conquest of Angola was preceded by different expeditions in East Africa, projects that - like the one of Novais - contemplated territorial conquest, settlement, and resource exploitation. The *repartição dos sobas* and the system of the *amos*, even though they had considerable parallels with the *encomiendas* in America, may have been more reminiscent of the tributary and fiscal practices of the *aforamentos* in the Northern Province and its

⁶⁷³ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, pp. 471-2

⁶⁷⁴ Catarina Madeira Santos, "Luanda: A colonial city between Africa and the Atlantic, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries", Liam Matthew Brockey (Ed.), *Portuguese colonial cities in the early modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 249-272

⁶⁷⁵ Green, "Baculamento or Encomienda", pp. 326-7

variations, with the institution of the *prazos* in Mozambique.⁶⁷⁶ This resemblance is highlighted by priest Diogo da Costa in his defence of the Jesuits' rights to own *sobas* in 1588. Although the priest alluded to his religious peers in America and their ownership of *encomiendas*, his plea for the Jesuits to keep the *sobas* and slaves in Luanda is linked to matters of basic sustenance. Costa compared this ownership to other legal rights to systems of income, like “the other secular incomes” enjoyed by the Jesuits, priests, and missionaries across the empire, “such as the ones in India, like the Salcete”.⁶⁷⁷

The *baculamentos*' emphasis on the tenure and taxation of local populations, rather than the exploitation of coerced labour to work the land itself, is much more akin to Portuguese practices in *Estado da Índia* during the 1550s.⁶⁷⁸ This is substantiated in the previously alluded to memorandum of Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco, regarding the tenure of the African chiefs in Angola. Entitled “*Projecto de regime de aforamento dos sobas*”, its name was derived from the concept of *foro*, which was a land rent in the Portuguese Empire. Castelo Branco's project specifically stated that the King should order “que se afore de juro e herdade” the *sobas* to the respective captains and Jesuits in Luanda, who were referred to as “*aforadores*” in turn. The price for ‘the rent’ of each *soba* paid by the captains would differ in relation to the size of their estate, ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 *réis*.⁶⁷⁹ While American *encomiendas* were rights labour, the multiple projects for the tenure of the *sobas* often underlined the *foro* of the *soba* and his respective *sobado*. According to Castelo Branco, the Crown had always had problems collecting these tributes, but through the allocation of *sobas* to individual captains, it would receive a steady and reliable source of income, and waste no neither resources nor time in the collection thereof. The Luanda residents would then personally oversee the collection of those tributes themselves, and they would be much more diligent in their enforcement by visiting the *sobados* themselves, as their financial sustenance (and profits) depended on it. A similar project for the tenure of *sobas* was proposed by Baltasar Rebelo de Aragão,

⁶⁷⁶ Luis Filipe Thomaz, “A estrutura política e administrativa do Estado da Índia”, *Idem, De Ceuta a Timor* (Lisbon: Difel, 1994) pp. 207-243

⁶⁷⁷ Amaral, *O consulado*, pp. 234-5

⁶⁷⁸ Susana Miranda, “Property rights and social uses of land in Portuguese India: the Province of the North (1534-1739)”, José Vicente Serrão, Bárbara Direito, Eugénia Rodrigues, Susana Münch Miranda, *Property Rights, Land and Territory in the European Overseas Empires* (Lisbon: CEHC-IUL, 2014) pp. 169-180

⁶⁷⁹ “Relação de Garcia Mendes de Castelo Branco,” 16-1-1620, António Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, p. 446-452

another long-time Luanda resident, in 1618.⁶⁸⁰ Albeit different in nature, both Aragão and Castelo Branco defended a similar solution for the colonisation of Angola based on the *aforamento* of the lands and the respective taxation of the *sobas*.⁶⁸¹

As mentioned, the appropriation of pre-existent land tributary systems, substituting previous local sovereigns as a form of self-financing, was one of the main characteristics of the Portuguese enterprise in Asia.⁶⁸² Although the tenure of the *sobas* mirrors some elements of Spanish *encomienda* practices, it is important not to ignore the global context of the Portuguese empire, where parallel and similar experiences took root. The same holds true for the ‘territorialisation’ of the Portuguese empire in Angola as a direct result of the Spanish conquest in Mexico and Peru, since similar projects had been attempted by the Portuguese in Asia since the 1530s, and later on in Ceylon and in the institution of the *prazos* in Mozambique.⁶⁸³

The *baculamentos* provide a fascinating case of cross-fertilisation between Iberian experiences, integrated in and adapted to the local African realities. Portugal only achieved territorial results in Angola through the establishment of local alliances and after receiving extensive assistance of local and indigenous armies, making considerable political concessions in the process.⁶⁸⁴ Those concessions also extended into the cultural and legal realms, requiring a joining of African local practices with Iberian ones in order to enable Portuguese control over the region. The integration of local Mbundu traditions and rituals in the ceremonies of vassalage contributed to the recognition of Portuguese authority among the *sobas*, and helped forge a new colonial society that mixed elements of an American, African and Iberian nature. Castelo Branco’s regular visits to Spanish American ports undoubtedly shaped his ideas regarding the intermingling of Portuguese and Spanish practices. At the same time, his proposal for the adaptation and transformation of local legal and tributary systems displayed a much broader global framework of the Iberian empires, one that extended far beyond the Atlantic Ocean. By looking at the overlapping and connected histories of the Portuguese and Spanish

⁶⁸⁰ “Informação do reino de angola, 1618” apud Luciano Cordeiro, *Questões histórico coloniais*, vol. I, (Lisbon: Agencia Geral das colonias, 1935) pp. 220-34

⁶⁸¹ Curto, “Projectos coloniais para a África Ocidental, *Cultura Imperial*, pp. 307-352

⁶⁸² Susana Miranda, “Centre and periphery in the administration of the royal exchequer of Estado da India, 1517-1640”, *e-journal of Portuguese history*, vol. 7, nº2, (2009), p. 3

⁶⁸³ Subrahmanyam, “Holding the world”, p. 1372

⁶⁸⁴ Thornton, “Firearms”, pp. 167-191

empires, it becomes possible to trace the multiple influences from Asia to America, and better understand his proposal and the characteristics of the *baculamentos*.

While the Portuguese and Spanish empires were neither identical nor interchangeable, this chapter has illustrated that existed multiple connections between them, which deeply impacted on the colonial societies on both sides of the Atlantic. Within this broad and shared Iberian global framework, Portuguese territorial ambitions in Angola cannot be understood separately from contemporary Spanish imperial and economic projects in the America. The cases of Brazil and Africa – especially Angola – challenge the established distinction between a ‘maritime and trade-based’ empire and the ‘territorial and tribute-base[d]’ Spanish counterpart in America.⁶⁸⁵ The colonial architecture, as well as the political and fiscal policies of those territories, are relatively in line with the practices – or ‘models’ – of the Spanish empire. The mission of Paulo Dias de Novais to Angola shared striking similarities with the previous campaigns of Hernan Cortés in Mexico fifty years before, and with Francisco de Toledo in Vilcabamba in the previous decade. The *capitães-mores* of Angola and the *conquistadores* of Mexico and Peru mirrored each other not only in their brutality during their plundering campaigns and *razias*, but also in their subsequent adaptation and transformation of indigenous structures and traditions for the exploitation of native populations. Those practices echoed on both sides of the Atlantic, through the system of *encomiendas* and the *mita* in America, and the vassal tributes and *doação dos Sobas*, and later the *baculamentos*, in Angola.⁶⁸⁶ Therefore, the events that would lead to the gradual occupation of Angola and the conquest of Ndongo cannot be seen in isolation from other Portuguese and Spanish global experiences.

Looking at both imperial ventures side by side demonstrates that their spheres of influence in the Atlantic were characterised by extremely porous borders, where multiple exchanges took place, and a constant flow, circulation and adaption of different elements from a Portuguese or Spanish imperial background. The spillover of actors, commodities, ideas, capital, institutions, and different cultures in the Atlantic created “an expansive Iberian World that cannot be easily – or accurately – divided into ‘Spanish’ and ‘Portuguese’ imperial spheres”.⁶⁸⁷ The interweaving of elements of both empires deeply

⁶⁸⁵ Subrahmanyam, ‘Holding the World’, p 1383

⁶⁸⁶ Green, “Baculamento or Encomienda?”; Heintze, *Angola nos séculos XVI e XVII* pp 252, 263-4

⁶⁸⁷ David Wheat, “Global Transit Points and Travel in the Iberian Maritime World, 1580-1640”, Peter C. Mancall, Carole Sahmmas (eds.), *Governing the Sea in the Early Modern Era. Essays in Honor of Robert C.*

influenced and shaped their respective colonial societies on both sides of the Atlantic, bringing together elements from Hispano-American and Luso-African societies in an expanding and overlapping Atlantic world, in which the slave trade functioned as its binding and driving force.

V – The Financial Organisation of the Slave Trade during the Union of Crowns

The Portuguese and Spanish empires underwent a considerable overseas expansion during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, building vast empires spreading throughout Europe, Africa, America, and Asia. By the second half of the sixteenth century, the Iberian imperial powers were already fully established on a global scale, creating new trans-continental links between the four corners of the world in the process. This expansionist process would reach its zenith between the years of 1580 and 1640, when the Iberian Crowns and their imperial domains were united under the same Monarch. Following a dynastic crisis that lasted from 1578 to 1580, the Portuguese Crown was integrated into the Spanish Monarchy for the next sixty years, marking the beginning of the Iberian Union, or Union of Crowns. With the incorporation of the Kingdom of Portugal and its overseas territories in the Spanish Monarchy, the Habsburg monarchs ruled over a *quasi*-global empire, controlling territories as distant and diverse as Mexico, India, Naples, Angola, the Low Countries, Peru, Macau, Sicily, North Africa, the Philippines, and Brazil.

Notwithstanding the unification of the two biggest seaborne empires of the time under one single ruler, the original spirit of the treaty of Tordesillas – where the two Iberian Crowns divided the world in two separate domains – was kept intact. The negotiations between Phillip II and the Portuguese ruling elites at the Courts of Tomar (1581) confirmed a complete governmental and institutional separation between the imperial spheres of both Iberian Crowns. The architecture of the administration of Portuguese empire was left untouched, and the government of its institutions, overseas territories, and colonial trade remained exclusively reserved to Portuguese naturals, while the Spanish possessions and trade in America were restricted to the subjects of the Crown of Castile. In other words, the Union of Crowns resulted in neither a single colonial administration, nor a unified Iberian empire.⁶⁸⁸ This imperial separation was also extended to the administrative, financial, and commercial structure of both the empires, which affected the organisation of their respective exclusive overseas trades. Both Crowns had claimed patrimonial rights over their respective territories' resources and colonial

⁶⁸⁸ Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *Portugal no Tempo dos Filipes. Política, Cultura, Representações (1580-1668)* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmo, 2000)

economies, and employed their own fiscal systems to regulate and profit from commercial activities in their respective empires.⁶⁸⁹

Among those economic activities was the trade of African slaves on the Atlantic, which resulted in the introduction of different bureaucratic and fiscal mechanisms between the Portuguese and Spanish empires for the control and regulation of this trade. The slave supplying regions on the West Coast of Africa were under Portuguese control, while the biggest markets for coerced labour were located in the viceroyalties of America, and integrated into the Spanish imperial system.⁶⁹⁰ Despite the establishment of early collaborative trans-imperial enterprises between Portuguese and Spanish agents for the provision of African slaves to the West Indies, the existence of different legal and financial systems between the two imperial spheres impacted on the regulation and proper supply of the Spanish American markets with African slave labour. It was the linking and complementary relationship between those two worlds that would shape the policies (commercial and military) employed by the Habsburg Monarchs on both sides of the Atlantic after the integration of the Portuguese empire in 1581. The wars against Ndongo in West Africa, and the creation of a vast apparatus to regulate the mass-embarkation of the African war captives to answer Spanish America's labour demands, are highly illustrative of the Habsburg strategy and connected policy between the empires on either side of the Atlantic.

However, a study of the colonial governments, economic policies, or the commercial circuits in those regions of the Iberian empires cannot be isolated from the global framework of the Spanish Monarchy. Notwithstanding the existence of a clear and direct relationship between the Portuguese warmongering policies for slave acquisition in West Africa, and the expansion of Spanish American economic sectors based on coerced labour (as addressed in the previous chapter), the metropolitan economy and the financial circumstances of the Habsburg Empire had a vital impact on the development of the Iberian slave trade during this period. Recent scholarship of the Atlantic slave trade has greatly improved our understanding of the changing patterns of the trade over the centuries, providing a much clearer and accurate picture of the demographic nature of the

⁶⁸⁹ John Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world : Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Charles Boxer, *The Portuguese seaborne empire, 1415-1825* (London: Hutchison and Co., 1969)

⁶⁹⁰ Mendes, "The Foundations of the System" pp. 63-94; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 1-6;

trade, and the impact of the different regions of capture on the American continent. However, the vast majority of studies that tackle the different rates and volume of the slaves transported from Africa to America do not fully explore or explain how the trade itself was organised and regulated within the Iberian Atlantic, nor how this economic activity was integrated within the Habsburg imperial policies and financial agenda.⁶⁹¹ Therefore, the study of the Iberian slave trade cannot be explained by the transatlantic commercial links between West Africa and Spanish America (or Brazil) alone. In order to address the full scope of the Iberian slave trade during the Union of Crowns, it is vital to consider this activity also in the political economy of the Spanish Monarchy, and its role as an instrument of State-building.⁶⁹²

The supply of African slave labour was fundamental for sustaining and growth of Caribbean port-cities and their economies (as described in the previous chapter). But the financial administration of the slave trade itself became increasingly important for the Spanish Monarchy's coffers in Europe as well. As part of the Crown's *regalia* (the King's patrimony), the control over the distribution of slave licences generated significant revenues over time, especially after the integration of the Portuguese empire. The growing demand for coerced labour on American markets in the second half of the sixteenth century would raise the value of the slave licenses, which progressively acquired a prominent position as sources of fiscal income for the Spanish Treasury. The military and financial struggles faced by the Habsburg Monarchs at the dawn of the seventeenth century would gradually drain almost all of the resources of the *Real Hacienda* (Royal Exchequer). This situation called for multiple financial reforms in the Treasury and in the administration of the Crown's royal revenues by the Habsburgs, in order to maximise income and support the Monarchy's imperial policies. The slave trade was no exception. The irregular revenues generated by the sale of slave licences were eventually replaced with the lease of semi-monopoly contracts to third-party contractors for the distribution

⁶⁹¹ Phillip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin University Press, 1969); Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

⁶⁹² José María Delgado Ribas, "The Slave trade in the Spanish Imperial System, 1500-1800", Josep Maria Fradera, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara (eds.), *Slavery and antislavery in Spain's Atlantic empire* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013) pp. 13-42

of slaves, which became important sources of income to help balance the increasing expenditure of the Royal Exchequer.⁶⁹³

The lease of the Monarchy's slave monopolies provided a predictable source of income, and similar to the other royal revenues, the Crown could secure *juros* (long-term interest bearing bonds) against them to finance its short-term debt. Slave licences would acquire a renowned value, as the Crown could distribute them as grants to reward services, or use them to repay individual debts of the King with their bankers and financiers. The emission of exclusive slave licences was also a strategy employed by the Crown during its occasional *secuestros de particulares* (extraordinary seizure of private bullion brought in the royal fleets, to compensate private merchants with a source of valuable collateral).⁶⁹⁴ The evolution of the financial policies for regulating the slave trade implemented by the Habsburg Monarchy, combined with the administrative reform of this commerce during the first years of the Union, reflect a much broader strategic and economic role of slave trafficking for the Spanish Crown.

This chapter follows the development of the legal structures and financial administration of the Iberian slave trade before and during the Union of Crowns, and its emerging role in the political economy of the Habsburg Monarchy. It will explore how the Habsburg financial policies affected the supply of slave labour to Spanish America, and how this economic activity gradually became significant to balance the financial haemorrhage of the Spanish imperial treasury during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This chapter also addresses how this trade was originally framed, and how the Union of Crowns and the intersection between the Spanish and Portuguese systems for the provision of African slaves to Spanish American markets contributed to the expansion of this trade at the dawn of the seventeenth century. At the same time, this chapter illustrates the role played by private players in the administration of the empire's finances, particularly the monopolies on the slave trade (the *asientos*), and how they took advantage of their privileged positions to expand their personal business and commercial ventures.

⁶⁹³ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "Los asientos portugueses y el contrabando de Negros", *Anuario de estudios americanos*, nº 30 (1973), pp. 557-599 [558-560], Rafael Torres Sanchez, *Constructing a Fiscal Military State in Eighteenth Century Spain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp. 10-20

⁶⁹⁴ Carlos Álvarez Nogal, *El crédito de la Monarquía Hispánica en el Reinado de Felipe IV* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 1997) pp. 174-180; Juan Gelabert, "Castile 1516-1815", Richard Bonney (ed.), *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe c.1200-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 201-242; Felipe Ruiz Martín, "Un expediente financiero entre 1560 y 1575. La Hacienda de Felipe II y la Casa de la Contratación de Sevilla", *Moneda y Crédito*, nº92, 1965 pp. 3-58 [29]

5.1 The Inception and Early Organisation of the Slave Trade: The first Slave Licenses (1492-1594)

The sale of African slaves to America represented one of the earliest collaborative enterprises between the Iberian overseas territories. As previously explored, Spaniards had their first experiences capturing and enslaving native populations in the fourteenth century during the conquest of the Canary Islands. African slaves from Upper Guinea were brought to Spanish ports by the Portuguese at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and Andalusian ships progressively ventured further along the African coast to trade and capture slaves themselves. The Catholic Kings Fernando and Isabela also challenged Portuguese exclusivism to the region as a result of the war of Castilian succession (1475-1479).⁶⁹⁵ After the treaty of Alcáçovas of 1479, Spanish expeditions and access to the African continent were limited to the North African strongholds in the Maghreb and the Canary archipelago. The treaties of Tordesillas of 1494, and Zaragoza of 1529, helped establish the limits of the Iberian overseas imperial domains by drawing an imaginary line and an anti-meridian demarcating their respective areas of influence and jurisdiction. Those treaties, while reinforcing the Spanish Crown's rights in the Americas and to the Canary archipelago, at the same time restricted their access to the African coast and the Guinea trade, which were recognised as exclusive prerogatives of the Portuguese Crown.⁶⁹⁶

Cut off from the sources of slaves on the African markets from the sixteenth century onwards, Spanish colonists and merchants in America were now forced to rely on Portuguese collaboration and other trans-imperial networks to bring African slaves to the colonies in America.⁶⁹⁷ Thus, the transatlantic slave trade to the New World took on an inter-imperial dimension from the very beginning of the Iberian expansion. The first shortages of labour experienced in the Caribbean Islands, following the collapse of the Taíno populations, encouraged Spanish settlers to develop partnerships with the Portuguese operating the commercial factories on the African coast to secure slaves

⁶⁹⁵ Alfonso Franco Silva, "La esclavitud en la península a fines del medievo. Estado de la cuestión y orientaciones bibliográficas", *Medievalismo. Boletín de la sociedad española de estudios medievales*, 5 (1995), pp. 201-10

⁶⁹⁶ Ivana Elbl, "Cross-Cultural Trade and Diplomacy: Portuguese Relations with West Africa, 1441-1521", *Journal of World History* 3 (1992), pp. 165-204

⁶⁹⁷ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, "Crossing empires: Portuguese, Sephardic, and Dutch Business Networks in the Atlantic slave trade, 1500-1674", *The Americas*, 68, nº1 (2011), pp. 7-32

directly, in order to explore the economic potential of their new settlements. During the first stages of the Atlantic trade, slaves were brought without any sort of supervision or control by an official overseeing body. Even King Fernando I encouraged this trade, sending slaves to work in the gold and copper mines of Hispaniola in 1510. African slaves were initially brought from Africa to Seville before sailing to America, but the growing demand for slave labour coming from the Spanish Caribbean, combined with the proliferation of illegal and unsupervised voyages carrying slaves to the Spanish American colonists, forced the Spanish Crown to adapt to this new reality.⁶⁹⁸

Although the Monarchy acknowledged the need to rely on foreign cooperation in order to secure the slaves acquired on Africa's markets, this did not imply its withdrawal from a supervisory role over this trade, and much less the forfeiture of the fiscal regulation and control over its American ports. Similar to the Portuguese Crown, the Spanish Monarchy extended its political and juridical sovereignty over key elements of the colonial economies, and incorporated them into its royal patrimony. Important sources of wealth such as gold, pearls, and silver were channelled to the Monarchy's Exchequer through the *Quinto real* (royal fifth), and circulated through a single legal gateway to Seville via an official fleet system (the *Carrera de Indias*) supervised by the *Casa de la Contratación* (House of Trade).⁶⁹⁹ The Crown also imposed monopoly rights over key components of the colonial economies, such as the supply of mercury (vital for silver refinement) and coerced labour. The slave trade to Spanish American ports was therefore a monopoly of the Crown, which could be operated by private agents through the acquisition of royal permits to transport slaves to America.⁷⁰⁰

To profit from this economic activity, the Crown began to issue charters, or special licenses, granting their holders the privilege to transport a certain number of African slaves to America. Those licenses were an exclusive prerogative of the King, and were granted as rewards for services to the Monarchy (*Licencias de merced*). The growing labour demands from the officials in Hispaniola and the concession of slave grants like the one given to the Governor Nicolás de Ovando generated a number of similar requests

⁶⁹⁸ Manuel Lobo Cabrera, *La esclavitud en las Canarias orientales en el siglo XVI (Negros, moros y moriscos)* (Las Palmas: Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, 1982) pp. 103-104

⁶⁹⁹ José María Oliva Melgar, *El monopolio de Indias en el siglo XVII y la economía Andaluza. La oportunidad que nunca existió* (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2004)

⁷⁰⁰ Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the ocean sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 28-30

from the different *Real audiencias*, as showed in the previous chapter. Their requests in turn required economic collaboration with the Peninsula's merchants. King Fernando acknowledged the potential of converting the grant of those charters into a system of commercial licences, which could be sold to any foreign commercial house or syndicate like the Genoese, Flemings, Germans, and the Portuguese.⁷⁰¹ Spanish policies for the commercial regulation of the slave trade materialised as early as 1513, through the implementation of a tax of two *ducados* for each slave that entered the Spanish colonies in America, which was the price paid for a 'license of exportation'. From this moment on, a system of commercial slave licences was implemented, and a direct trade route from Africa to America was soon authorised in 1518. By extending the control over the circulation of certain economic factors and by taxing all the slave ships that entered the ports in the Spanish Indies, the Monarchy could guarantee profits over a trade which supply sources fell outside its imperial sphere, and secure extra revenue through the issuing of individual commercial licences.⁷⁰²

In order to get a hold of African captives in the New World, Spanish merchants and colonists needed, first and foremost, to acquire the licenses that granted permission to ship the slaves to America. They were issued directly by the King, who entrusted their sale to the *Casa de Contratación* in Seville. Those licences were known as the *licencias de negros*, and could be used immediately after their purchase, or employed at a later point in time but had to be registered in the *Casa de la Contratación* in order to be valid. After the submission of the request to the judges and treasurers in Seville, the merchants would receive an official registry confirming the exact number of slaves to sail, the name of the ship, and the captain that would be responsible for the voyage. The document also specified the ratio of sex of the captives (usually one third female), the region of capture, port of arrival, conditions of shipment, and the composition of the ship's crew. The template of the *licencias de negros* remained identical throughout the years of the Iberian trade.⁷⁰³ License holders could also declare just a portion of the number of slaves contained in the license that they wished to ship to the officials of the *Casa*, and use the remainder at a later date. Slave licenses could be purchased by any individual, and since

⁷⁰¹ Germán Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 18-23

⁷⁰² Rafael Donoso Anes, "Algunos aspectos relacionados con el control administrativo y contable de la renta de los esclavos enviados a Hispanoamérica (Hasta el final del período de las licencias en 1595)", *Revista Española de Financiación y Contabilidad*, vol. XXX, nº 110 (2001), pp. 1093-1135

⁷⁰³ *Ibid*, pp. 1100-1103

they were valid for a considerable time frame, they could either be used by its buyer to satisfy a specific request, or transferred to another party. This practice would later create a secondary ‘black market’ for the re-sale of slave licenses, resulting in a steady inflation of their value throughout the years.⁷⁰⁴

Another method to acquire licenses besides purchase was to receive them directly from the King as a reward for services to the Crown. Charles V granted multiple slave licenses to men who had served the Monarchy, such as was the case for the aforementioned Governor Ovando, as well as agents in the Americas like Cortés and Francisco de Escovar. Licenses were also granted to multiple members of Charles’ administration and private bankers, like Diego Martinez, Geronimo Cataneo, Thomas de Marín, and Leonardo Lomellin.⁷⁰⁵ Although those men could fully employ their licences upon the payment of a small tax over the transportation of the slaves, they could also resell the licenses at much higher prices. The most famous of slave grants was the one given to the personal friend of Charles V, Laurent de Gouvenot (or Lorenzo de Gorrevod), the Count of Bresse. Gouvenot received a license to introduce 4,000 slaves in America between 1518 and 1527, whom he could ship directly from Africa without having to register them in Seville.⁷⁰⁶ However, Gouvenot did not ship a single slave, and opted to just sell the 4,000 licenses he had received for free to a Genoese consortium for the sum of 25,000 *ducados*. The syndicate then proceeded to split the licenses into smaller lots, and sell them at a price of between 8 and 12.5 *ducados*, generating a sum somewhere between 32,000 and 50,000 *ducados* from this enterprise.⁷⁰⁷ According to Rafael Donoso Anes, what made Gouvenot’s grant unique, was its exclusive nature, since the Crown pledged not to issue any single license outside the Peninsula until 1527. The scholar associated Gouvenot’s licence with a later grant to the Germans Ambrosius Ehinger (Alfinger) and Jerome Sayller (Hispanicised as Enrique and Jeronimo), personal agents of the Welsers, who also received 4,000 licenses in exchange for 25,000 *ducados* for their project in Venezuela. He describes this sub-period between 1518 and 1533 as an era of “monopolistic licenses”, during which the Crown used those charters almost exclusively

⁷⁰⁴ Eufemio Lorenzo Sanz, *Comercio de España con America en la Epoca de Filipe II*, tomo I (Valladolid: Diputación Provincial 1974) pp. 93-102

⁷⁰⁵ George Scelle, *La traite négrière aux Indes de Castille: contrats et traités d'assiento*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie de la Société du Recueil J.-B. Sirey & du Journal du Palais, 1906) pp. 768-772

⁷⁰⁶ Delgado Ribas, “The Slave Trade”, pp. 15-6

⁷⁰⁷ José Antonio Saco, *Historia de la Esclavitud* (Madrid: Ed. Juca, 1974), p. 172. The consortium was composed of Agustin de Vivaldo, Fernando Vasquez, and the brothers Tomas and Domingo de Forne

as an instrument of political power. Only after witnessing the profits that could be earned via the marketing of the *licencias*, would Charles V begin to regard the slave trade as another source of fiscal income. Exclusive monopolistic grants were abolished, and the Crown began to issue licenses in smaller lots in order to maximise profits during the second half of the sixteenth century.⁷⁰⁸

Even though the Spanish, Genoese, Flemish, Florentine, German and other foreign merchants and noblemen received the licences issued in Seville to carry slaves to America, they would still need to access the slave supply areas in Africa, which were controlled by the Portuguese. While most members of the aristocracy and the government simply sold their licenses like Gouvenot, Spanish merchants and colonists wishing to participate in slaving enterprises had to bypass those restrictions. To do so, they operated as front men in Seville for foreign slave merchants looking to acquire the licences for their business, or acted as proxies for Portuguese agents seeking to trade in the Americas, negotiating travel permits to the Indies on their behalf in exchange for slave shipments.⁷⁰⁹ Slave licenses held by Spanish and Genoese merchants were increasingly sought by the Portuguese ever since the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Their privileged access to the Portuguese factories in Africa, and the inner slave markets through commercial contacts with the Luso-African communities established on the coast made them prime associates for the holders of the licenses.⁷¹⁰ It was through the interconnection of Portuguese and Spanish Atlantic networks that the merchants Gaspar, Alonso, and Diego Torres managed to acquire a concession to ship 300 slaves to Trujillo (Honduras) in 1541.⁷¹¹ During the next ten years, the Torres family would acquire and ship more than 2,200 slaves to fund Honduras' gold extraction industry. This enterprise was made possible by the fact that Alonso was also a holder of the Guinea monopoly of the Portuguese Crown between 1536 and 1542. The business venture of the Torres family illustrates the merchant's ability to intertwine the African supply markets under

⁷⁰⁸ Donoso Anes, "Algunos Aspectos", pp. 1099-1100

⁷⁰⁹ Manuel F. Fernández Chaves, Rafael M. Pérez García, "La penetración económica portuguesa en Sevilla del siglo XVI", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma Serie IV, Historia Moderna*, t. 25 (2012), pp. 199-222

⁷¹⁰ Peter Mark, José da Silva Horta, *The Forgotten Diaspora. Jewish communities in West Africa and the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

⁷¹¹ Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura *Negreiros Portugueses na rota das Índias de Castela: 1541-1556* (Lisbon: Colibri, Instituto de Cultura Ibero-Atlântico, 1998) pp. 39-42

Portuguese taxation, and the Spanish legal system regulating their entrance in the Americas from a very early stage.⁷¹²

Contemporary with the expansion of and interconnectedness between Portuguese slave circuits in Africa and the labour demands from Spanish American port-cities, the Spanish Monarchy started to face its first financial problems and an increasing fiscal pressure during the 1550s. The imperial project of Charles V in Europe, and its military policies, took a massive toll on the Monarchy's finances. The Crown witnessed a gradual decrease of its revenues due to the relentless growth of public debt, plunging the *Real Hacienda* (Royal Exchequer) into a dreadful state, on the brink of bankruptcy.⁷¹³ In order to solve the growing needs of the Monarchy for capital and keep financing its imperial policy, the emperor was forced to employ emergency measures. Both Charles V and Phillip II postponed payments and renegotiated the Monarchy's debts (the Spanish 'bankruptcies'), sold offices and official titles, anticipated future revenues, and converted them into a fund to pay their creditors with interest.⁷¹⁴ Money was raised through the issue of *juros*, long-term interest bearing bonds that were secured against a specific Crown revenue, and consolidated debt.⁷¹⁵ The 'Spanish bankruptcies' were used to consolidate short term debt using the *juros*.⁷¹⁶ Money could also be acquired through the negotiation of short-term loans with different bankers, who transferred funds to pay for the Monarchy's troops, but also by leasing the administration of a particular Crown revenue to a private investor through a contracting system (the first *asientos*).⁷¹⁷ After the payment of a lump sum and the provision of security in the form of a bond, the private contractor could explore that rent on its own and fully collect its revenue, receiving complete

⁷¹² Manuel Fernández Chaves, Rafael Pérez García, "La penetración económica portuguesa en la Sevilla del siglo XVI, *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie IV, Historia Moderna*, t.25 (2012), pp. 199-222. Fernández Chaves and Pérez García study in-depth the Torres family, and conclude that they were from Andalusian descent, and not Portuguese as Ventura claimed, *Negreiros*, pp. 38-42.

⁷¹³ I. A. A. Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain 1560-1620* (London: Athlone Press, 1976) pp. 67-9

⁷¹⁴ Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, *Marte contra Minerva. El precio del imperio español, c. 1450-1600* (Barcelona, 2004) pp. 321-4

⁷¹⁵ Gelabert, "Castile 1516-1815", pp. 206-8; Mauricio Drelichman, Hans-Joachim Voth, "The sustainable debts of Phillip II: A reconstruction of Castile's fiscal position, 1566-1596, *The Journal of economic History*, vol. 70, n4 (2010) pp. 813-842

⁷¹⁶ Nogal, *El crédito de la Monarquía*, pp. 38-9

⁷¹⁷ Alberto Marcos Martín, "Deuda Pública, Fiscalidad y Arbitrios en la Corona de Castilla en los siglos XVI y XVII", Carmen Sanz Ayán, Bernardo García García (eds.), *Banca, Crédito y Capital. La Monarquía Hispánica y los antiguos Países Bajos (1505-1700)* (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2006) pp. 345-75

privileges and rights over the administration of that particular revenue.⁷¹⁸ The difficulties in the access to credit drove the Crown to attempt to maximise its profits, and outsource the administration of a great number of its rents in exchange for short term payments. It was within this framework that the sale of commercial licences to transport African slaves to the colonies in America began to gain relevance as a source of fiscal income.

With its revenues pledged in 1552 and an urgent need to generate immediate capital, the Spanish Monarchy attempted to maximise profits from all parts of its Treasury and Royal patrimony. It was within this context that Charles V turned to the introduction of slave labour in America, and attempted to transform this activity into a stable source of income for the Crown. He entrusted his son Phillip with the task of negotiating what was a 'primitive version' of an *asiento* with a Spanish merchant, Hernando de Ochoa. Through this contract, he attempted to anticipate a considerable revenue by selling the bulk of the slave licences for the next seven years. Ochoa was granted an exclusive licence to transport 23,000 slaves to Spanish America before 1559, in exchange for the payment of the hefty sum of 184,000 *ducados*. However, this *asiento* was immediately contested and sabotaged by the merchant guild in Seville, who saw in this exclusive concession a violation of their rights, and severely damaging to their business. The merchants of Seville, who participated regularly on this trade, as well as theologians like the illustrious Fray Alonso de Castro, pressured the Monarchy to withdraw the monopoly rights in the administration of the slave licences granted to Hernando de Ochoa. Fearful of economic backlash and losing the support of the commercial elite of Seville, the monarch was forced to cancel the *asiento* in 1553.⁷¹⁹ Despite the failure in the negotiations of an early *asiento*, the combination of the demand for slaves in America and the Crown's financial situation resulted in a rampant increase of prices for licences. Their initial price was fixed at 2 *ducados* in 1514, while they were eventually sold at 5 *ducados* in 1528, and 8 in 1552. The cash-flow demands of the Monarchy raised their price to (and fixed at) 30 *ducados* by 1561 (plus 20 *reales of aduanilla*, a customs tax), which meant that the *licencias* registered an overall increase of 1400 per cent of their value in just fifty years.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ Thompson, *War and Government*, pp. 256-7

⁷¹⁹ Delgado Ribas, "The slave trade" pp. 16-7

⁷²⁰ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos. Los asientos portugueses* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Americanos, 1977), p. 23; Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de Mexico* (Mexico City: Fuente Cultural, 1946), pp. 33-48

As the prices of the licenses grew, so did the importance of the experienced Portuguese slave merchants operating on the African markets. Approximately at the same time that the Crown was seeking solutions to maximise its profits from the sale of licenses, the demand from Spanish American colonies also resulted in an increase in the prices of slaves in the commercial settlements of Cape Verde. Slave prices in Guinea varied from 3,500 to 7,000 *réis* during the first decades of the sixteenth century, with an average of around 5,000 *réis*. With the extension of trans-Atlantic slave circuits to Spanish America, the port of Ribeira Grande in Santiago underwent a considerable growth in the second half of the century as a result of the commercial expansion of the slave trade. However, the local inhabitants of Cape Verde soon began to voice their concerns regarding the escalation of the costs of slave acquisition and transportation of Guinea shipments.⁷²¹ One particular slave cargo from Guinea on arrival in Santiago refused to sell slaves for 26,000 *réis* apiece to the local merchants, because it was “common knowledge” that they could easily “reach up to 30,000 *réis*”.⁷²²

The growing demand for coerced labour from Spanish America’s colonies raised the price of the slave licenses on the Peninsula, which in turn also affected the value of slaves brought from Guinea and Cape Verde. Such an increase in the cost of licenses and custom duties paid over the slaves shipped to the Spanish Indies would affect the profits of slave merchants. As a result, the Portuguese slavers directing the transatlantic voyages simply charged the new administrative costs and fiscal expenses of the enterprise to the end markets in Spanish America. Those changes resulted in various complaints from the American *Audiencias* regarding the inadequate supply of coerced labour, and the expensive prices of the slaves brought from Upper Guinea and Cape Verde. The Habsburg Monarchs attempted to impose fixed prices on slave sales on Spanish America’s markets during the 1550s, but since slave merchants were mostly Portuguese and carried slaves on Portuguese ships, the Habsburgs quickly abandoned the idea to regulate slave prices in America after 1561.⁷²³ Although the rise in price of the slave licenses helped the Crown ease some of its financial burdens, the King could not ignore the multiple complaints by the American territories regarding the shortage of coerced labour, and its expensive supply. The absence of a slave force compromised the growth of America’s colonial

⁷²¹ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, “Actividade comercial externa de Cabo Verde: Organização, Funcionamento, Evolução”, vol. I, pp. 275-6

⁷²² “Carta de Frei Gaspar da Silveira a el-Rei” (27-10-1549), Brásio, *MMA*, 2nd edition, vol. II, pp. 401-3

⁷²³ Bowser, *African slave*, p. 28

economies and mining industries, and in turn, the King's own royal revenues and bullion collected from the royal fifth. The inadequate supply of slaves, combined with the growing financial needs of the Exchequer, made the Crown hard-pressed to find a new solution that could cover both elements at once. For this reason, the Habsburg rulers began to include several slave licences in the negotiations of their financial loans, and use them as payments to men capable of making use of them. One of those cases was the credit negotiated with the Portuguese New Christian merchant Manuel Caldeira.

Manuel Caldeira was one of the most powerful and influential merchants of the sixteenth century, who administered multiple monopoly contracts of the Portuguese Crown, and was involved in numerous economic enterprises, from tax-farming and banking, to shipbuilding, freighting, and shipping goods in Portuguese colonial trade – which included the slave trade in Africa. As the leaseholder of the slave monopoly of Mina and São Tomé between 1558 and 1568 (which he administered with his brother-in-law Bento Rodrigues and Diogo do Castro), Caldeira was the first Portuguese merchant to receive such a substantial royal permit from the Spanish King to transport African slaves to the Spanish Indies.⁷²⁴ Manuel Caldeira had previously received the honours of Knight of the Order of Christ by King João III after acting as his factor and representative in Castile, before moving to Madrid where he became a private banker for Phillip II.⁷²⁵ Caldeira combined his business ventures of managing the Portuguese Crown's African monopolies with his banking activity in Castile.⁷²⁶ He would receive a licence for the introduction of 2,000 slaves in Spanish America in 1556, as compensation for his loan of 55,000 *ducados* to Phillip II, which he signed in Antwerp.⁷²⁷

Unlike the Genoese and other foreign merchants who usually resold the licenses they received for their loans, Caldeira was keen on making use of them. His position as a leaseholder of a Portuguese colonial monopoly over the trade in a specific African region gave him direct access to a wide range of slave markets and multiple merchant networks on Africa's shores. After securing the 2,000 licenses from Phillip II, Caldeira proceeded

⁷²⁴ Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, *Negreiros portugueses na rota das Índias de Castela (1541-1556)* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 1999), pp. 90-1; 141-3. Other merchants, such as the Jorge da Silva family, had already negotiated licenses, even if in smaller lots. Enrique Otte, Conchita Ruiz-Barruecos, "Los Portugueses en la trata de esclavos negros en las postrimerías del siglo XVI", *Moneda y Crédito*, Nº85 (1963) pp. 3-40

⁷²⁵ Caldeira, *Escravos*, pp. 174-5

⁷²⁶ AGI, Indiferente General, Leg. 737 N165

⁷²⁷ Ramón Carande, *Carlos V y sus Banqueros*, vol. 3 (Barcelona: Editorial Critica, 1990) p. 494

to use his commercial contacts across Europe's main financing centres (Lisbon, Seville, Medina del Campo, Hamburg, and Antwerp) and in Africa, securing partnerships that could expand his business activity towards the Spanish Indies as well.⁷²⁸ While directing operations from Lisbon, Caldeira named factors and granted powers of attorney to Miguel Nunes in Santo Domingo, to Bento Rodrigues, Simón Pinel, Alvaro Diaz and Pedro de Teixeira in Mexico, and to Francisco Matos to Panama. Those agents were responsible for ensuring that Caldeira's slaves arrived at the Spanish Indies, and collecting them at their respective ports. They would then proceed to oversee their sale, and send the proceeds of the operation back to Seville in the annual convoy fleets, and consign them to Caldeira.⁷²⁹ Despite his influence and good commercial contacts, Caldeira encountered active obstruction by the officials of the *Casa de la Contratación*, backed by the *Consulado* of Seville, and eventually used just 400 of his licenses, selling the rest to other businessmen in Seville, like Gaspar Jorge da Silva.⁷³⁰

The Royal Treasury greatly benefited from issuing slave licenses to secure better conditions with their creditors, but the King still needed to make sure that the licenses were used, and that the request coming from the various *audiencias* in America was properly supplied. Phillip II instructed the officials in Seville to advertise a series of 'small-*asientos*', offering favourable conditions to any merchant who wished to carry slaves to America and answer the demand of its American colonies. One of those contracts requested the shipment of 500 African slaves to the New Kingdom of Granada, and was signed with doctor Simão (or Simón) de Tovar, a Portuguese medic who had taken up residence in Seville.⁷³¹ Tovar was one of the city's most important slave merchants at the time, and responsible for shipping over 2,000 African slaves to the Americas in just five years (1575-1580).⁷³² Tovar spearheaded a vast commercial network, with family links and ties to Lisbon, Antwerp, Cartagena, Portobello, and Lima, which enabled him to exchange gold, silver, jewellery, and slaves during his enterprises.⁷³³ Simão de Tovar would eventually expand his business to Angola in 1591,

⁷²⁸ Ventura, *Negreiros portugueses*, pp. 49-50

⁷²⁹ AGI, *Panama*, Lib. 9, f. 337v-338 (28-06-1561)

⁷³⁰ Otte, Ruiz-Barruecos, "Los portugueses en la trata", pp. 12-15

⁷³¹ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 (Madrid, 8-01-1589)

⁷³² Manuel Fernández Chaves, Rafael Pérez García, "La penetración económica portuguesa en la Sevilla del siglo XVI", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, serie IV, Historia Moderna*, t.25 (2012), pp. 199-222

⁷³³ Miguel López Pérez, Mar Rey Bueno, "Simón de Tovar (1528-1596): Redes familiares, naturaleza americana y comercio de maravillas en la Sevilla del siglo XVI", *Dynamis*, nº26, (2006), pp. 69-91; AGI, *Panama*, 237, Lib. 12, f. 215v-216

from where he looked to sell slaves to Cartagena and Santa Marta.⁷³⁴ Tovar was also one of the most important business partners of the offspring of the aforementioned Manuel Caldeira. He became an associate and attorney in Seville for Francisco Nunes de Beja and Diogo Nunes Caldeira, future *contratador* of Cape Verde (1595), and the nephew of Manuel Caldeira.⁷³⁵ Nunes Caldeira's slaving business in America was directed by his uncle Luis Alvares Caldeira, his factor in Panama, and his brother António Nunes Caldeira in Mexico. António Caldeira would also become a great slave merchant in his own right. After completing his apprenticeship in Antwerp, in 1574, he travelled to Mexico on behalf of his father and *contratador* Francisco Nunes de Beja, operating as his attorney to oversee the sale of 580 slaves from his license. He gained considerable experience and knowledge as a merchant in the Americas, and would later return to the Kingdom, where he came extremely close to signing the first slave *asiento* with the Crown in 1595.⁷³⁶

Those early transatlantic slave ventures were also carried out on an inter-imperial level, as they often relied on foreign collaboration at different stages of the trade. The Sevillian merchant Hernán Vázquez obtained a grant from the Crown in the form of a licence to introduce 1,000 slaves in Spanish America in 1561. Despite having a partner in New Spain, Luís de Mercado, who could receive and sell the African slaves on his behalf, Hernán Vázquez had no contacts on the African shores, and was not familiar with African markets. Vázquez wanted to make use of the King's grant despite his unfamiliarity with the trade, and for that purpose he sought to form a commercial society with a Portuguese agent, Duarte Rodrigues, who would act as his factor in Cape Verde. Rodrigues would be in charge of purchasing the slaves himself, and then ship them to New Spain to Luis de Mercado, using Vázquez's license. At the end of the venture, both men shared the profits of the enterprise.⁷³⁷ A similar example can be found in the rich merchant Simón Ruiz. Established in Medina del Campo from where he oversaw most of his business, Ruiz commissioned one of his Portuguese partners, António Gomes, to acquire slaves on his behalf. Gomes acted as his middleman in the slave business, in

⁷³⁴ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 426, L. 28, f. 100-101

⁷³⁵ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 739 N1 "Autos de Diego Núñez Caldera, vecino de Lisboa, contratador de esclavos" (1595); Leg. 741, N199 "Consulta del Consejo de Indias" (1590)

⁷³⁶ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 "Expedientes respetivos a asientos de Negros" (30-12-1594, 31-12-1594, 21-04-1595); *Panama*, Leg. 16, R1, N14 "Testimonio de la sentencia contra Luis Alvarez Caldeira" (01-08-1609); Otte, Ruiz-Barruecos, "Los portugueses en la trata", p. 15

⁷³⁷ Delgado Ribas, "The Slave Trade" p. 18

addition to the previously mentioned Luis Caldeira, connecting the Portuguese slaving circuits on the Atlantic with Ruiz's operations in the Spanish financing system.⁷³⁸

The interdependency between Portuguese and Spanish agents surrounding early Atlantic slaving ventures already displays a clear network established between Luso-Hispanic agents in a chronology prior to the Union of Crowns. The rising share of Portuguese merchants and commercial syndicates in the acquisition of the Spanish slave licences during the 1560s and 1570s was a natural one, as the Portuguese were far better equipped than any other foreign nation to supply African slaves to America and cover the rising license fees.⁷³⁹ According to the data from the *almojarifazgo de esclavos* (duty charged over slave sales) from Seville for those years, it is possible to observe that 50 per cent of the total licences issued were negotiated with Portuguese merchants, while the Spanish accounted for 25 per cent, the Genoese for 16 per cent, and the remaining 9 per cent were held by other nationalities.⁷⁴⁰ The early prominence of figures like the Caldeiras or Simão de Tovar among Seville's mercantile elite, years before the Iberian Union or the inauguration of the first *asiento* (1595), attests to early prominence of this economic activity, and the inter-imperial partnership between Iberian merchants, connecting the markets in Africa and America.⁷⁴¹

The economic expansion of slave trading activities on the Iberian Atlantic propelled by Portuguese merchants would offer the Habsburg Monarchs a new source of income to help their increasing imperial expenditure, as the Spanish Crown gradually turned the slave licenses from instruments of political power into economic assets. Their employment was no longer limited to the rewarding of services, and instead they became to be used in the negotiation of credit with private financiers, and as actual payment for the settlement of debts. The steady increase in the value of the licenses, which reached its peak in 1561 and was fixed at 30 *ducados*, enabled the Habsburgs to start using those

⁷³⁸ Ana Sofia Ribeiro, *Early Modern Trading Networks in Europe: Cooperation and the case of Simon Ruiz* (London: Routledge, 2016) p. 52; Idem, "A endogamia em redes mercantis da «Primeira Idade Global». O caso da rede de Simon Ruiz (1553-1597)", *Historia: Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto*, IV série, vol. 2 (2012) pp. 23-40

⁷³⁹ Bowser, *African Slave*, p. 29

⁷⁴⁰ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio Negrero*, p. 27

⁷⁴¹ Manuel Fernández Chaves, Rafael Pérez García, "Sevilla y la trata negrera Atlántica: envíos de esclavos desde Cabo Verde a la América española, 1569-1579", Álvarez Santaló (coord.), *Estudios de Historia Moderna en Homenaje al Profesor Antonio García-Baquero*, (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2009), pp. 597-622

licenses to repay individual debts and cover some of its *juros*.⁷⁴² The Mexican scholar Aguirre Beltrán claimed that the constant increase in the value of the slave licenses fortified its position among one of the Monarchy's "safer rents". As a result, slave licenses were used to cover some of the Crown's public debt during the last quarter of the sixteenth century.⁷⁴³ Donoso Anes hints at a similar scenario, and shows how the majority of the licenses issued in the second half of the sixteenth century were used by the Crown to settle individual debts, and used to pay off public bonds. He offers the example of Admiral Luis Colón, who received a license for 167 slaves to cover his allowance of 1,000 *ducados*, whose total value rose to 5,000 in *juros*. The 167 licenses (valued at 30 *ducados* each, 5,010 total) covered both the capital and the interests held by Colón, releasing the Crown from this debt with the Admiral, leaving Luis Colón with a debt of his own of 10 *ducados*.⁷⁴⁴

Both Vila Vilar and Delgado Ribas offer similar examples detailing the Habsburg Monarchs' policy of using the slave licenses to settle the Crown's debts during the last quarter of the century. Ribas described how Seville's merchant Gaspar de Peralta accepted a grant for delivering 221 slaves to New Spain following the Monarchy's 'bankruptcy' of 1576. The total number of slaves included in the license were just enough to cover the value of the Crown's debt to Peralta, plus the interests he held in *juros* in the *Casa de la Contratación*. Vila Vilar presents a similar scenario using a report of the *Consejo de Hacienda* (Treasury Council) for 1588. The Crown issued 847 slaves licenses that year, which were distributed among nine individuals to cover their *juros* in the *Casa de la Contratación*, totalling 25,410 *ducados*. Another example of this kind of practice is found following the suspension of one of the Crown's contracts on the administration of the lease over the tax of Granada's silk, which had been signed with Lucían Centurione and Agustín Spinola in 1575. The Crown agreed to repay the two Genoese businessmen through a charter containing 1,712 slave licenses to cover the value of and interests the two men held in that revenue, totalling 51,360 *ducados*. Their charter was only put to use years later (during the 1590s), after being inherited by Ambrosio Spinola, who split the grant into smaller lots and sold at least 377 slave licenses to Portuguese slave merchants. Among the purchasers of Spinola's licenses can be found Simão Freire de Lima, brother

⁷⁴² Felipe Ruiz Martín, "Un expediente financiero entre 1560 y 1575. La Hacienda de Felipe II y la Casa de la contratación de Sevilla", *Moneda y Crédito*, nº 92, 1965 pp. 3-58 [29]

⁷⁴³ Aguirre Beltrán, *La población*, p. 23

⁷⁴⁴ Donoso Anes, "Algunos Aspectos", p. 1103

of Pedro Freire (*contratador* of Cape Verde 1589-1595), Leonel de Quadros, a slave agent in Seville, and Lanzarote de Sierra, business attorney of the aforementioned António Nunes Caldeira.⁷⁴⁵ By 1590, the vast majority of Crown's revenue that resulted from the slave licenses had been mortgaged in order to pay off several of the Monarchy's debts and *juros*.⁷⁴⁶

The Crown's policy of issuing slave licenses almost exclusively as a source of fiscal income and as an instrument to cover debt resulted in a severe problem: the majority of the men that received licenses did not have the means to employ them, as they often lacked the capital or the knowledge to conduct a successful slave voyage from Africa's shores to the Spanish Indies. Most creditors of the Crown only agreed to receive their money in the form of slave charters because they could simply re-sell them for an immediate profit, while their use in a slave voyage was often regarded as a long-term investment. This practice resulted in most licenses issued by the Crown simply being sold for a quick return, or in some cases, kept for long periods of time until their price rose and its holders could secure a higher profit (like the aforementioned Centurione and Spinola). Slave licenses were subjected to great speculation, and a secondary black market flourished around the private sale and re-sale of the slave charters granted by the King. More often than not, license holders aimed to profit exclusively from this parallel market, and not from their privilege to introduce slaves in the Americas.⁷⁴⁷

This practice caused a critical problem of supply. The King's concession of large bundles of licenses to members of his private circle, aristocrats, or wealthy financiers who had no intentions of using their privilege, and kept them solely for their market value, meant that the numerous requests for slaves by Spanish American colonies were left unanswered. The Crown had no way to ensure that the number of slaves it authorised over the years were actually carried to America, nor force its users to transport them, as its regulation of the volume of the trade relied on the issue of limited numbers of licenses on a yearly basis. Notwithstanding the concession of various grants to satisfy America's labour demands, the fact that a great portion of the *licencias de negros* were concentrated as financial assets in the Kingdom meant that they did not fulfil their purpose of supplying

⁷⁴⁵ AGI, *Contratacion*, leg. 740 N10 "Autos de los acreedores de Simón de Freire de Lima"; Leg. 2924, N5; Otte, Ruiz-Barruecos, "Los portugueses en la trata", pp 18-30

⁷⁴⁶ Delgado Ribas, "The Slave Trade" p. 19; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p.87 note 101; Bowser, *African Slave*, p. 32

⁷⁴⁷ Vila Vilar, "Los asientos portugueses", p. 559

Spanish America's markets. According to Rolando Mellafe, shortly before 1595, more than 6,000 slave licenses that had been issued by the Crown were still unused.⁷⁴⁸

In short, rather than fulfilling their original purpose and satisfying the requests for slave labour coming from Spanish America, the Crown increasingly regarded the *licencias de negros* as financial instruments to help balance its Royal expenditure. The rampant increase in the prices of the licenses during the second half of the sixteenth century due to the rising demand for coerced labour in America, made them lucrative assets for the Monarchy. As a result, the King gradually came to see the administration of the mechanisms that controlled the slave trade as a quick source of fiscal income, rather than a long-term investment to foster the economic development of its colonies. When Charles V faced his first financial crisis, he attempted to turn the issue of licenses into a fixed revenue for the Crown with the ill-fated *asiento* negotiated with Hernando de Ochoa. Its failure meant that the King had to settle for irregular returns from the slave trade rather than just one annual big payment, which he could use to cover individual debts. The sale of licenses in smaller lots prevented the Habsburg Monarchs from maximising the potential of the trade, or securing a fixed source of income on par with the remaining rents of the Monarchy. However, the gradual concentration of the licenses in the hands of foreign investors or noblemen with no means (or will) to use them compromised the supply of slave labour to the Indies. Since thousands of licenses went unused thanks to the speculative market created around them, the license system failed in its original purpose of answering Spanish American demand for coerced labour. The rising expenses and difficulties in securing a shipment of slaves, combined with the accumulation of unused licenses over the years, prevented this activity from generating a fixed source of income for the *Real Hacienda*, and without this security the King could only use its irregular returns sporadically to settle individual debts.⁷⁴⁹

By placing the evolution of the Iberian slave trade within the political and financial background of the Spanish Monarchy over the sixteenth century, it becomes possible to see that the changes to the system for the provision of individual commercial licences were not only owed to the factors and demand of the trade in the Atlantic, but also to the liquidity and treasury problems faced by the Habsburgs. The eventual shift from a system

⁷⁴⁸ Rolando Mellafe, *Breve historia de la esclavitud negra en América latina*, (Mexico City: Secretaria de Educacion Publica, 1973, p. 49

⁷⁴⁹ Donoso Anes, "Algunos Aspectos" p. 1100

of individual licenses to one of slave *asientos* (1595-1640) was the culmination of a long and cumulative process, which was motivated just as much by the financial shortcomings of the Habsburg Monarchy, as by the labour demands from the multiple *audiencias* of Spanish America. The integration of the Portuguese Crown into the Spanish Monarchy, and the union of the Iberian kingdoms in 1581, would help provide the perfect framework for the next stage of the trade. The signing of the first *asiento de negros* in 1595 officially marked the beginning of a new era for the Iberian slave trade.⁷⁵⁰

5.2 The Reform of the Trade: The Union of Crowns and the first *Asiento de Negros* (1580-1600)

The slave trade to Spanish America presented very particular administrative and commercial features. Although the Habsburgs Monarchs managed to put forward a series of legal and fiscal mechanisms to regulate and profit from this activity (the *licencias*), as well as enforce a relative control over the trade through their royal officials stationed in America, its operation was still limited by one key element: Spain had no legal access to the slave sources in Africa. The commercial factories located on the coast of West Africa and Upper Guinea were administered by the Portuguese Crown, and the acquisition of slaves through the local markets was controlled by Portuguese merchants. Portugal had claimed a monopoly of trade along the African coast since the early stages of the Portuguese overseas expansion, enforcing taxes and duties on all commodities exchanged in its ports, including African slaves.⁷⁵¹ After confirming Portugal's rights to the African Coast following the treaty of Alcáçovas, the Spanish Monarchy had to rely on foreign entities to bring African slaves to Seville or the Americas. This scenario would suddenly change in 1581, when the Portuguese and Spanish empires were united under the same ruler, marking the beginning of the Iberian Union, intertwining the destinies of the two empires over the next sixty years (1580-1640).

Phillip II was acclaimed as King of Portugal (as Phillip I) at the *Cortes* of Tomar in April 1581. This process was the culmination of a dynastic crisis prompted by the

⁷⁵⁰ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 23, 87; José de Veitia Linage, *Norte de la Contratación de las Indias occidentales* (Seville: printed by Iuan Francisco de Blas, 1672) c. xxxv, §9 p. 277

⁷⁵¹ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in West Africa. Empires, merchants and the Atlantic System 1580-1674* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp 82-3

unexpected death of the young and childless King Sebastião I (1554-1578) in the battle of Ksar el-Kebir (Alcácer-Quibir, Morocco) in 1578. Following a three-way dispute over the Kingdom's succession, Phillip II secured his rights to the Portuguese throne at the *Cortes* of Tomar, through a process that combined diplomacy, conquest, and economic negotiations.⁷⁵² The kingdom of Portugal was integrated into the Spanish Monarchy based on the aggregative doctrine of *aeque principaliter* (of equal importance), as opposed to an assimilation by virtue of conquest. As a result, the Portuguese 'State' remained intact, and shared an equal relationship with the remaining Crowns of the Habsburg Monarchy, preserving its administrative structure, language, legal system, and institutional architecture.⁷⁵³ The territories of the Portuguese empire followed the same principle as the Kingdom, and the imperial demarcation that had been established in Tordesillas in 1494, remained untouched. The treaty of Tomar confirmed a separation between both empires, and ensured that the administration of the Portuguese Exchequer, its offices, colonial trade, and overseas governments were reserved to Portuguese naturals. The nature of the aggregation also reiterated the political distinction between the subjects of the Iberian Crowns. This meant that the Portuguese did not lose their official status as 'foreigners' within Spanish imperial territories (and vice-versa), and that trade between colonies of the different Crowns was still prohibited.⁷⁵⁴

The conditions established at Tomar confirmed that Phillip II would effectively rule over two separate empires, each one with their own governmental and economic structures. Therefore, the Union of Crowns neither resulted in one shared global Iberian Empire, nor produced a uniform colonial government. From a legal perspective, the administrative integration between the Portuguese and Spanish imperial spheres was

⁷⁵² Mafalda Soares da Cunha, "A questão jurídica na crise dinástica", José Mattoso (dir.), Joaquim Romero Magalhães (coord.), *História de Portugal*, vol. 3 (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1993) pp. 552-559; Rafael Valladares, *La conquista de Lisboa* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2008); Fernando Bouza Álvarez, *D. Filipe I* (Lisbon: Circulo de Leitores, 2005); Jean-Frédéric Schaub, *Portugal na Monarquia Hispânica: 1580-1640* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001)

⁷⁵³ Jon Arrieta Alberdi, "Las formas de vinculación a la Monarquía y de Relación entre sus Reinos y Coronas en la España de los Austrias", Bernardo García García, Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio Alvariño (eds.), *La Monarquía de las Naciones. Patria, Nación, y Naturaleza en la Monarquía España* (Madrid: Fundación Carlos Amberes, 2004) pp. 303-326

⁷⁵⁴ Pedro Cardim, Susana Münch Miranda, "La expansión de la corona Portuguesa y el estatuto político de los territorios", Óscar Mazín, José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez (eds.), *Las Indias occidentales: procesos de incorporación territorial a las monarquías ibéricas (siglos XVI a XVIII)* (Mexico City: El colegio de México. Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2012) pp. 183-240 ; John Elliott, "The Spanish Monarchy and the Kingdom of Portugal, 1580-1640", Mark Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence* (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), pp. 48-67

impossible. In practical terms, however, the Iberian Union presented a perfect setting for the establishment of commercial links between the Portuguese and Spanish imperial territories. The fact that the two empires were now controlled by the same King led to a growing relaxation between the imperial borders of their respective overseas territories, which contributed to a gradual perception of the Iberian empires as one single entity by its own vassals. Imperial policies for both empires were now established in Madrid, which meant that some of the Habsburg strategies effectively intertwined the political and financial needs of both empires as if they were the same entity.⁷⁵⁵ The new political configuration brought about by the dynastic union encouraged the circulation of people, commodities, and capital throughout the territories of the Iberian empires. The sixty years of the Union bore witness to a proliferation of inter-imperial initiatives, mutual ventures, and commercial opportunities for the subjects of both Crowns.⁷⁵⁶

The intensification of migratory movements between both imperial spheres was one of the first reflections of this new reality, as Portuguese and Spanish colonial actors progressively infiltrated each other's domains over the course of the sixty years of the Union. Informal merchant groups especially gathered around the Atlantic trades. Traditionally of New Christian ancestry, those networks strengthened the links between the Portuguese territories on the African Coast and Brazil with the Spanish imperial domains in America during the first forty years of the Union. Although Portuguese agents were already active in Spanish American ports with a clandestine status, their presence became much more visible after 1581.⁷⁵⁷ New Christian merchant families took advantage of the new reality of the Union, and spread their business networks throughout Hispano-Caribbean ports and the mining districts of Mexico, Peru, and New Granada, where they

⁷⁵⁵ For an overview of the Iberian empires as an integrated unit see Pedro Cardim, Leonor Freire Costa, Mafalda Soares da Cunha (eds.), *Portugal na Monarquia Hispânica: Dinâmicas de integração e de conflito* (Lisbon: Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2013) pp. 9-14; Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Carlos Martínez Shaw, José António Martínez Torres (dirs.), *España y Portugal en el Mundo, 1581-1668* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2014)

⁷⁵⁶ Alejandra B. Osorio, "El Imperio de los Austrias Españoles y el Atlántico: Propuesta para una nueva historia", Valentina Favaro, Manfredi Merluzzi, Gaetano Sabatini (eds.), *Fronteras. Procesos y prácticas de integración y conflictos entre Europa y América (siglos XVI-XX)* (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica de España, 2017) pp. 35-54

⁷⁵⁷ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, "1580 e a Restauração", *Ensaio II. Sobre a História de Portugal*, 2nd edition (Lisbon: Livraria Sá da Costa, 1978), pp. 379-421

developed a considerable commercial activity, exchanging European manufactures, Asian textiles, luxury goods, and African slaves for pearls and American silver.⁷⁵⁸

Although those Portuguese merchants remained foreigners in the eyes of the Spanish imperial administration, their privileged position as slave brokers allowed them to regularly sail from Africa to visit the markets of Spanish America, and establish themselves in those territories with relative ease. From the 1580s onwards, Portuguese merchants arrived at the New World on board of slave ships at an increasing rate, and would start to take up residence in cities like Lima, Buenos Aires, Veracruz, Portobello, and Mexico City. Their presence was especially pronounced in Cartagena de Indias, as the city operated simultaneously as a hub for slave merchants from across the Atlantic, and as a gateway to the inner mining districts in South America. In 1590, Captain Luis de Santa Maria affirmed that more than 140 Portuguese merchants were already living in this city.⁷⁵⁹ Some of those merchants successfully legitimised their presence in those territories through processes of *composición* and the purchase of *cartas de naturaleza* (residence permits), or by acting as the official representatives of the leaseholders of the slave monopolies in those territories.⁷⁶⁰ Famous cases like Jorge Fernandes Gramaxo in Cartagena, Manuel Bautista Pérez in Lima, Duarte de Lião and Simão Vaaz de Sevilha in Veracruz, attest to the encroachment and fortunes of those same Portuguese slave networks in the Spanish Indies during the Union of Crowns. This reality continued well into the beginning of the 1630s, and the Portuguese's easy settlement in America through the slave trade worried local authorities.⁷⁶¹

The accumulation of wealth in Spanish American ports often allowed the Portuguese New Christian merchants to expand their businesses towards the inner regions of the continent. They operated on the regional and intra-American commercial circuits, where they exchanged colonial commodities such as sugar, hides, cocoa, dyes, and

⁷⁵⁸ Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation upon the Ocean Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru ao tempo da União Ibérica: Mobilidade, cumplicidades e vivências*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2005)

⁷⁵⁹ AGI, *Santa Fe*, N37 "Carta del gobernador Pedro de Lodena" (06-06-1590)

⁷⁶⁰ Antonio Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias y la región histórica del Caribe, 1580-1640* (Seville: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002) pp. 128-131; Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "Extranjeros en Cartagena (1593-1630)", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, nº 16 (1979) pp. 147-184

⁷⁶¹ Antonio García de León, "La malla inconclusa. Veracruz y los circuitos comerciales Lusitanos en la primera mitad del siglo XVII", Antonio Ibarra, Guillermina del Valle Pavón (Eds.), *Redes sociales e instituciones comerciales en el imperio español, siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/UNAM, 2007) pp. 41-83; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 21-35, Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru*, vol. I

tobacco. Their enterprises were supported by a network of factors and agents who oversaw their businesses, the *peruleiros* and *encomenderos de negros*, who secured the connections between America's main ports and the continent's inner districts. Their goods were then distributed in those cities by local Portuguese shopkeepers and peddlers called *pulperos*.⁷⁶² According to a report by a captain of infantry in Cartagena in 1627, the Portuguese merchants had agents in "Lima, New Spain, New Kingdom [of Granada], Caracas, and all of its coast (...) where they exchange many products of this land (...) which belong to the trade of the Crown of Castile". The captain voiced his concerns over the state of affairs and the prominence of Portuguese merchants in the intra-colonial trade, because they were the only ones "who owned ships" arriving from their slaving ventures "with which they secure the trade of the fruits of this land and the Kingdoms of Spain".⁷⁶³

Thus, the sharing of a single monarch intensified the commercial operations between the imperial borders of the Iberian overseas territories, and broadened the range of the commodities exchanged between Portuguese and Spanish trade circuits, especially in the Atlantic area. It was within the new political, commercial and social framework introduced by the Iberian Union that the legal conditions and economic circumstances for the provision of African slaves to Spanish America changed. As the new King of Portugal, Phillip II owned rights to the Portuguese monopolies and controlled the Portuguese commercial factories on the West African Coast. The Spanish Monarch was finally in a position where he could regulate the monopoly of African slaves administered by the Portuguese Crown, and directly supply the colonies in Spanish America himself. Even though the direct integration of the Portuguese and Spanish colonial trades might have been impossible from a legal and fiscal standpoint, the control over and administration of the revenues of both empires were still held by the same ruler. Commercial enterprises on the African Coast continued to be managed exclusively by Portuguese naturals during the Union of Crowns, but they were now officially subjects of the Spanish Monarch. This

⁷⁶² Maria da Graça Mateus Ventura, "Los Judeoconversos portugueses en el Perú del siglo XVII. Redes de complicidad", Jaime Contreras, Bernardo J. García García, Ignacio Pulido (eds.), *Familia, religión y negocio. El sefardismo entre el mundo ibérico y los Países Bajos en la Edad Moderna* (Madrid Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2002) pp. 391-406; Lokken, "Santiago de Guatemala," pp. 171-203; Alice Pifer Canabrava, *O comércio português no rio da Prata, 1580-1640* (São Paulo: Universidade 1944); Zacarias Moutoukias, *Contrabando y Control Colonial en el siglo XVII* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de America Latina, 1988); Studnicki-Gizbert, *Nation Upon the Ocean*, pp. 108-111

⁷⁶³ AGI, *Santa Fe*, N106 "Carta del capitán de infantería Diego de Matute" (1627) *apud* Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de India*, p. 134

fact meant that after his coronation as King of Portugal, Phillip II no longer needed to negotiate the provision of slaves to his American colonies with foreign intermediaries.⁷⁶⁴

The first experiences with the Portuguese administration

The integration of the Portuguese empire and the African *feitorias* into the Habsburg Monarchy encouraged Phillip II to introduce a series of changes to the system for the provision of slaves to the ports of Spanish America. Phillip traditionally relied on the support from Seville's merchant guild to explore the colonial trade with America, and granted its members exclusive rights to this commerce. However, he was resentful of the *Consulado* ever since its members blocked the attempt to negotiate the *asiento* with Ochoa in the 1550s. The King was still looking for alternative, new systems to secure the shipment of slaves to America, in order to maximise the revenues from this trade for the *Real Hacienda*. It was within this context that the Union of Iberian Crowns presented Phillip II with a unique opportunity, as he could rely on his new Portuguese vassals to manage the slave trade to Spanish America. The Portuguese Crown traditionally farmed out the monopolies of the African commerce to private agents, granting its leaseholders control over the trade in a specific region on the African Coast, and the right to collect royal duties over its exports, which were mostly slaves. Those wealthy entrepreneurs who administered the Portuguese rents and monopoly contracts (in exchange for fixed payments to the Crown) were initially called *rendeiros*, and later *contratadores*.⁷⁶⁵

In the eyes of the Crown, those entrepreneurs were seen as the perfect partners to exploit the slave trade to Spanish America. The Portuguese merchants were extremely well positioned to take on this enterprise, since they already controlled the supply lines to the West African markets, and had exclusive rights over the trade of the entire West African Coast. They were well acquainted with the logistics of the slave trade, had considerable experience in transatlantic voyages to Brazil, and possessed vast knowledge of Africa's inner markets and barter economies. Therefore, Phillip II approached those Portuguese *rendeiros* and *contratadores* to negotiate complementary agreements for the

⁷⁶⁴ Bowser, *The African Slave*, pp. 29-30

⁷⁶⁵ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, "Rotas comerciais, agentes económicos, meios de pagamento", Maria Emília Madeira Santos (ed.), *História geral de Cabo Verde*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de História e Cartografia Antiga, 2001) pp. 17-124 [77-80]; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 18-21

provision of African slaves to the Spanish Indies. The King needed someone to ensure that the labour demand from Spanish America was adequately supplied, and the Portuguese were the most capable and well-equipped men to carry out this enterprise.⁷⁶⁶

The financial credentials of the large-scale Portuguese merchants enabled them safely to cover the rising costs of the King's licences, and sell slaves on credit to the territories of Spanish America, whose demand continued to increase during the first years of the Union. To secure their collaboration, Phillip II took advantage of the public auctions of the African monopolies of the Portuguese Crown, and added new clauses and incentives to increase the bids, including multiple licences for the direct provision of slaves to Spanish America's ports. Those extraordinary concessions transformed the Portuguese monopolies into more attractive leases, and increased the competition over their adjudication. The gathering of the Portuguese *contratadores* of the African monopolies to supply slaves to Spanish America ensured that the King could satisfy the shipment of a minimum number of slaves to his colonies, while increasing the revenues of both Crown's monopolies at the same time. In turn, this joint operation brought considerable advantages for the Portuguese slave merchants, who were no longer in a position where they had to act as proxies or intermediaries of Spanish colonists, as they could now directly conduct the trade from Africa to Spanish Americas themselves. Portuguese slavers gradually took advantage of the Crown's venality during this period to infiltrate and entrench in Spanish America and control its colonial markets.⁷⁶⁷

During the first fifteen years of the Union (1580-1595), Phillip II negotiated individual agreements with the Portuguese *contratadores* of the African monopolies, granting their holders the privilege to carry a specific number of slaves from their contracts directly to the designated ports of Spanish America, in exchange for a small share of their profits. The first of this type of concessions was negotiated with Álvaro Mendes de Castro, during the adjudication of the contract of Cape Verde and Guinea in 1583, which Álvaro administered with Diogo Fernandes Lamego for a total of six years (1583-1589). Besides his rights over the trade in the region of Guinea and Cape Verde, Mendes de Castro also received a permit to deliver 3,000 slaves to Spanish America over the course of his contract, at the rate of 500 slaves per year. The Royal Treasury exempted

⁷⁶⁶ Vila Vilar, "Los asientos portugueses" pp. 559-560

⁷⁶⁷ Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru*, vol. I, pp. 43-89; Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, pp. 128-135; Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, p. 26

the *contratador* from paying the fees corresponding to the Spanish licences, collecting instead a percentage over the profits from slave sales in Spanish America, in this case one-quarter (25%).⁷⁶⁸ In the same year, a similar concession was signed with the Milanese merchant Giovanni Battista Rovellasca (Hispanicised as Juan Bautista Revelasca) during the lease of the monopoly of São Tomé. To his rights as *contratador* of São Tomé, Phillip II added the privilege of introducing 1,800 slaves in Spanish America over the course of six years, at a rate of 300 per year.⁷⁶⁹ Angola also received a special privilege, as the King negotiated the lease of the first contract for this region with Pedro de Sevilha and António Mendes Lamego in 1587. Rather than a specific number of licences, the *contratadores* received the right to introduce one-third of all slaves shipped from its coasts to America for a period of six years. However, the share that was reserved for the Crown was higher in the case of Angola: one-third of the profits (opposed to one-quarter). The number was eventually fixed at 3,000 just like for Cape Verde, but the annual limit for exports from Angola was expanded from 500 to 750 slaves in 1592.⁷⁷⁰

The first experiences with the Portuguese *contratadores* appear to have been successful, as the leaseholders of the African contracts successfully dispatched and used the majority of their licence grants (if not all). Following those positive results, Phillip II signed a new contract with the commercial society of Pedro Freire, Ambrósio de Ataíde, Diego Enriquez, and Simão Ferreira de Malaca in September of 1589, for the lease of the monopoly of Cape Verde on the exact same terms as that of its previous holder: 3,000 slaves over six years (1589-1594). This contract was negotiated at a public auction in Madrid with the help of the Council of Portugal, and the society of merchants agreed to pay an annual lump sum of 16,500,000 *réis* (41.250 *cruzados*) to the Crown for its lease, after a fierce competition with another slave merchant, the previously mentioned Nunes Caldeira. The *contratadores* were entitled to use their licences themselves, but they often sold the bulk of them to other slave merchants. The society operated from Lisbon and entrusted their agent Leonel de Quadros to oversee and administer the sale of licences in Seville on their behalf. This contract appears to have been extremely successful, as Leonel de Quadros finished dispatching all 3,000 licences in 1593, two years before the stipulated

⁷⁶⁸ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 732 N22 “Autos de Alvaro Méndez de Castro y Diego Hernández Lamego, contratadores de Cabo Verde y Guinea” (1591); Donoso Anes, “Algunos Aspectos”, p. 1106

⁷⁶⁹ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 “copia de algunos asientos de contratadores”

⁷⁷⁰ Scelle, *La traite*, vol. I, pp. 324-331; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 23-7

limit, shipping the majority of the slaves to Cartagena.⁷⁷¹ The next contract of Cape Verde retained the same conditions and was leased to Diogo Nunes Caldeira in 1595 (the brother of António Caldeira). The licences continued to be dispatched at a steady pace during Caldeira's tenure, and just ten months after the start of the contract, Diogo Nunes had already sold 714 licences to Spanish America, amounting to 25,450 *ducados*.⁷⁷²

The provision of West African slaves to Spanish America greatly benefitted from the early interconnection of the legal and economic mechanisms of the Iberian empires, the Spanish slave licences with the African monopoly contracts of the Portuguese Crown. The expansion of the transatlantic slave trade during the first years of the Union of Crowns was a direct consequence of the administration of this commerce by a new group of wealthy and financially established entrepreneurs, with considerable experience operating slave ventures, who also boasted a wide network of contacts in the African markets that supplied the Spanish American ports. Those factors allowed the Portuguese to carry out this trade on a much larger scale than Seville's merchants ever could, and at much more competitive prices, since they could negotiate both the transportation costs and slave purchases in the same financial transaction.⁷⁷³ By incorporating the African *rendeiros* and *contratadores* in the slave trade to the Spanish Indies, Phillip II guaranteed a minimum supply of slaves to his American colonies, and raised his revenues generated from slave trading activities, which he would then employ to finance his imperial and military projects in Europe.⁷⁷⁴

Notwithstanding their success, the deals struck with the Portuguese *contratadores* during the first years of the Iberian Union were merely seen as a temporary solution by the Spanish Crown, while the Monarch and the Council of the Indies searched for a better solution to supply America's labour markets, and maximise the financial returns from this activity for the Royal Treasury. As previously explained, the Habsburgs issued slave licences not only to answer the labour demands from American colonies, but also as a viable source of fiscal income. Both Charles V and Phillip II had previously attempted to turn its unpredictable revenues into a stable 'corpus of the Treasury' (*cuero de*

⁷⁷¹ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5.762, "libros de asientos para licencias de esclavos, de 1577 a 1608"; For an overview of this contract see Otte, Ruiz-Barruecos, "Los portugueses en la trata", pp. 15-18

⁷⁷² AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 739 N1 "Autos de Diego Nuñez Caldera" (13-10-1595)

⁷⁷³ José Gonçalves Salvador, *Os magnatas do tráfico negreiro: séculos XVI e XVII* (São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1981) pp. 18-58; Ribeiro da Silva, "Crossing Empires", pp. 17-8

⁷⁷⁴ Delgado Ribas, "The slave trade", pp. 19-20

Hacienda), in order to cover some of the Habsburgs' public debt. Although the balance of the early arrangements with the Portuguese contractors was positive overall, the limited number of licences allocated to the Portuguese leaseholders was still not enough to satisfy all the requests from most of Spanish America's economic sectors. At the same time, the profits from the slave sales in the two viceroyalties were extremely irregular, and underwhelming at times due to the different nature of the trade from each region of the African Coast, thus preventing the Crown from properly allocating those returns to its Royal Treasury.⁷⁷⁵

While some contracts like Guinea and Cape Verde recorded a considerable profit during this period and its holders dispatched all their licences effortlessly, the other contracts like Angola and São Tomé experienced some difficulties in its earlier years. One of the *contratadores* of Angola, António Mendes Lamego, died before the conclusion of his contract in 1591, after dispatching only 370 licences from the 3,000 limit. His associate Pedro de Sevilha had to negotiate with the widow and son of his late partner (Violante Gomes and Sebastião Neto Mendes), in order to settle their debts and entrust powers to a new representative, so he could sell Angola's licences on their behalf in Seville. Simão Freire de Lima was the agent chosen to represent the family, as he was a wealthy merchant with a well-known reputation and network of contacts in the city (and brother of the *contratador* of Cape Verde, Pedro Freire). Simão Freire could only dispatch around 1,330 slaves to Cartagena until the end of the Angola contract in 1593. This was a stark contrast with the administration of Cape Verde, illustrative of the irregular supply and returns between the different African regions, which prevented the individual agreements with the Portuguese *contratadores* from providing a secure and stable revenue for the Crown.⁷⁷⁶

The reasons behind the difficulties for the sale of Angola's licences, as opposed to those of Cape Verde, were surely linked to the nature of the contract itself and the precarious Portuguese position in that territory at the time. According to official reports, the slaves from Angola were less valuable than the ones from Guinea, who were "better and closer [to ship] to the Indies". This distinction persisted well into the seventeenth century, when slaves from Guinea were commonly described as "*negros de ley*" (the best 'quality' and value), and regarded as more resistant and hardworking than any other slave,

⁷⁷⁵ Vila Vilar, "La sublevación de Portugal", pp. 105-8

⁷⁷⁶ Otte, Ruiz-Barruecos, "Los portugueses en la trata", p. 20

and thus more expensive.⁷⁷⁷ The contract of António Lamego and Pedro de Sevilha (1587-1593) also overlapped with the death of Paulo Dias de Novais (1589) and the disastrous military defeat of Luis de Serrão in the battle of Lukala in 1590, which forced the Portuguese to retreat from Angola's interior and broke their alliances with local *sobas*. The end of the first cycle of military campaigns restricted the access of the Portuguese to the inner slave markets of Ndongo, and limited their ability to acquire slaves through military raids. Those markets would only become accessible again after the campaigns of Furtado de Mendonça (1595-1599), and Angola would only reach its position as the most important slaving export region during the first two decades of the seventeenth century.⁷⁷⁸ The Island of São Tomé suffered multiple plagues that destroyed its cane fields and hindered the merchants' ability to acquire and ship slaves on a regular basis. The island would also witness considerable slave revolts in the latter half of the sixteenth century, and groups of runaway slaves (known as *angolares*) became a serious problem for the local population and sugar merchants, which reflected in the poor performance of its contract.⁷⁷⁹

Other obstacles for the fulfilment of the Portuguese agreements arose from the opposition of Seville's *Consulado* (merchant guild) and institutions. To ensure that the Portuguese leaseholders could use their licences, Phillip II had granted the *contratadores* the privilege to use their licences in "*navíos sueltos y fuera de Flota*" (transport unconnected to the *Carrera de Indias*) directly from Lisbon, the Canary Islands, or Africa's outposts. This prerogative not only excluded Seville's merchants from the trade, but also opened the gateway for Portuguese, and their contraband slaves', penetration into Spanish America. Those privileges were not well received by the merchant community in Seville, infuriating the *Casa de la Contratación*, which saw it as an attack on Seville's exclusive trade with America. The association of slave licences (pertaining to Castile's Crown) to the lease of the African monopolies of the Portuguese Crown also created complaints of a legal and economic nature, since the *contratadores* registered their profits

⁷⁷⁷ According to a report from *Tribunal de Cuentas* of Cartagena from 1622, slaves from Guinea were sold for a price around 200 *pesos de plata ensayada* (corresponding to approximately 2640 *reales* or 264 *cruzados* or 105,600 *réis*) in Cartagena, while slaves from Angola were sold for a price around 150 *ducados* (corresponding to 1,650 *reales* or 165 *cruzados* or 66,000 *réis*). AGI, *Santa Fe*, Leg. 56 N172 "Cartas y expedientes: Tribunal de cuentas de Santa Fe" (27-06-1622). For earlier distinctions see AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 "Informações sobre o comércio dos escravos" (14-03-1589);

⁷⁷⁸ See chapter 3, 4

⁷⁷⁹ Isabel Castro Henriques, "Ser escravo em São Tomé no século XVI," *idem*, *Os pilares da diferença. Relações Portugal-África séculos XV-XX* (Lisbon: Caleidoscópio, 2004) pp. 247-258

from their colonial trades in the House of India and Mina, which reported to the Portuguese *Conselho da Fazenda* (Treasury Council). As a result, the *Casa de la Contratación* claimed losses of around 48,000,000 *maravedís*, and it deterred the Crown from negotiating further exclusive licences with the Portuguese *contratadores*.⁷⁸⁰

The slave licences had clearly proven to be ineffective over the years, not only in fulfilling their purpose – to meet the labour demands of Spanish American ports –, but also in yielding proper economic dividends for the Crown. Despite the promising results of the parallel contracts negotiated with the Portuguese *contratadores*, those individual agreements were still not enough to cover the labour demands of Spanish America. The revenues generated by the slave sales from their contracts in America were extremely irregular and too haphazard to provide a stable source of fiscal income for the Crown. According to a memorandum of the *Casa de Contratación*, by 1589, slaves were already considered the most important commodity carried to America, who generated revenue of up to one million *ducados* per year.⁷⁸¹ Those one-off deals were simply regarded as a temporary stopgap while the Crown searched for a more stable solution, while Spanish legal and economic institutions dissuaded the Crown from contracting further agreements with the *contratadores*.⁷⁸² All of those problems were heavily discussed in the Council of the Indies, which had been tasked by the King to find a solution for supply of the Indies, and maximise the financial returns of the administration of the slave trade for the Royal Treasury. By 1589, the *Consejo de Indias* had acknowledged the complete failure of the system of the *licencias*, from both a financial and supply perspective. It then advised Phillip II to attempt to establish a monopoly over the trade through the negotiation of an *asiento*.⁷⁸³

The administration of the slave trade through a monopoly regime was not a new concept in the Spanish Empire. Charles V had already attempted to negotiate a small *asiento* for the marketing of licences in the 1550s, and many members from the Council of the Indies, Treasury officials, private merchants, and travellers from the Portuguese

⁷⁸⁰ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 “Informe de la Junta de Portugal sobre el proyecto de asiento del consulado” (1590); Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 23-8

⁷⁸¹ Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, p. 123, who in turn quotes the document from Fernando Márquez de la Plata y Enchenique, “Documentos Relativos a la introducción de esclavos negros en America”, *Revista chilena*, vol. 57, N61 (1928), p. 301. This document is indexed with the number of the old catalogue of the Indies Archive of Seville, but the value translated is extremely doubtful.

⁷⁸² Bowser, *The African slave*, pp. 29-30; Delgado Ribas, “The Slave trade”, p. 31; Vila Vilar, “Los asientos portugueses”, pp. 559-560

⁷⁸³ The *asientos de negros* were not complete monopolies, as I will explain further below.

and Spanish empires had suggested a similar solution over the years.⁷⁸⁴ One of the men who defended the institution of a slave *asiento*, was the Portuguese Duarte Lopes. Originally from Benavente (Santarém), Duarte Lopes was among the first settlers to go to Angola in 1578, where he lived for ten years collecting information about the geography, fauna, and ethnography of the region, which he published in his famous *Relazione del reame di Congo* in Rome in 1591.⁷⁸⁵ Lopes returned to Lisbon in 1589, and submitted a detailed report to King Phillip II, suggesting the introduction of a system of monopolistic *asientos* to secure the supply of slaves to Spanish America. According to Lopes, more than 8,000 slaves could be exported from Kongo and Angola's shores every year, and if the Crown sent half of those captives to Spanish America at a rate of 15 *ducados* per licence, it could generate up to 60,000 *ducados* for the Royal Treasury on a yearly basis. Duarte Lopes argued that the revenues collected from the Royal fifth in the Spanish Indies would also increase, should the King impose a monopoly enforcing the distribution of a specific number of Angolan slaves to pre-established regions in need of coerced labour. Lopes maintained that, with the *asiento*, the King would not only ensure the supply of Spanish America, but also consolidate his own conquest in Angola, showcasing how the slave trade was intrinsically linked to the Angola conquest, and mutually reinforced both imperial projects of the Iberian Atlantic.⁷⁸⁶

Duarte Lopes' account displayed a vast knowledge of the financial system of the Habsburg Monarchy, and recommended the employment of an *asiento* for the administration of a Portuguese colonial territory. At the same time, it highlighted how the interconnection between the Portuguese and Spanish economic systems for the provision of slaves to America was progressively perceived as the perfect solution for the consolidation of Iberian imperial ventures in Africa and America. His information was produced together with multiple reports from Angola at the onset of the Iberian Union, often by men interested in this conquest, who were looking for financing and support from the new Habsburg dynasty. Those reports frequently highlighted the large number

⁷⁸⁴ Bowser, *Africa slave*, p.31

⁷⁸⁵ Rozendo Garcia Sampaio, "O portugues Duarte Lopez e o Comercio espanhol de escravos negros", *Revista de Historia*, N30 (1957), pp. 375-385

⁷⁸⁶ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 "Informações sobre o comércio dos escravos" (14-03-1589).

Duarte Lopes's account suggests that the slaves should be distributed as follows: 300 for Santo Domingo and Porto Rico; 150 for Cuba and Jamaica; 400 for Caracas, Margarita and Venezuela; 300 for Santa Marta and Cabo de la Vela; 200 for the mines of Nueva Zaragoza; 400 for the Kingdom of New Granada; 150 for Cartagena; 150 for the mines of Veragua; 150 for Panama and Nombre de Dios; 600 for Quito and the district of Popayan; 1,000 for Peru.

of slaves that could be acquired for the American colonies, should the Crown seriously invest in the conquest of Angola, ideas that were also present in the writings of Diego Herrera and Jerónimo Castaño. The two Spanish soldiers who participated in the Angolan campaigns and wrote memorandums about their experiences to the Crown, calculated the potential of “the slaves brought from this kingdom [Angola] to Peru” to be worth more than 30,000 *ducados* already in 1589, and over 130,000 *ducados* by 1598.⁷⁸⁷

The voices of private agents like Duarte Lopes, Herrera, and Castaño joined the official discussions from the *Junta de Negros* and the reports of the Council of the Indies, all vouching for a reform of the licence system. Following the recommendations of the official Councils, the King shelved all projects for the renewal of the agreements with the *contratadores*, and attempted to place the sale of slave licences under a monopoly contract. An immediate dispute arose between the Council of Indies, the *Casa de la Contratación*, the *Consulado*, and the Portuguese merchants, about who should be in charge of its administration. Multiple offers were presented by the subjects of both Crowns. Juan de Ibarra, the King’s secretary, began to negotiate an *asiento* with the Portuguese merchant Bernardino Pena in 1589, for the transport of 4,250 slaves to the Americas every year. This agreement was immediately boycotted by the *Casa de la Contratación*, whose officials refused to give up their control over the sale of slave licences and to open the Spanish colonial trade to foreigners. The *Consulado* of Seville attempted to negotiate an *asiento* of their own in the following year (1590), valid for nine years, to introduce 38,250 slaves in Spanish America (4,250 per year) for 517,500 *ducados*. The Portuguese *contratadores* also proposed a new collective bid, fixing an annual number for each African region to carry to specified ports in the Americas: 1,750 for Cape Verde, 500 for São Tomé, and 2,000 for Angola.⁷⁸⁸

All of those projects were rejected by the Spanish Treasury Council, since it was impossible to satisfy all parties involved. The Council of the Indies was in favour of the proposal of Bernardino Pena, but the opposition of the *Casa de la Contratación*, who rejected the idea of having a monopoly administered by a Portuguese natural, undermined the agreement. At the same time, the members of the Council of the Indies distrusted the

⁷⁸⁷ José Luis Cortés López, *Esclavo y colono. Introducción y sociología de los negroafricanos en la América española del siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2004) p. 70

⁷⁸⁸ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Informe del Consejo sobre la proposición de Pedralvarez Pereira” (10-12-1594); Leg. 2829, “Asiento pasado com Bernandim Pena sobre las 4U250 licencias de esclavos” (1589); Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 28-32; Scelle, *La traite*, vol. I, pp. 799-809

ability of Seville's merchants to successfully administer a trade over which the Portuguese had total control and far more experience, and obstructed the project of the *Consulado*. The inability to reach a compromise paralysed the negotiations for almost four years (1589-1593), which harmed the King's revenues from the slave trade in the meantime. Phillip was forced directly to intervene to settle the matter, and entrusted the administration of slave licences to the *ventiquatro* (alderman) of Seville, Hernando de Porras, in October 1593.⁷⁸⁹

Phillip II's intervention in the decision over who should administer the slave trade would indirectly tip the scales in favour of the Portuguese solution. The administration of Hernando de Porras, which lasted only two years (1593-1595), was disastrous for the Crown's coffers. Although de Porras could sell the licences to either Spanish or Portuguese merchants, the privilege that had been always granted to the Portuguese *contratadores* for out-of-fleet shipping, was removed. This fact lowered the demand for the licences on the Peninsula's markets, since it greatly raised costs for private slave ventures due to the need for a compulsory return of slave ships from Africa to Seville. Hernando de Porras was forced to sell licences at considerably lower prices than in previous years, lowering their value from the fixed price of 30 *ducados* to somewhere between 17 *ducados* (paid in advance) and 25 *ducados* (on credit). As a simple administrator nominated by the King, Porras was no entrepreneur, and refused to take responsibility for multiple deferred payments in the Spanish Indies, or advance credit to individuals without reliable insurers. As a result, Hernando de Porras only managed to sell 1,918 licences during his administration, which was considerably lower than that of the Portuguese slave contractors, who sold far more licences across three different and overlapping African contracts. From the 16,636,050 *maravedís* generated from the licences dispatched by Porras, only 4,876,800 were received in advance, while the rest was sold on credit. A disastrous result, especially when compared to the profits of over 33,000,000 *maravedís* generated by the society in charge of the contract of Cape Verde in the same time period. The failure of Porras' administration finally convinced the Monarch to implement a monopolistic *asiento* for the slave trade, concluding a period in which the Crown issued between 122,000 and 150,000 slave licences.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸⁹ Cortés López, *Esclavo y colono*, pp. 71-2

⁷⁹⁰ Donoso Anes, "Algunos aspectos", pp. 1123-4

The negative financial results of Hernando de Porras' administration, Seville's representative, in comparison to the Portuguese *contratadores* who easily dispatched their licences, advanced credit, and had logistical support for the provision of slaves on the African markets, swayed the King's final decision. If Phillip II wanted the revenue from this trade to be as high as possible, as well as safe and predictable for its Treasury (*'una renta segura'*), he had to entrust the *asiento* to an individual with not only the financial credentials to shoulder the burdens of its administration, but also the experience and network to ensure the direct supply of the necessary slaves to the New World.⁷⁹¹ When the financial reality of the Habsburg Monarchy and the limitations of the licence system called for a reform of the administration of the slave trade, the first experiences with the Portuguese *contratadores* right after the establishment of the Union generated the best results for the Crown, both economically and in effective supply. Despite the opposition of the *Casa de la Contratación* and Seville's *Consulado*, the Portuguese merchants were the considered the ideal candidates to administer the trade through the new monopoly lease, as they had proven to be the most capable of managing this enterprise. The first *asiento de negros* would therefore be signed with Pedro Gomes Reinel (or Pero Gómez Reynel) in 1595, marking the beginning of a period of forty five years (1595-1640) during which the Portuguese exclusively administered the slave trade to Spanish America (with a small interruption between 1609-1614), better known as the 'Portuguese *asientos*'.⁷⁹²

The reform of the system: The first asiento de negros (1595-1600)

Following the Union of Crowns, and the positive experiences of the Portuguese *contratadores* in the shipment of thousands of Africans to the New World through individual contracts, the Council of Indies proposed the adoption of a monopoly regime for the shipping of slaves to the Americas to Phillip II, and its lease to a third party contractor in 1594. According to the members of this Council, this system offered the perfect solution to rectify the dreadful state of the trade. Through the assignment of a new (semi-)monopoly contract, obligating one leaseholder of immaculate financial credentials to fulfil a series of duties, the Crown could always ensure a minimum supply of slaves to the American colonies every year, and exert a rigorous control over this trade. This

⁷⁹¹ Lorenzo Sanz, *Comercio de España con América en la época de Felipe II*, t.1 (Valladolid, 1979) p. 528

⁷⁹² Vila Vilar, "Los asientos Portugueses", pp. 557-609

solution would additionally convert the irregular revenues generated from the use of licences into a stable and predictable source of fiscal income for the Royal Treasury, as it was far easier to collect and manage the payment of an annual lump sum negotiated through one single contract (rather than multiple smaller agreements with different parties). A fixed revenue obtained through the lease of a monopoly contract would also enable the monarch to sell new long term interest bearing bonds (*juros*) secured against this rent.⁷⁹³ The political circumstances brought about by the Union of Crowns also favoured the adoption of a new legal and fiscal solution for the provision of slaves to Spanish America. After inheriting the Crown of Portugal, the Habsburg Monarchs found themselves in a position where they could regulate the Portuguese side of the slave trade as well, thanks to their control over the lease of the African trade monopolies, and through the reinforcement of the military project for Angola. The combination of all those factors encouraged Phillip II to order a legal reform to the licences, and attempt a new model for the administration of the slave trade by means of an *asiento*.⁷⁹⁴

Similar to other revenues of the Spanish Monarchy, the management of the provision of African captives to Spanish American ports was placed under a monopolistic contract, and its lease was advertised at public auction in Portugal and Spain. The Crown expected to collect an immediate influx of capital in exchange for chartering the exclusiveness of the slave trade to a private entity for a set period of time. Those type of financial arrangements were quite common in the Habsburg Monarchy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and were known as *asientos*. An *asiento* was a long-term contract signed between the Crown and one (or more) private entrepreneur(s), for the assignment and administration of a specific privilege of the Crown. Certain taxes and revenues required the Crown to mobilise considerable resources just to supervise and collect its proceeds, which considerably diminished (and at times nullified) profits. To solve this problem and channel all possible resources to its imperial expenditure, the Habsburg Monarchs regularly assigned the collection and administration of multiple Crown monopolies to third-party contractors over certain periods of time, in exchange for considerable sums of money paid in advance. This system of indirect management over specific revenues by the Crown was settled through the negotiation and signing of *asientos* with private investors. In essence, the *asientos* were money transfers negotiated

⁷⁹³ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 742, N128BIS "Consulta del Consejo de Indias. Sobre el estado del asiento de negros" (10-2-1594)

⁷⁹⁴ Bowser, *The African Slave*, pp. 31-2

between a private agent and the King, in exchange for the exclusive management of a specific Crown prerogative or royal revenue. Those could range from the collection of commercial duties and trade taxes, to the administration of royal monopolies, agreements for the military provision of Spanish garrisons, armies and navy, or simply substantial loans with cumulative interests or some sort of collateral attached to it.⁷⁹⁵

The holders of the *asientos* were expected to pay the Crown a fixed lump sum every year, for the right to oversee and collect the profits from the negotiated royal prerogative. This system ensured that the Crown always had a reliable and foreseeable source of income, while cutting the costs and expenses inherent to the administration of its particular monopolies. Due to the considerable financial and human resources necessary for the maintenance and government of its empire, the *asientos* were seen as standard fiscal solutions by the Spanish Monarchy, as they released the Crown from the expenses invested in the management of its monopolies, while providing a vital source of income to help balance increasing fiscal pressure.⁷⁹⁶ For their part, the leaseholders attempted to extract as much profit as possible from their contracts, while securing different privileges and special perks for their own business ventures (such as the Crown's protection of their estates and fortunes, privileged access to future leases, noble titles, and sometimes access to Spanish American bullion).⁷⁹⁷ The holders of the *asientos* were called *asentistas*, and they received full powers over the management of a specific royal prerogative in exchange for their payments, often in an exclusive monopoly regime. The *asientos* also granted their holders extraordinary privileges and special powers in the administration of less attractive revenues from the Crown, as rewards for their payments. In the forming of an *asiento*, the King and the leaseholder together agreed upon different clauses, with different duties and obligations for each party in order to ensure the fulfilment of the enterprise, and co-signed the contract.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁵ Jean E. Gelabert, "La evolución del gasto de la Monarquía Hispánica entre 1598 y 1650. Asientos de Felipe III y Felipe IV", *Studia Histórica*, nº 18 (1998), pp. 265-297; Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe. Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as fiscal-military states, 1500-1660* (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 130-133; Henri Lapeyre, *Simon Ruiz et les "Asientos" de Phellipe II* (Paris: Colin, 1953) pp. 12-13

⁷⁹⁶ Carmen Sanz Ayán, *Los banqueros de la crisis de la Monarquía Hispánica de 1640* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, Ediciones de Historia, 2013) pp. 23-30; Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, *Marte Contra Minerva. El Precio del Imperio Español c. 1450-1600* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004) pp. 312-323

⁷⁹⁷ Carlos Álvarez Nogal, "Los banqueros de Felipe IV y los Metales Preciosos Americanos (1621-1665)", *Estudios de historia económica*, Nº 36 (1997), pp. 5-195

⁷⁹⁸ Reyes Fernández Durán, *La Corona Española y el tráfico de negros. Del Monopolio al libre comercio* (Madrid: Editorial del Economista, 2011) p. 22; Lapeyre, *Simon Ruiz*, p. 277

The Spanish Crown contracted several *asientos* with different businessmen, bankers, noblemen, and merchant consortiums over the years, varying from tax farming contracts, fiscal collections, royal monopolies, governance, and military provisions, among many more. The creation of a monopoly regime for the administration of the slave licences followed this pattern, and was labelled the “*renta y provisión general de los esclavos negros para Indias*”, or in short, the “*asiento de negros*”. The *asientos de negros* were contracts negotiated between the Crown and a private entrepreneur, in which the King transferred the royal privilege to administer and sell a pre-determined number of licences for the introduction of slaves in Spanish America to the *asentista*. The two parties negotiated multiple clauses for the *asiento*, specifying the number of slaves that should be shipped each year, the duration of the contract, the ports of delivery in America, the shipping system, an extra figure to accommodate for casualties during the Middle Passage, the nomination of different factors for America’s ports, the size of the crews, etcetera. For this exclusive privilege, the *asentista* had to pay the Crown an annual lump sum and provide financial securities to guarantee that he could fulfil the *asiento* for its full duration. After satisfying those conditions and signing the contract, the holder of the *asiento* could officially proceed to manage the slave licences as he pleased. The *asentistas* could use the licences themselves, or sell them in smaller lots to different merchants. To the exclusive privilege of marketing slave licences, the *asentistas* added other special individual privileges according to the different articles and clauses of their respective contracts, and aimed to take every possible advantage of them.⁷⁹⁹

The negotiations for the auction of the first slave *asiento* took place at the end of 1594. According to the reports of the Council of the Indies, a deal was all but concluded with the renowned Portuguese slave merchant António Nunes Caldeira by 31 December 1594, for the annual figure of 61,000 *ducados*. However, the sudden appearance of another Portuguese entrepreneur, Pedro Gomes Reinel, complicated the negotiations. Reinel actively disputed the lease of the *asiento* with Nunes Caldeira and topped his bid with an offer of 80,000 *ducados*, but the Indies Council was hardly dissuaded. Caldeira was extremely well-regarded by the members of the Council, since he had considerable

⁷⁹⁹ Scelle, *La traite*, vol I, pp. 347-470; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 23-58; Bowser, *The African Slave*, pp. 31-2; Rolando Mellafe, *Breve historia de la esclavitud negra en America Latina* (Mexico: SEP/Setentas, 1973) pp. 48-51; Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, pp. 43-131; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 19-21. Copies of all *asientos* negotiated with the Portuguese merchants can be found in AGI, *Contaduria*, Leg. 261 “Asientos de negros con diferentes compañías y particulares”

“credit, experience [...] and a great reputation” in the kingdom, which made up for the “few thousand more” *ducados* offered by Pedro Gomes Reinel. Caldeira also counted on his good family name: as the nephew of Manuel Caldeira, the son of Francisco Nunes de Beja, and the brother of Diogo Nunes Caldeira, all capable merchants with a successful history of administering slave contracts, António was seen as the safest and most logical choice to administer the *asiento*. Caldeira’s offer also included an extra incentive: a one-time payment (described as *socorro*) of 60,000 *ducados*.⁸⁰⁰

Concurrently, the secretary of the King Juan de Ibarra urged the members of the Council to accept Caldeira’s bid, as the immediate injection of 120,000 *ducados* was urgently needed for the Kingdom of Naples.⁸⁰¹ Pedro Gomes Reinel was not discouraged by the rejection, improving his offer, first to 91,000 *ducados* (plus a *socorro* of 14,000 *ducados*), and after some discussion, he finally persuaded the Council with a bid of 100,000 *ducados* per year. Antonio Nunes Caldeira still attempted to sway the final decision by improving his offer to 72,000 *ducados*, but to no avail. Even though he had gathered the support of the *Junta de Negros* and the secretary of the King, had considerable credit, and counted on his family network and name, Phillip II ignored Caldeira’s pleas and signed the *asiento* with Pedro Gomes Reinel.⁸⁰² The assignment of the first *asiento* to the highest offer without accounting for the securities or solvency of its bidder, was once again evidence of the King’s strategy behind the legal reform of the trade: its purpose was not only to secure the supply of slaves to the Indies, but also to generate a considerable income from this trade, which should be as high as possible. This system greatly benefitted speculators, whose inflated offers often came with a high degree of risk and unreliable insurers, keeping the more responsible yet safe and credited individuals away from the *asiento*. This economic policy would inevitably bring about problems for the Crown during the administration of future *asientos*.⁸⁰³

To secure the *asiento*, Reinel agreed to pay 100,000 *ducados* to the Crown annually, as well as insuring the State with a hefty sum in the form of a bond (*fianza*). He would pledge his own property and estate as securities, and nominate at least three other

⁸⁰⁰ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Consultas del Consejo de Indias al Rey” (31-12-1594); “Sobre el papel que se dio a SM y se remeteo al consejo en raçon del asiento de negros para las Indias” (21-04-1595)

⁸⁰¹ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 34

⁸⁰² AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795, “Consultas del Consejo de Indias al Rey” (23-12-1594, 30-12-1594, 31-12-1594)

⁸⁰³ Otte, Ruiz-Barruecos, “Los portugueses en la trata”, pp. 3-6

wealthy and certified individuals who could step in and cover the costs of the operation, should the *asentista* fail to keep up with his payments. Pedro Gomes Reinel associated with Jerónimo and Gil Fernandes Aires (or Arias), slave merchants from Porto, and Ruy Fernandes Pereira, a Lisbon entrepreneur residing in Seville, and offered the Crown 150,000 *ducados* as a bond. However, his initial *fianza* and insurers were rejected, not only because they were all Portuguese, but mostly because the money of their bonds was invested in *juros* of the Portuguese Crown. The Council forced Reinel to offer a second *fianza*, and present new partners with financial assets in Castile, causing Reinel to name the wealthy Diego Mendoza, Juan de Zapata, Don Diego Pacheco, and Nicolas Peñalosa as his bondsmen.⁸⁰⁴ The *asiento* was then formally signed on 30 January 1595, and Reinel agreed to introduce a total of 4,250 slaves in the Americas every year, of which at least 3,500 should arrive alive. The *asiento* was valid for a period of nine years (1595-1604), and Reinel should transport between 31,500 (minimum) and 38,250 (maximum) slaves during its full duration.⁸⁰⁵ The slaves could be shipped to any port of Spanish America, but the Crown reserved the right to determine the destination of at least 2,000 slaves every year, should the King need to answer specific labour shortages.⁸⁰⁶ If Reinel failed to fulfil these conditions, he had to reimburse the Crown with 10 *ducados* for each licence he failed to navigate. The *asentista* vowed to open offices in Seville, Madrid, and Lisbon, and sell licences to any merchant or individual that requested them. Finally, he also had to update the *Consejo de Indias* and the *Junta de Negros* every two years regarding the number of licences sold, and present his accounting books to the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville.⁸⁰⁷

In exchange for his massive investment, and for complying with those clauses, Pedro Gomes Reinel would receive considerable privileges. The King would publicly transfer the royal privilege to manage the licences for the shipping of slaves to Spanish America to Reinel. The *asentista* could then administer the rent as he saw fit, but would mostly sell those licences (the price of which was fixed upon the signing) during the full duration of his contract. The stipulated amount that the *asentistas* were expected to pay

⁸⁰⁴ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Consulta del Consejo al Rey” (28-04-1595); Cortés López, *Esclavo y colono*, p. 72; Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia*, p. 142

⁸⁰⁵ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 336 (15)

⁸⁰⁶ In 1596, for example, Reinel was ordered to ship at least 200 slaves to Puerto Rico to help build the city’s fortifications. AGI, *Santo Domingo*, 2280, L.3, f. 217v-18

⁸⁰⁷ AGI, *Contaduría*, Leg. 261 “Asientos de negros con diferentes compañías y particulares”, N1 (Asiento con Pedro Gómez Reynel); Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 28-32, 65-76; Bowser, *African Slave*, pp. 31-3

the Crown for the administration of the contract would be slightly lower than the total value of the licences that they were allowed to use during the duration of their *asientos*, but still enough to provide a profit margin to cover the initial investment. For Reinel's *asiento*, the costs of which were stipulated at 100,000 *ducados* annually, he was entitled to sell 4,250 licences at the price of 30 *ducados* plus 20 *reales* for the *aduanilla* tax if the licences were sold on the Peninsula, and 40 *ducados* plus 30 *reales* if payment was deferred until the slave cargo arrived in America. Those numbers should have earned the *asentista* a theoretical figure of around 127,500 *ducados* annually (before the Crown's taxes). Reinel could have expected to receive a return of 27,500 *ducados* from his investment every year, close to a thirty per cent profit before administrative expenses. Taking into account the full nine year duration of the *asiento*, if the entire operation proceeded smoothly and without problems, Reinel's liquid income should have amounted to 247,500 *ducados* over his entire administration. Taking into account that licences could be sold in Spanish America by Reinel's designated agents for 40 *ducados*, and should include an extra 2 or 3 *ducados* per licence due to the *aduanilla*, that value would be even higher.⁸⁰⁸

The *asentistas* enjoyed other privileges to compensate for their massive financial efforts and help them fulfil their contracts, in order to streamline the shipment of African captives to Spanish America. The most important privilege for the *asentistas* was the ability to receive large amounts of Spanish American bullion as payment for the licences in America. As an example, Reinel received 4,507 silver *pesos* via Cartagena, for the duties of the slaves purchased by Nicolás de Valdeón in Potosí. Reinel's agent in Seville, Ruy Fernandes Pereira, also collected 2,500 *pesos* in his name for the sale of 120 licences to Jorge Fernandes Gramaxo in Cartagena.⁸⁰⁹ His factor in America, Tomás de Fonseca, would send a minimum of 80,000 *pesos* of his *asiento* back to Seville.⁸¹⁰ The *asientos* also brought back the privilege of transporting slaves on ships unconnected to the Royal Fleet (*navíos sueltos*). The holders of slave licences could once again sail directly from Europe, Africa, and the Atlantic archipelagos to any "islands, ports, [and] rivers" of Spanish America. Their ships were still subject to the official control and inspection of Crown officials, and required an official document signed by the judges and officials of the *Casa de la Contratación* (called *registro*) before departing on their slave journeys.

⁸⁰⁸ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 379-99.

⁸⁰⁹ Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, p. 140

⁸¹⁰ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 (25-06-1605)

However, slavers were once again free to sail from the Peninsula to acquire slaves in Africa, and then ship them directly to the Americas, which lowered costs of operation but also facilitated the smuggling of slaves.⁸¹¹ The *asiento de negros* also granted its holders the special privilege of receiving two-thirds of the total value of any cargo apprehended from unlicensed ships trading in America, as well as the fine paid by the culprit (around 100 *pesos*). The supervision and control of illegal voyages was enforced by the royal authorities of the Spanish American ports, who sold the slaves in a public auction, and kept the remaining third of their proceeds for themselves.⁸¹²

The *asiento* holders could also nominate and send personal agents to Spanish American territories to act as their official representatives. Those men were called *feitores* (factors), and were placed at key points of colonial America to oversee and manage the businesses of the *asentista* on the other side of the Atlantic. The factors were indispensable to support the administration of the *asentista*, as they were tasked with registering the payments of merchants who bought licences in America, and charge the ones that were granted on credit on the Peninsula. They accompanied the royal officials, usually a treasurer and a customs official, during the inspections of newly arrived ships in their ports of residence, in order to make sure that the number of slaves disembarked corresponded to their respective licences, and to look for possible frauds and contraband slaves.⁸¹³ To ensure that factors fulfilled their role dutifully, the *asentistas* often nominated members of their own family network for those positions. They took advantage of a special clause in the *asiento* contracts, which granted legal residence permits to the *asentista*'s factors in the Spanish Indies. They used the opportunity to expand their own personal businesses on the American markets, placing their own family members in key territories. The *asentistas* João Rodrigues Coutinho (1600-1603) and António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1622) appointed their own family members (Manuel de Sousa Coutinho and Jorge Fernandes de Elvas) as their official factors to Cartagena, while Cristóvão Mendes de Sousa (1632-1640) sent his brother Francisco Mendes de Sousa to Veracruz. Together with their official function as factors of the *asiento*, those men were entrusted with the management of the commercial enterprises of the *asentistas* themselves in the American colonial trade. Some of those factors continued to operate

⁸¹¹ AGI, *Contaduria*, Leg. 261 "Asiento con Pedro Gomes Reynel" art.º 13

⁸¹² Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica* pp.34-6

⁸¹³ Tatiana Seijas, *Asian slaves in colonial Mexico. From Chinos to Indians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) pp. 99-100; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 65-76

their businesses in America even after the conclusion of their respective *asiento* and the expiration of their legal permit. Tomás de Fonseca served Pedro Gomes Reinel from Cartagena, and later named agents to help his business in Nombre de Dios and Rio de la Hacha, as he illegally continued to direct his operations in South America after the conclusion of Reinel's contract.⁸¹⁴

The *asentista's* factors always kept their own accounting books, in which they recorded the transactions corresponding to the slave licences paid in America. They had to present copies to the Council of the Indies every two years to make sure they matched the accounts of the House of Trade. Upon recording the operation in their books, the money was entrusted to the official accountant and bookkeeper of the Royal Treasury Houses of the different American *audiencias*, and deposited in *Cajas Reales* (royal strongboxes). The proceeds of the *licencias* registered by the *asentista's* factors in America were stored in those *Cajas Reales* with the remaining treasuries of the colonial economies of Spanish America. After approximately one year (sometimes more), the money of the Royal Treasury Houses would be sent back to Seville in the annual convoys of the *Carrera de Indias*, and consigned in the *asentista's* name. The *partidas* (consignments) of the slave trade were then collected by the officials of the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville, and after subtracting the Royal fifth, the money would be distributed among the official representatives of the *asentista* residing in that city.⁸¹⁵

An example to illustrate this process can be found in treasury brought by the royal fleet of Tierra Firme in the year 1620. The galleons carried multiple entries from the sale of licences in America among its cargo, both in money and specie, consigned to the then *asentista*, António Fernandes de Elvas. One of the entries was registered by Domingues Rodrigues, shipmaster of the vessel *San Antonio*, who settled a payment of 7,480 silver *pesos* in Cartagena after sailing from Angola in January 1620. The sum corresponded to the 127 slave licences that he acquired on credit from the *asentista* in Cadiz two years earlier, the payment of which he had deferred to the end of his journey. Another entry pertaining to the *asiento* in the same fleet was sent by Captain Agustín Villas Boas, but

⁸¹⁴ Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, pp. 379-80, 400-4; Newson, Minchin, *From capture to sale*, pp. 18-21; Torrão, "Rotas comerciais", pp. 72-84; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 116, 185

⁸¹⁵ The factors in Spanish America initially charged the money from the slaves' licences, but after multiple abuses, the collection was changed to the common procedure of tax collection in Spanish America during the *asiento* of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho. AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 "Ratificaciones del Asiento de Gonçalo Vaz Coutino en lo tocante a la renta de las licencias de los negros esclavos que se navegan a las Indias" (02-05-1605), art.º 39; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 77-80

this time in specie: 20 ingots of assayed silver, plus 325 silver *pesos* and 5 *tomines*. The total value of his consignment was evaluated at 6,007,500 *maravedis* by the officials of the House of Trade, and corresponded to the payment of 375 licences (plus the *aduanilla* tax) that Villas Boas acquired in Cartagena in December 1619, after shipping a cargo of slaves from Angola to that city on board of the ship *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*. For 1620, the total value of the consignments that were brought to the *asentista* in the Fleets from Tierra Firme and New Spain totalled 49,730,141 *maravedís* (approximately 132,614 *ducados*), before taxes (fleeting, *averia*, insurance). A positive record, considering that Elvas' annual expenses for his *asiento* were fixed at 115,000 *ducados*.⁸¹⁶

Among some of the other minor clauses that benefitted the *asentista*, we can find the permission to choose a Spanish or Portuguese crew, the ability to nominate special judges to inspect the ships, and the exemption of the mandatory sanitary visit to his own ships, saving the *asentista* three *reales* in medical inspection for each African slave he decided to ship.⁸¹⁷ The *asiento* of Reinel also contained special privileges that would not be present in future *asientos*, such as a permit to ship 600 slaves to the Rio de la Plata, and the entitlement to the thirds and quarters of the slave sales that were destined for the Crown of the previous (and some still ongoing) agreements with the Portuguese *contratadores* of the African monopolies.⁸¹⁸

Although the *asentistas* enjoyed considerable privileges in their supervisory role in the importation of African slaves to Spanish America, it is important to highlight that they did not have complete control over the Atlantic slave trade, since the *asiento de negros* was not a true monopoly. The *asientos* did grant substantial powers to its leaseholders, but they were still essentially a temporary cession of powers by the King. Despite transferring the exclusive right to administer a limited number of slave licences every year to the *asentista*, Crown officials continued to enforce the regal authority in Spanish American colonial ports to prevent illicit behaviour and frauds by merchants as well as the *asentista*'s agents. To keep the *asiento* holders in check, the King reserved himself the power to issue additional licences at any point in time, a clause he included in every *asiento*. The Habsburg Monarchs could use those extra licences to reward services, or even sell them to rival merchants of the *asentista*. The number of licences

⁸¹⁶ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 "Relación de las partidas que por cuenta del asiento de esclavos se han traído de las Indias este año de 1620"

⁸¹⁷ Cortés Lopes, *Escalvo y colono*, p. 72

⁸¹⁸ Scelle, *La traite*, pp. 348-383; AGI, *Contaduria*, Leg. 261 "Asiento con Pedro Gomes Reynel" art.º 5

reserved by the Monarch was usually fixed around 1,000 licences per year, and despite being significantly lower than the *asientos* (between 3,500 and 4,250), this specific clause negated the existence of a true monopoly.⁸¹⁹ Even if this prerogative was vastly lower than the *asiento*, it was still significant from a fiscal perspective. The Duke of Lerma profited 27,000 *ducados* from the sale of the licences that he received as a grant of the King in 1613. Phillip IV also collected a sum of around 30,000 *ducados* from his extraordinary issue of licences during the *asiento* of Manuel Rodriguez Lamego in 1624.⁸²⁰

This clause was included in every *asiento* negotiated between 1595 and 1640, so that the Habsburg monarchs could cover emergency supply needs in specific regions in colonial America, and regulate competition in the Atlantic slave trade, as it prevented any abusive and monopolising attempts by the *asentistas*. If such a situation occurred, the King could simply sell the extra licences to competing merchants with the same conditions of the official *asiento*. The fact that the Monarch's licences were assigned to the rival of Pedro Gomes Reinel, António Nunes Caldeira, after the adjudication of the first *asiento* in 1595, appears to confirm this scenario of market regulation.⁸²¹ Although the number of the extra licences was small compared to the scale of the *asiento*, their allocation and sale to the competition still hindered the men administering the official contracts. After leasing the *asiento* to António Fernandes de Elvas in 1615 (for eight years), Phillip III signed what appeared to be a 'parallel *asiento*' with a merchant from Porto called Diogo Pereira two years later. Pereira received the exclusive administration of the King's annual 1,000 licences for the year of 1617 in exchange for 25,000 *ducados*. Diogo Pereira could dispatch the *licencias* over the course of eight years, and his ships could sail directly from Lisbon and Porto. This secondary agreement generated many complaints from the official *asentista*, not only because Pereira's administration rivalled his, but mainly due to the dispute over the proceeds of the slave trade carried from America by the royal fleets, since both leaseholders claimed it corresponded to their respective licences.⁸²²

⁸¹⁹ Bowser, *African Slave*, p. 31; Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, p. 397-8

⁸²⁰ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 54-8; Aguirre Beltrán: *La población*, p. 39

⁸²¹ AGI, *Contratación* 5763 (Registro de Licencias, 1606)

⁸²² AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 "Auto sobre las mil licencias que se mandan Reservar en el asiento de negros y repartimiento dellas"

Therefore, not all *asientos* negotiated by the Habsburg Monarchs were monopolies, despite often being labelled as such. The terminology ‘*asiento*’ was employed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to describe public contracts with the State, or “agreements between parties” of significant financial dimensions: in this case, between the Crown and a private entity. The term that accurately portrayed a ‘State monopoly’ of the Spanish Monarchy in the seventeenth century was not *asiento*, but rather *estanco*. The difference between those two concepts is significant, because, whereas some *asientos* could be *estancos* (such as tobacco), others clearly could not, as seen in the *asiento de negros*.⁸²³ With this lease, the King granted the leaseholders (*lo que se asentaba*) the capacity to market and distribute slave licences, not the sale of slaves itself. Even if the holders of the *asiento* decided not to sell any licences and use them all themselves, the *asiento de negros* could never be a *estanco*, since the King reserved the right to issue additional slave licences at any point in time in every *asiento*, thus preventing the occurrence of a true monopoly. At the same time, the very first clause of the *asientos de negros* obliged its leaseholders to have open offices in Lisbon and Seville, and to sell licences to any person who requested it. This type of arrangement meant that the *asentistas* did not hold a monopoly over the slave trade.⁸²⁴

To summarise, the *asiento de negros* were public contracts negotiated between the King and a private contractor for what was effectively a semi-monopoly over the sale of licences for the exportation of African slaves to the Spanish Indies. Through the lease of the administration of the slave licences, the Crown compelled the *asentistas* to supply a minimum number of African captives to Spanish America every year, thus securing the necessary labour demands of its colonies. The Crown managed finally to secure a stable and predictable income from this economic activity, and cut any costs related to the administration of this trade. The *asiento* signed with Pedro Gomes Reinel in 1595 provided the model for all subsequent *asientos* until the end of the Union of Crowns. During this period, the Portuguese merchants monopolised this revenue of the Spanish Monarchy, with only a small interruption between 1610 and 1614, when the contract was placed under royal administration with disastrous results. Minor changes were made to

⁸²³ Alejandro García-Montón, “The Cost of the Asiento. Private Merchants, Royal Monopolies, and the Making of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in the Spanish Empire”, Amélia Polónia, Cátia Antunes, (Eds.), *Mechanisms of Global Empire Building* (Porto: CITCEM-Afrontamento, 2017) pp. 11-34; Torres Sánchez, *Constructing a Fiscal Military State*, pp. 22-5

⁸²⁴ AGI, *Contaduría*, Leg. 261 “Asientos de negros con diferentes compañías y particulares”, N1 (Asiento con Pedro Gómez Reynel, artº 1); Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 32-42

future *asientos* as a result, most notably to the allotted number of slaves (lowered to 3,500 with the possibility of reaching up to 5,000), the duration of the contract (shortened to eight years), and the legal ports of disembarkation (limited to Veracruz and Cartagena).⁸²⁵ Those measures were mostly aimed to reduce Portuguese, and their contraband slaves', infiltration in the Americas, which had become a significant problem for Seville's institutions and merchant guild.⁸²⁶

As for the private contractors, after paying their annual fees and bonds for the exclusive privilege to manage the slave licences, they could employ them as they pleased, but should look to profit from the difference between the total value of the annual licences and the yearly payments owed to the Crown. The *asentistas* were to find potential buyers, to provide the infrastructure for supervising and managing this rent, and to have enough credit to accommodate deferred payments in America, in order to enable the fulfilment of several Iberian slave enterprises. They would then collect the returns of the distribution of slaves across the different ports of Spanish America with the help of a network of factors and agents, much of it in American bullion. To help the *asiento* holders bear the considerable financial burdens of their contracts, the Crown granted special privileges to help them make the most out of their administrations. Thus, the *asentistas* benefited from an exclusive position not only to expand their own slaving activities, but also to access Spanish American markets.⁸²⁷ However, the administration of the *asientos* was far from simple, as the costs associated with the management of the contracts, combined with the bureaucratic difficulties and delays faced by the *asentistas* to receive the proceeds of their investments on time, greatly hindered the success of their respective enterprises. Under those conditions, the pursuit of profits by the Portuguese *asentistas* would often result in countless abuses, fiscal fraud, and illicit practices, which could lead to the abrupt termination of their contracts and the bankruptcy of their holders. Effectively, of the six *asientos* negotiated between the Crown and the Portuguese merchants during the Union of Crowns, only the last two reached their conclusion without experiencing any sort of

⁸²⁵ All those changes were introduced in 1615, after an interim period where the *asiento* was under royal administration (1611-1614). The last *asiento* (1632-1640) also lowered the number to 2,500/year.

⁸²⁶ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 42-7; Rafael Valladares, "Poliarquía de mercaderes: Castilla y la presencia portuguesa en la América Española (1595-1645)", Luis Miguel Enciso Recio (Ed.), *La burguesía española en la Edad Moderna*, vol. 2 (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1996) pp. 605-622.

⁸²⁷ Bowser, *The African Slave*, pp. 31-3

problems or incidents.⁸²⁸ Who were the men vying for the management of these contracts, and how exactly did they profit from their administration?

5.3 The Integration of the Iberian Slave Trade: Portuguese *Asentistas* and Financial Strategies in the Administration of the Slave Trade in the Habsburg Monarchy

Slave trafficking to Spanish America was officially organised and regulated by the Crown through a series of licences and semi-monopolistic *asientos* during the sixteenth century, which were then explored through the establishment of cooperative strategies with private contractors from 1595 onwards. However, the system implemented by the Spanish Monarchy for the control of the transatlantic slave trade had one crucial limitation. Even though its leaseholders had exclusive rights over the sale of the licences that allowed merchants to bring African slaves to the American colonies, the *asientos de negros* did not grant any access to the actual source of their trade: the slave supply markets on the West African Coast. The Spanish Crown enforced a system for the legal and financial control over the import and distribution of slaves on the markets of Spanish America, but the source of their trade was actually beyond its jurisdiction. The colonial trade with West Africa, as well as the market of slaves itself, was an exclusive prerogative of the Portuguese Crown. While both Iberian Crowns were joined under the same ruler after 1581, the negotiations of the courts in Tomar confirmed that the Portuguese and Spanish empires were to remain officially separated from one another, which included their respective Treasuries, Councils, economic institutions, and colonial monopolies.⁸²⁹

Thus, the *asientos de negros* of the Spanish Crown could only grant its leaseholders the control over the Iberian slave trade on a fiscal level, not a commercial one. The *asentistas* were in charge of selling the licences for introducing African slaves in Spanish America, but had no share in their commerce and acquisition in West Africa. Rather than administrators of the Iberian slave trade, the *asentistas* were mostly financial entrepreneurs who operated as middlemen between the King and the actual slave merchants purchasing slaves on Africa's shores *en route* to Spanish America. The control

⁸²⁸ Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 19-20; Delgado Ribas, "The slave trade", pp. 20-1; Vila Vilar, "Aspectos marítimos del comercio de esclavos con Hispanoamérica en el siglo XVII", *Revista de Historia Naval*, 19 (1987) pp. 113-131

⁸²⁹ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 78-9

over the actual provision of slaves, and the collection of royal export duties on the West African coast, was reserved to the official leaseholders of those specific monopolies of the Portuguese Crown: the *rendeiros* and *contratadores*.⁸³⁰

The Portuguese monopoly contracts were usually auctioned and negotiated in Lisbon. However, following the acknowledgement of Phillip II as King of Portugal, the Habsburg Monarchs officially began to direct the finances of the Portuguese Crown as well. While the Statute of Tomar safeguarded that the Portuguese colonial trade should remain exclusively linked to the Portuguese Exchequer, and its monopoly contracts levied in Lisbon's financial institutions, it was the King who made the final decision on all the leases of his patrimony. Since the Monarch was absent from the Kingdom, the reports and information generated by Lisbon's Councils and economic institutions regarding the public bids for the colonial monopolies had to be compiled, and then sent to Madrid by the Secretary of State. Those reports were discussed and filtered by the Council of Portugal, an institution founded in 1582 to streamline the communication between the councils and ruling institutions in Portugal with the King in Madrid, and only then reached the King with the recommendations of the Council's members.⁸³¹ As a result, the Portuguese commercial elites that traditionally bid for the Portuguese royal monopolies, gradually began to relocate to the Spanish capital, in order to negotiate their offers directly at the Court. The previously described contract of Cape Verde (leased to the commercial society of Portuguese financiers in 1589) was already negotiated in Madrid, through a constant dialogue between the merchants and the Council of Portugal.⁸³² The new political and financial background of the Union of Crowns encouraged the wealthy Portuguese businessmen, who had built their fortunes in the South Atlantic sugar and slave trades, to go to Madrid to negotiate the royal monopolies of the Portuguese Crown directly, as well as extend their services and credit to the new Kings. Their capital and experience would eventually enable those entrepreneurs to spread their interests far beyond the exclusive lease of the Portuguese royal monopolies, and legally start to access and participate in the trade with Spanish America.⁸³³

⁸³⁰ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 376-9; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to sale*, pp. 18-21;

⁸³¹ Francisco Bethencourt, "Estruturas de Poder", *Idem*, Kirti Chaudhuri (eds.), *História da Expansão Portuguesa*, vol. II (Lisbon: Circulo de Leitores), pp. 303-314; António Manuel Hespanha, *As vésperas do Leviathan: Instituições e Poder Político em Portugal no século XVII* (Lisbon: Almedina, 1994) pp. 288-293

⁸³² AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5.762, "libros de asientos para licencias de esclavos, de 1577 a 1608"

⁸³³ Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers*, pp. 17-41

With their move to the capital, the Portuguese financial elite took the opportunity to gradually start bidding for the *asientos* of the Spanish Monarchy as well. The leaseholders of the Portuguese African monopolies had shown an interest in the transatlantic slave trade to Spanish America long before the dynastic union, as seen through the previous arrangements of Manuel Caldeira or Francisco Nunes de Beja, *contratadores* of São Tomé and Cape Verde respectively, with the Monarch to supply the American colonies with slaves. The men managing the African monopolies during the 1580s had also negotiated special agreements with the King to deliver slaves of their contracts to Spanish American colonies. Those merchants were already familiar with the different legal and financial mechanisms of the Portuguese and Spanish Crowns in their slaving businesses.⁸³⁴ Thus, when the Crown reformed the licence system and auctioned the first *asiento de negros* in 1595, the Portuguese *contratadores* were naturally drawn to this rent. Those men already oversaw the commercial movement on Africa's shores, and the prospect of controlling the distribution of African slaves on Hispano-American markets led the Portuguese businessmen linked to the slave trade to put forward extraordinary bids to secure the *asientos*. The joined management of the Portuguese monopolies of the African trade and the Spanish *asiento* for the provision of African slaves to America would grant their leaseholder an unprecedented power over the Iberian slave trade during the period of the Union of Crowns. By bidding for the *asientos*, the *contratadores* could control both sides of the Atlantic business, and operate simultaneously as the main suppliers and distributors of African slaves in the Atlantic region. The dual relationship between the *asentista-contratador* and the Crown, both as its main client and provider, promised massive returns, and granted the leaseholders and their commercial networks a privileged position to commit frauds and abuses in the colonial trade, such as shipping prohibited goods to colonial America, exporting more slaves than permitted, charging extra duties and higher prices, and smuggling American silver.⁸³⁵

Therefore, the *asientos de negros* of the Spanish Monarchy were actively pursued by Portuguese businessmen linked to the Atlantic and African trades since the moment of their inception. Despite the presence of Spanish agents during the auctions of the various *asientos*, the Portuguese commercial elites completely controlled this lease throughout

⁸³⁴ Torrão, "Rotas comerciais", pp. 74-80

⁸³⁵ Ribeiro da Silva, "Crossing Empires", pp. 17-19; Vidal Ortega, *Cartagena de Indias*, pp. 122-8

the years of the Iberian Union. The administration of slave monopolies of the Iberian Crowns required huge investments of the private entrepreneurs, and it was only accessible to men with considerable capital and financial tradition. To manage such contracts, they had to endure enormous expenses before they could see any profits from their enterprise. The long delays in the recovery of the remittances from America meant that the private actors bidding for the slave monopolies had to possess extensive fortunes and immaculate financial securities to withstand the Crown's annual payments, as well as the costs of the administration (salaries, shipping). Under those conditions, even the wealthiest of merchants often had trouble to keep complying with their expenditures until the end of their designated term. When the *asentistas* and *contratadores* failed to honour their payments, their estates and goods were confiscated, their contracts cancelled, and in the absence of a financial settlement, they would be incarcerated.⁸³⁶

Thus, the *contratos* and *asientos* were destined for only the finest echelon of the Portuguese mercantile and financial elite. Those men required not only immaculate credit and reputation, but also considerable logistical and political support to ensure the success of their administrations. They relied on established commercial networks, trusted factors, attorneys, and personal agents throughout the different ports of the Atlantic to manage their businesses successfully.⁸³⁷ Only under very exceptional conditions could the wealthiest and most reputable of those entrepreneurs attempt to lease the monopolies of both Iberian Crowns simultaneously, and explore the interconnection between the two systems regulating the Iberian slave trade. The joint lease and combination of an African monopoly with the *asiento de negros* was only achieved on two separate occasions by Portuguese businessmen during the entire duration of the Iberian Union, with very different results: firstly, by the Coutinho brothers – João Rodrigues Coutinho and Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho – who held the *asiento de negros* and the monopoly of Angola simultaneously (1600-1609); and secondly by António Fernandes de Elvas, who combined the contracts of Cape Verde and Angola with the management of the *asiento* (1615-1623). This section will focus on the financial administration of the former, as it presents an exceptional case that combined the commercial ambitions of a noble family operating the slave trade with a colonial project by the Crown for the conquest of Angola.

⁸³⁶ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 81-6; Gonçalves Salvador, *Os Magnatas*, pp. 3-11, 59-71

⁸³⁷ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 229

The asiento of João Rodrigues Coutinho: A colonial enterprise (1600-1603)

João Rodrigues Coutinho was the first man to hold both the monopoly contract for Angola and the *asiento de negros* jointly in 1601, which he managed with the help of his family, most notably his brother and successor Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho.⁸³⁸ The Coutinhos descended from a family of noblemen with an established tradition of services to the Portuguese Crown. Their father Lopo de Sousa Coutinho descended from a secondary branch of the Counts of Marialva, and spent much of his life as a soldier in the Portuguese overseas empire. His services in India were rewarded with a position in the Royal Council by the Portuguese King João III, and later with an appointment as Captain of the fort of São Jorge da Mina (Elmina). Lopo de Sousa Coutinho married Maria de Noronha, the daughter of a member of the King's Council (Fernando de Noronha), who served as one of the personal aides of Queen Catarina of Habsburg. Lopo and Maria had various children, and among them were João Rodrigues, Gonçalo Vaz, and Manuel de Sousa, the second, third, and fourth sons respectively.⁸³⁹ Those three would form an ambitious partnership for the control the Iberian slave trade at the dawn of the seventeenth century, which they oversaw from key positions in the Kingdom, West Africa, and Spanish America.

Their family links and services hint that the Coutinhos were well established among the ranks of the Portuguese nobility before the death of King Sebastião. During the dynastic crisis however, the sons of the Count of Marialva were part of the anti-Habsburg faction and fought the Spanish forces entering the Kingdom. They were then persecuted and imprisoned after the rise of Phillip II to the Portuguese throne.⁸⁴⁰ In order to distance themselves from the actions of the offspring of their main house, the Coutinhos pledged their allegiance to the new King and spent the next years fighting for the Habsburgs in the overseas empire. João Rodrigues followed in his father's footsteps, serving in the *Armadas* of India from 1581 to 1584, and was likewise rewarded with the position of Captain of São Jorge da Mina in 1586.⁸⁴¹ His brother Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho,

⁸³⁸ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2766, L. 3 "Registro de Esclavos negros" (1601-1615)

⁸³⁹ Manuel José Felgueiras Gayo, *Nobiliário de Famílias de Portugal*, vol. X (Braga: Agostinho de Azevedo Meirelles, Domingos de Araújo Affonso), 1938-1941, pp. 21-2

⁸⁴⁰ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, p. 184

⁸⁴¹ ANTT, *Chancelaria de Filipe I*, L. 15, f. 287 (01-04-1586)

a graduate of philosophy and letters from the University of Coimbra, joined the fleets patrolling Portugal's Coast, and was appointed Governor of São Miguel in the Azores in 1597. His services as Governor, particularly his defence of the island against an English fleet, were rewarded with a position in the Royal Council. Manuel de Sousa Coutinho (the future illustrious Friar Luís de Sousa) also enlisted in the Monarchy's armadas, and battled 'the moors' in North Africa and the Mediterranean.⁸⁴² The Coutinho brothers accumulated two decades of services across the empire under the new Habsburg rulers, serving in North Africa, India, the Azores, and Mina. Gonçalo and João received honours and the Knighthood of the Order of Christ, while Manuel joined the order of Malta. He was later promoted to noble squire (*fidalgo escudeiro*) by King Phillip II and received a grant of 200,000 réis. It was on account of the accumulation of services, experience, and family tradition of the Coutinhos in the overseas territories that the King appointed João Rodrigues as Governor of Angola in 1601.⁸⁴³

Coutinho accepted the nomination for this territory already in possession of considerable knowledge of the African trade. João Rodrigues was probably introduced in this business by his father (a former Captain in Africa), but it was during his eleven year tenure as Captain of São Jorge da Mina, Portugal's biggest commercial entrepôt in West Africa, that he accumulated most of his knowledge and experience in the slave trade. Among the collections of papers sent from Africa to the Kingdom by Portuguese officials, merchants, and priests in the late sixteenth century, there are various reports describing the misconduct, abuses, and illegal businesses of Coutinho in Mina. During his time as Captain of the fort, Rodrigues Coutinho intercepted and captured French and Dutch enemy ships trading on the West African Coast. Instead of depositing the confiscated cargo of those ships in the *feitoria*, João Rodrigues Coutinho seized all of the goods for himself, including large quantities of gold that had been previously ransomed by those vessels. Coutinho would then proceed either to sell some of the confiscated cargo to the merchants visiting the fort, or to ship those goods to São Tomé, where they were exchanged for slaves brought from Kongo or Lower Guinea. It was reported that, through

⁸⁴² Diogo Barbosa Machado, *Bibliotheca Lusitana. Historica, critica, e cronológica*, t.2 (Lisbon: Officina de Ignacio Rodrigues, 1747) p. 408; Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 80-1; Rodrigo Faustini Bonciani, "Os irmãos Coutinho no Atlântico: escravidão, governo e ascensão social no tempo da monarquia Hispânica", 5^o encontro Internacional de História colonial. Elites, Trajetórias e Estratégias nos Impérios Coloniais Ibéricos Maceió, 2014

⁸⁴³ ANTT, *Chancelaria de Filipe II*, L. 7, fs. 174-174v (30-01-1601); AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5763, f.30

his schemes and abuses in the factory of Mina, Coutinho earned a fortune of at least 90,000 *cruzados*.⁸⁴⁴

The experience and wealth that João Rodrigues Coutinho accumulated in West Africa enabled him not only to continue, but also to expand his slaving business during his governorship in Angola. As previously described, Coutinho managed the unique feat of associating the administration of the two monopolies of the Iberian Crowns with a special tenure for the governorship of Angola for nine years.⁸⁴⁵ The opportunity for Coutinho to simultaneously control the Atlantic slave trade and conquer the empire's most promising slaving region (Angola), was part of a public-private partnership negotiated directly with the King. Through this business association, the Crown would be able to support the conquest of Angola's fabled mineral deposits, and answer the demands of its American colonies for slave labour. Through this commercial-military project, the Governor vowed to explore and conquer the silver mines in Cambambe and the salt mines in Kisama within six years of the beginning of his term, while financing his troops himself.⁸⁴⁶ In exchange, Coutinho received the exclusive control over the legal and economic mechanisms to explore the transatlantic slave trade from Angola to Spanish America through the lease of the Iberian slave monopolies. The conquest of this territory would result in the capture of various war prisoners who would be later sold as slaves across the Atlantic, thus enlarging Coutinho's estate, as he owned the rights over the duties of Angola's contract and their distribution in Spanish America through the *asiento*. The interests of the Crown and Coutinho converged perfectly in the Angolan enterprise, as Coutinho would do his utmost to fulfil the Crown's instructions since it would directly increase his own profits. The success of this partnership was mutually beneficial for both parties, revealing a perfect balance between the royal and private interests in the conquest of Angola and the slave trade.

Thus, Phillip III took measures to ensure that his Governor had all the necessary tools to succeed in the enterprise, and negotiated the lease of the *asiento de negros* with João Rodrigues Coutinho in a private *junta*, and not through the usual public auction

⁸⁴⁴ "Acontecimentos ocorridos na Mina" (1592), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, pp. 454-9

⁸⁴⁵ He was also the only man ever to associate the role of Governor with the commercial monopolies for the slave trade. See also chapter 3

⁸⁴⁶ Luciano Cordeiro, "Estabelecimentos e resgates na Costa Ocidental de Africa (1607)", *Memorias do Ultramar: viagens, explorações e conquistas dos Portuguezes. Coleccção de documentos* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881) pp. 21-2

negotiated in the Royal Treasury Council.⁸⁴⁷ The previous *asiento* had just been revoked following the abuses of Pedro Gomes Reinel, and the Crown specifically reserved this contract to associate it with João Rodrigues Coutinho's mission to Angola. Three months after his nomination for the government of Angola (in January), Coutinho finished his negotiations for the lease of the *asiento* in May 1601, and the contract was signed for nine years (until 1609) for the sum of 170,000 *ducados*.⁸⁴⁸ The immense increase in the price of the *asiento* (70,000 *ducados* more than the previous lease) was owed not only to the rising value of the slave trade, but mostly to the extraordinary circumstances of Coutinho's enterprise, as it pooled the costs of the *asiento* with the monopoly and the governorship of Angola.⁸⁴⁹ The substantial expenditures associated with the administration of the *asiento* and the Portuguese monopoly, combined with his own financing of the military expedition to Angola, meant that João Rodrigues Coutinho required extensive financial and logistical support to fulfil this enterprise. Immediately after signing the *asiento*, Coutinho sold 400 slave licences in Madrid to the rich merchant Jorge Rodrigues Solís, one of the biggest investors in the Portuguese India carracks and the Cape Trade. Solís paid 16,000 *ducados* for the licences (40 *ducados* each), and Coutinho used this sum to recruit the military force for the Angola expedition.⁸⁵⁰ Solís would become the main business associate of the Coutinho's' slave enterprise, and even acted as a bondsman for João Rodrigues in his settlements with the Crown.⁸⁵¹ Before his departure for Angola, Coutinho negotiated yet another sale, this time with the King, for the provision of 300 Angola slaves to Havana until the end of July 1602, at the price of 200 *ducados* each (which included the duties of the Angola monopoly) to help with the construction of the fortifications of the city. The deal was evaluated at a total of 60,000 *ducados*, which would be deducted from Coutinho's annual payments to the Crown.⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁷ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, leg. 409, 11-12 N1 "Satisfaciendo a una consulta del consejo de Indias sobre el afiançar la Renta de los esclavos" (07-05-1601)

⁸⁴⁸ AGI, Indiferente 2766, "Condiciones del asiento de Juan Rodrigues Coutiño. Libro de Esclavos 1601-1615". The *asiento* was signed in May 1601, but it had retroactive jurisdiction over the licences issued from 1 May of the previous year, and was set to cover the years 1600 to 1609.

⁸⁴⁹ The anonymous author of the "Relação da Costa da Guiné" (1607) evaluates the *asiento* in 130.000 *cruzados* (around 116,000 *ducados*) and the *contrato* of Angola in 60.000 *cruzados* (around 54,000 *ducados*), thus reaching the 170,000 *ducados* price tag. Luciano Cordeiro, "Establecimientos e resgates Portuguezes", *Memórias do Ultramar* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881) p. 22

⁸⁵⁰ "Auto do contrato de João Rodrigues Coutinho sobre a venda de negros para as Indias de Castela" (02-05-1601), Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, doc. 54, pp. 486-7

⁸⁵¹ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 430, 11-15 N1 (13-04-1603)

⁸⁵² AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829, "Obrigaçõ de entrega de 300 escravos a Havana por João Ruiz Coutinho" (01-08-1601)

João Rodrigues Coutinho organised this massive enterprise with the help of his family, relying on the close assistance of his two brothers, Gonçalo and Manuel. As a member of the King's Council, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho moved to the court in Madrid at the end of the sixteenth century, where he began to invest in the Crown's finances and to manage different contracts for military provision and tax farming. Thanks to his involvement in Castile's credit and financial circuits, Gonçalo Coutinho acquired considerable capital, and became the main partner and financier of his brother's *asiento*. João Rodrigues was the official leaseholder of the *asiento*, but Gonçalo was the main shareholder in their business enterprise. He helped his brother with the annual payments and the financial securities of his contracts, and administered the sale of licences in the Kingdom on his behalf, for which he also collected a share of the profits.⁸⁵³ While the Governor focused on the military enterprise in Africa and the capture of slaves through his wars in Angola's interior, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho was in charge of the financial administration of the monopolies in the Kingdom. Additionally, he supported his brother's slave ventures in Angola by securing partnerships with merchants of Porto and Hamburg, from where he chartered ships to sail to Luanda to carry his brother's slaves to America. During one of the official inquests into the procedure of the Governors of Angola, the Crown's special envoy and clerk Manoel Nogueira reported that "foreign rebels" visited Luanda aboard "ships from Hamburg", and had been illegally authorised by Rodrigues Coutinho to anchor and trade in that port.⁸⁵⁴

As Rodrigues Coutinho finished preparations to set sail for Angola, he named his other brother Manuel de Sousa Coutinho the "general administrator of the rent of the *asiento*", and sent him to Cartagena as the official factor of the *asiento* and the Angola monopoly.⁸⁵⁵ Manuel was entrusted with recording the payment of licences and slave duties in South America and Hispano-Caribbean ports, and oversee the family's personal slaving business in the region. He was accompanied by his own Portuguese entourage (Pedro Lopes de Brito, Cristovão Caldeira, Gonçalo Freire, and Estevão Almeida) and personal servants (including a female African slave named Escolástica Correia), for whom he obtained official permits of residence, a privilege reserved to the administrators

⁸⁵³ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5763 "Libros de asientos de licencias para esclavos" (03-09-1601)

⁸⁵⁴ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 430-11-11 (1-4), 430-11-15 (1-2); Scelle, *La traite* Vol. 1, p. 390, n.2; Biblioteca Nacional Portugal (BNP), *Reservados, Coleção Pombalina*, cód. 526, f. 294 ss.

⁸⁵⁵ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829, "Real cedula a la casa para que dejan pasar a Cartagena Manuel de Sosa como factor de Juan Ruiz Coutino" (Valladolid, 3-9-1601)

of the *asiento*. Manuel Fernandes Mora represented the Coutinho family in New Spain, while André Faleixo and Simón Perez collected the proceeds of the *Carrera de Indias* in Seville, as well as selling licences in that port.⁸⁵⁶ Manuel de Sousa Coutinho oversaw slave sales in Panama, Peru, and Cartagena, but he also operated along the Rio de la Plata, where he exchanged horses and silver for Angola slaves. In his accounting books, he recorded payments for all slaves arriving to Spanish American ports, including the ones disembarked in Acapulco via the Manila Galleons, this axis totalling “201 black slaves between the years of 1600 and 1603”. The rights to those duties and the legal entry of “black and chino” slaves through this route were strongly contested by the Portuguese *asentistas* during the Union.⁸⁵⁷ Sousa Coutinho moved to Peru in 1604 to personally oversee the sale of 308 slaves sent from Angola, and he entrusted Jorge Fernandes Gramaxo, famous and reputable Portuguese merchant resident in Cartagena, with the role of factor for both the *asiento* and the Angola monopoly.⁸⁵⁸ Gramaxo received a salary of 2,000 *ducados* from Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho, and two per cent over all transactions he secured. He was appointed in this role due to his vast business network that spread across all of the American continent, São Tomé, Angola, Portugal, Spain, and the Low Countries. He was the prime associate for any merchant or financier seeking to conduct business in Spanish America.⁸⁵⁹

To personally accompany him on his expedition to Angola, the Governor brought along his nephew Luiz de Sousa Coutinho, no doubt sent by his father Gonçalo to learn the ropes of the African slave trade under the guidance of his uncle.⁸⁶⁰ Rodrigues Coutinho’s personal experience in Africa, and his family’s network in Spanish America and at Court, gave him a considerable power over the transatlantic slave trade. Through his authority in Angola, financial support in the Kingdom, and supervision over the distribution of slaves in American ports, the Coutinhos established a massive slave enterprise on an unprecedented scale, and looked to collect massive returns from it.

⁸⁵⁶ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5270, N2, R44-47 “Informaciones y licencias de pasajeros a Indias” (04-1602); *Contaduría*, leg. 196A N15 “Juizo a respecto de Gonzalo Vaez Coutino” (06-03-1610)

⁸⁵⁷ AGS, *Secretarías Provinciales*, L. 1580, f. 134-5; *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª Época, Leg. 2958, N39; Gonçalo de Reparaz, *Os Portugueses no Vice-Reinado do Peru (século XVI e XVII)* (Lisbon: Instituto de Alta Cultura, 1976) p. 22. For the Manila-Acapulco connection, see the fascinating work of Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves*, pp. 98-103

⁸⁵⁸ AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª Época, Leg. 3182 (16-08-1604); AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Relación de lo que Juan Rodrigues Coutinho y sus herederos deben y tienen por pagar del precio dela renta de los esclavos” (24-02-1605)

⁸⁵⁹ Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru*, pp. 274-5

⁸⁶⁰ Felgueiras Gayo, *Nobiliário*, t. X, pp. 21-22

Rodrigues Coutinho disembarked in Luanda with “the biggest force ever gathered” in that territory, and immediately began his warmongering campaigns into Angola’s hinterland. The military offensive towards Cambambe produced a multitude of slaves as expected, who were immediately shipped to the American markets, satisfying the instructions of the *asiento* (4,250 slaves per year), and securing the financial stability of his enterprise. By means of his campaigns, Coutinho also secured a great share of slaves for himself, which he shipped to his brother Manuel de Sousa in America, so he could exchange them for silver and horses (in high demand for the Angola conquest) in the Platine trade, and sent them back to Luanda. The creation of a prestigious cavalry division in Angola was another of João’s military plans for his Angolan conquest, which he used his slave business to achieve.⁸⁶¹

Far from prominent members of the Portuguese commercial elite, the Coutinhos were a family of noblemen with a strong presence at Court, who traditionally served the Crown through military services, and not necessarily through financial support. Of all of the Portuguese *asentistas* during the Union of Crowns, the Coutinhos were the only ones who descended from the traditional nobility, and without any *judeoconverso* ancestry.⁸⁶² It was the experience of João Rodrigues Coutinho in the government of an African commercial outpost, combined with his family’s recent fortune, influence, and credit at court (through his brother Gonçalo), that led to his appointment to spearhead a unique project which combined the financial administration of the slave trade with Angola’s conquest. The Coutinhos managed to control all stages of the trans-Atlantic trade, from the personal capture of slaves on the West African Coast to their sale in America, while managing the two monopolies that supervised the activity in the metropolis at the same time. This was an unprecedented enterprise, unique in all of the Iberian Union, which perfectly aligned the interests of the Crown on both sides of the Atlantic with all members of the Coutinho family.

However, the business venture of the Coutinho brothers suffered a massive setback when João Rodrigues Coutinho suddenly fell ill with a tropical fever in the summer of 1603, during his campaign against the powerful *soba* Cafuche (or Kafuxi) in Kisama. Coutinho died just six days after displaying the first symptoms of his fever,

⁸⁶¹ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, L. 1580 ff. 134-5

⁸⁶² Ana Hutz, *Os cristãos-novos portugueses no tráfico de escravos para a América espanhola (1580-1640)* (Campinas: Unpublished M.A. dissertation in History, Unicamp, 2008) pp. 76-7

following his nephew Luiz de Sousa who had also succumbed to the disease.⁸⁶³ In Madrid, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho received the news with great apprehension, not only due to the loss of his brother and son, but also because his personal fortune was at stake. Rodrigues Coutinho had committed their family assets as part of the securities to pay the *fianzas* of the contracts, and the brothers were still awaiting the arrival of multiple shipments from America with money from the slave trade to satisfy pending debts. Vaz Coutinho attempted to salvage their business and assets, and when he wrote to the King informing him of his brother's death (16 July 1603), he expressed his desire to continue to manage not only the two slave contracts, but also to secure the Governorship of Angola for his family once again.⁸⁶⁴

The Crown however was extremely displeased with Coutinho's procedure in Angola, since the Governor had disregarded his royal instructions and misused his powers in Luanda, similar to what he had done in Mina years earlier. Not only had Coutinho refused to disband the *amos* as per the King's orders, but even granted the Luanda elites tutelage over the *sobas* he subjugated in order to win their favour, stealing their tributes to the Angola's Treasury for his own gain. Coutinho also abused his position as *contratador* by manipulating the price of the duties charged over the slaves exported from Luanda, increasing their value by 1,000 *réis* per slave.⁸⁶⁵ Future inquests in Luanda carried out by the Crown's overseers revealed that João Rodrigues and his factors had tampered with the funds of Angola's factory, and some of the accounting books that recorded the sale of *avenças* and royal duties were either burned, shredded, or simply disappeared, hinting at the practice of fraud and large-scale contraband slaves shipped to America and Brazil.⁸⁶⁶

The financial situation of João Rodrigues Coutinho's contracts in the Kingdom was also far from settled, as he had accumulated numerous debts during his administration. Not only had Coutinho failed to honour his payments, but two years after the beginning of his *asiento*, he had yet to satisfy the signature bond (*fianza*). The Crown's urgency to match the *asiento* with the colonial project for Angola led to the immediate

⁸⁶³ Alencastro, *O trato*, p. 81

⁸⁶⁴ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 747 "Carta de Gonzalo Vaz Coutiño al Rey" (26-07-1603)

⁸⁶⁵ Fernão Guerreiro, "Relação Anual das Cousas que fizeram os Padres da companhia" (1602-1603), *Brasão*, MMA, vol. V, pp. 50-7; Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. 1, pp. 26-7

⁸⁶⁶ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 13 "carta do ouvidor geral de Angola, André Velho da Fonseca" (20-11-1610)

acceptance of Coutinho's insurers and bondsmen who, rather than a select group of wealthy and reputable businessmen, were a total of fifty three farmers from small villages around Toledo and Ciudad Real. The value of the *fianza* was stipulated at 250,000 *ducados*, but Coutinho only satisfied around 120,000 *ducados* total, while the rest was 'secured' in property assets of the farmers.⁸⁶⁷ Royal Treasury officials noted it to be "impossible to collect as much as 10,000,000 *maravedís* in hard currency" from Coutinho's bond (around 26,700 *ducados*), and as a result they were ordered to confiscate all the money delivered from America, and cancel the *asiento* completely. Vaz Coutinho was forced to employ a risky business strategy to prevent the collapse and seizure of his family fortune: Gonçalo had recently signed an *asiento* of his own with the Spanish Monarchy for the military provision of its entire High Seas fleet. The three squadrons of the Monarchy's armada (Portugal, Vizcaya, Castile) were all to be supplied by the same man, an operation that covered more than 40 ships for eight years, and totalling over 7 million *ducados*. The signing of a contract of this dimension hints at the fortune from their slave venture expected by the Coutinhos, as the management of the *asiento* enabled their access to American silver. Backed by his position as the main supplier of the Monarchy's fleets, Gonçalo proceeded to blackmail the Treasury officials, claiming that, as a shareholder of his brother's *asiento*, his credit would be severely compromised if he did not receive the money brought in on the Carrera Fleets. Should the King cancel the *asiento de negros* of his brother, Spain's armadas would not receive any supplies, and would be left without their provider as a result.⁸⁶⁸

Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho appeared to have no qualms in using one of the Crown's exclusive contracts to benefit his own commercial interests, which were tied into another royal monopoly. His actions illustrate one of the strategies employed by private actors in the management of the Monarchy's finances, particularly how they made use of their administrative positions to benefit their own private commercial businesses. The 'warnings' of Vaz Coutinho, which were more easily understood as threats, produced the desired results, as the Crown could not take away the *asiento* from João Rodrigues due to its interference with Gonçalo's own contract. Nevertheless, Coutinho was forced to rectify his delayed payments, offer new bondsmen, and pledge the *asiento* money brought

⁸⁶⁷ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 430, 11-14 "Certificación...de las fianzas que deo Juan Rodriguez Coutino (21-02-1600)

⁸⁶⁸ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 430, 11-15 N1 (Valladolid 13-04-1603). For Vaz Coutinho's *asiento de las provisiones de la armada del mar océano* see Thompson, *War and Government*, pp. 227-8

in on the royal fleets to remedy his financial situation. Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho and his business associate Jorge Rodrigues Solís, presented themselves as insurers, and offered more than 120,000 *ducados* of their own estates as security for the *asiento*. Both men were also obliged to cover the costs of a shipment of 480 slaves to Havana for the Crown, the operation's estimated value 96,000 *ducados* (200 per slave). Finally, Gonçalo also pledged one of his *juros* over Lisbon's custom houses, evaluated at 1,000,000 *maravedís*, bearing an interest of 6.25 per cent (16,000 *al millar*), satisfying the total value of the *fianza* of 250,000 *ducados*.⁸⁶⁹ The full payment of the bond of the *asiento* took two extra years, and by the time news of João Rodrigues's demise arrived at Court, it was yet to be settled. Following the death of the *asentista* and the pending settlement of his accounts, the Royal Treasury re-issued an *embargo general* over all of the assets of Coutinho in America, and declared the *asiento* free to be leased at public auction once again.⁸⁷⁰

The asiento of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho: A commercial enterprise (1603-1609)

Numerous abuses were registered during the embargo on Coutinho's estate, and a considerable share of the *asiento*'s proceeds stored in the strongboxes of the *audiencias* in America was lost in the process. It is reported that more than 291,700 *ducados* were confiscated from the Coutinhos' accounts in America, but only a little bit over 103,000 *ducados* actually made it to Seville.⁸⁷¹ Not only did a substantial share of the profits from Coutinho's *asiento* disappear, but the Treasury officials in Spanish America also seized the accounts of the slave monopoly of Angola, and shipped everything to Seville. The seizure of the earnings generated from the slave duties of Angola by the treasurers in Spanish America was not only illegal, but also a clear violation of the status of the Iberian Union, as this revenue was linked to the Portuguese Crown, and should always have reverted to its Exchequer and institutions in Lisbon. Since João Rodrigues was both the *contratador* and *asentista*, his factors – like Manuel de Sousa Coutinho – would often receive the payment from the duties of both Crown monopolies at the same time, and deposit them together in the royal strongboxes of their respective *audiencias*. The

⁸⁶⁹ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 430, 11-15 N2; Idem, 11-17 (04-05-1603); AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 "Relación de lo que Juan Rodrigues Coutinho y sus herederos deben y tienen por pagar del precio dela renta de los esclavos" (24-02-1605)

⁸⁷⁰ Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, pp. 75-8

⁸⁷¹ AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª Época, Leg. 3182 "Tanteo de las cuentas de Coutiño" (1603-4)

earnings of the Angola monopoly were therefore illegally seized, sent to Seville and not Lisbon, and then misused by the treasurers of the *Casa de la Contratación*.⁸⁷² The money confiscated from the *asiento* was used to reimburse some of the King's debts to his Genoese bankers, in the payment of various *juros*, and to supply the Spanish garrison of Melilla.⁸⁷³

Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho withdrew from his armada contract in the middle of 1603, around the same time that he received news of his brother's death in Angola and the imminent removal of the *asiento de negros*.⁸⁷⁴ Gonçalo had to focus all of his efforts on the recovery of the accounts and assets that were apprehended from his brother, in order to prevent the loss of his family fortune. He offered to settle all of the debts of João Rodrigues to the Royal Treasury, but only if he could continue to manage the *asiento* in his place. The irregular embargo on the goods of the Coutinhos in America gave Gonçalo the necessary leverage to negotiate the *asiento* with the Crown with even better conditions than his brother. The problems that the auction of a new *asiento* presented for the Monarchy, such as the long process to find a new contractor with immaculate capital and credibility to administer this revenue, combined with the Crown's debt from the illegitimate appropriation of the revenues from Angola's monopoly, led Phillip III officially to assign the *asiento* to Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho's in October 1604. Both the King and Gonçalo renewed the conditions of the previous contract, keeping the same dates, securities, bondsmen, and *fianzas*. Gonçalo would receive the accounts and the silver from his brother stored in Seville, but only after settling the outstanding debts from the first four years of his brother's *asiento*. He then negotiated a reduction of the price for the remaining five years of the *asiento* to 140,000 *ducados* (instead of 170,000). Vaz Coutinho could use and profit from the licences of his brother, kept open the legal gateway to the American markets, and most importantly, renewed the privilege to receive payments in "gold, silver, pearls, or any other commodity from the Indies". He also received full control over Angola's monopoly. The King only introduced one new clause in this contract, the prohibition of trade with the Rio de la Plata, in order to try to limit

⁸⁷² AGI, *Indiferente*, Leg. 2829, "Expedientes que tratan de los asientos para licencias de esclavos negros" (25-06-1606, 03-07-1606)

⁸⁷³ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 "Relación de lo que Juan Rodrigues Coutinho y sus herederos deben y tienen por pagar del precio dela renta de los esclavos" (24-02-1605); Leg. 2829, "Expedientes" (03-07-1606); *Contratación*, Leg. 5765 "Libros de cargo y data pertenecientes a la renta de esclavos" f.100

⁸⁷⁴ Thompson, *War and Government*, p. 264

the increasing illegal trade in this region. The *asiento* thus resumed its initial course of nine years until 1609, but the last five years would be administered by Vaz Coutinho.⁸⁷⁵

Much like his predecessors, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho experienced numerous problems with the *Real Hacienda* regarding his payments and the timely recovery of his shipments from America. Although the *asentistas* expected to profit from the difference between their annual payments and the sale of their allotted licences, in practical terms, there were quite a few obstacles that prevented operations from going smoothly. The long duration of slave journeys, combined with the sale of the majority of licences on credit, prevented the *asentistas* from capitalising on their business venture during most years of their administrations. After the conclusion of Coutinho's *asiento*, the Treasury officials noted that more than 420,000 *ducados* were still missing from his annual payments (equivalent to three years), while the *asentista* defended himself by claiming that more than 600,000 *ducados* from his *asiento*'s earnings were still held in America in 1610.⁸⁷⁶ In 1618, nine years after the conclusion of the *asiento*, there were still shipments arriving to Seville with money from the sale of licences from Coutinho's administration.⁸⁷⁷ Royal officials in America also overstepped their authority, and appropriated the money stored in the Treasury Houses that was reserved for the *asentistas* from time to time. Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho complained to the King that the royal officials from Santo Domingo, Buenos Aires, Margarita, and Honduras, all used money generated from his *asiento* to finance their local governments. Due to the delays in the recovery of the profits from America, Coutinho had to endure embargos, suspensions, and cancelations of his contract in 1606, 1607, and 1608. In 1609, he voiced his discontent with the fact that even though he held the *asiento* for almost five years, he had not been able to exercise his powers and sell licences for more than two and a half years. His *asiento* ended in 1609 before he managed to dispatch all of his licences due to the constant interference of the Crown's agents, but he was compensated through a financial settlement with the *Real Hacienda*, receiving a permit to sell 6,000 licences until 1612.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁵ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 "Ratificaciones del Asiento de Gonçalo Vaz Coutino en lo tocante a la renta de las licencias de los negros esclavos que se navegan a las Indias" (02-05-1605)

⁸⁷⁶ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 80-1; AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3^a Época, Leg. 3182

⁸⁷⁷ AGI, *Contaduría*, Leg. 196A N8 "Real cédula para que la contracción de Sevilla recaude el caudal perteneciente al asiento de negros de Antonio Hernandez de Elbas" (1618)

⁸⁷⁸ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 "Los contadores reales de la caza" (02-03-1610); Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, pp. 324-5

The *asiento* was therefore extremely costly and taxing for its leaseholders to manage successfully. The delays in the remittance of profits, combined with the colossal annual fees, the obstruction by royal and accounting officials, embargos, and the regular seizure of accounts, raise the question of how the Coutinhos actually managed their enterprise, let alone profit from it. Frederick Bowser claimed that the *asentistas*, despite their status as “princes of the slave trade”, greatly overestimated the profits that they could generate from their contracts, which led to the signing of contracts with payments that they could not realistically satisfy without going out of business. This argument is also propagated in some of the recent literature on the Iberian slave trade, which describes *asentistas* almost exclusively as smugglers who used the *asientos* solely for their illegal business. The fact that all of the first four *asientos* experienced some sort of problem or legal incident led those scholars to conclude that all *asentistas* during this period (1595-1623) suffered from insolvency.⁸⁷⁹ As will be shown, this was not the case with the Coutinho brothers, or even their predecessor Pedro Gomes Reinel. Of the Portuguese *asentistas*, the only man who lost his contracts due to an effective bankruptcy was António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1623).⁸⁸⁰

To evaluate the business venture of the Coutinho brothers managing the *asiento*, it is necessary to consider two different elements: the number of licences sold by both *asentistas*, and the accounts and treasury brought from America in the *Carrera*, and stored in Seville. This is no simple task. The existence of different and conflicting accounts from the treasurers in Seville and Madrid’s financial institutions, combined with the overlap of the *asiento* with the previous administration of Pedro Gomes Reinel, make it fairly difficult to determine with precision the total number of licences sold during both brother’s administrations. The *asiento* of Reinel was supposed to last for nine years (1595-1604), but his contract was terminated prematurely due to the occurrence of countless abuses and fiscal fraud. Reinel had sold far more licences than he was originally entitled to, and appropriated payments from outside of his jurisdiction, including the licences of João Coutinho. Six months before the beginning of his *asiento*, Reinel had already sold more than 6,376 slave licences, and would sell 6,900 more in the following months, totalling more than 13,276 licences in the first year of his administration alone

⁸⁷⁹ Bowser, *African Slave*, pp. 31-3; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 19-20; Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 111-12

⁸⁸⁰ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 83

(far surpassing his 4,250 limit), earning close to 446,203 *ducados*.⁸⁸¹ Reinel continued to surpass the stipulated limits of his *asiento*, charging prices above the market value (up to 50 *ducados*), and avoided his payments to the Crown, as the majority of his sales were on credit. He was finally charged with fiscal fraud and arrested in 1599, losing his *asiento* in the process. Contrary to the argument of Bowser, his withdrawal was not a result of a bankruptcy, but based on his criminal behaviour and the proven accusations of fiscal fraud. The Coutinhos would experience similar embargos, but ultimately retained the *asiento* for its duration.⁸⁸²

Table 3 – List of Portuguese *asentistas* and number of licences sold (1595-1640)

	Name	Annual payment (<i>ducados</i>)	Annual quota (licences)	Expected total amount	Licences sold (estimate)	Final Balance
1595-1600	Pedro Gomes Reinel	100,000	4,250	21,250	30,000	+ 8,750
1600-1603	João Rodrigues Coutinho	170,000	4,250	17,000	15,968	- 1,032
1604-1609	Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho	140,000	4,250	21,250	28,580	+ 7,330
1615-1623	António Fernandes de Elvas	115,000	3,500	21,000	30,914	+ 9,914
1624-1631	Manuel Rodrigues Lamego	120,000	3,500	28,000	21,350	- 6,650
1632-1640	Melchior Gómez and Cristovão Mendes de Sousa	95,000	2,500	20,000	19,000	- 1,000

Source: AGI, *Contaduría* leg. 261; *Contratación* legs. 5758, 5763, 5766, 5758; *Indiferente General* legs. 2795, 2829. Peralta Rivera, *El comercio negrero en América Latina* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Federico Villareal, 2006) pp. 321-9; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 193-5

The fact that Reinel sold far more licences than he was entitled to, and that his contract was suspended before its conclusion, meant that numerous consignments from his *asiento* continued to arrive at Seville during the years of Coutinho's administration. Based on the readings of the *Registros de Esclavos* from Spain's Archive of the Indies,

⁸⁸¹ AGS, *Consejo de Juntas y Hacienda*, Leg. 336 (15) "Memorial sobre el asiento de Reinel" (30-06-1596)

⁸⁸² Henri Lapeyre, "Le trafic négrier avec l'Amérique Espagnole", *Homenaje a Jaime Vicens Vives*, vol. 2 (1967) pp. 285-306; Vila Vilar, *Los asientos portugueses*, pp. 567-8

Enriqueta Vila Vilar estimates that Gomes Reinel sold around 30,798 licences during his *asiento*, while Germán Peralta Rivera has recently re-accessed those figures with the help of the accounting books of Reinel from the *Archivo de Simón Ruiz*, and lowered that estimate to 29,706. The real issue lies in the accounting of the 5,809 licences that were registered during the year 1600, when both administrations overlapped. According to a Royal Decree, Reinel's *asiento* officially ended on the last day of April 1600, while Coutinho's *asiento*, although signed in 1601, had a retroactive jurisdiction over the licences issued from 1 May 1600 onwards. There were also licences registered in that year belonging to the administration of Hernando de Porras. With those facts in mind, Peralta Rivera uses a more conservative estimate of 30,000 total licences sold by Reinel, which still exceeds the amount he was entitled to for that time period (21,250).⁸⁸³

The proceeds brought in on the royal fleets for the year 1600 were claimed by both *asentistas*, and the dispute was only solved after the signing of a financial settlement, with Gomes Reinel agreeing to yield all licences issued after 30 April to João Rodrigues Coutinho. However, the former *asentista* hid his official accounts, and his factors in America continued to sell licences under his name, especially Tomás de Fonseca. The Coutinhos accused Reinel of appropriating the proceeds of 10,162 licences from their administrations, corresponding to almost 90,000,000 *maravedís* (approximately 240,000 *ducados*). They also accused the factor Tomás Fonseca (who volunteered to serve the Coutinhos) of receiving more than 360,000 *pesos* from the sale of 6,149 slave licences in America, but only sending around “80 to 90 thousand *pesos*” back to Seville. After a lengthy investigation, the Crown embargoed the goods of Fonseca stored in the *Casa de la Contratación* and delivered them to the Coutinhos.⁸⁸⁴

The problems in the accounting of the licences of 1600 are reflected in the final assessment of scholars for the *asiento* of Rodrigues Coutinho. Their numbers slightly diverge, as Vila Vilar estimates that João sold 13,189 licences, while Peralta Rivera raises this number to 13,541 (from an expected 17,000).⁸⁸⁵ Due to the premature death of the *asentista* and the embargo on his accounts, the numbers of João Rodrigues' administration display a surprisingly negative balance, despite his ample powers in Angola and his commercial network in Spanish America. But the estimates from both

⁸⁸³ Peralta Rivera *El comercio*, pp. 321-3; Vila Vilar, “Los asientos portugueses”, pp. 560-1

⁸⁸⁴ AGS, *Consejo de Juntas y Hacienda*, Leg. 430-11-16 N1 (20-10-1604); AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 (25-06-1605)

⁸⁸⁵ Peralta Rivera *El comercio*, pp. 323-5; Vila Vilar, “Los asientos portugueses”, p. 561

historians, based on the *Registros* of the Archive of the Indies, greatly differ from later accounts produced by the treasurers of the *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas* (Audit Board of the Accounts of Castile) and subsequent reports of the King's Councils. The reason behind this discrepancy is most likely owed to the fact that slave merchants purchased licences from the *asentistas* years in advance, and only submitted them for the *registro* in the *Contratación* days before their journey. This practice led to the common occurrence of licences issued by certain *asentistas* being used only years after their sale.⁸⁸⁶ Therefore, the later accounts always reflect an increase in the number of the licences sold by João Rodrigues Coutinho, as they were only recorded in the House of Trade years later. After the end of this *asiento*, the accountants of the *Casa de la Contratación* Juan de Guevara and Fermin García report that close to 14,896 licences had been sold during João's administration, while information of the Council of Portugal of 1607 increased that number to 15,778. In 1611, an evaluation by the Council of Indies estimated that "a total of 15,968 licences" were sold "under the account of the four years of the *asiento* of Juan Rodriguez Coutinho".⁸⁸⁷ This number is much closer to the allocated limit of 17,000, and confirms a scenario where the profits from the licences issued by João were only recovered many years later, during Vaz Coutinho's administration.

All of those factors hinder our ability to accurately pinpoint how many licences were effectively sold during each Coutinho's administration. As a result, the estimates of the two scholars' for the *asiento* of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho differ once again, with Vila Vilar estimating the number around 31,302 licences, and Rivera a more conservative figure of 28,580. The latter figure appears to be the more precise, since Vilar evaluates the distribution of licences of the *asientos* chronologically, and thus includes many licences belonging to the *asiento* of João Rodrigues. Rivera acknowledges the problems of a chronological account, and thus bases his conservative estimate on the reading of later accounts assembled by the Council of Indies and the *Contaduría Mayor*. Their accountants recorded the distribution of licences based on the *asentista* that issued them, and not the year in which they were used. Thus, it is more reliable to use the later accounts of the slave trade, and combine the numbers of both brothers' administrations (due to the delayed payments) in one final balance.⁸⁸⁸ The delays in making profit and the premature

⁸⁸⁶ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 2876-2896 "Registros de Esclavos" (1604-1639)

⁸⁸⁷ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5763; AGS, *Secretarías Provinciales*, L. 1499, f.46 "Avenças de Angola" (09-12-1608); *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª Época, Leg. 3182 (01-07-1611)

⁸⁸⁸ Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, pp. 324-5

death of João Rodrigues resulted in a disappointing performance (-1,032), yet Gonçalo Vaz recorded an extremely positive balance in the total licences sold during his *asiento* (+7,330), which more than made up for his brother's account. From their combined management of the *asiento*, which included 38,250 licences for sale, the Coutinhos dispatched a total estimate of 44,548 slave licences. This number is extremely close to the one drawn from an account of the *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, which calculated a total of 44,379 licences sold during the combined administration of the Coutinhos (only 169 less than the figure presented here).⁸⁸⁹ This type of approach shows that Gonçalo greatly benefited from his brother's early administration, despite the initial setbacks, and illustrates the difficulties experienced by the *asentistas* due to the delayed capitalisation on their contract. The final balance of the two brother's enterprise is therefore extremely positive, with 6,298 more licences sold than their allocated limit, which fell within the legal excess margin contemplated by the clause for the losses of the Middle Passage (1,750 extra per year).⁸⁹⁰

The *asiento* of the Coutinhos covered some of the busiest and most profitable years of the slave trade during the Union of Crowns (from a fiscal perspective), especially Gonçalo's administration, despite all of the difficulties and embargos he had to endure. Taking the estimate of 44,548 licences, and supposing that all licences were sold on credit, those figures would enable the Coutinhos to realise a maximum profit of 535,564 *ducados* during their entire administration, after subtracting the annual lump sums to the Royal Treasury. However, the yearly payments to the Crown were not the only expenses of the *asentistas*. They also had to pay taxes over the shipment of their own profits from America, and the administrative fees inherent to the management of the *asiento de negros* on both sides of the Atlantic. The *Casa de la Contratación* always reserved 24,000 *ducados* from the *asentista's* earnings every year to pay its employees, "10,000 in the Indies, and 14,000 in Seville". Its official accountants and treasurers also charged a percentage over the final profits of the *asentistas* for the expenses of the galleons of the *Carrera de Indias*, such as freight, *avería* (duty paid on shipment of silver and the goods carried from America, usually 6-8 per cent), insurance, and later the conversion of silver

⁸⁸⁹ AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª Época, Leg. 1019 "Cuenta del asiento de los Coutiño" (1610)

⁸⁹⁰ Clause 5 of the *asiento*. AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 "Ratificaciones del Asiento de Gonçalo Vaz Coutino en lo tocante a la renta de las licencias de los negros esclavos que se navegan a las Indias" (02-05-1605)"

into coin.⁸⁹¹ From a set of papers of the *asentista* António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1623), it can be inferred that the administrative costs of the *asiento* were too high, since they taxed a total of 24 per cent over the profits brought from America every year. Those expenses were added to the already considerable annual lump sums, which lowered the profits from this enterprise.⁸⁹²

The profits from the *asiento* were shipped from America to the Kingdom together with the rest of the treasury in the annual fleets of the *Carrera de Indias*. Their galleons carried accounts (called *cartas-cuenta*) detailing the origin of their shipments, which were then delivered to the Treasury officials of the *Casa de Contratación* upon arrival, so that they could collect the royal fifth and charge the necessary taxes. Through those accounts, it is possible to discern how much of the proceeds belonged to the *asiento*, the voyages that employed the licences, the regions of capture of the slaves, the number of ‘slave pieces’ disembarked in each port, and the nature of their payments (in gold, silver, coins, pearls or bills of exchange).

Table 4 – Money deposited in the *Casa de Contratación* from the *asiento* and delivered to the *asentista* (1603-1609)

	Total (In <i>maravedís</i>)	Net Total for the <i>asentista</i> (after freight and <i>avería</i>)
1603	55,316,250	42,000,000
1604	54,375,000	38,723,219
1605	-	-
1606	55,257,504	51,629,724
1607	24,420,244	23,082,897
1608	54,329,288	44,839,639
1609	50,135,945	43,234,255
Total	293,834,231	243,518,734

Source: Adapted from Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica* p. 88; AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3^a Época, Leg. 2958 “Carta y Relaciones del dinero que Vino de las Indias procedido de la Renta de esclavos negros”; AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795

⁸⁹¹ The King could also use the money of the *asentista* stored in the royal strongbox of Seville if he so desired. On those occasions, he repaid the *asentista* for the full amount he used plus an interest of 8 percent per year. AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5765 “Libros de cargo y data pertenecientes a la renta de esclavos”, l.1, ff. 195-7v. (14-06-1608); *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2929 “Ratificaciones”

⁸⁹² AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2767, L.1 “Registro: Asiento de Negros. Asiento que se tomó con Antonio Fernandez Delbas”; Leg. 2829, “Sobre el Asiento de Antonio Fernandez de Elvas” (06-1615)

Through the reading of some of the accounts of the treasurer of the *Contratación* Melchior Maldonado, and the books of the Coutinho brothers of the *Contaduría Mayor*, it is possible to quantify some of annual shipments from their asiento that arrived for the Coutinhos', and calculate how much the leaseholders actually received. Although the data from those accounting books does not cover all nine years of the Coutinhos' *asiento*, the numbers of Table 5.2 are still evidence of a substantial difference between the initial profits of the *asiento* brought in on the *Carrera de Indias*, and the total net gain received by the Coutinhos. Taking as an example the year 1609, there were sixteen different consignments pertaining the *asiento* among all of the treasury brought in on the *Carrera* fleets that were destined for the Coutinhos. Those proceeds were registered in various *audiencias* by slave captains mostly coming from Angola (but also Guinea), who paid for their licences with specie, silver coins, bills of exchange, and pearls. The *Casa de la Contratación* evaluated the total of the shipments of the *asiento* at 50,135,945 *maravedís*. From those profits, the accountants of the *Casa* took 3,302,904 *maravedís* to cover administrative costs and customs taxes, and another 3,598,790 for general expenses of the royal fleet. In the year 1609 alone, the Coutinhos had to leave 6,901,690 *maravedís* of their profits in the strongbox of the House of Trade.⁸⁹³ Evaluating all the six years displayed in the table, the Coutinhos had to disburse a total of 50,315,497 *maravedís* from their total profits just to cover the administrative fees of the *asiento* (around 134,175 *ducados*), a considerable amount which almost matched the value of one of Vaz Coutinho's annual payments to the Crown. Subtracting that figure from the early maximum calculation, and the maximum profit from this contract could not surpass 400,000 *ducados*.

Although those expenses lowered the total profits of the Coutinhos' enterprise, the *asiento* only represented the fiscal element of their business venture. Although the *asentistas* could only control and collect a tax over the introduction of slaves in Spanish America, the Coutinhos also profited from all slave exports of Angola through their exclusive control over its monopoly contract, given shape in the sale of trading licences (*avenças*). The monopoly of Angola thus complemented the *asiento*, as it represented the commercial element of the Coutinho's business venture, and was fundamental for their operation. Unfortunately, unlike the licences registered in Seville, it is impossible

⁸⁹³ AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª Época, Leg. 2958 "Carta y Relaciones del dinero que vino de las Indias procedido de la Renta de esclavos negros". See Appendix 3

objectively to estimate the profits from the sale of *avenças* of this contract, since the accounting books stored in the factory of Luanda have all been lost, and the copies sent to the House of India and Mina in Lisbon were destroyed during the earthquake of 1755. It is only possible to catch small glimpses of the numbers of this contract in fragmented documentation. Some information can be found in the notebook of the Governor of Angola Manuel Cerveira Pereira in 1606, where the expenses of the colony are compiled together with the costs of Luanda's factory. Among the offices, salaries, and functions of the personnel operating in the factory, it is reported that "between 12,000 and 13,000 slave pieces leave this Kingdom every year." Taking into account the royal duties for Brazil (3,000 *réis*) and Spanish America (7,000 *réis*) at the time, Coutinho's *avenças* should in theory have generated somewhere between 36,000,000 and 63,000,000 *réis* before any expenses.⁸⁹⁴

Other clues regarding the returns of the leaseholders of the contract of Angola can be found in the correspondence between the Portuguese Treasury Council (*Conselho da Fazenda*) and the Council of Portugal in Madrid. Among the discussions regarding the state of the African monopolies, "whose profits come from the *avenças* of the slaves sent to the Indies of Castile and (...) Brazil", it is reported that during the years that the contract of Angola was entrusted to "the heirs of João Ruiz Coutinho" the *avenças* generated at least 24,000,000 *réis* every year.⁸⁹⁵ Another figure is provided by a member of the same Council, Melchior de Teves, who warns of the practice of multiple frauds in the sale of the *avenças* in Angola following the death of João Rodrigues Coutinho. According to Teves' information, more than 80,000,000 *réis* were generated from the sale of the *avenças* for two years (40,000,000 a year), which were illegally seized from Luanda's factory by agents of the *contratador*.⁸⁹⁶ Those numbers illustrate that the *avenças* from the Angola monopoly also presented substantial returns for the Coutinhos, and Gonçalo would once again attempt to secure and expand the business venture previously directed by his brother in that territory.

To recover the goods confiscated from the estate of João Rodrigues Coutinho in Luanda after his death, as well as to prevent a repetition of abuses by local officials and merchants, Gonçalo Coutinho negotiated an agreement with the interim Governor of

⁸⁹⁴ "Caderno do Governador Manuel Cerveira Pereira" (27-10-1606), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. V, p. 224. As will be shown in chapter 6, the revenues from the Angola contract were neither simple nor significant

⁸⁹⁵ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, L. 1472, fls. 32-4 "Consulta do Conselho da Fazenda" (24-01-1613)

⁸⁹⁶ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, L. 1499, fls. 46-46v "Avenças de Angola" (09-12-1608)

Angola, Manuel Cerveira Pereira (1603-7). Coutinho granted the Governor special privileges in the collection of the slave duties from the Angola contract, and a small share of his profits. In exchange, Cerveira Pereira would store his brother's fortune in a safe place, and hide his accounts from the Crown's overseers.⁸⁹⁷ Gonçalo's strategy and alliance with Cerveira Pereira illustrates how vital the control over the governorship of Angola was for the success of the entire enterprise of his family. This fact is further evidenced by the actions of Manuel de Sousa Coutinho, the brother stationed in America. After the arrest of Cerveira Pereira in 1606, Manuel Coutinho moved to Rio de Janeiro, and wrote a letter to the Crown requesting the position of Governor of Angola for himself. According to the request of Sousa Coutinho, he had "the right" to succeed his brother, since João Rodrigues had powers to nominate a successor as part of his public-private partnership with the Crown. Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho was the official heir of the late Governor, but the *asentista* rejected this appointment due to his fear of the tropical diseases that had already claimed the life of his older brother and son. Thus, the position should be entrusted to Manuel de Sousa Coutinho. In the same year as Manuel's request, the name of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho was featured among the possible candidates for the Government of Brazil.⁸⁹⁸ The request of both Coutinhos to receive important positions on opposite sides of the Atlantic clearly indicates that their family strategy relied on the continuous investment in the slave trade, which they planned to continue to influence from key posts in the South Atlantic.

The control over the slave trade from Angola was therefore fundamental for the success of their business enterprise. The monopoly contract originally enabled João Rodrigues Coutinho to take advantage of his position to send slaves to the American markets, slaves which he acquired for free through the raids in West Africa's hinterland. The practice of a policy of warfare also stimulated the profits of both Iberian monopolies, since the offer of slaves would increase and reflect in the commercial and fiscal earnings of the Coutinhos. For this reason, it was vital for Vaz Coutinho to have someone in Angola after the death of João and the arrest of Cerveira Pereira. However, to the dismay

⁸⁹⁷ "Treslado da sentença que absolveu Manoel Cerveira das acusações que lhe fizeram como governador interino de Angola" (30-03-1609) Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, doc. 25 pp. 421-6

⁸⁹⁸ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, L. 1476, fls. 73-4v "Sobre a candidatura de D. Gonçalo Coutinho para o governo do Brasil" (21-04-1606); fls. 102-102v "Sobre uma carta que escreveu Manuel de Sousa Coutinho a S.M. desde o Brasil" (05-06-1606). There is another Gonçalo Coutinho nominated for the government of Angola between 1611 and 1613, who rejects the nomination to go to the fortress of Mazagão. However, this is another person (Pereira Coutinho), as Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho was living in Lisbon at the time, from where he kept administering his business.

of the *asentista*, both nominations were rejected, as the Crown had already abandoned the project for the conquest of Angola's mineral deposits, and nominated Manuel Pereira Forjaz (1607-1611) for this territory instead. Without the governorship of Angola, the Coutinhos had no way of taking advantage of their powers to dispatch slaves from a privileged position, nor influence local policies to increase the supply of captives through warfare. They could not maintain the slave networks and local alliances established by João Rodrigues, nor commit frauds in the administration of Angola's treasury without an agent on the spot with considerable political power. Part of the estate left behind by João Rodrigues Coutinho was apprehended by the Crown's overseer André Velho da Fonseca, who reported his inability to locate the rest of the Governor's accounts since his agents stole and burned most of his and the factory's books.⁸⁹⁹

Under those conditions, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho apparently withdrew from the monopoly of Angola in 1607, and had to later dispute over his rights to some of the slave duties and the estate of his brother with the future *contratador* Duarte Dias Henriques (1607-1614).⁹⁰⁰ He continued to administer the *asiento* for two more years, and benefited from an extension to sell licences due to the previous interference by treasurers of Seville.⁹⁰¹ In spite of all the difficulties and the loss of the Angola monopoly, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho still managed to profit from his administration of the *asiento*, as he himself claimed in a memorandum written to the Crown years later. He called this lease "the best that Spain had in its overseas trade", and explained his experience in the management of this revenue of the Crown in detail.⁹⁰² Coutinho claimed that there were very few risks inherent to the administration of this revenue, since there was never a lack of demand for the slave licences, and the *asentistas* could expect a profit by the end of their tenures. The profits acquired in American silver were enough to make up for almost all of the difficulties experienced by the *asentistas*. One of the last shipments of his *asiento* came in the form of 1,534 silver ingots from Potosí as payment for a shipment of Angola slaves transported to Buenos Aires, totalling 12,981 *pesos*.⁹⁰³ The reason as to why Coutinho 'sold' the secrets behind the management of the *asiento*, is owed to the fact that he had

⁸⁹⁹ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 13 "Carta do ouvidor André Velho da Fonseca ao Rei" (20-11-1610; doc. 15 "Carta do ouvidor de Angola André Velho da Fonseca ao Rei" (05-02-1611)

⁹⁰⁰ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, L. 1473, fls. 146-191 "Contenda entre Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho e Duarte Dias Henriques" (19-08-1620)

⁹⁰¹ AGI, Indiferente General, Leg. 2829 "Los contadores reales de la casa" (02-03-1610)

⁹⁰² "Discurso de Gonzalo Vaez sobre los asientos", *apud* Vila Vilar, *Los asientos portugueses*, pp. 569-70

⁹⁰³ AGS, *Consejo y Juntas de Hacienda*, Leg. 485 N1-1 (04-03-1608)

acquired sufficient capital to move on to different business ventures, and attempted to lease the more prestigious monopolies from the Spanish Crown. In 1613, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho was featured among the merchants vying for the *asiento de avería*, and although he failed to win the public auction, it shows that he had acquired considerable returns from his previous economic administration. His continuous presence at Court, in auctions over more reputable *asientos*, and on Castile's financial circuits show that Gonçalo never underwent any sort of bankruptcy, in spite of the problems he experienced with the Treasury officials.⁹⁰⁴

As for Manuel de Sousa Coutinho, he continued to operate on the Luanda-Rio de Janeiro-Buenos Aires circuit until 1613, when he returned to the Kingdom and joined the religious order of the Dominicans in the monastery of São Domingos de Benfica. Adopting the name of Friar Luis de Sousa in honour of his fallen nephew in Angola, Sousa Coutinho dedicated his life to the production of an extensive literary and historical work until his death in 1632. The true extent of the fortune built by Manuel de Sousa in America through the slave trade remains unknown, yet, in his will, he claimed to have sold 'numerous slaves for his brother in Panama, Peru, and Buenos Aires'. He left the profits of some of his shipments from the Rio de la Plata to Angola to his nephew Francisco de Sousa Coutinho (the second son of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho). He decided to bequeath his fortune to Francisco because he "needed more help [because] his brother already has a rich inheritance", again hinting at the safe financial status achieved by Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho on the conclusion of his administration of the slave contracts.⁹⁰⁵

Despite all of the difficulties experienced during the management of the *asiento de negros*, the Coutinhos managed to acquire a considerable fortune by means of the interlacing of this contract with the monopoly of Angola, and the control over an overseas government. Through their investments in some of the Monarchy's tax farms and the slave trade, this family secured a legal access to Spanish American markets, where Manuel de Sousa collected the slaves sent by his brother João who led the conquest of Angola. In the Kingdom, Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho used the commercial advantages granted by the lease of the revenues to cash-in countless payments in the most desired commodity of the time, American silver. The success of this enterprise eventually enabled the family to rise through the social ranks at Court, and turn their attentions to some of the most

⁹⁰⁴ Vila Vilar, *Los asientos portugueses*, pp. 569-70

⁹⁰⁵ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, L. 1580 fls. 134-5

prestigious and profitable monopolies and tax farms of the Habsburg Monarchy. Despite their newfound fortune, the Coutinhos never severed their original links with Angola and the slave trade, and continued to expand their business network in the South Atlantic through family alliances. Gonçalo Vaz married Francisca de Moraes, the daughter of the *Tesoureiro-mor* of the Kingdom Sebastião de Morais. His eldest son (Lopo de Sousa Coutinho) would go on to marry the daughter of the future Governor of Angola, Manuel Pereira Coutinho (1630-1635), while his second son Francisco de Sousa (a famous diplomat) visited this territory and conducted business there. The grandson of Vaz Coutinho was also involved in the slave businesses, and wed the daughter of Diogo da Veiga, one of the most influential and active Portuguese slave merchants operating from Peru, Buenos Aires, and Brazil.⁹⁰⁶

In conclusion, the *asiento* was the fiscal solution implemented by the Habsburg Monarchy to secure and profit from the monopoly of distribution of slaves to its American colonies. The collection of the profits from this revenue of the King's patrimony required massive financial efforts, and the Crown willingly turned to private agents to administer this trade on its behalf, in exchange for considerable payments scheduled annually. This trade eventually turned into one of the strongest sources of fiscal income for the Crown, and the stable revenues from its lease were employed to cover the Kings' debts and finance the Habsburgs' imperial project. During the Iberian Union, the Crown priced the *asiento* at a total of 3,638,000 *ducados* (Table 5.1). However, it is equally important to take into account the indirect profits generated by this revenue, such as the fees paid for the royal fifth, *averias*, *alcabalas*, and *almojarifazgos*, among others. An example of the 'extra' revenues can be seen in a report by the Council of Indies of 1612, in which it is inferred that the Iberian slave trade should earn the Spanish Exchequer not only the fixed lump sum of 120,000 *ducados* from the lease of the slave *asiento*, but also an extra sum 60,000 *ducados* in the form of customs revenues, such as the sales taxes (the *alcabala*) or the duty paid over the returns of the *Carrera* fleets (the *averia*).⁹⁰⁷

⁹⁰⁶ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 80-1; Gonçalves, *Os magnatas*, p. 127; Canabrava, *O comércio português*, pp. 124-130; Rodrigo Ceballos, "Os Portugueses do Prata: Tratos, contratos e privilégios locais (1580-1670)", *história, histórias*. Brasília, vol. 1, n. 1, 2013 pp. 88-112

⁹⁰⁷ AGI, *Indiferente General*, leg. 2795, "inconvenientes del asiento que se tomó el año pasado de 1611" (1612). This report is integrated in a series of discussions between the *Casa de la Contratacion* and the

Indispensable for the expansion of the Iberian slave trade, was the regular association of the Portuguese *asentistas* with the leaseholders of the slave monopoly in the administration of the *asiento*. The interweaving between the Portuguese and Spanish commercial circuits at the onset of the Union gradually fostered an overlapping economic partnership between the Iberian empires on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Despite their status as ‘foreigners’ in Spanish imperial territories, Portuguese merchants managed to secure access to Hispano-American markets through the establishing of the Portuguese and Spanish mechanisms for the legal provision of African slaves to America. Their commercial ventures contributed to nurturing a strong market demand for slaves in Spanish America, as the African slaves were progressively regarded as a vital element for some American economic sectors and industries like agriculture, construction, manufactures and urban services.⁹⁰⁸ Over time, a “clearly complementary relationship emerged in the economies of both Iberian empires”, centred on the exchange of African slaves and American silver.⁹⁰⁹

Overall, the first four administrations of the *asiento* (1595-1623) registered the highest sales and best profits, as the slave trade to Spanish America flourished during the first twenty years of the union, reaching its zenith during the campaigns of Vasconcelos in Ndongo. The results from the different phases of the Angolan wars are reflected in the number of sales during Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho *asiento*, and later during António Fernandes de Elvas’ administration. Despite the King lowering his limit to 3,500 licences, Elvas’ *asiento* registered the highest sales during the Iberian Union, aided by the intersection of this contract with the monopoly of Angola and Cape Verde (1615-1623). Excluding the interim years of 1611-1614 when this revenue was placed under Royal administration with disastrous results (less than 500 licences sold), the *asiento* began to experience its first problems of supply during the *asiento* of Manuel Rodrigues Lamego (1624-1631). The increasing occurrence of piracy attacks by Dutch vessels against slave ships during transatlantic voyages hindered the ability of slave merchants to conduct this trade safely, as the conflict in the Atlantic escalated after the conquest and retake of Bahia in 1624-25, and the occupation of Northern Brazil in 1630. The risks associated with this

Conselho de Portugal regarding the removal of the *asiento* from Portuguese administration, and the mentioned values are the losses sustained by the Crown with the current state of affairs.

⁹⁰⁸ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, “La sublevación de Portugal y la trata de Negros”, *Ibero-amerikanisches Archiv*, vol. 2, nº3 (1976) pp. 171-192. See also chapter 4

⁹⁰⁹ Costa, Lains, Miranda, *História Económica*, pp. 132-141

trade increased considerably, and affected the interest of Iberian merchants in the purchase of licences, as stated by the *asentista* himself.⁹¹⁰ Even though the number of allocated licences had been lowered to 3,500 per year, Lamego registered a massive deficit regarding the licences he was supposed to sell during his administration (-6,650). Although the volume in the supply of slaves decreased in the aftermath of Vasconcelos' campaigns in Angola, other foreign factors besides the aforementioned Dutch piracy on the Caribbean, Brazilian and African shores affected the demand of this trade. The interference of Portuguese New Christian merchants in the Spanish Empire and the growing trade in contraband slaves and haemorrhage of American bullion caused great discontent in Seville's merchant community, which ultimately resulted in the coordinated Inquisition raids in the viceroyalties of Peru and New Spain during the 1630s. These raids targeted the Portuguese merchant elite, which paralysed the trade.⁹¹¹ The distrust in the slave trade and its diminishing returns during the last decade of the Union reached such levels that it forced a renegotiation to lower the limit to just 2,500 slaves per year by the last *asentistas* Melchior Gómez and Cristovão Mendes de Sousa (1632-1640), as they were incapable of complying with the previous number.⁹¹²

The men administering this trade thus employed different strategies to properly navigate the political and economic circumstances of the time, and support the financial burden of those contracts. The Coutinhos present a fascinating case of how private agents managed the monopoly leases of the Habsburg Monarchy, and from their position of power employed unique strategies to expand their own businesses successfully. Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho had no problems with using different Crown monopolies, from the *asiento* to the *provison de las armadas*, to benefit his own commercial interests in Angola at the expense of the Crown. The privileges acquired through the interweaving of both Crown's monopolies, and the respective financial gains of the Coutinhos illustrate how private agents took advantage of the opportunities provided by the Union of Crowns to expand their businesses around the Atlantic. It sheds light on the motivations behind the collaboration of private actors with the State, and the different strategies employed by those men to enlarge their estates and improve their social and economic status in relation to their new Habsburg rulers. Through the administration of the Crown's monopolies,

⁹¹⁰ AGI, Contratación Leg. 5858 "informe de Lamego" (1625)

⁹¹¹ Toby Green, *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear* (London: Macmillan, 2007); Studnicki-Gizbert, *Nation upon the Ocean Sea*; Ventura, *Portugueses no Peru*.

⁹¹² Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 47-54

they secured access to the Spanish markets for silver, and eventually climbed the social ladder to bid for future, more prestigious revenues. A future study could follow the individual trajectories of Portuguese entrepreneurs managing the monopolies of the slave trade, and how they eventually transitioned into the management of more prestigious revenues of the Habsburg Monarchy. The first Portuguese agents to secure contracts from the Spanish Crown were all surprisingly linked to the slave trade: Pedro Gomes Reinel secured the lease of the *almojarifazgos*, João Nunes Correia (*contratador* of the Angola monopoly) secured the *avería* of the Fleets from Tierra Firme, and Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho the provision of the High Seas fleet. Famous slave merchants like Duarte Dias Henriques and Gonçalo Nunes de Sepúlveda would follow in their footsteps in the following years, and would replace the Genoese as private bankers and *asentistas* of Phillip IV following the renegotiation of the debt in 1627. The fortunes of all those men who established themselves as reputable financiers at the Habsburg Court had their origin in the Atlantic trade.⁹¹³

⁹¹³ Jesús Carrasco Vázquez, “Los conversos lusitanos y la unión ibérica: oportunidades y negocios. El caso de Juan Nunez Correia”, Alfredo Alvar, Jaime Contreras, José Ignacio Ruiz (Eds.), *Política y cultura en la Edad Moderna* (Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 2004) pp. 763-774; Boyajian, *Portuguese bankers*

VI – The Economy of Angola, Transatlantic Networks, and Slaving Business in Luanda

In a report drawn up at the offices of the *Relação e Casa do Porto* (High Court) in 1633, the *desembargador* (judge) Fernão Matos de Carvalhosa informed King Phillip IV and the Portuguese Treasury Council about the state of finances of Angola, and the revenues of the slave trade. This document was a follow up to Carvalhosa's mission to Luanda, where he was tasked to carry out an inquest into the governorship of Fernão de Sousa in Angola (1626-1630). According to the judge, the revenues generated by Angola's slave exports were "considerably diminished" by 1633 in comparison to previous years. The Dutch presence in Loango brought competition for the Portuguese in the acquisition of slaves from Angola and Kongo's inland slave markets, and raised prices of copper and ivory as well. Besides the slave trade, Carvalhosa informed the King of his remaining revenues in Angola, mainly the *dizimos* (tithe), the tributes of the African *sobas* (*baculamentos*), and other, smaller taxes on certain commodities like wines. Those revenues were usually converted into *panos* at the factory of Luanda, an African cloth that was used as currency on West Africa's native markets, and had no real value outside of Angola. Although the slave trade was not as profitable as in previous years, the *desembargador* underlined its importance for the sustenance of Luanda's colonial apparatus, since the payments of the monopoly contract of Angola were channelled into covering the administrative costs and salaries of Luanda's officialdom. A good share of Luanda's slave revenues was also shipped to Brazil, around 40,000 *cruzados* every year, in order to finance the fortification of Bahia against the Dutch who had recently occupied Pernambuco.⁹¹⁴

The King had apparently asked Carvalhosa about the possibility of the colony financing itself through the collections of its local taxes and African tributes alone, which would enable the Crown to direct the payments of the monopoly of Angola in the Kingdom to other purposes, as the financial haemorrhage of the Spanish Monarchy

⁹¹⁴ Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a História de Angola do século XVII: Memórias, Relações e outros manuscritos da colectânea documental de Fernão de Sousa (1622-1635)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlaag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), vol. I, pp. 388-92. While the document is not signed, Heintze inferred the author to be Fernão Matos de Carvalhosa, since the information, chronology, and place of writing matches his mission to Angola and return to Porto.

constantly drove the Habsburg monarchs to search for ways to create new sources of revenue for its Exchequer in all parts of the empire. Fernão Matos dismissed this possibility after his inquest into Angola's finances, as he concluded that both the slave trade and the Kingdom of Angola itself, were of vital importance for the conservation of the Habsburg Monarchy as a whole. Despite the diminished returns of the slave trade in comparison to previous decades, its revenues remained "fundamental for the preservation" of not only Brazil, but "the Spanish Indies as well", as both territories relied "on the negros of Angola", without whose supply, they would collapse overnight. Carvalhosa also warned that many of Luanda's merchants had fortunes from their slave businesses stored or levied in Lisbon's customs, and should this trade stop, it would "destroy" not only Angola's merchant population, but the one in Portugal as well. The *desembargador*, who had no previous ties to Angola or the slave trade itself, rather than nurturing the idea of directing the slave revenues somewhere else, encouraged the King further to invest in this territory and trade, as he argued that it could still generate massive returns for the Crown, not only in Angola, but throughout all of its territories in the Atlantic region.⁹¹⁵

The report of Carvalhosa is extremely detailed and illustrative of Angola's finances and contribution to the Iberian Atlantic, but above all, it highlights the central role of slave trade ventures for the entire Habsburg Monarchy. The State's interests and private merchant initiatives were concentrated, and often times intermingled, in the Angola slave trade during the Union of Crowns. Conflicts, rivalries, partnerships, and long-term investment, were but a few of the realities faced by those who were involved in the Iberian slave trade in the seventeenth century. To profit from this economic activity, which spread out over multiple ports and crossed trans-imperial borders, it was essential to invest great quantities of capital to cover all stages of a transatlantic slave voyage. Only the wealthiest and most resourceful of merchants could get a hold of the monopoly contracts for Africa's trade. Those businessmen could then sell special commercial licences to smaller investors and merchants, who sponsored or ran slave voyages. They were in turn supported by vast and complex trading networks, which relied on trustworthy entrepreneurs and agents spread out throughout key ports in the Atlantic. Over time, a certain specialisation around the slave trade became visible. The administrators of the *asientos* and the slave contracts were not the people present on Angola's shores

⁹¹⁵ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, pp. 388-92

purchasing slaves, captaining ships, or charging licences and duties in the ports of America. Parallel to the official administration of the slave trade, a whole new group of people gathered around this economic activity, and their role was in no way less important for the development of slaving circuits in the Atlantic than the merchant capitalists administrating the official contracts of the Crown.

To get a hold of slaves in Angola, merchants required factors and personal attorneys stationed in Luanda to bring slaves to the port, or try their luck at the public slave auctions. Knowledge of the different colonial markets was only attainable through agents on the spot, who could engage in cross-cultural trade and streamline credit operations towards the metropole or other colonial markets. The most experienced merchants commissioned their own slave factors and local entrepreneurs, who had contacts with African middlemen who ventured into the interior and purchased slaves on inland markets at far better rates. Local dwellers also participated in this trade, as they collected slaves and sold them upon the arrival of ships to the port. Luanda's barter economy, where slaves were the measure of all commodities, brought considerable opportunities for business in the region, but also carried significant risks. There were several ways for merchants, shipmasters, officials and commoners to participate in the slave trade, including on parallel circuits to the official one established by the Crown and its institutions. The strategies and business networks of those merchants will be the focus of this chapter. The organisation of the Angolan slave trade will be addressed, from the lease of the first monopoly contracts and collection of revenues by its leaseholders to the creation of commercial companies and trans-imperial partnerships between merchants in the Kingdom and Angola to profit from slaving ventures. Through the description of historical occurrences based on official reports and private accounts, this chapter seeks to capture some of the strategies and dynamics of local groups in Luanda engaged with the slave trade, and explain how their business operations and slave capture strategies were linked to and intermingled with the distant credit operations in the metropolis and America.

6.1 The Contract of Angola and the Financial Administration of Luanda

Over the sixteenth century, the revenues generated in the Portuguese empire were primarily realised through the returns from the *Carreira da India*, and from the customs duties charged over the Atlantic trades. Both became significant sources of fiscal revenue for the Crown at the onset of the Union, as a reflection of the rise of the Brazilian sugar industry and the expansion of Guinea's intra-insular circuits. However, many of those revenues did not revert to the Royal Treasury in the Kingdom. In the agreement of Tomar, Phillip II had confirmed that the fiscal revenues of the Portuguese empire, especially those resulting from local tax collection (like in the *Estado da India*), should be spent locally, in order to finance the administrative and military infrastructures of its colonial governments. Therefore, the revenues generated in the factories of the Atlantic should not come back to the homeland's coffers, and should be used to support the overseas apparatus instead. This was somewhat similar to what would happen in the Spanish empire in the eighteenth century, when part of its treasure was retained in America, and allocated for local expenditure.⁹¹⁶ The non-transfer of overseas taxes and economic surplus meant that the Portuguese empire's contribution to its Royal Treasury remained mostly indirect, manifesting in the duties charged over the circulation of colonial goods in the customs houses of Lisbon and the Kingdom, as well as through the returns of capital invested in monopolised goods.⁹¹⁷

Like the Spanish Monarchy, the Portuguese Crown had also enforced monopoly rights over certain colonial goods – such as pepper, brazilwood, gold, and slaves –, which would ultimately contribute to enrich its Exchequer. Colonial monopolies could be explored directly by the monarch, or assigned to a third party composed of private investors through a contracting system, in exchange for sizeable sums of money paid upfront.⁹¹⁸ This system of tax farming, or revenue leasing, was similar to that of the Spanish *asientos*. In Africa, the Portuguese rulers had claimed a monopoly over trade on

⁹¹⁶ Regina Grafe, Maria Alejandra Irigoin, "A Stakeholder Empire: The Political economy of Spanish Imperial Rule in America", *Economic History Review*, 65/2 (2012), pp. 609-625

⁹¹⁷ Susana Münch Miranda, "Fiscal Systems and Private Interests in Portuguese Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640", *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 60/3 (2017), pp. 202-232

⁹¹⁸ Jorge M. Pedreira, "Costs and Financial Trends in the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1822", Bethencourt, Curto (Eds.), *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion*, pp. 49-87; Costa, Lains, Miranda, *História Económica*, pp. 128-130, 135

its coasts since the early stages of the overseas expansion in the fifteenth century. Privateering and commercial voyages to Africa were open to any subject of the Crown until 1443, when Prince Henry the Navigator received complete control over all voyages and trade to the Coast of Guinea. After his death in 1460, the administration of this monopoly returned to the Crown until at least 1469, but it remains unknown exactly how the Portuguese rulers explored this concession during those years. Eventually, and until 1475, the monopoly of Guinea was leased to a private investor, a merchant called Fernão Gomes, for an annual sum of 200,000 *réis*. There were some restrictions imposed on Gomes' exclusive rights over the African coast, most notably in the factory of Arguim (which remained under the Crown's management), and in some parts of the Gambia and Senegal Rivers (where the settlers of Cape Verde had received special trading privileges). Nevertheless, his administration is regarded as the first informal management of a royal monopoly in Africa.⁹¹⁹

From that point onwards, the Portuguese Kings would explore the monopoly of Africa's coast through direct administration, whose supervision would be entrusted to royal factors and Crown officials, or through the lease of exclusive economic rights and tax collection to private investors in a specific region. Despite granting those privileges to informal agents, the monopolies remained under the authority and jurisdiction of the Crown and its institutions, such as the *Casa da Guiné e Mina* and later *Casa da Índia e Mina* (House of Trade).⁹²⁰ To oversee and control trade in Africa, the Crown built commercial factories to store the goods from the Kingdom for trade on the coast, and created fiscal institutions to enforce its legislation over transaction in those territories. Factories were headed by a royal factor appointed by the King, who would be often accompanied by clerks, judges, guards, and royal tax collectors. The monopolies were later opened to private entrepreneurship at the end of the fifteenth century, through the concession of special commercial and trading licences, which individuals merchants could purchase and use in the designated areas. Due to the increasing expenditure in the African outposts, combined with the inability of the Crown to effectively collect its revenues and taxes in those areas, the lease of the contracts became increasingly more

⁹¹⁹ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *A Expansão Quatrocentista Portuguesa*, 2nd edition (Lisbon: Edições Don Quixote, 2008) pp. 329-31, 347-8

⁹²⁰ António Carreira, *Notas sobre o tráfico português de escravos* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova, 1978) pp. 21-4

frequent, and became a usual practice in Portuguese Africa between the 1530s and 1640s.⁹²¹

The Portuguese Crown therefore negotiated several contracts with informal agents for the management of its Atlantic monopolies during the sixteenth century, in order to finance and support the overseas governments in its respective colonies.⁹²² The African colonial trade was just one among various leases, enforcing the Crown taxes on transactions and charging duties on all commodities exchanged in its ports. As the slave trade became an increasingly profitable commercial endeavour, the African contracts became attractive leases for wealthy businessmen, who competed for those contracts almost exclusively because of their privilege to tax slave exports.⁹²³

The Monopoly Contracts of Angola

While the Crown ensured the establishment of factories and secured the placement of fiscal agents in all of its commercial outposts in Africa and the South Atlantic, the Portuguese rulers still actively leased out the management of the African commerce to private investors. In exchange for the payment of a fixed lump sum in Lisbon, the King transferred the official control over the trade in a specified region on the African Coast to a private investor, as well as other perks – such as the right to collect royal duties over commercial transactions in those ports. By leasing out the *contratos*, the Crown saved itself from all costs for the administration of that particular revenue, as it was no longer at risk of inconsistent revenue streams, instead enjoying a stable and fixed source of income deposited in the Kingdom's financial institutions.⁹²⁴ At the same time, the King solved some of its administrative problems in the African overseas governments, such as the inefficient supervision over the African factories and customs' houses, as its regulatory institutions were often underfunded and far too understaffed properly to

⁹²¹ Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese in West Africa. Empires, merchants and the Atlantic System 1580-1674* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp 82-4

⁹²² Jorge M. Pedreira, "Costs and Financial Trends", pp. 49-87; Costa, Lains, Miranda, *História Económica*, pp. 128-130

⁹²³ Maria Manuel Ferraz Torrão, "Rotas comerciais, agentes económicos, meios de pagamento", Maria Emília Madeira Santos (Ed.), *História geral de Cabo Verde*, vol. 2 (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos de História e Cartografia Antiga, 2001) pp. 17-124 [77-80]; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 18-21

⁹²⁴ Miranda "Fiscal Systems"; I. A. A. Thompson, *War and Government in Habsburg Spain, 1560-1620* (London: Athlone Press, 1976); Felipe Ruiz Martín, *Las Finanzas de la Monarquía Hispanica en tempos de Felipe IV, 1621-1665* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1990)

conduct trade or enforce the royal legislation. The leaseholders would solve this issue by retaining their own agents to supervise and charge the taxes on trade, as well as be diligent in the collection of other colonial revenues, since their profits were intrinsically linked to the successful administration of the ports. Finally, the Crown delegated the responsibility of paying for the salaries of its officialdom in Africa to the third party contractors (*contratadores*).⁹²⁵ While this was certainly the rule for Cape Verde and São Tomé, the situation was somewhat different for Angola, as will be shown below.

The administration and organisation of the African monopolies underwent some transformations and reforms over the sixteenth century. Ultimately, it was divided into three major regions, each one corresponding to a different monopoly contract: Guinea and Cape Verde, São Tomé, and Angola. Those contracts were leased to the *contratadores* for different periods of time (between six and eight years for Angola), who were entitled to collect royal taxes and customs' duties on commodities circulating in the ports covered by the areas of their stipulated contracts for the duration thereof. Since the African Coast primarily consisted of barter economies, where no metallic currency circulated, and did not have many taxable commodities that could offer a profit (besides ivory and wax), the African contracts were sought almost exclusively for the royalties on the slaves bound for Brazil or Spanish America. Therefore, the *contratadores* of the African monopolies effectively controlled the commercial movement of slaves in their respective regions, and could transfer a small share of their monopoly rights to sub-contractors through the sale of special trading licences or subcontracts called *avenças*. The *avenças* of the African monopolies entitled merchants to acquire slaves, and specified their number and respective duties.⁹²⁶

The coast of Kongo and Angola, and the revenues generated by commercial transactions in its ports, were initially integrated in the contract of São Tomé. After the founding of Luanda, Paulo Dias de Novais received special privileges over the trade in Angola, particularly the right to one-third of the revenues of the duties over the slave exports, which traditionally belonged to the *contratadores* of São Tomé. Novais had received this prerogative to help support his enterprise and finance the Portuguese settlement in the new colony, but he could only sail to Angola after the conclusion of the

⁹²⁵ Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 84-6

⁹²⁶ Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 82-96; Walter Rodney, "Portuguese attempts at monopoly on the Upper Guinea Coast, 1580-1640, *The Journal of African History*, vol. 6 (3), 1965, pp. 307-322; Torrão, "Rotas comerciais", pp. 74-88; Salvador, *Magnatas*, pp. 15-58

monopoly of São Tomé (leased to Pedro de Noronha) in 1573. Disputes over the non-payments of slave duties with the local administrators of São Tomé, combined with the Crown's own perception of Angola's potential – rumoured to have shipped “more than 50,000 slaves to Brazil” by 1578 –, led the Portuguese Cardinal-King Henrique to hold a special hearing about the potential separation of the two regions into different monopolies, which he approved in 1579.⁹²⁷ The separation of Angola from the contract of São Tomé coincided with the beginning of the wars in Ndongo, and Dias de Novais' first incursions into the African hinterland. Those events ultimately contributed to the stimulation of slave exports from Luanda, which translated in the doubling of that contract's value in less than two decades.⁹²⁸

The Crown adopted its traditional contracting regime for Angola, and this revenue was placed under Royal administration for a couple of years after the initial separation from São Tomé in 1579. São Tomé (without Angola) was soon leased for six years to the Milanese merchant Giovanni Battista Rovellasca in 1582, which confirms that it was already a separate monopoly contract by this point.⁹²⁹ The first contract of Angola would only be leased a few years later to António Mendes Lamego and Pedro de Sevilha in 1587, for an annual sum of 11,000,000 *réis*. The contract was signed for a total of six years, from June 1587 to 1593, and the first annual payment would start in December 1588. The *contratadores* only had to pay half of the total amount (5,500,000) during the first two years, and from 1590 onwards, once every six months (until 1594). The *contratadores* had to pledge chattels and provide credible bondsmen to insure their estates. Moreover, they were obliged to sell *avenças* (commercial licenses for the slave trade) to any merchant who requested to purchase them (similar to the licences for the *asentistas*). They were also obliged to perform one-time payments to religious institutions (200,000 plus 20,000 *réis*), and reserve 2 slaves for the King every year. Finally, an extra fee of 8,000,000 *réis* was paid to cover any duties charged in 1586-87. In exchange, the leaseholders received the monopoly over the trade and export duties of the slaves from Angola, Congo, and Benguela. The *contratadores* enjoyed the right to place factors in Angola and send commodities for trade, and received a special permit to ship one-third

⁹²⁷ “Memoriais de Jerónimo Castanho ao Rei” (5-05-1599), Brásio, MMA, vol. IV, pp. 597-612;

⁹²⁸ José Luis Cortés Lopés, *Esclavo y colono (Introducción y sociología de los negros africanos en la América Española del siglo XVI)* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2004) pp. 70-1; Amaral, *O Consulado*, pp. 183-88

⁹²⁹ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 “copia de algunos asientos de contratadores”

of the slaves (later fixed at 3,000) to Spanish America, as part of Phillip's policy of granting slave licences to the Portuguese *contratadores* before the *asiento*.⁹³⁰ According to the report of Domingos de Abreu e Brito, by 1591, a total of 20,131 slaves had officially left Angola's port, which should have earned the *contratadores* a sum of around 60,000,000 *réis*, while having paid 44,000,000 by that point, displaying how tax-farmers could profit from this lease as long as they kept up their payments to the Royal Treasury.⁹³¹

The second contract of Angola remains a historiographical problem to this day. Scholars of the Iberian slave trade have repeated and replicated two major misconceptions regarding the Angola slave contracts for decades: that Pedro Gomes Reinel administered the colonial monopoly of Angola together with the *asiento* in 1595, and that he shared that administration with João Rodrigues Coutinho as his partner. The root of this problem can be traced back to Frédéric Mauro's compilation of the contractors of the Portuguese monopolies.⁹³² Mauro's exceptional monograph offers detailed information regarding the economic system of the Portuguese empire, as well as the relationship between the State and private entrepreneurs, and is regarded by most historians as great reference material for the study of the Portuguese monopolies and its respective leaseholders. Nevertheless, the scarce archival sources addressing the monopolies of Africa led Mauro to take some of his information for the Angola contracts from dubious secondary sources. Mauro quotes a list drawn up by priest Ruela Pombo, who himself took the information from Alfredo Felner, who had misinterpreted the previously described contract of Lamego and Sevilha that was published by George Scelle in 1906. Although Scelle elaborated on the various differences between the *asiento* and the Portuguese African monopolies as contracts belonging to separate Crowns, in his transcription of the first contract of Angola (1587-1593), he applied the Spanish translation '*asiento*' to the Portuguese contract. Felner copied this same transcription in 1933, and mistakenly associated the monopoly of Angola and the Spanish *asiento de negros* as a single lease.⁹³³ Using Felner's document as a reference, Ruela Pombo compiled his own list of the Angolan slave contracts, which

⁹³⁰ Scelle, *La traite*, pp. 791-4

⁹³¹ Domingos de Abreu e Brito, *Um inquérito à vida administrativa e económica de Angola e do Brasil*; pref. Alfredo Felner (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1931), pp. 30-3

⁹³² Frédéric Mauro, *Portugal, o Brasil, e o Atlântico (1570-1670)*, vol. I (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1989) pp. 215-17. Originally in Idem, *Le Portugal et l'Atlantique au XVII^e siècle 1570-1670* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E, 1960)

⁹³³ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, pp. 481-84 (doc. 51)

is in fact a mixture of Portuguese contracts and *asientos de negros*, describing not only Reinel as a *contratador*, but also Manuel Rodrigues Lamego, another *asentista*.⁹³⁴

The persisting of this historical error has since misled different generations of scholars of the Atlantic and the slave trade, who either quote Mauro or Felner as references for the chronology of Angola's contracts. Based on this misinformation, Luiz Felipe Alencastro believed that Reinel started a pattern for a "continuous association" between "the Angola monopoly and the *asiento* that persisted until at least 1624", which is factually incorrect.⁹³⁵ The absence of sources for the assignment of the monopoly of Angola after 1593 has also led scholars wrongly to associate Reinel's lease with the one of Coutinho that started in 1600. Enriqueta Vila Vilar portrays both men as partners and co-administrators of the Angola monopoly and the *asiento* between the years of 1593 and 1603, although neither the *asiento* nor the African monopoly lasted that long. Linda Newson and Susie Minchin also associate the contract of Angola and the *asiento* of Reinel with the Governorship of Coutinho since 1593. Recently, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva, quoting the earlier list of Mauro, repeats this trend.⁹³⁶ Not only would Coutinho only arrive in Angola in 1601, but he was actively involved in a financial dispute with Reinel due to the licences of their respective *asientos*. As described in the previous chapter, the slave monopolies of the two Iberian Crowns were indeed united at some point, but only in two separate and very specific contexts. Unlike Alencastro's suggestion, not all of Angola's contractors were *asentistas* until 1624. The only ones who achieved such a feat were the Coutinho brothers (1601-1609) and António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1621). While the copies of the Angola contracts stored in the House of Mina were destroyed during the earthquake of 1755, it is still possible to uncover the identity of the true holder of the 'lost' contract of Angola for the years of 1593 to 1599. By cross-checking fragmented sources from different archives, the conclusion can be drawn that the contract of Angola was never held by Reinel, but rather by another Portuguese New Christian merchant, João Nunes Correia.

In a memorandum sent to the Council of the Indies in Seville (c1611), its author gave an extensive report on the revenues and losses generated by the Iberian slave trade

⁹³⁴ Manuel Ruela Pombo, *Anais de Angola (1630-1635): Época de decadência no Governo de D. Manuel Pereira Coutinho* (Lisbon: Empresa da Revista 'Diogo Cão', 1945) pp. 116-17

⁹³⁵ Alencastro, *O trato*, p. 80

⁹³⁶ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 27; Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, pp. 20-1; Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, p. 228

during the previous decade. The Council studied this document with attention, since the author was none other than the wealthy merchant João Nunes Correia, who had considerable knowledge and experience dealing with slaving ventures. His information and advices are validated and acknowledged by his signature and comments as a “former leaseholder of the slave trade of the Crown of Portugal”.⁹³⁷ João Nunes Correia was a prominent member of the New Christian mercantile community, and had been, at different stages of his life, the *contratador* of the revenues of *pau Brasil* (brazilwood), and contractor of the *asiento de averia* of Seville. He was the head of the Nunes Correia family consortium, as well as father to João Nunes Saraiva, who would become one of the biggest financiers of the seventeenth century, and one of the first Portuguese *asentistas* who financed Phillip IV in 1627.⁹³⁸

Nunes Correia lived in Pernambuco, where he owned a sugar mill and regularly purchased slaves from Angola, together with André Lopes and Manuel Fernandes Angel, his prime associates in his Atlantic businesses.⁹³⁹ João Nunes Correia was arrested by the Inquisition on his visit to Brazil in 1592, and taken to the Kingdom to stand trial for the accusation of Cryptojudaism. He was later freed upon paying a bail of 4,000 *cruzados* in 1593, in order to continue to oversee his business during the lengthy process. According to documents from his inquisition trial, he requested permission to go to Madrid to negotiate the payments of his two monopoly contracts in 1595: the *pau-brazil*, and the monopoly of Angola.⁹⁴⁰ Nunes Correia clearly identified himself as a *contratador* of Angola by 1595, the same year that the scholarship believes that Reinel took this contract. Correia’s information can be confirmed by looking into a different source: the accounting books of the *Hospital de Todos os Santos* in Lisbon. The contracts of Angola always included a clause obliging their leaseholders to pay a fee of 400,000 *réis* to pious institutions, and this Hospital was the declared establishment for all Angola contracts.⁹⁴¹ The Hospital’s accounting books indeed recorded an instalment in October 1599, signed by the treasurer Marcos de Noronha, noting its donor as “João Nunes Correia *contratador*

⁹³⁷ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Parecer de João Nunes Corria sobre a navegação para as Indias se fazer directamente e não por Sevilha” (1611)

⁹³⁸ Jesús Carrasco Vázquez, “Los conversos lusitanos y la unión ibérica: oportunidades y negocios. El caso de Juan Núñez Correa”, Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro, Jaime Contreras, José Ignacio Ruiz Rodríguez (Eds.), *Política y cultura en la época moderna (Cambios dinásticos. Milenarismos, mesianismo y utopías)* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2004) pp. 763-774

⁹³⁹ AHU, *Reino*, Cx. 1, pasta 91

⁹⁴⁰ ANTT, *Tribunal do Santo Ofício*, Inquisição de Lisboa, processo 1491 f. 108

⁹⁴¹ See Appendix 2, clause nº1

de Angola”.⁹⁴² Other mentions to Correia as a leaseholder of Angola’s monopoly can be found in private letters from King Phillip II to the President of Portugal’s Governmental *Junta* in 1596.⁹⁴³

Like all contracts for Angola, João Nunes Correia’s administration would have been valid for 6 years. Taking into account that his final payment to the Hospital was made in 1599, his contract surely must have started in 1593, immediately after the end of the lease of António Lamego and Pedro de Sevilha. This hypothesis is further confirmed in a letter exchanged between the Count of Ficalho Juan de Borja y Castro and the Duke of Lerma. As president of the Council of Portugal, Juan de Borja informed the King’s *valido* about the various contracts of the Portuguese Crown that were available for lease, which included the contract of Angola, after the death of Rodrigues Coutinho in 1603. He suggested the possibility of asking a former leaseholder “João Nunes”, who had signed the contract “in 1593”, to step up and bid for this monopoly again.⁹⁴⁴ Through the cross-checking of those multiple sources, it is finally possible positively to identify João Nunes Correia as the official *contratador* of Angola between 1593 and 1599, and dismiss the historiographical error that keeps showcasing Reinel as a *contratador-asentista* from 1595. Nunes Correia managed the monopoly contract like his predecessors. Only after the end of his lease would the Coutinho family achieve the combining of the *asiento* with the Angola contract for the very first time.

The commercial and financial enterprise of the Coutinhos has been addressed in the previous chapter. Their ability to combine the Angola monopolies and the *asiento* enabled the brothers to realise massive profits, and build a successful business venture around the slave trade. The only *contratador* that managed to follow in their footsteps was António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1621), albeit with very different results. Fernandes de Elvas was linked by birth, marriage, and business association to the majority of the wealthy New Christian families administrating the contracts of the Monarchy, such as the Rodrigues de Elvas, Gomes Solís, Vaz de Évora, Rodrigues de Elvas, and Mendes de Brito.⁹⁴⁵ António Fernandes Elvas had considerable investments in the West African,

⁹⁴² ANTT, *Hospital de São José*, Registos de Receita, lib. 589 f. 216v

⁹⁴³ BAL, 51-VII-4, fl. 72

⁹⁴⁴ British Library, *ADD MS*, 28428, fol. 246-246v. The author is deeply thankful to Bruno A. Martinho for providing me with a copy of this document

⁹⁴⁵ Ana Hutz, “As estratégias da família de Antônio Fernandes d’Elvas – homens de negócios, Coroa espanhola e Inquisição”, Aldair Carlos Rodrigues, Angelo Adriano Faria de Assis, Pollyana Gouveia

Brazilian, and later Spanish American, trades, and regularly participated in the pepper contracts and the Cape trade. Married to Elena Rodrigues Solís, António Fernandes de Elvas became the prime associate of his father-in-law Jorge Rodrigues Solís, one of the richest merchants on the Iberian Peninsula, whose businesses spread across Northern Europe, Asia, Brazil, and America. It was through Jorge Rodrigues Solís that António Fernandes de Elvas was introduced to the slave trade, since Jorge Rodrigues Solís had vast experience in administering slave ventures, as he had been one of the main business associates and investors in the *asiento* of the Coutinhos (1601-1609).⁹⁴⁶

António Fernandes de Elvas won the bid for the *asiento* in 1612 since he was “far richer [...] and his reputation and credit were unmatched by the remaining bidders”.⁹⁴⁷ The *asiento* was however cancelled before the official signature, due to the backlash of the Spanish *Consulado* against former Portuguese administrations and growing smuggling reports in the Americas associated with slave ships. The King backed down from the Elvas *asiento*, and assigned its management to a commission led by the Royal accountant Juan Alfonso de Molina Cano and Melchior Maldonado, the treasurer of the *Casa de la Contratación* until 1615. The Spanish administrations had disastrous results, so much so that the Crown was forced to re-open the *asientos* for the Portuguese in less than four years.⁹⁴⁸ Elvas re-bid on the *asiento* with an offer of 115,000 *ducados* annually, and was given the administration of the slave licences in May 1615.⁹⁴⁹ Similar to the Coutinho brothers, António Fernandes de Elvas also bid on the monopoly of Angola, to which he added the one of Cape Verde as well.⁹⁵⁰ The public auction for the contract of Angola immediately followed the one for the *asiento*. Although the Crown had already agreed to grant the Angola monopoly to another Portuguese merchant, Fernando Góis da Fonseca, the sudden appearance of Fernandes de Elvas among the candidates, even with an inferior bid (8,000,000 *réis* less per year than his rival), his social capital and reputation was enough to sway the Crown’s decision in his favour over Fernando Góis de Fonseca.⁹⁵¹

Mendonça Muniz, Yllan de Matos (Orgs.), *Edificar e Transgredir: Clero, Religiosidade e Inquisição no espaço ibero-americano (séculos XVI-XIX)* (Jundiaí: Paco Editorial, 2016) pp. 215-236

⁹⁴⁶ Boyajian, *Portuguese Trade in Asia*, pp. 14-9

⁹⁴⁷ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 93-7

⁹⁴⁸ AGI, *Contaduría*, Leg. 261 N^o3, N^o4

⁹⁴⁹ Gonçalves Salvador, *Os magnatas*, 136

⁹⁵⁰ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 58

⁹⁵¹ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, docs. 58, 60

The Habsburgs' decision regarding the lease of the Portuguese monopolies contracts was intertwined with the needs of the Exchequer of the Spanish Monarchy, since the lease of the Angola contract could not be separated from Elvas' proposal for the *asiento*. This decision displays a clear financial link between the royal revenues for the Habsburg Monarchy, even if they belonged to different Crowns. Fernandes de Elvas backed his position and control by assigning his kin as factors to the most important ports of the trade: his son Jorge Fernandes de Elvas together with his brother-in-law Francisco Gomes Solís to Cartagena; his other brother-in-law Jerónimo Rodrigues Solís was sent to Angola to oversee his business from there. By holding the contracts of Cape Verde and Angola, together with the *asiento*, Fernandes de Elvas and his network were in a position to ship more slaves to America than any previous *asentista* ever had (including the Coutinhos).⁹⁵² However, the administration of so many parallel revenues brought with it serious problems. While the Coutinhos had countered the various accusations of financial default and temporary embargos, and always managed to keep their business afloat, Elvas did not have the same success. The multiple accusations of fraud and smuggling in the *asiento* were also extended to include his *contratos* of Cape Verde and Angola, and after a series of investigations into his contracts, the Crown's overseers detected several irregularities and transgressions in Elvas' businesses.⁹⁵³

Despite having a considerable fortune and credibility, and an extensive network of trusted agents across the financial centres of the empire, the vast sums of money needed to cover all his debts were too high, and the delays in the capitalisation of profits prevented Elvas from meeting the terms and conditions of the entirety of his contracts, which would eventually lead to his bankruptcy.⁹⁵⁴ He was arrested in 1620 due to the lack of payments for the contract of Angola, and had to wait for one of his bondsmen, Manuel Gomes d'Elvas, to bail him out.⁹⁵⁵ After his release, Elvas still had to deal with the accusations regarding the administration of his *asiento*. The extensive trial for the removal of the *asiento* (the *quiebra*) coincided with Fernandes de Elvas' sickness, which prevented him from attending the discussions in Madrid and defending himself. He sent the factor Pedro de Toro in his place, to defend his honour and accounts. Elvas was

⁹⁵² Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 50, 70 See also Chapter 4

⁹⁵³ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib. 1552, fls. AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, docs. 62, 71

⁹⁵⁴ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 "Pedro del Toro sobre a quiebra de Antonio Fernandes delvas" (1621)

⁹⁵⁵ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib. 1552

ultimately found guilty of cheating the Crown of large sums of money and was once again sentenced to prison, where he died shortly afterwards.⁹⁵⁶ Despite emulating the strategy of the Coutinhos, Elvas had a complete different result. He lost the monopolies over Africa, his *asiento* was cancelled in 1622, and the Crown sent multiple officers to seize all his goods and estate across the empire. His wife still attempted to contact all his factors in Brazil, Cartagena, Angola, and Cape Verde to gather the goods of her husband and to cover his debts, as well as extending the *asiento* for eight more years, but it was rejected by the Treasury Council and the *Consejo de Indias*.⁹⁵⁷

The monopoly contracts of Angola were therefore directly linked to the *asientos* only on two separate and unique occasions, and both administrations produced vastly different results, with Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho benefitting considerably from this enterprise, and Fernandes de Elvas incurring massive debts, falling into bankruptcy and imprisonment. The *contratadores* of Angola had the opportunity to realise massive profits from the slave trade, but they were also obliged to keep up with a various financial obligations. Should they incur losses for the Treasury, they would face the jurisdictional and financial backlash of the Crown. The business structure of the Angola monopoly is visible in one of the few surviving copies of one of its earlier contracts, which provides a valuable insight regarding the full extent of their jurisdiction. This copy of 1609 was a correction to an earlier contract signed with Duarte Dias Henriques, and printed in a lawsuit over the revenues of Angola between Henriques and Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho.⁹⁵⁸ The contract was initially signed for eight years in 1607 (after the withdrawal of Coutinho) in exchange for 21,000,000 *réis*. However, it was re-signed in 1608 to include the “*resgates do reyno do Congo e Loango*”, that is, the coast of Kongo and Loango, which had previously been included in the São Tomé contract for 4,000,000 *réis* more, totalling 25,000,000 *réis*. The contract contains twenty nine different clauses, stipulating the method of payment, values, duration, as well as rights and obligations of the *contratador*.⁹⁵⁹

⁹⁵⁶ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2795 “Pedro del Toro”

⁹⁵⁷ Peralta Rivera, *El comercio negrero*, pp. 116-8

⁹⁵⁸ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, Lib. 1473, fls. 148-191

⁹⁵⁹ Appendix 2

Figure 12 – Monopoly Contract of Angola signed with Duarte Dias Henriques (1609)



Source: AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, Lib 1473, fls 184-191

The contracts offered a wide variety of benefits for the *contratador*. First and foremost, the main source of income for the leaseholder were the duties paid for each slave leaving Luanda. Dias Henriques could sell *avenças* in the Kingdom or Angola, and register them in a special book given by the Treasury Council. During the first contracts, merchants paid 3,000 *réis* per *peça* exported to Brazil, and 6,000 *réis* for the ones shipped to the ports of Spanish America. The ones sent to Lisbon were taxed at 2,000 apiece. This value would slightly increase during the lease of João Rodrigues Coutinho, which quickly turned into the standard price for most of first half of the seventeenth century, with 4,000 *réis* for Brazil and 7,000 for Spanish America.⁹⁶⁰ Few accounting books from Luanda's factory survive to account for the revenues generated by the *avenças* for the *contratadores*. In 1608, a report by the Council of Portugal noted that more than 80,000,000 *réis* were generated by the *avenças*, although it does not specify any dates.⁹⁶¹ A copy from the factory book of Luanda tracked the number of slaves that departed from

⁹⁶⁰ *Razões do réu Duarte Dias Henriques, contratador, que foi do trato de Angola* (Lisbon: Pedro Craesbeeck, 1619) paras. 25-26

⁹⁶¹ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, Lib 1499, fls. 46-46v "avenças de angola" (9-12-1608)

that port between December 1624 and August 1626, generating the contract 74,044,059 *réis* corresponding to the duties of 17,708 slaves.⁹⁶²

Although the royal duties over the slave exports were the main reason private contractors bid on the Angola monopolies, they could also charge duties over other goods entering or leaving the port – such as ivory –, as well as the commodities used to barter for slaves – like wines, textiles, and metalware. The same factory book recorded earnings around 49,134 *réis* in ivory, and 738,875 *réis* in cloth brought on a ship from Loango. In other words, the contract gave the *contratadores* the monopoly to tax every commodity coming through its ports and adjacent regions. Besides granting the exclusive slave rights over one of the African regions, the *contratos* also entitled their holders to seize a share over the ships caught with neither licences nor *avenças*. In those cases, the *contratador* was entitled to one third of the apprehended cargo's value, while the rest would be directed to the Royal Treasury.⁹⁶³ The *contratadores* could also benefit the members of their entourage, which was a common way to pay their factors and attorneys, granting them the authority to oversee their business on their behalf. In Henriques' contract it is stated that he could send up to six factors to Brazil and two to Angola, who could then sell *avenças* on his behalf, among other things. Finally, the leaseholder themselves could participate in this trade and use their own ships for trade. The ships of the *contratador* and his network of factors and attorneys had rights of precedence in the port of Luanda, and would bypass the long waits in the loading of ships and issuing of the embarkation certificate. The *contratadores* and his factors would also enjoy the protection of the Crown, and with the *contratos* mostly being granted to New Christians, that clause might lead them to invest in this trade as an insurance to safeguard other investments.⁹⁶⁴

Similar to the procedure for the lease of the *asientos*, the *contratadores* were also investigated before their bids were accepted, in order for the Crown to evaluate their chattels, bondsmen, reputation, and collateral. Dias Henriques was obliged to honour the stipulated payments on time, provide securities, pay an initial bond of 25,000 *crúzados*, pledge his estate, offer bondsmen, and not interfere with Luanda's merchants own businesses on Angola's slave fairs. The fulfilment of those contracts was, much like the *asiento*, a massive financial burden for their holders, as they were forced to abide by the

⁹⁶² AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 2, doc. 219

⁹⁶³ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 231

⁹⁶⁴ José Gonçalves Salvador, *Os magnatas do tráfico Negroiro* (São Paulo: Pioneira/Edusp, 1981) pp. 3-11

established deadlines of the contract before they could realise a profit or receive any revenue due to the credit nature of the business.⁹⁶⁵ Unsurprisingly, some of these *contratadores* buckled (or declare insolvency) before they could make a profit, or even cover their initial investment, like Fernandes de Elvas.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, the average value of the Angola contracts would hover between 20,000,000 and 25,000,000 *réis*. Only Henrique Gomes da Costa would break this norm, with an enormous bid of 40,000,000 *réis* in 1624, on which he unsurprisingly failed to keep up the payments.⁹⁶⁶ However, this bid needs to be placed into proper context: It was issued shortly after the end of the campaigns of Vasconcelos (and contemporary with the incursions of João Correia de Sousa in Kongo), which had dramatically increased the volume of the slave trade coming from Angola during the later years. An official report of António Bezerra Fajardo in 1624 evaluated the revenues from Angola's slaves to be somewhere between 60,000,000 and 80,000,000 *réis* – although he included the tributes of the *sobas* in his accounts, valued at 12,000,000 *réis*, which were not included in the contract of Angola. With those figures in mind, it is somewhat understandable that the value of Gomes da Costa's offer far surpassed the average of the first half of the seventeenth century. As previously described, the years between 1616-1626 registered the biggest surge in the volume of slave exports from Angola, and various merchants wanted to secure a share of the profits. The trade attracted an increasing number of investors during this period, and Gomes da Costa was forced to bid almost 15,000,000 *réis* more than his predecessor António Fernandes de Elvas.⁹⁶⁷ The Crown owed a debt of 12,000,000 *réis* to Gomes da Costa for his provision of the fort of Mazagão in North Africa, who possibly used that debt to raise his bid and secure the contract.⁹⁶⁸

The timing for an offer of this magnitude was somewhat unfortunate (June 1623), as his contract would only start in December 1624, the year that the Dutch attacked and took Salvador da Bahia, which created problems in the provision of slaves to Brazil due to the increasing attacks on its shores. The competition of Dutch merchants in Loango and Mpinda was already harming Portuguese slaving ventures in that region, and the

⁹⁶⁵ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 229

⁹⁶⁶ Celme Coelho da Cruz, *O tráfico negreiro da 'costa de Angola', 1580-1640*, (Lisbon: Unpublished Dissertation in History, University of Lisbon, 1966) pp. 14-86

⁹⁶⁷ "Relação de António Bezerra Fajardo" (24-2-1624), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, pp. 205-13

⁹⁶⁸ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, Lib. 1516, f. 98

occupation of such a vital node for the Portuguese slave trade as Brazil was extremely damaging for the Angola slave trade. Gomes da Costa wrote several letters to the Crown, claiming that the trade in Angola “was paralysed”, and that he had suffered massive losses with the aforementioned events, with two of his own slave ships being captured in the Atlantic region. As a result, Henrique Gomes da Costa requested from the King to have his payments remitted due to the considerable losses he registered in the administration of the Angola monopoly, following the conquest of Salvador by the Dutch.⁹⁶⁹

In spite of the serious blow that the loss of Bahia represented for the slave trade, reports from Angola and the Kingdom suggest that the revenues of the slave trade were not severely affected by this attack. Looking at the numbers of Angola’s slave exports during the years of Gomes da Costa’s contract, they display that the trade kept exports in line with those of Vasconcelos’ time (around 18.000 a year, smuggling included) despite the capture of Bahia.⁹⁷⁰ The book of the royal factor of Luanda also attests that the trade kept running during those years, with 75 slave ships having been registered to have left Angola between December 1623 and December 1625, carrying “17,708 *peças de escravos*” to Spanish America and Brazil. Therefore, Luanda dispatched an average of 37.5 ships a year, with the vast majority of them going to Brazil (34), contradicting Gomes da Costa’s claims regarding the complete halt of the trade to justify his lack of payments.⁹⁷¹ His contract was eventually suspended, and Gomes da Costa and his insurers were all arrested in 1629 for failing to honour the contract and not covering their security bonds.⁹⁷²

The decrease in the number of slave exports would only be truly felt at the end of the decade, when the Portuguese had trouble finding African middlemen who could cover the long distances between the coast and the inland slave fairs. The closure of many African slave markets, and their relocation to the hinterland was a result of the depopulation caused by the pillage of Ndongo, which raised the slaves’ prices significantly, and was reflected in their customs’ in Luanda, which doubled in the 1630s.⁹⁷³ The contracts of Angola therefore offered great business opportunities for

⁹⁶⁹ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 2, doc. 166, 198

⁹⁷⁰ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 15 April 2016, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/nN5yFVGL>

⁹⁷¹ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 2, doc. 219

⁹⁷² José Gonçalves Salvador, *Os magnatas do tráfico Negreiro* (São Paulo: Pioneira/Edusp, 1981), pp. 46-7, 114

⁹⁷³ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 2, doc. 242

businessmen, tax-farmers, and slave merchants, but also posed considerable risks. While wealthy merchants backed by multiple capitalists like Dias Henriques, Nunes Correia, and Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho thrived in their careers and fortunes on conclusion of their contracts, others like António Fernandes de Elvas and Henrique Gomes da Costa collapsed in a catastrophic fashion

While it was private entrepreneurship that sustained the Angolan slave trade, the monopoly contracts were absolutely vital for the maintenance of Angola's colonial administration. In the absence of mineral deposits, the deadlock in the war against Ndongo, the enforcement of peace, and the subsequent lack of investment by the Crown meant that Angola's colonial administration had to find a way to sustain itself. The revenues of the slaves' duties deposited in the factory of Luanda were the number one source of income in Angola, and as such, they should cover the Treasury's expenses for the administration, provision, and military apparatus in Luanda. When the *contratos* were farmed out by the monarch, the leaseholders were the ones directly responsible for paying the salaries of the royal officers, which led to countless abuses by the *contradores*, particularly in Cape Verde.⁹⁷⁴ Angola, unlike Cape Verde, was however surrounded by an active and hostile military threat. The Crown could not afford to have its contingent in Angola without provisions, or dependent on private funding. While the monopoly contracts were negotiated and signed in Lisbon, and the fees deposited to the treasurer of the *Casa da Índia*, the Crown made sure to reserve this money to finance the salary of the royal officers and Luanda's administration (together with the revenues generated from Luanda's taxes), as well as to invest in the shipment of troops every time a new Governor took office.⁹⁷⁵

The revenues generated by the lease of the contracts of Angola were still to be used to pay for the administration and military (mostly maintenance) expenses, but the *contratadores* could not deposit actual money in Luanda's factory due to its barter system, and lack of monetary currency. For this reason, special clauses were introduced for the *contratadores* to pay one part of his contracts in Angola and the remainder in the *Casa da Índia* in Lisbon. This was achieved through the payment of the usual fixed lump sum in Lisbon, and the rest of the value would be covered through the shipment of valuable commodities, which would be deposited in Luanda's Treasury. The ratio varied between

⁹⁷⁴ Torrão, "Rotas comerciais", pp. 76-88; Riberio da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 88-92

⁹⁷⁵ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, pp. 28-9, 206-7

contracts. The contract of André Rodrigues Estremoz (1628-1636), valued at 29,000,000 *réis*, required the *contratador* to pay “13,000,000” *réis* in hard currency in the Kingdom, and “16,000,000 in commodities” and *panaria da conquista*, which was a local currency, in Angola.⁹⁷⁶ For the contract of António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1621), from the 24,000,000 *réis* he had to pay to the Crown on a yearly basis, 16,000,000 *réis* should be paid and registered in the Treasury of Angola, and the remaining 8,000,000 in the Kingdom.⁹⁷⁷ This money was absolutely vital to sustain the bureaucratic apparatus and the ‘conquista’ of Angola.

However, some of the *contratadores* refused to pay their leases in commodities levied in Luanda, such as was the case for Duarte Dias Henriques. Despite his contract specifying that his first instalment should be paid in full “to the Treasurer of Angola” in commodities and goods chosen by the Governor, “which will serve to pay the soldiers”, Dias Henriques ordered his factor in Luanda, Manuel Drago, not to register any of the duties as payments in the factory of Luanda.⁹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, it later came to light in a report of the Council of Portugal that he was forced to pay more than 12,500,000 in Angola.⁹⁷⁹ The duties paid on the *avenças* in Luanda were also charged in commodities, and immediately stored in Luanda’s factory to finance the government. The royal factor Salvador Meireles received a payment for a shipment of 328 slaves for the slave ship *Angel de la Guarda* captained by Antonio Andres on 22 June 1621. The total amount of the operation was valued at 1,800,650 *réis*, paid in “panaria and hacienda” in order to pay for the conquest, that is, the military force of Angola.⁹⁸⁰

According to the reports from Crown officials in Angola, the money from the Angola monopolies should be more than enough to finance Angola’s government. The first payment in Angola was supposed to come from the contract of Dias Henriques, as he was ordered to deposit 25,000,000 *reis* in Angola. His factor Manuel Drago gave up his books when threatened with prison time. However, it is not clear if the payment was charged over *avenças* registered in Dias Henriques’ name, or if he indeed shipped that value in tradeable goods.⁹⁸¹ By the time that Manuel Pereira Forjaz had taken office, the

⁹⁷⁶ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, pp. 388-92. See Appendix 2, clause n^o2

⁹⁷⁷ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, p. 225

⁹⁷⁸ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 6

⁹⁷⁹ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib 1516

⁹⁸⁰ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5755 f.78 “Autos de arribada del Navío: el Ángel de la Guarda”

⁹⁸¹ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 6

expenditure of Angola's administration was 11,484,768 *réis*, and in 1614, the expenses of the bureaucratic apparatus, clergy, and 'conquest' amounted to 16,198,000 *réis*. Therefore, the value paid by the *contratador* should (in theory) have covered the expenses of the Royal Treasury in Angola, and the surplus was to be invested in the development of Angola's infrastructure and administration. However, the Crown's project clashed with the private contractor's failure to honour his payments, as Duarte Dias Henriques was already behind on his payments to the Crown in 1614.⁹⁸² From the total sum of 200,000,000 *réis* that Henriques was supposed to pay during the entirety of his contract (eight years), the Treasury had only seen 133,679,894 *réis*. Henriques owed the Crown a grand total of 66,320,160 *réis*. Besides this huge sum, which would have been enough to pay for four years of expenses in Angola, the Treasury in Angola was equally harmed by the personal business and illegal actions of his factor in Luanda, Manuel Drago.⁹⁸³ Another example of a reports detailing the impact of the *contrato* in the budgets of Angola were recorded between 1626 and 1628, after Gomes de Acosta lost his contract, and the Crown's administration of the monopoly generated 31,067,084 *réis*, which sustained the budget of Luanda for some years.⁹⁸⁴

⁹⁸² "Despesas da Fazenda Real em Angola" (6-5-1614), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, pp. 174-6; Delgado, *Historia de Angola*, vol 2 p. 116

⁹⁸³ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1 doc. 12

⁹⁸⁴ BAL, 51-IX-20, fls. 253-253v.

Table 5 – *Contratadores* of Angola and the Crown’s expenditure in Luanda

(1579-1640)

Contract				Expenditure in Angola	
Year	Contratador	Value/Year	Total Paid (Estimate)	Per Year	Total (Estimate)
1579-1587	Royal Administration	~11,000,000	101,159,000		
1587-1593	Pedro de Sevilha and António Lamego	11,000,000	66,000,000 + 8,000,000	5,878,473	35,270,622
1594-1599	João Nunes Correia	-	~126,000,000	-	-
1600-1603	João Rodrigues Coutinho	24,000,000 + 2,600,000 (Congo + Loango)	-	-	-
1604-1607	Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho	24,000,000	-	-	-
1607-1615	Duarte Dias Henriques	21,000,000 + 4,000,000 (Congo + Loango)	200,000,000 (By 1615, only 133,679,894)	11,484,768	91,878,114
1616-1623	António Fernandes de Elvas	24,000,000	Suspended in 1619 (prison)	16,198,000	129,584,000
1624-1630	Henrique Gomes da Costa	40,000,000	Suspended in 1625 (prison)	16,000,000	62,242,700
1628-1636	André Rodrigues de Estremoz	29,000,000	232,000,000	17,000,000	136,485,000
1636-1644	Pedro Ruiz de Abreu	25,000,000	Suspended in 1641 (Dutch occupation)	-	-

Source: Adapted and corrected from Eunice Jorge da Silva, *A Administração de Angola, Século XVII*, vol I (University of Lisbon: M.A. dissertation in History, 1996) p 296; Unpublished personal database

The contracts of Angola that taxed the slave exports were the main source of revenue from this territory. However, there were other sources from which the Crown could draw income to finance the local Treasury and government of Luanda. As previously explained, the collection of the tributes from the local *sobas* was initially in the hands of several individual *amos*. Under Novais, several captains, Jesuits, and government officials received grants with rights over one or more *sobas* and his dependents, and collected an annual tribute from them, mostly in the form of *peças de escravos* (slaves). Manuel Pereira Forjaz was the first Governor successfully to put an end to this system in 1607, and in the process attempted to channel those tributes into Angola's Treasury. Forjaz received orders to record the number of *sobas* under Portuguese vassalage, collect their tributes in slaves, and sell them on Luanda's slave auctions. The income generated by their sale would then be deposited in the Treasury of Angola.⁹⁸⁵ This tribute would be referred to as the *baculamento*.⁹⁸⁶ The Crown instructed the Governors and Crown's judges in Angola to include the proceeds of those tributes in the annual reports on the budget of Angola, and use them to pay the expenses of the governmental apparatus in Luanda. The revenues collected from the *baculamentos* should also be used by Luanda's royal factor to pay the soldiers garrisoned in the city, as well as in the forts of Massagano, Muxima, and Cambambe. The slaves from those tributes could also be sent to São Tomé, and be exchanged for foodstuffs and other necessary commodities to sustain the livelihood of the colony.⁹⁸⁷

After the *Regimento* of Pereira Forjaz, Angola's Governors were instructed to free the *sobas* from the *amos*, establish new 'vassalage' contracts with them, and store their tributes in Angola's Treasury.⁹⁸⁸ In spite of the King's orders and attempts to use the *baculamentos* to finance the Angolan enterprise, the majority of the Governors stole those tributes without declaring anything in Luanda's factory. After 1623, the Governors were ordered to delegate the sale of slaves to the royal factor of Luanda, who would then be in charge of depositing their proceeds in Angola's Treasury.⁹⁸⁹ Besides the interference of venal authorities, the Crown faced another problem in the enforcement of the tributes.

⁹⁸⁵ "Regimento do Governador de Angola" (26-3-1607), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. V, pp. 264-79

⁹⁸⁶ Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes para a História de Angola do século XVII: Memórias, Relações e outros manuscritos da colectânea documental de Fernão de Sousa (1622-1635)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlaag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1985), vol. I, p. 114. See also Chapter 4.3

⁹⁸⁷ BAL, 51-IX-20, fls. 275-78; 331v.-32

⁹⁸⁸ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 437-72

⁹⁸⁹ "Relação de Bezerra Fajardo" (24-02-1624), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, pp. 205-14

When Forjaz arrived in Luanda and abolished the *amos*, not a single *soba* paid tribute during that time. The lack of means to enforce the vassalage agreements, the prohibition of war, combined with the royal instructions to charge those tributes “lightly and without extortion” failed to generate any significant dividends from this revenue to the State during Forjaz’s tenure. Without a military force, the Portuguese could neither enforce this tribute of the *sobas*, nor claim any vassalage links over them. The *baculamentos* could only be enforced through fear, extortion, and violence.

The successful enforcement of the tributes would only occur after the alliance of Bento Banha Cardoso with the *Imbangala*, and the beginning of the new phase of the Portuguese offensive in Africa (1611). During his campaigns in the Hari province, Cardoso subjugated 80 different *sobas* by force, who swore vassalage to the Portuguese and committed to pay their annual tributes in Luanda. Due to Luanda’s colonial apparatus’ lack of means to enforce the tribute of all 80 *sobados*, Cardoso entrusted the collection of tributes to individual Portuguese captains, who swore to deposit them in the Royal Treasury. This was a compromise between the old *amos* and the colonial government of Angola in order to ensure that the tributes were collected at the very least. The first Governor who successfully charged those tributes to the royal treasury appears to have been Fernão de Sousa. Upon his arrival in 1624, special offices were created to oversee the collection of the tributes, such as the *comissário geral dos aforamentos* (leading collector), as well as a scribe and sheriff.⁹⁹⁰

How much did those tributes yield to Angola’s government? In a set of papers exchanged between the President of Portugal’s Council Diogo de Castro and Fernão de Sousa in 1624, the inference is made that each *soba* agreed to pay around 4 *peças* as part of their tributes. This would have resulted in a total of 320 slaves received by Angola’s Treasury from the 80 *sobas* subjugated by Banha Cardoso. Since a slave was usually evaluated at 22,000 *réis* in Luanda in the early seventeenth century, the *baculamentos* should have generated a sum of around 7,040,000 *réis*. In the same instruction to Fernão de Sousa, Diogo de Castro claimed to have received confirmation that Mendes de Vasconcelos’ campaigns resulted in the vassalage of 109 new *sobas*, whose *baculamento* tributes would amount to 436 *peças*, equivalent to a sum around 9,592,000 *réis*, or 25,000 cruzados. To those tributes should be added the ones of the remaining 81 *sobas* of Fernão

⁹⁹⁰ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, pp. 137-9; Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, pp. 267-69

de Sousa (1624-1630), with 320 slaves (worth 17,600 cruzados). Among the tributes were also recorded donations in cattle and foodstuffs worth “3,000 cruzados more” which would all add up to 45,000 *cruzados*, or 18,000,000 *réis*.⁹⁹¹ The total amount generated by *baculamentos* varied over the years, and information regarding their collection is scarce. In 1628, Governor de Sousa noted, in a certificate handed over by the scribe Ruy Pegado to the factor Agostinho Cerqueira Pimentel, that the *baculamentos* had generated 40,116,950 *réis* since his arrival (1624). This meant that over those four years, the *baculamentos* averaged around 10,000,000 *réis*, which was considerably lower than the information about Vasconcelos’ time suggested. Between 1628 and 1630, this tribute generated around 10,418,500 *réis* per year. In 1633, they are estimated to have amounted to somewhere between 12,000,000 and 13,000,000.⁹⁹²

The *baculamentos* appear to have generated a substantial revenue for Angola. However, the values recorded are highly inflated due to their payment being registered in *panos* (cloth), and at times exaggerated. Bento Banha Cardoso (1611-14) claimed that, during his time, the *baculamentos* only amounted to 4,800,000 *réis* instead of the projected 7,000,000.⁹⁹³ A few years later, the overseer António Bezerra Fajardo, in describing the terrible state of the Crown’s Treasury in Angola, noted annual losses “between 12,000 and 13,000 *cruzados* (5.200,000 *réis*)” in the collection of the *baculamentos*. Some of those tributes were not received by the Treasury according to the report of Fajardo, who accused the Governors of Angola of pocketing “the tributes for themselves”, causing great losses for the Treasury of Luanda.⁹⁹⁴ Another problem was the conversion of the value of slaves into *panos*, native cloth made of *Raphia* – raffia palm trees – that functioned as currency on Angola’s inland slave markets, but lost half of its value outside them.⁹⁹⁵ In an anonymous document from 1633 (possibly written by the Crown Judge Fernão Matos de Carvalhosa), the tributes were reported often to be received in “*panos de praça* (...) one of the currencies of the Kingdom”. The author reported that many of the *soba* tributes were paid in different types of cloth, ivory, foodstuffs, and other commodities. The few slaves that were collected from the tributes

⁹⁹¹ BAL, 51-IX-20 fls. 13v.-14v.

⁹⁹² BAL, 51-IX-20 fls. 210v; 253-53v.

⁹⁹³ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, p. 267

⁹⁹⁴ “Relação Bezerra Fajardo”, Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, pp. 205-7

⁹⁹⁵ For instance, a strip of African cloth (*pano*) had a nominal value of 100 *réis*, yet on Angola’s *pumbos*, its market value doubled (200 *réis*). See below

were then sold in an auction, and once again exchanged for *panos*.⁹⁹⁶ Angola's Treasury was eventually overloaded with this commodity in just a few years. Since *panos* were only useful for barter exchanges on Angola's inland markets, they lost half of their value in Luanda's port, and were completely devoid of value outside of Angola.

Based on the aforementioned reports, the importance given to the revenues of the *baculamentos* needs to be taken into account, as their value was lower than initially suggested. Many officials and overseers sought the opportunity to be nominated the *baculador* (collector of the tributes), and use their authority to snatch the slaves from those tributes for themselves. While the *baculamentos* were important for the sustenance of Luanda's administrative apparatus and overall expenses, their revenues were considerably lower than the officially declared values, and vastly inferior to the *contratos* of Angola.

In summary, the colonial monopolies of Angola were vital to finance its local government, as well as supply its 'conquest'. The *contratador* did not pay the salaries of the colonial administration 'directly', but rather through the transfer of necessary goods, foodstuffs, gunpowder, clothing, and anything else that the Governor or the city council might request. The values thereof were decided during the negotiation of the contracts in the Kingdom, and were delivered to the royal treasury factor in Angola by the agents of the *contratador*. *Avenças* paid in Angola were also done in *fazendas* and *panaria*, and recorded in the factory of Luanda. This financed the colonial government. The slave trade, as highlighted in Carvalhosa's report to the King, was in fact the driving force behind this economy. While Angola had other taxable commodities, they would never be enough to cover the Crown's expenses within this territory, nor sustain its presence. In the end, the duties paid over slave exports and the transfers of commodities to Luanda by the *contratadores* ultimately enabled the Government to be self-sustainable. The value of the contracts for Angola accompanied the conquest of Angola, which translated in growing rates on the provision of slaves coming from this territory, and increased the competition between merchants and private investors. Returning to Carvalhosa's report, slave trade enterprises indeed sustained the Monarchy's imperial project in Angola, and the ramifications thereof extended well beyond the different commercial centres of the Atlantic.

⁹⁹⁶ BAL, 51-IX-20, fls 210-12v.

6.2 Transatlantic Slave Networks, Private Ventures, and Angola's Slave Markets

The transatlantic slave trade between Portuguese Africa and Spanish America was officially regulated through the different monopolies of the Iberian empires, both traditionally farmed out to private leaseholders by the Crown. The *asentistas* and the *contratadores* secured the fiscal and juridical mechanisms that controlled the slave trade, and built complex financial enterprises in order to achieve maximum returns from their positions of power, sponsoring multiple slaving enterprises on both sides of the Atlantic. While slave ventures were effectively profitable, the bulk of the profits of the *asentistas* and the *contratadores* was realised in the sale of slave licences, and the collection of custom duties' over slave exports. The *contratadores* and *asientistas* never visited Cape Verde, Angola or Guinea, nor captained the slave ships transporting slaves to Brazil or Spanish America.⁹⁹⁷ Upon grabbing hold of their monopolies, those wealthy entrepreneurs with considerable social capital at the Court built their own networks by choosing economic agents from their personal circle and family, placing them as factors and attorneys in the main ports of the Iberian Atlantic. In turn, those factors and *procuradores* were entrusted with the enforcement and collection of the revenues from the monopolies of their administrators. This was accomplished through the sale of slave licences in the *asientos*, and the sale of *avenças* in the *contratos*, to any individual who wished to undertake a slaving voyage. This mechanism of commercial exploitation in the Iberian slave trade can almost be framed as a pyramid scheme: the King leased the full administration and management of its monopoly to a private contractor, who in turn divided it in smaller lots and sold them to lesser merchants, ship captains, travellers, and sailors who wished to carry slaves from Africa to Spanish America.⁹⁹⁸ Thus, the Iberian slave trade, albeit controlled by the Crown, heavily relied on private initiative to operate. If the leaseholders of the *asientos* and *contratos* profited mostly from the re-sale of their monopoly rights from their offices in Lisbon, Madrid, or Seville, then how did the slave business operate under the official contractors? How were transatlantic slave voyages organised, and how did investors realise profits?

⁹⁹⁷ The case of João Rodrigues Coutinho was a special exception, as his nomination for the governorship was due to a special set of circumstances as seen in Chapters 3 and 5.

⁹⁹⁸ Torrão, "Rotas comerciais", pp. 76-88

Slave merchants and ship captains first had to scout potential partners in Lisbon or Seville, and secure the necessary financial support for their voyages. After fulfilling the preliminary preparations, ship captains would require two different documents: one issued by the Spanish Crown, and the other by the Portuguese. The process of shipping slaves across the Atlantic officially started in one of the designated offices of the *asentista*, where merchants and captains looking to organise a slave venture purchased a *licencia* from the representatives of the *asentista*. Each licence corresponded to one *pieza de esclavos*, or *pieza de Indias* (piece or unit of slaves, *peça* in Portuguese), and was evaluated at 30 *ducados* (or 40 if the payment was deferred until the arrival in America). The ‘*peça*’ or ‘*pieza*’ became a standard unit for slave enterprises, equivalent to an adult and healthy male slave (between fifteen and forty years), while the children, women, old, and unhealthy slaves only accounted for a ‘*meia peça*’ (half piece), or sometimes even a quarter piece for small children and babies (*muleques* and *crías*).⁹⁹⁹ For this reason, the total number of slaves arriving in America would always be superior to the amount of ‘*piezas*’ registered in the accounting books, but the labelling of children, teenagers, and young adults could be adjusted or negotiated with the official overseers upon registration (often through bribery), and therefore reduce their price and increase their numbers. Those licences could be purchased in bulk or individually, and when purchased in smaller numbers, merchants would come together and entrust their licences to a single captain or shipmaster, in order to secure a slave ship and share the costs of the journey.¹⁰⁰⁰

The agents of the *asentista* would agree to sell a number of slave licences to any private agent who would request them through the signing of a script (often called *avenza*), which had to be presented and validated by the judges and officials of the *Casa de la Contratación* in Seville.¹⁰⁰¹ The *Casa* would then issue the second legally required document that was necessary for the slave voyage, a certificate known as *registro* (registry). This certificate would list the number of slaves encompassed in the licence, the ports to which its holder was allowed to sail, the name of the shippers, and the consignees. Royal officials would record the ship and its licences, receive a security bond from the captain or shipmaster, and proceed to inspect the ship three times, a process known as the

⁹⁹⁹ Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, pp. 100-102; Almeida Mendes, “The Foundations” p. 91

¹⁰⁰⁰ Joseph Miller, *Way of Death. Merchant Capitalism in the Angolan Slave Trade 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), pp. 67-8; Herbert Klein, “The Portuguese Slave trade from Angola in the Eighteenth century”, *The Journal of economic History*, nº 32, 1972 pp. 904-5; Almeida Mendes, “The Foundations”, p. 78

¹⁰⁰¹ Not to be confused with the Portuguese *avenças*, which will be expanded upon below.

visita, to make sure that the ship met all the necessary conditions for its voyage. When all conditions were met, the officials of the *Casa de la Contratación* issued a final registry and validated the *registro* that allowed the ships to set sail. This document had to be presented upon arrival in Spanish America to the royal officials in that port and the factor of the *asentista*, who would conduct a visit to the ship together to make sure the actual number of slaves corresponded to the one contained in the licence. The captains and shipmasters would then proceed to pay the factors the deferred payments, as well as the taxes over the slaves. The money would be kept in the *Cajas Reales*, and sent back to the *Casa de la Contratación* in the next annual convoy of the royal fleet.¹⁰⁰²

It was within this strongly supervised legal framework that private merchants ventured in the slave trade to Spanish America. For example, shipmaster Bento (or Benito) de Sepúlveda purchased 200 slave licences from Agustín Pérez, the agent of the *asentista* António Fernandes de Elvas in Seville (1615-1622). Sepúlveda submitted his script to the *Casa de la Contratación*, and after fulfilling all conditions, his ship the *San Francisco* and crew received the needed *registro* and *despacho* from the official of the *Contratación* Gaspar de los Reyes on 28 March 1618. Sepúlveda agreed to sail from Sanlúcar de Barrameda to Angola to collect slaves, and then sail to Veracruz. He began his journey on 8 April 1618, eleven days after receiving the *registro*. Sepúlveda was obliged to pay the licences upon arrival to the royal officials in Veracruz, which should be taxed at 40 *ducados* plus the 30 *reales* for the *aduanilla*, and would amount to 3,204,000 *reales*, or 14,000 *ducados*. Sepúlveda concluded his voyage a year and a half later, arriving in Veracruz on 13 October 1619. Although Sepúlveda claimed to have loaded around 290 slaves in Angola, only 160 were unloaded in Veracruz.¹⁰⁰³

The Spanish archives are rife with documentation illustrating the logistics of these type of voyages, including the registration of ships, number of licences, captains, and methods of payment in Seville or Spanish America. However, they do not offer much information regarding how slaves were acquired in Africa, nor how those captains dealt with the representatives of the African monopolies in those ports. Ship captains looking

¹⁰⁰² Linda Newson, Susie Minchin, *From capture*, pp. 21-4; Marc Eagle, "Chasing the Avença: An investigation of illicit slave trading in Santo Domingo at the end of the Portuguese *asiento* period", *Slavery and abolition: A journal of slave and post-slave studies*, Vol. 35, issue 1, 2014 pp. 99-120; Seijas, *Asian slaves*, pp. 100-101; Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamerica*, pp. 143-4

¹⁰⁰³ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5766, lib. 1, f. 21 "Libros de Asientos de comisiones y contratos y de despachos de naos"; Leg. 2880 (1619); *TSTD*, accessed 30 December 2019, voyage ID 29254

to buy slaves in Africa had to do so through another legal document, a trading license issued by the holder of the colonial monopoly of Angola (or his representatives), authorising the export of slaves upon the payment of their respective royal duties. The *contratadores* were obliged to sell *avenças* to any merchant that requested them. The *avença* was a type of subcontract containing extensive information, including the number of slave captives that could be transported, their respective duties, as well as a pledge between the purchaser of the *avença* (*avençador*) and the *contratador*, who insured the risks of the voyage (fire; shipwreck; pirates) in exchange for a security from the *avençador*, usually a bond or his property. The *avença* was then recorded in the *Casa da Índia*. An *avença* could be paid for upfront in the Kingdom, but was in the majority of cases acquired at the destination port, and issued by the factors of the *contratadores*. This act was once again dependent on the issue of a dispatch certificate in Luanda, which was confirmed after the *avençador* pledged his person and estate and guaranteed that he would take the stipulated number of slaves at a rate of 4,000 *réis* for Brazil or 7,000 *réis* for Spanish America, and pay their duties there.¹⁰⁰⁴

The payment of an *avença* in the Kingdom would exempt the *avençador* from paying the slave duties in Africa. The *avenças* could also be changed and re-written from port to port, and after purchase, they could even be re-sold and change owner. In 1617, the captain Estevão Pais had used his connections to purchase an *avença* for 100 slave licenses to be picked up along the ‘Rivers of Guinea’. For some unknown reason, Pais did not use the *avença*, rather selling it to another merchant (Francisco Gomes de Sardinha) some months later, at the price of 6,300 *réis* for each licence, totalling 630,000 *réis*.¹⁰⁰⁵ The number of slaves could be specified upon purchase in Lisbon, like the aforementioned Estevão Pais who registered 100 licences in the *avença*, or they could be determined later in Luanda in case the captains or merchants did not know how many slaves they could purchase for their shipments. In a shipping contract between the merchant Francisco Ferreira and the captain of the vessel *Espirito Santo*, Francisco Gomes, the captain received instructions from the shipper to depart from Lisbon, register the ship in either Seville or Cádiz, and take his wine cargo to trade for “peças da Índia (slaves) and *panos*, which is the currency of the land”. Since Francisco Ferreira was paying the transportation of wines in tonnage, he had no idea how many slaves his cargo

¹⁰⁰⁴ Eagle, “Chasing the *avença*”; Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 90-2

¹⁰⁰⁵ ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa*, n^o2, Cx. 22, liv. 111, f. 129-131

would be worth. Therefore, the captain Francisco Gomes was only able to ask for an *avença* to be issued after landing in Luanda.¹⁰⁰⁶

In Luanda, merchants could choose to pay for the *avença* in local currency, usually through commodities and *panaria* to support the ‘conquista’, or defer the payment to Brazil or Spanish America, to an agent of the *contratador*. The previously mentioned Antonio Andrés, ship captain of the *Angel de la Guarda*, signed an *avença* with the factor of the *contratador* of Luanda, Gonçalo Nunes de Sepúlveda, in June 1620. The ship had arrived from Seville, and was bound for New Spain. Antonio Andrés pledged to pay the value of the 50 slaves contained in the *avença* issued by Sepúlveda to the factor of the *contratador* Fernandes de Elvas in New Spain, at the rate of 7,000 *réis* per slave. The extensive document contained numerous pledges by the *avençador*, including the formulation of a second *avença*, stipulating that Andrés would pay for some of the slaves in Luanda with the commodities brought in his ship. The certificate was issued in the presence of the scribe of the factory of Luanda (Ruy Pegado), Sepulveda (factor of the *contratador*), Salvador Meireles (royal factor), and Francisco de Alfaia Ferreira, in charge of branding the slaves.¹⁰⁰⁷

The different stages of a slave voyage effectively required investors and slave captains to deal with different Portuguese and Spanish bureaucracies, as well as their respective fiscal administrations and colonial authorities. Transatlantic slave voyages illustrate the nature and extent of this complex business, the operation of which had to be linked between multiple points across the Atlantic. An example of the logistics behind this process can be seen in the voyage of Jorge Leitão de Sousa. His slave ship, the *Nuestra Señora de Guía y Santo Antônio*, arrived with a slave cargo at the port of San Juan de Ulúa in Veracruz on 26 September 1621. However, the journey had begun way back in January 1618 in Seville, in the offices of the *asentista* António Fernandes de Elvas. Shipmaster and captain Jorge Leitão de Sousa (or Leitón de Sosa) had begun preparations for his transatlantic voyage by signing a script with Agustín Pérez, attorney and representative of the *asentista* in Seville, for the purchase of a license that granted the right to ship 280 ‘slave pieces’ from Angola to Spanish America. Following his acquisition of the *licencia*, Leitão presented the script and payments to the judges of the *Casa de la Contratación*, who issued a certificate validating the document signed with

¹⁰⁰⁶ ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa*, nº2, Cx. 23, liv. 116, f. 4-6

¹⁰⁰⁷ AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5755 fls. 50v-78

Agustín Perez. The *Nuestra Señora de Guía y Santo Antônio* was inspected three times by the officers of the *Contratación*, in order to ensure that the ship fulfilled the conditions and possessed the necessary equipment for the voyage. The inspector recorded the size of the crew, and collected a bond from the sailors to ensure their return to the Kingdom. Once all conditions were met, the ship received a document (*auto*) validating the ship's *registro*, which listed the approved destination(s) in America, the vessel and the captain's names, the number of slaves to ship, their respective duties, and the names of the investors. The *registro* would later be presented to the Spanish Treasury officials upon arrival in Spanish America.¹⁰⁰⁸

Once the bureaucratic process was concluded, Leitão de Sousa could finally set sail to Angola, which he did from the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda on 19 March 1620, two whole years after his initial acquisition of the slave license from Agustín Perez. The voyage to Angola would last somewhere between three and four months. Ships would often anchor in Luanda for long periods of time while acquiring their slave cargos, and wait for the better sailing winds after September and October.¹⁰⁰⁹ After spending some time in Luanda acquiring the slaves permitted in his *licencia*, Captain Leitão de Sousa signed yet another official document, the *avença* this time. Due to the lawsuit between the holder of the colonial contract of Angola António Fernandes de Elvas and the Crown at the time, Jorge Leitão negotiated the *avença* with the King's factor in Luanda, Salvador Meireles. Leitão de Sousa presented the *avença* to the *Provedor da Fazenda* (Royal official accountant) of Luanda, Captain Paio Ruiz de Araújo, who inspected the cargo and issued a *certidão de despacho* (embarkation certificate), clearing the vessel to depart from Luanda towards Spanish America. It is not clear when the *Nuestra Señora de Guía y Santo Antônio* left Angola, but Leitão de Sousa surely took some time acquiring all the 280 slaves included in his license. Luanda's bay often hosted more than twenty ships at a time, which delayed the collection of different cargos and spurred competition between impatient captains and merchants in Luanda's slave auctions.¹⁰¹⁰ Leitão's arrival in

¹⁰⁰⁸ A great number of this type of documents can be found in AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5766 "Libros de asientos de comisiones y contratos y despachos de naos"

¹⁰⁰⁹ Frédéric Mauro, *Portugal, o Brasil, e o Atlântico: 1570-1670*, vol I (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1989) pp. 111-115

¹⁰¹⁰ Arlindo Caldeira, "Angola and the seventeenth-century South Atlantic Trade", David Richardson, Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Eds.), *Networks and Trans-cultural Exchange. Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) pp. 135-6

Veracruz a full year and a half after departing from Sanlúcar appears to confirm this scenario.

Voyages from Luanda to Cartagena lasted sometime between thirty-five and fifty days, and up to two or three weeks more for Veracruz.¹⁰¹¹ However, Leitão's trip lasted longer than the average sailing ventures from Angola to Spanish America. The official inspection of Leitão's voyage by the royal officials of the Treasury of New Spain uncovered that the ship had not sailed directly to the port indicated in the *registro*. Information was received that the vessel had been sighted close to Campeche on 27 August 1621, a full month before landing in Veracruz. The detour was part of a series of illegal stopovers to smuggle slaves to the different ports of the Spanish Caribbean. It turned out that Leitão was carrying more than just the 280 slaves he was legally entitled to. His visit to forbidden ports was a common strategy among smugglers to offload additional cargo and avoid the payment of extra duties and taxes, as well as acquire higher profit margins. The royal officials of Veracruz detected irregularities in Leitão's *registro*, and their investigation revealed that the *Nuestra Señora de Guía y Santo Antônio* had unloaded some slaves in Jamaica prior to delivering its shipment of 288 slaves to its final stop in Veracruz, on 26 September 1621.¹⁰¹²

Jorge Leitão de Sousa's voyage, although registering some problems at its final destination stemming from smuggling activities, attests to the highly complex bureaucracy that marked the Iberian slave trade during the Union of Crowns (1580-1640). Leitão had to pay for a legal permit issued by the Spanish Crown (and negotiated with a third party contractor) in order to ship slaves to Mexico, while submitting his ship to an extensive control by the Crown's institution responsible for organising its colonial trade, the *Casa de la Contratación*. In Angola, Leitão had to submit to another local inspection, and pay taxes over the slaves he purchased, this time pertaining to the Portuguese Crown's monopoly over the region (again, through a contract holder). Finally, in Veracruz, the captain had to pay yet more taxes over the cargo he unloaded in the New World (the *almojarifazgo*, *alcabala*, *água de Turbaco*, *cimarronaje*, and etc).¹⁰¹³

¹⁰¹¹ Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, pp. 148-151; Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, *Urban Slavery in colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531-1706* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018) p. 114

¹⁰¹² AGI, *Contratación*, Leg. 5755 "Autos denuncias y arribas de esclavos" (1621); Contaduría, Leg. 883. Additional information on Jorge Leitão de Sousa's voyage can be found in TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 24 May 2018, voyage ID 29272

¹⁰¹³ Newson, Minchin, *From capture to sale*, pp. 71, 216-8

Transatlantic Slave Ventures: From Lisbon to Angola to Spanish America

Slave merchants looking to do business in Spanish America had to register their ships in Seville with the officials of the House of Trade to validate their licence until at least 1623, when a Decree enabled dispatch from Lisbon.¹⁰¹⁴ After receiving the *registro*, most ships would return to Lisbon to load the cargo, or depart to the Atlantic Archipelagos in Madeira or the Canary Islands and purchase commodities there. Luis Henrique Reinel, *armador* (freighter) and shipmaster of the *São Francisco*, began preparations to sail to Angola to purchase slaves, and sell them in Cartagena or Veracruz afterwards. In order to accomplish his goal, Henrique Reinel took loans from several investors interested in sponsoring the voyage. One of those investors was Luis Nunes de Sousa, who participated in the *armação* (rigging) with 80,000 *réis*. He instructed Reinel to invest the money into *fazendas* (commodities) and carry them to Angola, where he should exchange them for “good slave pieces”. According to Nunes de Sousa, the value of the cargo should be enough to purchase four slaves. Reinel should hand them over to Captain Duarte de Leão in Cartagena, or to Captain Mendes da Costa if he ended up sailing for Veracruz.¹⁰¹⁵ Henrique Reinel completed his journey two years later, choosing Veracruz as the destination.¹⁰¹⁶ The notarial records of Lisbon’s National Archives (ANTT) are filled with this type of contract, as well as with valuable information regarding the outfitting, financing, and overall functioning of transatlantic slaving voyages. Based on a sample collected from 134 different type of notarial acts recounting the preparation of slave voyages for Angola between 1584 and 1639, some patterns regarding the structure, financing, and overall organisation of slaving ventures trade become clearer. The sample is gathered from different notarial records from three different sections of the *Cartórios de Lisboa*. (Appendix 4). This data was complemented by the valuable appendix published by Leonor Freire Costa, with the ships she identified as sailing to Angola being included here.¹⁰¹⁷ Many of those voyages can be cross-checked with the *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* for an even clearer picture of this trans-imperial enterprise.

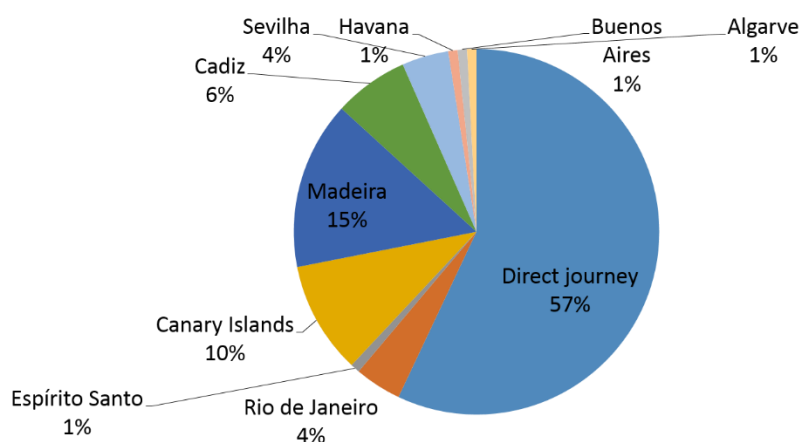
¹⁰¹⁴ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamerica*, p. 51

¹⁰¹⁵ ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa*, nº2, Cx. 24, liv. 119. f. 25

¹⁰¹⁶ TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 14 May 2019, voyage ID 29276

¹⁰¹⁷ ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa*, Nº1 (Cx. 1); Nº2 (Cxs. 16, 17, 22-24, 28-30); Nº15 (Cxs 42, 48, 49; Leonor Freire Costa, *O Transporte no Atlântico e a Companhia Geral do Comércio do Brasil (1580-1663)*,

Figure 13 – Ports of Call for Inbound Angola Voyages (1584-1639)



Source: ANTT, Cartório Notarial de Lisboa, Nº1 (Cx. 1); Nº2 (Cxs. 16, 17, 22-24, 28-30); Nº15 (Cxs. 42, 48, 49); Costa, *O Transporte*, vol 2 apêndice

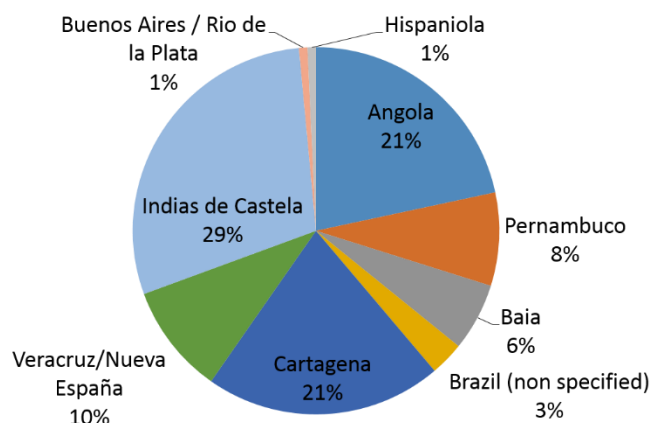
From this sample, it is possible to infer that the majority of ships loaded their cargo in the port where the notarial deed took place (Lisbon in most cases) before sailing to Angola. Alternatively, ships would anchor in other ports of the Atlantic to load other types of cargo before sailing to Africa, mainly in the Atlantic archipelagos of Madeira or the Canary Islands. The brothers Álvaro and Domingos de Matos specialised in those type of journeys, receiving commissions to load mostly wines in Madeira, and from there sail to Luanda, where they were exchanged for slaves. The slaves were then carried to the ports of Spanish America, and the profits from this enterprise were entrusted to the agents who had financed the initial voyage.¹⁰¹⁸ They would later receive the proceeds of their investments back in Lisbon through bills of exchange or credit, or in silver and precious stones in Seville. In the majority of the notarial acts, the designated agents and collectors of the profits of the enterprise in America were the same people. Andrés de Acosta and João de Betancor were commonly named as receivers in New Spain, while Duarte de Lião and the Gramaxo family (Jorge and Antonio) featured for Cartagena. The credit,

vol. 2 apêndice (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as comemorações dos descobrimentos Portugueses) 2002

¹⁰¹⁸ ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa*, nº2, Cx. 24, liv. 116. f. 104

reputation, and wealth of those merchants in those territories led many of the individual merchants organising trips from Lisbon to elect them as their attorneys and collectors.¹⁰¹⁹

Figure 14 - Final Intended Destination of Vessels Contracted to sail to Angola (1584-1639)



Source: ANTT, Cartório Notarial de Lisboa, Nº1 (Cx. 1); Nº2 (Cxs. 16, 17, 22-24, 28-30); Nº15 (Cxs 42, 48, 49); Costa, *O Transporte*, vol 2 apêndice

Another pattern that emerges from this sample, is the declared destination of Angolan voyages. Brazil features in less than 20 per cent of the ships sailing for Angola from Lisbon and Seville, while Spanish America occupies more than 50 per cent of that total. This sample gives more credibility to the earlier assessment of the volume of the transatlantic slave trade, and how the Spanish American market, rather than Brazil, was effectively the driving force behind the increasing volume of transatlantic slave voyages during the Union of Crowns.¹⁰²⁰ However, it is equally important to acknowledge that most of the Brazilian trade was conducted through bilateral, rather than triangular exchanges. Those ships would secure connections in the South Atlantic, and create a whole new economic system. As such, they do not feature in Lisbon's protocols. Some of those voyages can be observed in personal bills of exchange and merchant accounts, such as the one left behind by the commercial society between the private merchant João

¹⁰¹⁹ This type of credit operations, business associations, and commercial ventures in the overseas settings is brilliantly explained in Torrão, "Rotas comerciais", pp. 17-124. For the networks of Portuguese merchants in Spanish America, see Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea*.

¹⁰²⁰ Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 259-70. See chapter 4.

de Argomedo and Angola's government official Pereira Forjaz (1607-1611). An accounting list details various bills passed on merchants taking slaves from Angola to both Brazil and Spanish America, whose total operation costs rose to 16,699,752 réis. The majority of those voyages can be found in neither the *cartorios* of Lisbon, nor the TSTD database.¹⁰²¹

The slave voyages from Lisbon were either commissioned by commercial companies who shared costs of operation, organised through the advancement of credit by one big financier, or by several merchants grouping their individual investments in the chartering of a single ship. In April 1619, Captain Sebastião Vaz de Azevedo, shipmaster of the *Nossa Senhora da Piedade*, inbound for Angola (and then Cartagena or Veracruz), received several consignments and credit from various merchants to prepare his voyage. Duarte Coronel Henriques provided 410,000 réis so that Azevedo could invest them in commodities to take to Angola, which he was expected to convert into at least eleven slaves. Those captives were to be carried to, and sold in the Americas, the profits of which were to be delivered to Coronel's attorneys in Cartagena or Veracruz.¹⁰²² During the preparation for the voyage, the *Nossa Senhora da Piedade* was contracted to acquire slaves on Luanda's markets and take them to Spanish America for a total of four times over the course of a single month, all by different merchants and investors, with each offering different sums of money and different commodities. The other notarial acts were signed with Nicolau de Castilho, Manuel Drago, and João de Argomedo. Thus, one ship had various investors, who often had different stakes in the same voyage.¹⁰²³

The last of the aforementioned merchants featured prominently in many of the contracts from the sample collected. Argomedo's slaving enterprise with Captain Sebastião Vaz de Azevedo fuelled one of the largest slaving networks of New Spain. The latter carried several slaves to Veracruz together with another brother (Luis Vaz de Azevedo). Upon unloading the slaves in that port, they were collected by another family member, António Vaz de Azevedo, *encomendero de negros*, who then carried slaves from the ports of New Spain to the urban slave markets, such as the one in Mexico City. In this city resided the head of the family, Simão Vaz, also known as Simão Vaaz de Sevilha, one of the wealthiest Portuguese New Christian merchants in America. Their slaving

¹⁰²¹ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 17

¹⁰²² ANTT, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa*, nº2, Cx. 24, liv 116, fls. 35-8

¹⁰²³ *Ibid*, fls 27, 44, 53

enterprise in New Spain mixed various colonial commodities and overseas trades with other Lusophone merchants, including cacao from Venezuela, European textiles, pearls, silver, and of course Angolan slaves.¹⁰²⁴

Besides his links to Veracruz, João de Argomedo participated in a wide array of business ventures. The documentation in the notarial records showcases the massive international network of Argomedo, whose business spread through Seville, Madrid, and Antwerp (credit), Tenerife, Porto, Olinda and Bahia (sugar), and Cacheu, Havana, Porto Rico, Bahia, Cartagena, and of course Luanda (slaves).¹⁰²⁵ João de Argomedo was also the merchant who established the aforementioned commercial society with one of Angola's Governor's, Manuel Pereira Forjaz. Their three-year business venture included the shipment of wines and other commodities by Argomedo from Lisbon, and their conversion into slave pieces by the Governor, the duties over which would be paid in Brazil and Spanish America. The commercial society appointed factors in different ports of the Atlantic, including Cartagena (Jorge Fernandes Gramaxo, Luis Alvares Caldeira and Duarte de Lião), New Spain (Alvaro Ruiz de Azevedo and Andres da Costa), Bahia (Julio de Moura), and Pernambuco (Manuel Lopes Correa).¹⁰²⁶

In Luanda, João de Argomedo not only counted on the ability of the Governor to gather slaves in the port, but also on a private factor specifically placed in the port to acquire slaves for him. Between 1609 and 1611, Francisco de Mar acted as a slave broker in Luanda for various merchants seeking to acquire slaves. In his extensive letters to João de Argomedo, de Mar informed his employer about which commodities to send to Luanda in order to get the best possible prices. Francisco de Mar requested wine from the Canary Islands, and *palmillas* and *cacheras* (cloth and textiles) from Spain. The most important commodity requested by the factor were *beirames*, cloth from India that was highly esteemed on the African markets (*pumbos*). He advised against the importation of cowries (used as currency on the inland markets) and flour and salt, which were far from profitable in cross-cultural trade. Although De Mar admitted that he did not visit the *pumbos*

¹⁰²⁴ Antonio Garcia de León, "La malla inconclusa. Veracruz y los circuitos comerciales lusitanos en la primera mitad del siglo XVII", Antonio Ibarra, Guillermina del Valle (Coords.), *Redes Sociales e instituciones comerciales en el imperio español, siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/UNAM, 2007) pp. 41-83; Norma Castillo Palma, "La trata negrera, sus redes mercantiles portuguesas y estrategias de negocios en Nueva España durante el siglo XVII: una visión comparada", *Trashumante. Revista Americana de Historia Social*, vol. 10 (2017) pp. 126-47

¹⁰²⁵ Appendix 4

¹⁰²⁶ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1 doc. 19

himself, he listed various ships that had sailed thanks to slaves brokered by him with other local intermediaries. De Mar recounted some difficulties in collecting sufficient slaves in Luanda in 1609, but insisted that Argomedo send him wines and the *beirames* anyway, “because no other commodities are as requested as those” as soon as there were slaves for sale, they would immediately be sold for those commodities. As seen in Francisco de Mar’s accounts, merchants visiting Luanda not only had to charter voyages, load ships and pay licences, but also had to purchase the slaves themselves. De Mar’s extensive account of Luanda’s slave market provides a colourful portrait of the way slave trafficking was conducted in that port, naming several of Luanda’s other brokers and slave captains by name, and describing their respective shipments.¹⁰²⁷

Other brokers and intermediaries like Francisco de Mar lived in Luanda and acquired slaves through different methods and strategies. Angolan slaves were mostly acquired by three different means. The first and most obvious one was warfare. The relationship between the Portuguese military enterprises in Angola and the consequent capture of prisoners of war to be later sold as slaves across the Atlantic has been explored in the previous chapters, as well as the alliance with local groups like the *Imbangala* for the plunder and enslavement of the Mbundu and its neighbouring people. Warfare as a means of acquiring slaves was mostly profitable for the Governor and the *capitães-mores* participating in the raids into Angola’s interior, who would personally take dividends from their capture. The Governors also appropriated some of the Crown’s taxes such as the tithe, which allowed them to collect one out of every ten slaves sold in Luanda’s auctions. The soldiers would often keep some of the slaves for themselves.¹⁰²⁸ However, barring some exceptional circumstances, the Portuguese could rarely afford systematically to engage in warfare, and had to rely on local alliances with local elites or free Africans who served as auxiliaries to the Portuguese (*quimbares*) with their own armies. They were known as *Guerra Preta*, and helped the Portuguese in capturing slaves.¹⁰²⁹ Those alliances in turn had to be properly rewarded, with the African elites often requesting costly commodities, slaves, and land. Although clearly profitable for certain individuals (mostly captains, soldiers, and governors), capture through warfare, and subsequent moving of considerable numbers of slaves to Luanda’s port, represented

¹⁰²⁷ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1 docs. 5, 17, 18, 19

¹⁰²⁸ “Carta de Baltasar Rebelo de Aragão” (1618), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, pp. 332-343

¹⁰²⁹ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, vol. I, pp. 121-9

“a relatively small part” of the total amount of slaves exported from Angola according to Beatrix Heintze.¹⁰³⁰

The second method was tributes. As seen in the previous section regarding the *baculamentos*, the numbers of slaves acquired through tributes looked promising on paper considering the number of subjugated *sobas*. However, due to the abuses of the venal authorities and Angola’s Governors, the Crown could not properly tap into the true potential of those tributes. The rising pressure to acquire more slaves for the market of Luanda led many *sobas* to be unable to pay their shares, and cover most of the value of the slaves with commodities and *panos*. When threatened, many chose to abandon their homes, and relocate further into the hinterland. At the same time, projects and *arbitrios* arriving at Court (such as the one of Garcia Mendes) with clear intentions of benefiting from the decisions and take a share of the profits tend to be highly exaggerated. A report of 1630 claimed that the *baculamentos* should generate 698 slaves per year, but as seen, the Treasury could not even collect more than 10,000,000 *réis* from those tributes (less than 455 slaves). The number of slaves acquired through the tributes was extremely irregular as a result.¹⁰³¹

The third method to acquire enslaved Africans, was commerce. The rising demand for slaves, and the limitations on warfare imposed by the Crown in a first stage, and the increasing supply on the African *pumbos* after the proliferation of war prisoners from the fallout with Ndongo and the civil war in Kongo, motivated the merchants to find new routes and markets to acquire slaves. Portuguese merchants established extensive commercial routes deep into the hinterland, supported by Luso-African networks, linking Luanda to Ndongo and its inner markets, reaching as far as Mbata, Soyo, Loango, Mayumba, and the south of Dande River.¹⁰³² On the African slave fairs (*pumbos*), the Portuguese could negotiate for slaves thanks to the vassalage agreements with the *sobas*. There was at least one fair in every *sobado*, and besides those regional fairs, there were other markets on a supra-regional level. African merchants were instructed by their own *sobas* and leaders to visit those markets and sell slaves there, travelling considerable distances in the process.¹⁰³³ They were called the *pumbeiros* (or *pombeiros*), free African

¹⁰³⁰ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 491-504

¹⁰³¹ Heintze, *Angola*, p. 377

¹⁰³² Rosa Cruz e Silva, “As Feiras do Ndongo. A Outra Vertente do Comércio no Século XVII,” *Actas do Seminário ‘Encontro de povos e culturas em Angola’ Luanda, 3 a 6 de Abril de 1995* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, 1997), pp. 405-22

¹⁰³³ Caldeira, “Angola and the seventeenth-century”, p. 115-16

intermediaries and middlemen, who visited the various *pumbos* in the interior of Angola, Malemba, and Matamba, as well as the Portuguese forts along the Kwanza and Luanda. The purchase of slaves on Angola's slave fairs through the use of the *pumbeiro* slave networks was vital to supply of the Atlantic slave trade.¹⁰³⁴ The Portuguese experienced difficulties not only with the lengthy journeys inland, but also because many of those fairs were neutral zones at which the presence of "white-men" was strictly forbidden. Should official authorities interfere or abuse the trade on those fairs, the Africans would abandon the market, and force any Europeans to travel further inland.¹⁰³⁵ The *pumbeiros* were entrusted with the merchandise of Luanda's traders, carrying it on very long journeys to the interior markets, where they used it to barter for slaves on the trader's behalf. These trips would often take years. The Portuguese also appointed their own middlemen, often *mestiços* and Luso-Africans agents residing in Luanda, called *comissários* and *aviadores*. The presence of those "dressed blacks" on those fairs was later prohibited by Governor de Sousa.¹⁰³⁶

Commercial transactions were conducted through barter exchanges in Africa. The absence of a local monetary currency led the Europeans to trade in commodities, even while keeping track of their pricing and market value. The commodities were evaluated by the Europeans according to their value in *réis*, whereas the African slave dealers on the inner fairs sought an equivalence in the goods exchanged in those transactions, regardless of their monetary value for the Europeans.¹⁰³⁷ For the trade of slaves on the slave markets, African agents requested European commodities such as wines from the Canary Islands and Madeira, metalware, woolen cloths, Indian textiles, beads, iron, or luxury products. Ultimately, they would take African currency.¹⁰³⁸ African currency consisted of small shells called *nzimbu* (*Olivancillaria nana*), which were the preferred payment method on the slave fairs and inner circuits of the African continent. Alternatively, they dealt with small palm fibre cloths produced in Kongo or Loango, the already alluded to *panos*, *panaria* or *infulas*, the local currency of Angola. The value of

¹⁰³⁴ Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 60-66

¹⁰³⁵ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 473-492

¹⁰³⁶ Maria da Conceição Gomes Pereira, "As Feiras – Sua importância no contexto comercial de Angola. Sécs XV a XIX," *Africana: Revista da Universidade Portucalense*, vol. 6 (1990) pp. 211-23; Ribeiro da Silva, *Dutch and Portuguese*, pp. 201-32

¹⁰³⁷ Rodney, *Upper Guinea Coast*, pp. 191-2

¹⁰³⁸ "Informação da Mina" (29-9-1572), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. III, pp. 89-113 [105-6]

those currencies was unstable, and the value of the commodities exchanged was often arbitrary at the different fairs.¹⁰³⁹

According to Pedro de Sardinha, a clerk in Angola, the *nzimbu* was a shell fished for on the island of Luanda: it “was the coin of greatest value in the Kingdom of Kongo”. Despite conceding the island of Luanda to the Portuguese, the *Manikongo* retained the rights to the fishing of the *nzimbu* shells, the income of which was as important to the *Manikongo* “as the mines of Potosi in Peru” for Phillip III.¹⁰⁴⁰ One *kofo* (African measurement unit equivalent to a basket) of *nzimbu* was worth around 13,000 *réis* in Kongo in 1540. However, the *nzimbu* lost a lot of its value when a similar shellfish was found on the shores of Brazil and was brought to Africa and the port of Mpinda by private merchants in great quantities, which completely deregulated its market value.¹⁰⁴¹ While one *kofo* of *nzimbu* was still appraised at 10,000 *réis* in 1615, by 1622, it was only worth around 2,000, registering a devaluation of 80 per cent in its value in just seven years.¹⁰⁴² The Bishop of Angola Manuel Baptista Soares, actively involved in the slave trade, received a payment from the *Manikongos* in *nzimbus*. Although the bishop and the rulers of Kongo clashed multiple times over the years, they diligently worked together to stop the influx of Brazilian shells by the Portuguese merchants, since the Bishop’s fortune would be lost (as it eventually was), should a commodity used in a barter economy lose its value.¹⁰⁴³

The *panos* were of a different nature, and held a different value. The Portuguese had to import those *panos* from Kongo and Loango to trade on Angola’s markets. According to the memorandum of Sardinha, the *panos* from Kongo could be distinguished as *pintados* (640 *réis* each), *songas* (200 *réis*) and *meio cundes* (100 *réis*). The *panos* from Kongo that entered Angola every year were estimated to cost around 20,000,000 *réis* total in 1611. The *panos* from Loango, on the other hand, were often distinguished between *enxulas*, which were acquired via contract (200 *réis* each), and *ensacas* (1,200 *réis*). Sardinha named other commodities used on the African *pumbos*,

¹⁰³⁹ Adriano Parreira, *Economia e Sociedade em Angola na Época da Rainha Jinga (Século XVII)* (Lisbon: Estampa, 1990) pp. 82-5, 115-17

¹⁰⁴⁰ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 21

¹⁰⁴¹ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 256-8

¹⁰⁴² “Carta do Rei do Congo a D. Filipe II” (23-10-1615), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VI, pp. 230-3; “Carta do Rei do Congo a Gregório XV” (1622), *Ibid*, vol. VII, pp. 51-3

¹⁰⁴³ Rodrigues, *Do Reino a Angola*, pp. 66-92

such as *Xingas* (elephant tail), another red cloth named *tacula*, salt, and the *ozembo* or *nzimbu*.

The discrepancy in the value of certain items between the Europeans and Africans completely changed the market price of certain commodities in Angola in comparison to rest of the empire. Since Europeans aimed to profit from price differentials rather than commodities of equal value, they would invest their money in items that had a high market value in Africa, but little outside of it. The institution of two commodities as stable units of measurement helped to regulate the trade, but resulted in different pricings due to their different evaluation by Europeans and Africans. The first commodity was the most stable and universally valued: the slave, or the *peça da Índia*. The trade in *peças* was always well regarded, since slaves were constantly in demand by both Europeans and Africans, and their price was always high due to its constant demand from transatlantic markets.¹⁰⁴⁴ The other established unit was the *pano*. The *pano* (piece of cloth) was evaluated at the standard measure of one by two metres.¹⁰⁴⁵ Mostly obtained in Loango, deriving the name *panaria* or *panos libongos* from that region, they could also be called *Infula*. Consisting mostly of cloths made up of indigenous palm fibre, only Africans used them as clothing, while the Portuguese used them exclusively as currency in the slave trade.¹⁰⁴⁶ Whereas the *pano* had a less fluctuating market value than the *nzimbu*, it was also problematic because of the different exchange rates in Angola in regard to the Portuguese currency (the *real*).

The first commodity (slave pieces) translated into the nominal value, and was used in official commercial transactions and in the calculation of the Crown's revenues. This was known as the strong currency in Luanda, called *bom dinheiro*), or *peças da Índia*. It was associated with slaves because they retained their value on both the Angolan and any other Atlantic markets, which enabled the actual transfer and conversion of large sums of money from Luanda.¹⁰⁴⁷ The second one (cloth) was the unofficial currency, and corresponded to the *pano*'s market value and purchasing power in Angola (*dinheiro corrente*). The *pano*, unlike the *peças*, did not carry the same value for Portuguese transactions, as it was not convertible as a unit of exchange outside of Angola or West

¹⁰⁴⁴ BAL, 51-IX-20, ff. 493-4

¹⁰⁴⁵ Newson, Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, p. 38

¹⁰⁴⁶ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. 1, p. 118

¹⁰⁴⁷ BAL, 51-IX-20 f. 222v.

Africa. As an example, one *pano* would have a nominal value of 200 *réis* in Angola, but its actual market value in Luanda would only amount to 100 *réis*.¹⁰⁴⁸

As Angola was a barter economy with no actual monetary currency, and the strongest currency - the *peças de escravos* - were shipped to the ports of Brazil and Spanish America, the *panos* were adopted as the standard unit of currency used in the payment of the salaries of Luanda's administration. Due to the absence of a metallic currency with which to secure transactions, over the years, the factory of Luanda was filled with countless *panos*, "which only [held] value in this Kingdom".¹⁰⁴⁹ A royal official whose salary was fixed at 1,000 *réis* in Portugal would receive five *panos* (two hundred times five) on Angola's slave markets due to the conversion rate. However, those five *panos* would only amount to five hundred *réis* in Luanda, losing the official money purchasing power in the port. Those inconsistencies translated to an actual loss of one hundred per cent in the value of transactions outside of Angola.¹⁰⁵⁰ As for the trade of *panos* for slaves, one slave was valued at 120 *panos*.¹⁰⁵¹ This exchange rate brought countless problems, since the official rate (*bom dinheiro*) was used to calculate revenues of the Crown, and the other rate, *dinheiro corrente* ('current money') was not recognised by an overseeing authority, but used in the payment of salaries and could be neither converted nor used outside of Luanda. Only the population of Angola used this value due to its barter economy and the need to trade with African authorities. The simple exchange between the value of the *pano* on the African markets or in *bom dinheiro* in Luanda could make the difference between profit and disaster when registered by the taxing authorities. The Treasury of Angola would often be on the receiving end of the losses resulting from the different values and conversion rates of the *panos* used in Angola.

Not surprisingly, the Governors of Angola were amongst the main perpetrators of abuses of this system. According to the reports of António Bezerra Fajardo, the governors constantly "[took] the merchandise that they want[ed] from the captains, pilots and *avençadores* (...) of the ships that [came] to trade slaves, and [sold] them on their own behalf for higher prices, and after selling them, they pay[ed] back the owners,

¹⁰⁴⁸ Felner, *Angola: Apontamentos*, pp. 306-7

¹⁰⁴⁹ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 15

¹⁰⁵⁰ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, pp. 224-5 n32; Delgado, *História de Angola, terceiro período*, p. 182

¹⁰⁵¹ Marion Johnson, "Atlantic Slave Trade and the Economy of West Africa", Roger Anstey and P.E.H. Hair (Eds.), *Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1976) pp. 23-4

profiting without spending”.¹⁰⁵² The previously mentioned Governor Manuel Pereira Forjaz abused this system of trade by using the Treasury of Angola’s funds for the reparation of the vessel called *Nossa Senhora de Guadalupe*, bounded for India, which moored in Angola due to the need for repairs. Forjaz took a cargo of wine casks evaluated at 25,000 réis, yet he managed to declare the expenses as amounting to 50,000 or 60,000 réis in the Royal Treasury thanks to the exchange rate on Angola’s market. With the profits from those transactions, the Governor reinvested capital in different cargos. For instance, while olive oil was evaluated at 500 réis in Luanda (1.25 cruzados), Forjaz managed to declare the expense for the purchase of this commodity at 1,200 réis (3 cruzados). He later sold the slaves obtained through this method “for a significant amount more than what they had cost him” according to overseer André Velho da Fonseca.¹⁰⁵³

Despite the growing influence of the merchants and the establishment of commercial routes in Angola’s hinterland as the main sources for acquiring slaves, the Governors were able to use their political influence, military power, and status to rally the support of soldiers, captains, sailors, and city officials to remain relevant and play an active role in the trade. However, the nature of the barter markets was extremely volatile. The commodities that were generally used in the trade with Africans did not hold the same value at all *pumbos*, and extensive knowledge about those markets was essential for the slave buyers to assure a good profit. That would be ensured mostly through intermediaries or agents of the merchants and captains who landed in Luanda, often embedded in Luso-African networks. The merchandise used in the ports did not have the same value at all African fairs. Therefore, Lisbon-based merchants had to spend time on multiple commercial transactions to conduct slave ventures. Not only did they need to engage with a large bureaucratic and financial endeavour, but they had to have agents or knowledge of the African markets in order to acquire the best profit margins. The markets were extremely volatile, as the multitude of currency, combined with the different needs, demands, or interest of local populations whose interest could change in the time frame of a year, turned slave trafficking into a highly complex business in the early modern age. Without a metallic currency, the only ‘unit’ that retained its value outside of Angola was slaves. In order to acquire them in trade, the Portuguese were forced to engage in multiple operations and barter transactions to ensure the maximum profit margin.

¹⁰⁵² “Relação Bezerra Fajardo”, Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, p. 207

¹⁰⁵³ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 15

6.3 Luanda-Based Networks: Royal Officials and Angolan Elites in the Trade

The transatlantic slave trade was a highly structured and complex business enterprise in the seventeenth century, requiring considerable investments throughout the different ports of the Atlantic, in financing, licensing, capture, and sale, from which the investors would only later realise capital gains. As seen above, slave ventures were supported by highly developed mercantile networks, led by wealthy businessmen and backed by trustworthy entrepreneurs and attorneys, specifically positioned in key centres of the trade in colonial settings, in order to properly conduct and oversee the slaving business at the margins of the empire. Besides having the proper connections and partnerships, it was essential to invest great amounts of capital in insurances, cargo, freights, taxes, crews, shipment, as well as in the salaries of factors and attorneys throughout the different ports of the Atlantic.

However, those complex and well-organised networks and merchant consortiums were not the only entities able to impact the trade, and to access a share of its profits. The case of the Governor of Angola Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos (1617-1621) provides a portrait of a Crown Official operating in a distant colonial setting, who benefitted from the distance from the peninsula. He took advantage of his power position to interfere with, and influence the direction of the slave trade of Angola, in order to profit from it. Backed by agents of his own network, placed in key positions of Angola's administrative and bureaucratic apparatus, Mendes de Vasconcelos managed to greatly profit from his warmongering policy which eventually destroyed the Kingdom of Ndongo. Based on the exceptional number of captives obtained through his campaigns, the Governor orchestrated his own personal financial enterprise from Luanda, and achieved a fortune in the process. The great impact that Vasconcelos and his network had on the territory had massive consequences for the Portuguese in Angola, and above all, for the evolution of the patterns of the slave trade in the following years, thanks to the colossal surge in the volume of slaves that flooded the American ports.

The Network of Luis Mendes de Vasconcelos in Angola

Vasconcelos was actively involved in all layers of the slave trade, from the capture of prisoners of war in Angola's interior, to their embarkation in the port of Luanda, and their subsequent sale in Brazil or the ports of Spanish America. This financial operation began to take shape shortly after his arrival in Luanda, covering not only the years of his government, but also the decade that followed the end of his term in 1621. His involvement in the slave trade over the years can be traced through multiple reports, inquiries, letters, and private information produced by a multitude of different individuals, including priests, overseers, officials, captains, merchants, and local residents of Luanda. After his departure from Angola, his successors in office not only alluded to Vasconcelos' involvement in, and disruption of the slave trade, but also described the interference of his associates and members of his network, who still actively represented the interests of Vasconcelos in Luanda after his departure, and conducted business on his behalf.

Such reports were mostly included in the writings of Governor Fernão de Sousa (1624-1630), who described the state of Angola in various letters to his sons, as well in official reports to the Crown, in the aftermath of the political turmoil caused by the two previous Governors, Mendes de Vasconcelos and Correia de Sousa, in Ndongo, Kasanze and Kongo. In his accounts, Fernão de Sousa recorded multiple complaints by local *sobas*, who accused the "Negros of Luís Mendes and Joane Mendes de Vasconcelos, his son, (...) of raiding and plundering the region of Ilamba" years after Vasconcelos' departure.¹⁰⁵⁴ Those complaints were specifically aimed at the personal army of slaves that Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos had left in the territory, estimated to be around "2,000 archers". Upon his departure, the former Governor had entrusted this massive force to one of his agents in Angola. Some of the *sobas* that had previously been vassals of the *Ngola aMbandi* had also joined forces with this army. Those *sobas* offered their forces as a *Guerra Preta*, with each army led by their respective *tendala*, and accompanied the force of Vasconcelos, relentlessly pillaging the region.¹⁰⁵⁵ Due to the numbers and dimension of this rogue army, Fernão de Sousa summoned the city council of Luanda to attempt to find a solution which would end the incursions peacefully, in order to avoid

¹⁰⁵⁴ General designation of the different local African rules, from small tribal leaders to warlords. Heintze, *Fontes*, pp. 127-8

¹⁰⁵⁵ Dignitary from Ndongo, also the military commanders of the auxiliary African troops

what he feared would become a “general riot” in Angola, and a direct confrontation with the Portuguese forces led by Bento Banha Cardoso. Fernão de Sousa proposed to offer the army fertile lands in Lembo, urging a man called Manuel Antunes da Silva, the only known person in Angola “whom the slaves would obey, since he was a friend of their master”, to travel to the Ilamba region, alongside Vasconcelos’ personal *maculunta* (a female slave called Esperança), in order to drive this force away from the territory, thereby putting an end to the situation.¹⁰⁵⁶

Manuel Antunes da Silva, an associate of Vasconcelos, was in fact the mastermind behind the attacks in the Ilamba region. He coerced the more vulnerable *sobas* with his military force, and extorted tributes in the form of slaves, which were later dispatched to Luanda and entrusted to a man called Luis Gonçalves Bravo, businessman, attorney and personal friend of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos. Gonçalves Bravo was in charge of their trade in the port, and the sending of the profits of this enterprise in bills and commodities to Vasconcelos in Portugal.¹⁰⁵⁷ Luís Gonçalves Bravo, a New Christian “highly-respected and revered” among his community, was one the wealthiest merchants in Luanda by the time that he was left in charge of Vasconcelos’ economic endeavours in 1621.¹⁰⁵⁸ In addition to overseeing the slaving enterprise of the former Governor, Luís Gonçalves Bravo was himself involved in multiple economic activities, particularly in the lease and administration of several real estate properties and warehouses in the port of Luanda. His real estate ventures earned him between 4,000 and 6,000 *cruzados* each year.¹⁰⁵⁹

The documented army of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos, as well as the intimidation and extortion tactics practiced by his associates after his departure from Angola, are rather indicative of his involvement in the slave trade. However, those were not the only traces of his activity. His participation in slaving ventures is perhaps more infamous due to his personal policy in Angola. The campaigns of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos have been scrutinised in the previous chapters, as they constituted one of the key elements of the conquest of Angola by the Portuguese. At the same time, the number of Angola slave exports has also been shown to have reached an all-time high during his governorship and

¹⁰⁵⁶ BAL, 51-IX-20, f. 240; f. 243v-244; Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I p. 286. Maculuntas were trusted slaves, who were in charge of supervising the other slaves, and had the authority to punish them. (Beatrix Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I p. 120)

¹⁰⁵⁷ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 120

¹⁰⁵⁸ Arlindo Caldeira, *Escravos e traficantes no Império Português*, (Lisbon: Esfera dos Livros, 2013) p. 215

¹⁰⁵⁹ BAL, 51-VIII-25, fls. 99-102

subsequent years, a direct consequence of the capture of numerous war captives enabled by the alliance with the *Imbangala*. Vasconcelos' involvement in the trade has been clear in multiple reports and inquiries produced by Luanda's authorities accusing him of seizing slaves for his own estate. For a mere Governor, Vasconcelos profited abundantly from his time in Luanda. His appropriation of slaves through the seizure of the Crown's taxes (tithe and *baculamentos*), imposition of 'tyrannous' tributes, and control over the supply of slaves on Luanda's markets have been described throughout this thesis. While they were rather indicative of Vasconcelos' ability to amass a generous estate in Angola before the end of his term, the old conqueror still wanted more.

The involvement and interference of the governors of Angola in the transatlantic slave trade was a common occurrence. However, the earnings of Mendes de Vasconcelos were vastly superior to any of his predecessors. Unlike other warmongering Governors, such as Banha Cardoso or Cerveira Pereira, both veterans of the Angolan wars with years of experience in the territory, Vasconcelos successfully turned the capture of slaves in Angola into an actual transatlantic enterprise. Rather than simply selling them in the port of Luanda or cashing in his estate through the conversion into *panos* in the factory of Luanda, Vasconcelos guaranteed that they would be shipped to the Spanish Indies or Brazil.

In order to secure the profits from the rampant export of captives caused by his campaigns in Ndongo, and further to expand his own enterprise from Angola to the other side of the Atlantic, Vasconcelos surely needed assistance. Not only did the Governor lack access to, or control over the mechanisms that regulated the trade (the monopoly contract of Angola and the *asiento*), but above all, the enormous financial burdens of the transport of African slaves across the Atlantic in great numbers were beyond the reach of a simple governor. Transatlantic slave ventures required the investment of considerable amounts of capital in order to obtain the licences in Lisbon or Seville, to pay for an *avença*, to organise and freight the ships, to pay factors to secure the certificate and dispatch from Luanda, and to receive and collect the cargo at the ports of arrival. To make his fortune, Vasconcelos built a highly articulated commercial and administrative network around him, integrating several key offices and people in the administration and port of Luanda. His network was rooted in multiple links and bonds, from kin, trust, and credit, to social and political capital.

When identifying some of the individuals and officials that made up his network in Luanda, the most clear and palpable of those bonds was his kin, which shall be explored first. According to the official biographer of his family, João Salgado de Araújo, Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos was the second son of João Mendes de Vasconcelos, Lord of Esporão and a Knight of the Order of Christ. His mother, Ana de Atayde, was the daughter of the first Count of Castenheira. His older brother, Manuel de Vasconcelos, occupied an importance position in the Kingdom as the Mayor of Lisbon, and later at Court, as a member of the Council of Portugal in Madrid. Both of his sons, Francisco and Joane Mendes, followed Luís Mendes Vasconcelos to Angola, where they served as his lieutenants. Joane Mendes acted as his right hand man and second in command at the tender age of nineteen, earning himself the African name ‘*Catunda*’ (the son of the sun) by the native *sobas*, as well as the reputation of being a ‘decapitator of *sobas*’ when he executed multiple prisoners who refused to swear vassalage to his father.¹⁰⁶⁰ Joane was among the Portuguese noblemen who participated in the military expedition to retake Bahia from the Dutch in 1625, and returned to Angola, where he was promoted to the role of sergeant by Governor Fernão de Sousa. He was later in charge of the fort of Santa Cruz with a company of musketeers in 1629, and was nominated *Maître de camp* in Angola by Phillip IV in 1636.¹⁰⁶¹

Vasconcelos and his family, regardless of their already existing links to the Portuguese nobility, as well as the Knights of the Order of Christ, joined themselves with a famous New Christian merchant family through marriage. From this family network, the most important link for Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos’ strategy in Angola was undoubtedly his wife Beatriz Caldeira, the daughter of Manuel Caldeira.¹⁰⁶² Manuel Caldeira was one of the most powerful and influential merchants of the sixteenth century, who held multiple monopoly contracts of the Crown (including over the African trade), and was involved in numerous economic enterprises, among others shipping, tax-farming, outfitting, banking and of course, the slave trade. Caldeira held great influence at Court, both in Portugal and Spain, and was also the first Portuguese merchant ever to receive a massive licence to transport close to 2,000 slaves to the Spanish Indies due to his loans

¹⁰⁶⁰ João Salgado de Araújo, *Sumario de la familia ilvstrissima de Vasconcelos, historiada, y con elogios*. (Madrid: Juan Sanchez, 1638) f. 41-43v.; Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 357-8

¹⁰⁶¹ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, p. 111

¹⁰⁶² Salgado de Araújo, *Sumario*, f. 43

to the Spanish monarchs.¹⁰⁶³ The impressive curriculum of Manuel Caldeira, combined with his wealth and financial successes in the provision of key contracts and loans to the Crown, kept him safe from the Inquisition. An expert and influential merchant, it was through Manuel Caldeira's negotiation skills that Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos received the 'Major captaincy' (*Capitania-Mor*) of the annual fleet of the *Carreira da Índia*, a gift for marrying his daughter Beatriz.¹⁰⁶⁴ This concession was possible for a merchant of Caldeira's calibre due to his help in covering one freighting contract of the *Carreira's* vessels, abandoned by its previous contractor Luís César in 1582.¹⁰⁶⁵ These kind of perks were only available to men with great social and financial capital, hinting at the dimension of Caldeira's fortune and influence.

Vasconcelos' association with a New Christian family despite his nobility connections to the Counts of Castanheira is explained by the fact that he himself had some New Christian blood through his grandfather.¹⁰⁶⁶ Luis Mendes also counted on the protection of his older brother, Manuel de Vasconcelos, an influential personality in the Council of Portugal in Madrid. Due to his loyalty to the new rulers since the integration of Portugal into the Spanish Monarchy, with years of service in the Azores, as well as in Italy and the Low Countries, no mention to his association with a New Christian family was made in his official nomination for Angola, despite the Crown's strict prohibition of men linked to the Portuguese Nation accessing its military ranks.¹⁰⁶⁷ His marriage gave him access to a wide and international network of contacts and commercial partners linked to the enterprises of his father-in-law, based in Lisbon, Oporto, Viana, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, and the Spanish Indies. Those connections no doubt influenced his procedures and conquering policy, as it allowed him easily to transfer large amounts of money through the Atlantic ports to support his slaving ventures.

The remaining family of Manuel Caldeira was also heavily involved in the slave trade, especially his nephews Antonio and Diogo Nunes Caldeira. Diogo obtained the colonial monopoly of Cape Verde in 1595, and António travelled to Mexico to oversee

¹⁰⁶³ Ventura, *Negreiros portugueses*. See Chapter 5

¹⁰⁶⁴ Diogo do Couto, *Da Asia de Diogo do Couto e João de Barros Década X*, liv. IV, cap. 5 (Lisbon: Regia oficina tipográfica, 1788) f. 422-3

¹⁰⁶⁵ Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os Descobrimientos e a economia mundial*, vol. III (Lisbon: Presença, 1982-7 p. 56

¹⁰⁶⁶ José Gonçalves Salvador, *Cristãos-Novos: Povoamento e conquista do solo brasileiro, 1530-1680* (São Paulo: Pioneira Editora, 1976) p. 311

¹⁰⁶⁷ ANTT, *Chancelaria de Filipe II, Doações*, liv. 36, fl. 115

his father's sale of a slave shipment, before returning to the Kingdom and bidding for the first *Asiento*.¹⁰⁶⁸ António also obtained multiple leases and licences from the Spanish Crown to introduce African slaves in America.¹⁰⁶⁹ The brother-in-law of Vasconcelos is also reported to have personally accompanied him to Angola.¹⁰⁷⁰

Thanks to family links, Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos benefitted from a vast network of commercial partners, which allowed him to integrate a considerable merchant consortium, and expand his business enterprises in Angola. On account of his family connections and marriage, he was also able to establish new commercial partnerships himself, and connect the slaves acquired through the destruction of Ndongo to their sale and transport across the Atlantic. The documented arrival of members of the Caldeira clan in Panama, Hispaniola, and Cartagena on board of slave ships attests to the involvement of this commercial house with slave ventures during the years of Vasconcelos.¹⁰⁷¹

Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos had the full support of his immediate family during his stay in Angola, as well as access to a variety of commercial contacts through his marital links. However, the operation and apparatus established in Luanda by the Governor was not based on his kin alone, or on an affinity with member of the Portuguese Nation (New Christian merchants like Luís Gonçalves Bravo). Despite his turbulent administration with multiple skirmishes and arbitrary expeditions, Vasconcelos was surprisingly cautious and meticulous in managing his alliances in Luanda. The military actions against Ndongo earned Vasconcelos the animosity of many residents, city councils, merchants, and priests, among others, who censured his crimes against Ndongo, and the Crown's orders. To defend himself from the vicious backlash caused by his actions, Vasconcelos filled the main offices of Luanda's administration with men of his entourage and trust, but that effort alone was not sufficient to circumvent all the supervision and regulation surrounding the port of Luanda. With the capture of slaves and the resources for their transportation assured, only the approval of their passage through the port of Luanda remained.

¹⁰⁶⁸ For Caldeira's commercial links to America and Europe, see Ventura, *Negreiros portugueses*. See also Chapter 5

¹⁰⁶⁹ AGI, *Contratación*, 5762

¹⁰⁷⁰ ANTT, *Tribunal do Santo Ofício, Inquisição de Lisboa*, Caderno do Promotor nº 24, liv. 224, fl. 311v.

¹⁰⁷¹ AGI, *Escribania*, Leg. 589A "Comisiones de la Gobernación de Cartagena" (1619); TSTD, *Voyages*, accessed 7 August 2015, Voyage ID 41915

There were key positions, especially the ones associated with the Royal Treasury of Angola, with supervising and monitoring powers over the slave trade and Luanda's port that were beyond the reach and jurisdiction of the governors of Angola. These posts were assigned directly by the Crown, and were also supervised by auditors and overseers sent from the Kingdom with the specific mission of drafting reports on the territory. The representatives and attorneys of Angola's monopoly contracts were independent from the Governor as well, since they were directly appointed by the *contratador* himself. Furthermore, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was an active and influential force in Angola (with a college built in Luanda) since 1575. The Governor had no jurisdiction over their matters. The Jesuits had multiple properties and warehouses in Luanda. They were usually paid in slaves, using them for their own commercial transactions, becoming heavily involved with this trade, and speculating with their prices.¹⁰⁷²

Among the men occupying key positions and offices with direct influence and regulatory powers over the slave trade, positioned outside of the jurisdictional reach of the Governor, two figures are worthy of note: Manuel Vogado Soutomaior, auditor-general (*ouvidor-geral*), later promoted to *Provedor* of the Royal Treasury of Angola (Royal Official with jurisdiction over all fiscal issues and financial matters) in 1615; Jerónimo Vogado Soutomaior, Dean of St. Paul's Jesuit College in Luanda.¹⁰⁷³ Other than having a family name in common, the relationship between Jerónimo Vogado Soutomaior and Manuel Vogado Soutomaior is not explicitly stated in any letter or report from this period. However, it is possible to suppose a likely relationship between the Dean of the Jesuits and the *Provedor* of the Royal Treasury, whose association would grant them a powerful and influential position in Luanda. The ownership of multiple slaves and warehouses in the port by the Dean of the Jesuits, combined with the supervision and coordination of the colony's finances and power to collect the revenues of Angola by the *Provedor*, allowed the Soutomaiors to trade slaves from a privileged position and with relative impunity. Despite the lack of direct confirmation on their kinship, their relationship can be inferred from information on a third member. Fernão Vogado Sotomaior was a confirmed relative of Jerónimo Vogado Soutomaior, and linked to

¹⁰⁷² Caldeira, *Escravos*, pp. 206-7

¹⁰⁷³ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 34, 46

Manuel Vogado by Luciano Cordeiro, confirming the kinship between the Dean and the *Provedor*.¹⁰⁷⁴

According to the sources collected by Luciano Cordeiro, Fernão Vogado was present in Angola since 1615, despite holding no official position. Neither of his relatives, Manuel or Jerónimo, had the power or authority to grant their nephew an influential post in the administration of Luanda. Luís Mendes Vasconcelos was aware of the power held by both the Dean and the *Provedor* of the Royal Treasury in Luanda, since their positions allowed them to hinder, or even sabotage the Governor's operations in Luanda. Notwithstanding the opposition that the Soutomaior partnership could pose for the Governor, Vasconcelos chose to help the duo in order to ensure the success of his business strategy, appointing Fernão Vogado as the King's factor of the Treasury in Angola in 1617.¹⁰⁷⁵ The reason for this nomination, and for benefitting the Soutomaior family, would be revealed years later in a report regarding the problems of Angola's trade by one of its former officials, a man named António Dinis. His report is highly informative regarding the operation of the slave trade in Luanda, and the existence of collusions between merchants and the authorities in the port, exposing the Soutomaiors' strategy. Dinis enumerates the various problems associated with the commercial transactions in the port of Luanda, such the absence of a maritime customs house, as well as the interference of certain persons in the trade. The inexistence of the maritime customs house resulted in a lot discrepancies in the prices of the products brought by the ships visiting Luanda, which were reported to have been sold "for absurd excessive prices, without paying any entrance duties due to the inexistence of a customs house". Dinis reveals himself to be surprised about the fact that the residents of Luanda did not seem to mind the prices and still bought their products, since they would pay for them with slaves which had been acquired easily as a result of Vasconcelos' campaigns.¹⁰⁷⁶

Due to the lack of monetary currency in Angola, all of the transactions in Luanda were done through barter trade, usually in slaves or cloths, the value and duties of which were calculated according to their destination: "3,600 *réis* plus 400 in advance" for Brazil (for a total of 4,000), and "7.000 *réis* of customs duties to his Majesty" per piece to the

¹⁰⁷⁴ This simultaneously confirms the relationship between the first two as well. Luciano Cordeiro, *Memórias do Ultramar: viagens, explorações e conquistas dos Portuguezes; collecção de documentos*, vol II (1620-9) (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1881) p. 5; BAL, 51-VIII-25 fls. 99-102

¹⁰⁷⁵ Heintze, *Fontes*, p. 108

¹⁰⁷⁶ "Relação de António Dinis" (1622) Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, pp. 67-74

Spanish Indies. Those values were to be recorded in the factory Luanda, in the presence of both the factor of the contract of Angola and the Royal factor, the aforementioned Fernão Vogado Soutomaior, appointed by Vasconcelos. Despite the fact that the ships could only be dispatched after providing the necessary paperwork to both factors, the Royal factor could issue the embarkation certificate and record the number of *avenças* by himself if the Contract returned to royal administration (due to irregularities or lack of payments).¹⁰⁷⁷ Such a situation occurred during the administration of António Fernandes de Elvas (1615-1621).¹⁰⁷⁸ Vasconcelos also clashed with Elvas' own factor and attorney in Luanda on numerous occasions, as it will be seen below.

The motivations behind the nomination of Fernão Vogado by Vasconcelos become much clearer when considering the powers of the Royal factor of Angola, namely his ability to issue embarkation certificates for slave ships departing from Luanda, as well as his role in the collection of the revenues from the slaves' duties. In Dinis' report, Fernão Vogado was explicitly accused of having been handpicked by the "previous Governor" [Vasconcelos], and of accumulating a "fortune of 15,000 or 16,000 *cruzados*, some say more" in Luanda, which he used to send "ships to Brazil and Indies for his personal gain". According to Dinis, his actions were aggravated due to the presence of a "Dean of St. Paul's College, priest of the company of Jesus and a relative" since "with the power of one, and the worth of the other, they usually dispatch ships that go to Brazil and (...) Indies". Their business venture resulted in the loss of at least "four thousand *réis*" to the Crown's coffers for each slave they shipped.¹⁰⁷⁹ The fortune of the Soutomaior family was acquired by tampering with, and forging the accounting books of the factory of Luanda. The Royal factor dispatched several ships with slaves provided by his brother to the more profitable Spanish American market, but recorded Brazil as their destination in the factory books in order to avoid the higher fees for the Spanish American ports of Veracruz and Cartagena.¹⁰⁸⁰ Manuel Vogado, although absent from Dinis' report, was equally relevant for this operation, since the collaboration of the main supervising official

¹⁰⁷⁷ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, p. 231

¹⁰⁷⁸ AGS, *Secretarias Principales*, lib. 1552, fls. 352-58

¹⁰⁷⁹ "Relação de António Dinis", pp. 68-9

¹⁰⁸⁰ José Antonio Martínez Torres, "Politics and colonial discourse in the Spanish empire: The African Atlantic Possessions, 1575-1630", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas*, 51 (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2014) pp. 113-148

of the Royal Treasury of Angola was vital for the success of the Soutomaior's illegal operation.

The discrepancies between the fees for shipping slaves to Spanish America (7,000) and Brazil (4,000) encouraged this type of behaviour as a strategy for tax evasion. Angola merchants and shipmasters often declared the cheaper ports of Brazil as their final destination before setting sail from Luanda, thus paying a lower fee on the licences of the slaves they were transporting, while achieving higher profits in the Spanish colonies. They entered those ports under the pretext of forced arrivals (*arribada forzosa*), and after being cleared by inspections, were often allowed to sell their slaves at the port of arrival.¹⁰⁸¹ The Soutomaior emulated this strategy, paying somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 *réis* less for each slave shipped to the Spanish ports. Their privileged position in the factory and port of Luanda, coupled with the supervision of the Treasury of Angola by Manuel Vogado, allowed the trio to seize the extra fees for themselves, and build their fortune. Those funds would be employed to acquire more slaves, freight their own ships, and pay for the shipmasters and *armadores* (ship outfitter) to take them to Spanish America, where the slaves would be sold, and their proceeds sent back on the Fleet, and received by Fernão Vogado's people in Seville.¹⁰⁸² António Dinis revealed himself to be shocked by the practice of the Vogados family in Luanda, calling for their immediate removal from office, and requested the Crown to send an overseer to perform an inquest on their estate.

The association between the Soutomaior family and Vasconcelos, as well as their financial arrangement, is evidenced in yet another report from Luanda, the previously described memorandum of António Bezerra Fajardo (1624). Fajardo had accused the various Governors of Angola of regularly seizing the tributes of the *sobas* (in slaves). The value of these tributes amounted to “twelve, thirteen thousand cruzados each year” (4,800,000 to 5,200,000 *réis*), according to Bezerra Fajardo, and should always be deposited in the Royal Treasury, but “the governors insist[ed] on collecting it themselves”. Manuel Vogado clearly overlooked Vasconcelos' abuses in the collection of the *baculamentos*, since they should in theory have been handed over to the *Provedor* of the Royal Treasury instead. Fajardo also suspected that the Governors did not pay any duties over the slaves they shipped from Luanda, and criticised the lack of efficiency of

¹⁰⁸¹ Heintze, *Angola*, pp. 290-2; Eagle, “Chasing the Avença”

¹⁰⁸² Salvador, *Os magnatas*, p. 132

the King's factor in collecting those duties. Once again, the reason for the preference for Fernão Vogado on Vasconcelos' part is obvious. The Royal factor was the man in charge of collecting the slaves' duties, but according to Bezerra Fajardo, that did not occur. The practice of the factor caused considerable losses for the Royal Treasury and the *Contratador*, since Vasconcelos had appropriated "eighty [or] hundred thousand *cruzados* in Brazil and Indies" and "twenty thousand *cruzados* in commodities" that did not belong to him. In his memorandum, Fajardo also warned that the Governors kept neither papers nor certificates for the agents they nominated for administrative positions in Angola, which helped avoid jurisdictional backlash over their decisions. Therefore, the Angola Governors could fill the colonial apparatus of Luanda with men of their choice, leading to Fajardo's criticism that "only the servants and agents of the Governor" occupy public offices.¹⁰⁸³

Fernão Vogado Soutomaior was immediately suspended from office in 1622 when the new Governor João Correia de Sousa took office. He would be later reinstated by Governor Fernão de Sousa as an auditor-general, and later promoted to *Provedor* of Angola's Treasury, dying shortly after (1625). When the Crown envoy Gaspar Barbosa attempted to seize the accounts of Fernão Vogado in Seville a year later (1626), he was informed by his two attorneys and correspondents (Agostinho Peres and Henrique de Andrade) that "neither money nor estate" were left behind by the former factor. The complete lack of 'official' estate or letters confirms that his transactions had been neither recorded officially by the authorities, nor declared in their respective ports.¹⁰⁸⁴ The funds illegally obtained in Angola were most likely channelled through contraband, and the profits of that enterprise redirected towards the provision of their ships, and constantly re-employed through the transport of more slaves from Angola, as reported by Dinis. Jerónimo Vogado, the Dean of the Jesuits, was also involved in a conflict with Governor João Correia de Sousa, perhaps related to the suspension of his nephew, and he was expelled from Angola as well.¹⁰⁸⁵ Jerónimo Vogado would return in 1625, being re-elected as the chancellor of the College, and in office until 1633.¹⁰⁸⁶ Manuel Vogado's whereabouts after 1620 are unknown.

¹⁰⁸³ "Relação de António Bezerra Fajardo" (24-2-1624), Brásio, *MMA*, vol. VII, pp. 205-13

¹⁰⁸⁴ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 2, doc. 208

¹⁰⁸⁵ Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*, p. 127

¹⁰⁸⁶ Heintze, *Fontes*, vol. I, p. 113

During his time in Angola, Vasconcelos saw the potential of an alliance with the Vogado Soutomaior family. By nominating their relative as Royal factor, they were able to control the port of Luanda together. The high concentration of important positions held by this family enabled them to build their own business venture, and profit from the slave trade themselves. This operation also became easier due to the constant influx of African captives from Vasconcelos' campaigns in Ndongo. The collusion between the Royal factor and overseer of the port (collection of duties; voyage registry), the accountant of the Royal Treasury of Angola (fiscal supervision of the territories' revenues), and the Dean of the Jesuits (control over multiple warehouses; slave possession) certainly helped the Governor in return. By associating himself with the Soutomaior family, Vasconcelos was able to circumvent the inspection and surveillance in the port, and still receive the embarkation certificate from the factory without paying the usual duties when he shipped slaves, which was common practice for the Soutomaior ships. Vasconcelos was also able to acquire extra funds from the appropriation of some of the slaves' duties for himself, which fell under Fernão Vogado's responsibility. Vasconcelos and the Vogados were able to put forth their own commercial enterprise with the power and liberty granted by the other. The Soutomaiors' venture was devastated after the arrival of João Correia de Sousa, and both Jerónimo and Fernão lost their posts.

Commercial Rivalry with António Fernandes de Elvas

The actions of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos in Angola, in addition to reinforcing the Portuguese influence on the West Coast of Africa, also stimulated the transatlantic slave trade with the numerous captives obtained through the war in Ndongo. The Governor aimed to profit from the slave trade since the very beginning of his term, as he emphasised the importance of this commerce to the Crown before he even took charge of his office in Luanda. In the Governor's eyes, the Angola slave trade held great potential, but could only be profitable through a regular and steady influx of slaves, which required a permanently active army, a policy which Vasconcelos enforced during his term.¹⁰⁸⁷ Running parallel to the campaigns in Angola, the massive surge in the volume of the transatlantic slave trade during this period was also driven by the combination of the monopoly contracts of Angola and Cape Verde with the *Asiento* by António Fernandes

¹⁰⁸⁷ AHU, *Angola*, Cx. 1, doc. 53

de Elvas (1615-1621). The concentration of the slave revenues of the two Iberian Crowns in the same person facilitated the connections between the Portuguese and Spanish colonial markets in Africa and America, a situation which had previously occurred with the Coutinhos.¹⁰⁸⁸

The lease of the *asiento* to a Portuguese merchant also signalled the end of a five year period of heavy restrictions on the Portuguese operating the slave trade imposed by the Spanish Monarchy. As shown, these restrictions had been strongly influenced by the opposition of the *Consulado* of Seville and the *Casa de la Contratación*, following the problems reported during the *asiento* of Gonçalo Vaz Coutinho, and the multiple irregularities registered in the Indies. The management of the *asiento* by Seville and Melchior Maldonado was extremely underwhelming, and after countless hearings at Court, the King decided to lease the *asiento* to a Portuguese merchant once again.¹⁰⁸⁹ The *asentista* António Fernandes de Elvas, by holding both the *Asiento* and the monopoly contracts of the two most important slaving regions (Angola and Guinea-Cape Verde) had all the necessary tools effectively to control the slave trade, with the perspective of considerable profits. His administration precisely overlapped with the years of the military campaigns of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos in Ndongo, which greatly increased the supply of slaves on the West Coast of Africa, which triggered a growing demand and increased sales of the licences of the *asentista* in the Kingdom and America. For the longest time, traditional historiography of the Iberian slave trade remained unaware of an event of the magnitude of the campaigns of Vasconcelos in Ndongo taking place at the same time that António Fernandes de Elvas managed to acquire both the *Contratos* and the *Asiento*, and attributed the massive influx of captives from Angola to Elvas' enterprise alone.¹⁰⁹⁰

In recent years, scholars and researchers of the transatlantic slave trade have acknowledged, and linked the Angolan events to the contracts of Fernandes de Elvas in the Kingdom.¹⁰⁹¹ Some have gone as far as suggesting that the sudden increase in the exports of Angola captives transported across the Atlantic was the direct result of a

¹⁰⁸⁸ See Chapter 5

¹⁰⁸⁹ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio Negrero*, pp. 93-7

¹⁰⁹⁰ Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamerica*; Bowser, *African Slave*; Aguirre Beltran, *La poblacion*; Frederic Mauro, *Le Portugal*; Salvador, *Magnatas*

¹⁰⁹¹ Heintze, *Angola*; Heywood, Thornton, *Central Africans*; Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*.

‘collusion’ between the *asentistas* and the Governors of Angola.¹⁰⁹² The massive increase in the volume of the trade during this period propelled by the Ndongo wars, combined with the massive influx of ships from Luanda linked to Elvas’ *asiento*, hint at the possibility of a partnership between the New Christian merchant António Fernandes de Elvas and Governor Mendes de Vasconcelos. To export slaves to Brazil and Spanish America, great amounts of capital were necessary, not only to outfit the ships and organise crews, but also to insure voyages, acquire licences, and pay for slaves’ duties. The *asentista* and his network could easily cover the logistics of the voyages and financial investment, while Vasconcelos would be in charge of filling the ships with captives in the bay of Luanda. The businessman would use his influence and put forward the capital and respective resources for the transportation of the captives, while the Crown agent would easily supply the basis of their trade, in what appears to be the perfect partnership between two men involved in the early seventeenth century’s transatlantic trade.

According to Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, the wars in Ndongo were ultimately driven by the private interests of the “slave cartels” which controlled the Atlantic trade, under which he counts Elvas and Vasconcelos as a joint-enterprise. The conquest of Ndongo and raiding cycles that plagued the West Coast of Africa were ultimately the result of labour demand from the colonial markets in Portuguese and Spanish America. The Brazilian scholar believes that the vast majority of the slaves transported across the Atlantic during this period did so on ships linked to the *asiento*, which allowed the business network of António Fernandes de Elvas to accumulate a considerable fortune, in American bullion. According to Alencastro, this enterprise reflects a “clear consortium between the Governors of Angola and the *asentistas*” to control the Atlantic trade. At the same time, Alencastro attributes the consequent military campaigns and militarisation on the West African Coast to the greed of those ‘slave cartels’.¹⁰⁹³ While Alencastro’s work is nothing short of astonishing, and ground-breaking in its own right, it suffers from broad generalisations like all massive monographies written about the entire Iberian Atlantic slave trade, given the massive amount of data from different geographical and chronological frameworks that has to be dealt with. Similar to the classic work by Henriqueta Vila Vilar, Alencastro attempts to provide an overview of the Iberian slave

¹⁰⁹² Hugh Thomas, *The slave trade : the story of the Atlantic slave trade, 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); Ana Hutz, *Homens da Nação e de Negócio: Redes Comerciais no Mundo Ibérico (1580-1640)* (São Paulo: PhD dissertation, 2014)

¹⁰⁹³ Alencastro, *O trato*, pp. 96-116

trade, and to highlight the connections between the Angolan slave trade and the shaping of the colonial identity of Brazil. By limiting the motivation behind the wars in West Central Africa to the ambitions and greed of the New Christian ‘cartels’ operating the trade alone, some of the complex mechanism and financial networks surrounding the transatlantic slave trade, as well as the different evolution of the Portuguese presence in Angola, are oversimplified.

Despite the ties and connections between some of the previous Governors with the *asentistas* (like the Coutinho brothers, or Dias Henriques and Forjaz), this does not appear to be the case for the relationship between Mendes de Vasconcelos and Fernandes de Elvas. Based on sources gathered and analysed by author of the present dissertation, a completely different picture took shape. Rather than seeing both the Governor and the *asentista* as partners, they are portrayed as rivals, with each disputing the control over the Angolan slave trade. By comparison and cross-checking of sources of different archives concerning their respective businesses models, strategies, and partnerships, the results paint a picture of rivalry and competition. Both men acted as figureheads of different factions, vying for their own share of the profits of the transatlantic slave trade during the peak years of this economic activity in the seventeenth century. Their networks and respective factions were equally spread across the different colonial settings and financial circuits of the Monarchy, reflecting what Leonor Freire Costa described as a “globalisation of the mercantile networks”.¹⁰⁹⁴

In the first place, Vasconcelos had no need whatsoever to associate himself with António Fernandes de Elvas, nor to use ships licensed under the *contratador* in order to ship the slaves acquired in Ndongo across the Atlantic. As shown above, Mendes de Vasconcelos’ strategy relied on the control over Luanda’s port and financial institutions, as well as on the lenient inspections conducted by the Vogados, which rendered the payment of duties linked to Elvas’ own contracts and profits obsolete. Vasconcelos was also linked to the Caldeiras by marriage, and his ventures in Angola were fully integrated into their commercial strategy. By examining the respective family links of the Governor and the *asentista*, it becomes clear that António Fernandes de Elvas – mostly tied with the Solís, Mendes de Brito, Gomes d’Elvas, and Rodrigues de Évora families – did not

¹⁰⁹⁴ Leonor Freire Costa, “El Imperio Portugués: Estamentos y grupos mercantiles” in *La Monarquía de Filipe III: Los Reinos*, vol. IV, dirs. José Martínez Millán, Maria Antonieta Visceglia (Madrid: Fundación MAPFRE – Instituto de Cultura, 2008) pp. 859-882

have any connections to the Caldeiras. Quite the opposite, as Elvas' own kin were rivals of the Caldeiras at the public auctions for several Crown monopolies and tax farms over the years.¹⁰⁹⁵ The father-in-law of Fernandes de Elvas, Jorge Rodrigues Solís, had directly competed with Manuel Caldeira and his nephews during the *asiento* of the Coutinho brothers.¹⁰⁹⁶

After the union of the Iberian Crown, the Habsburg Kings kept the same contracting system of the Portuguese Crown's monopolies. One its most sought contracts was the one for the provision of the ships of the *Carreira* trade. The first consortium which got hold of that contract was headed by Manuel Caldeira, Vasconcelos' father-in-law (accompanied by Jacome Barde, Venture de Frias, and Pedro de Noronha), with the contractors receiving a sum of 50,000 *cruzados* per vessel, while they agreed to outfit five carracks to sail to Goa every year.¹⁰⁹⁷ This merchant consortium held the contract until late 1583, when they were substituted on account of a superior bid by Jorge Rodrigues Solís, none other than the father-in-law of António Fernandes de Elvas.¹⁰⁹⁸

It was common for the merchant families to alternate in the lease of the shipping contracts of the India carracks, yet Rodrigues Solís continued to feature prominently in those contracts, while Caldeira faded from its sight. His nephew Diogo Nunes Caldeira, together with some business partners, farmed the revenues for maritime customs' house of Lisbon from 1596 to 1601. In 1602, this consortium was yet again substituted by Jorge Rodrigues Solís, together with Manoel Gomes da Costa (Elvas' long time business associate) and Pedro de Baeça.¹⁰⁹⁹

The Caldeiras appear to have shifted their investments towards the Atlantic. Manuel, together with his brother-in-law Francisco Nunes de Beja, and nephews Diogo Nunes Caldeira and António Nunes Caldeira, started to invest in the slave trade by leasing the monopolies of the African trade and the Spanish licences. As described in the previous chapter, Manuel Caldeira was the first recipient of a massive slave licence (2,000) while António Nunes Caldeira travelled to Mexico to oversee the sale of slaves of Francisco Nunes de Beja's contract. Diogo Nunes Caldeira soon followed into their footsteps, and

¹⁰⁹⁵ James Boyajian, *Portuguese Bankers at the court of Spain, 1626-1650* (New Jersey: Rutgers, 1983) pp. 46-54; Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, vol. III, p. 213

¹⁰⁹⁶ AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3ª época, leg. 3182

¹⁰⁹⁷ Godinho, *Os descobrimentos*, vol. III p. 56

¹⁰⁹⁸ Boyajian, *Portuguese trade*, pp. 19-21

¹⁰⁹⁹ BAL, 51-VIII-6, fls. 11-11v; Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos*, vol. III, p. 213

secured the monopoly of Cape Verde. Both brothers continued the strategy of the family after Manuel Caldeira's death in 1593. António Nunes Caldeira bid on the first *asiento* in 1595 as well, but lost to Pedro Gomes Reinel.¹¹⁰⁰ He still managed to get hold of the extra licenses that the King reserved for himself. A third brother called Luis Alvares Caldeira was a factor of Diogo Nunes in Cartagena in 1596, and an active merchant in the Spanish Caribbean during the first decades of the seventeenth century, particularly in Jamaica.¹¹⁰¹ The presence of Beatriz Caldeira's brother, brother-in-law of Vasconcelos, in Angola in 1617 proves that the interests of this family in the slave trade were still very active in the region. Furthermore, the documented arrival in the West Indies of two illegal ships carrying slaves, led by a Jerónimo Nunes Caldeira and the aforementioned Luís Alvares Caldeira, "*extranjeros Portugueses*", in 1619, further suggests that the Caldeiras were still actively involved in the slave trade, operating outside the legal framework of the *asiento*, and not integrated with the circle of friends of Fernandes de Elvas.¹¹⁰²

The competition between Vasconcelos and Elvas is further evidenced by the cross-checking of reports coming not only from Angola, but also from the Council of Portugal in Madrid. Both reports mentioned in the previous section, signed by Duarte Dinis and Baltazar Bezerra Fajardo, allude to the lack of payment of the customs duties over slaves leaving the port and the misappropriation of the Governor of the same duties, as well as the mismanagement of those revenues by the Royal factor in Angola. The collection and misappropriation of the slaves' duties generated one of the biggest clashes between the agents of Vasconcelos and Fernandes de Elvas. A report from Angola signed by the Governor in 1618 criticises the procedure of Jerónimo Rodrigues Solís regarding the collection of the customs duties. Jerónimo was the brother-in-law of Fernandes de Elvas, as well as his attorney and acting factor of the contract in Luanda. Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos voiced his concerns about the actions of Jerónimo Rodrigues Solís, since the factor attempted to collect all the duties of the slaves leaving the port himself, instead of registering them in the accounting books of the factory of Luanda, together with the royal factor. The Governor, while acknowledging that those duties would ultimately be delivered to António Fernandes de Elvas (through bills of exchange, credit, or

¹¹⁰⁰ Vila Vilar "Los asientos portugueses y el contrabando de negros", in *Anuario de estudios americanos*, 30 (1973), p. 33

¹¹⁰¹ AGI, *Panama*, 16, R.1, N14 (1-10-1609)

¹¹⁰² ANTT, *Tribunal do Santo Oficio, Inquisição de Lisboa*, Caderno de Promotor nº 24, liv. 224, fl. 311v.; AGI, *Escribania de Cámara de Justicia*, 589A; 589B

commodities charged in Brazil and Spanish America), accused Jerónimo Solís of not following the common procedure stipulated in the Angola contracts, according to which the customs duties of the slaves were always recorded in the factory of Luanda. This procedure had apparently been implemented by Solís to try to avoid possible frauds, ensuring that the values registered by both the contract's factor and the royal factor would match each other.¹¹⁰³

According to Vasconcelos' report to the Crown, the actions of Jerónimo Solís also had further consequences for the port of Luanda. His insistence on receiving the payment of the duties in Angola himself greatly delayed the departure of every slave ship from Luanda. In Vasconcelos' opinion, this hindered the merchants who were loading slaves in that port, since the increased time of their stopover in the bay would increase the expenditures for food and risk slave casualties. The main problem with Solís' behaviour, according to Vasconcelos, was that most of the ship captains and *armadores* who visited Luanda had neither instructions nor means to pay the factor directly, since they only carried commodities and goods to exchange for slaves. Shipmasters and *armadores* usually carried the *avenças* from the Kingdom, or registered the transaction value in Luanda, and deferred their payment to the agents of the *asentista* and *contratador* in the Americas or Brazil, or even upon return in Lisbon or Seville through bills of exchange with the profits of their enterprises. However, Solís' demands made a great number of those voyages impossible. Taking into account the previous reports from Angola, Vasconcelos' grievances were more motivated by the interference of Solís' procedure with his own business venture, rather than the defence of Luanda's merchants. Vasconcelos took action against the brother-in-law and representative of Fernandes de Elvas by "recommending" his immediate removal in favour of someone of "worth" and "safe" credentials. He recommends an agent of his own circle, an "honourable man, Salvador Meireles," to take the seat of the factor of the holder of *contratador* in Angola, which in itself was a violation of the *contratos* which entitled the factors to choose their own men in the ports they operated.¹¹⁰⁴ The interference and conflict between the factor and the Governor does not appear to suggest that both men were associates working together, rather the exact opposite.

¹¹⁰³ Jorge da Silva, *A administração*, pp. 230-232

¹¹⁰⁴ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 89

The complaints regarding the procedure of Elvas' factor were shared by Francisco de Azevedo, the acting accountant of the Treasury of Angola. In the same year (1618), Azevedo claimed that the duties of the slaves should never be delivered to Jerónimo Solís, since the captains and shipmasters only carried commodities to exchange for slaves in Angola, and Solís' proposal was unreasonable. Rather than defend the qualities of Salvador Meireles (Vasconcelos' choice) when calling for Rodrigues Solís' substitution, Azevedo attacked the credibility of the factor appointed by António Fernandes de Elvas, stating that Jerónimo neither requested permission to enforce this measure, nor was he in possession of papers or a permit granting that right. Azevedo further elaborated on why it was impossible for merchants, captains, and *armadores* to pay for the slaves' duties in Luanda if they had only brought *fazendas* which were already earmarked for the intended purchase of slaves. The profits generated through the later sale would cover the costs of the operation, reinforcing that "to pay, you must first receive".¹¹⁰⁵ This assessment appears to be in line with some of the reports regarding the profitability of the trade, where merchants visiting Angola had to invest almost 80 to 90 per cent of their profits to finance a slave journey, which would be impossible if they had to pay for the duties before selling the slaves.¹¹⁰⁶ Francisco de Azevedo also criticised the *contratador-asetista* António Fernandes de Elvas, alluding to his dubious contracts and delayed payments in the Kingdom. However, his report was not unbiased, since he had been personally appointed to this office by Vasconcelos himself, and being one of his people, gave voice to the Governor's attacks against his rivals.¹¹⁰⁷

Although the practice of Vasconcelos greatly obstructed the collection of revenues of Fernandes de Elvas' contracts, the *asetista* himself also evaded the regulations and jurisdiction of the Crown for his own benefit. Elvas had sent a petition to King Phillip III, requesting permission to receive the payment of the *avenças* and licences of his contracts either in Lisbon or in the ports of America, but never in Luanda.¹¹⁰⁸ With clear instructions to his factor to charge the duties in Luanda, Fernandes de Elvas attempted illegally to exploit the merchants operating the trade, charging extra fees or even double-taxing the duties in the different ports of the Atlantic region. He was also accused of charging licences above the market value stipulated upon the signature of his

¹¹⁰⁵ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 90

¹¹⁰⁶ AGI, *Indiferente General*, Leg. 2829 (c. 1612)

¹¹⁰⁷ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 1, doc. 90

¹¹⁰⁸ AGS, *Secretarias Provinciales*, lib. 1516, fol. 3

contracts.¹¹⁰⁹ The abuses and attempts of the factor of Fernandes de Elvas illegally to increase his profits were also documented in the extensive report by Bezerra Fajardo, and in the legal action brought against Elvas by the *Casa de la Contratación*.¹¹¹⁰

Taking into account his activities, and the accusations by Vasconcelos and the *Casa de la Contratación*, it becomes clear that Solís and Elvas' behaviour was harmful not only towards the bulk of Luanda's merchants and shipmasters venturing in the trade, but also for the agents associated with the Governor. By hindering the participation of other groups in the trade, Elvas' network could successfully inflate the licences market in America's ports, increasing his own profits. The accusations of Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos and his agents confirm that his ships were never the same as the ones licenced by the *asentista*, and that the strategy of Elvas and Vasconcelos in Angola personally hindered each other's business. The governors were also forbidden from taking money belonging to the *contratos* which were registered in the factory of Luanda. However, Mendes de Vasconcelos appropriated some of the commodities recorded under Elvas' name in Angola, and used them to pay his own salary and his troops as soon as he arrived, to Elvas' detriment.¹¹¹¹ The individual strategies and methods employed by either Vasconcelos or Elvas, far from suggesting a hypothetical collaboration and mutual venture, reflect a scenario of clear competition. The men were rivals for the profits of the trade, and their respective business strategies were mutually exclusive.

The alliance of Vasconcelos with a family whose participation in the slave trade was already conducted outside the legal spectre of the *asiento* in Luanda distanced him from Fernandes de Elvas. Taking into account that the *asentista* ultimately lost his contracts due to the excessive number of slaves entering the Americas through smuggling and contraband, Vasconcelos could even be held partly accountable for Elvas' downfall. According to an official inquiry carried out in Cartagena in 1620, approximately two-thirds of the slaves arriving to that port were not taxed, and in the previous year Cartagena registered the arrival of four ships in rapid succession. Those ships supposedly brought 80 registered slaves each, but they were in fact carrying a much higher number: 206, 246, 422, and 623 respectively.¹¹¹² Therefore, in addition to the arrival of 320 registered slaves, an extra 1,497 made their way to the port as well, that is, over 360 per cent more. Those

¹¹⁰⁹ BAL, 51-IX-20 f. 324v.

¹¹¹⁰ AHU, *Angola*, Caixa 2 doc. 170; Peralta Rivera, *El comercio*, pp. 325-7

¹¹¹¹ BAL, 51-V-48 fl. 44

¹¹¹² Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica*, p. 162

numbers are quite representative of the dimension of the contraband during the years of Elvas' *asiento*, and why it was emphasised as a major problem. Due to Vasconcelos' actions, António Fernandes de Elvas not only failed to regulate the duties of his contract, but also to take a hold of the massive influx of slaves in the Atlantic region. While initially profiting from the wars in Ndongo, he failed to keep up with the level of distribution fuelled by Vasconcelos' campaigns, and to keep contraband in check. Ultimately, the only solution to control the abuses would be to remove the *asiento*, culminating in his already mentioned bankruptcy and the *quiebra*, followed by the seizure of his goods.¹¹¹³

With the previous events in mind, and considering the final outcome of Fernandes de Elvas' as well as Vasconcelos' ventures in Angola after the end of his term (through his attorney Gonçalves Bravo), the hypothesis of the Governor and the *asentista* having colluded for the enlargement of each other's estate at the Crown's expense makes no sense. Actually quite the opposite was the case, as different agents and mercantile groups with similar ambitions, objectives, and stakes were placed in direct competition with each other. The wars of the Governor, even if they increased the flow of Angola's slave exports and demand for licences from the *asentista*, also harmed Elvas' enterprise in the long run. The massive number of African captives produced by Vasconcelos' wars was channelled to the American ports until the mid-1620s, with a considerable number of those slaves being transported illegally due to the restrictions of the *Asiento*, a fact which alarmed the officials of the *Casa de la Contratación*, and culminated in an enquiry and the removal of Elvas' contracts.

The fact that Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos was not aligned with the *Asentista* would not prevent him from selling slaves, even without access to the licences and the *avenças*. The levels of the trade reached historic rates during the first half of the seventeenth century, as the previous examples of Cartagena illustrate. The family network of Vasconcelos, as well as his alliances in Angola with the Royal factor, inspector of Treasury and the Dean of the Jesuits, reinforces the argument that the commercial activity of the Governor was not sustained nor connected to the *asentista* or his associates. Vasconcelos structured an enterprise that aimed to bypass the regulation of the Crown and agents of the contract of Angola from the very beginning, and focused in the control of the micro cosmos of the port of Luanda. His acquisition of slaves was ensured through

¹¹¹³ Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio*, pp. 116-8

his campaigns, he had engineered the support of the authorities in the port of Luanda, and he was guaranteed slave sales across the Atlantic by his family connections to a vast merchant house with clear links to the slave trade. His marriage and commercial partnerships clearly place him on the other side of the fence from the agents of António Fernandes de Elvas.

Vasconcelos was arrested after the end of his term upon the arrival of his successor João Correia de Sousa in 1621. Together with his two sons, he was sent to the Kingdom in chains to stand trial for his unauthorised wars and complaints of the local population. Upon inspecting Vasconcelos' house, Correia de Sousa was surprised to find “neither estate nor goods besides a couple *patacas* (Spanish coins, worth 1,400 *réis* each)”, which should not have been possible since the territory was full of African slaves who were rumoured to belong to Vasconcelos. Correia de Sousa requested a complete inspection “to ascertain how many slaves [Vasconcelos] sent to the Indies, in duties and ships”.¹¹¹⁴ Luis Mendes and his sons were promptly freed upon reaching Portugal due to the intervention of his brother, the member of the council of Portugal, Manuel de Vasconcelos, and they were soon cleared of the charges. He continued to receive revenues from his slave enterprise, which he had left in the hands of Luís Gonçalves Bravo and Manuel Antunes da Silva.

Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos' actions as a Governor, as well as his alliances and conflicts in Angola illustrate many of the divergent interests and strategies employed in respect of the slave trade at the dawn of the seventeenth century. Having been withdrawn from the main financial circles controlling the trade, and with his aspirations for a glorious retirement having been dismissed by the Crown, it was through his family ties that he was able to start building a large-scale enterprise from Angola. After securing the position of Governor thanks to the efforts of his brother Manuel de Vasconcelos at Court, Luís Mendes soon initiated his military campaigns, from which he managed to obtain an exceptional number of prisoners. From that point onwards, Vasconcelos constantly abused his power and filled the main administrative offices of Luanda with men of his own circle, in order to realise his own profits through the slave trade. The impact that his network had on his military operations had massive consequences for the development of

¹¹¹⁴ Alfredo de Albuquerque Felner, *Apontamentos sobre a ocupação e início do estabelecimento dos portugueses no Congo, Angola e Benguela, extraídos de documentos históricos* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1933) doc. 40

the Portuguese relations with the neighbouring kingdoms of Angola, due to the destruction of Ndongo. His personal enterprise ultimately sabotaged and compromised the higher circles that were vying for the control over the slave trade, as seen by the subsequent bankruptcy of António Fernandes de Elvas, and the eventual drop in Angola's slave exports in the mid-late 1620s.

VII – Conclusions

The Iberian slave trade regulated by the system of the *asientos* came to an abrupt end after the split of the Union of Crowns in 1640, as a consequence of the revolt of the Portuguese. A long process of crisis followed, which effects started to be felt by the entire Habsburg Monarchy after the second decade of the seventeenth century. The effects of this crisis also extended to the Atlantic trade, and they were reflected in the diminished rates of the slave trade after 1630. The Angolan military campaigns had been halted in Matamba by the forces of Queen Njinga, and the mobilisation and displacement of African slave fairs towards the West African hinterland hindered the ability of the Portuguese to keep up with previous slave quotas. The increasing fiscal pressure and political turmoil registered in the remaining realms of the Spanish Monarchy soon affected the Angolan slave trade. The inability to keep the same number of slave provisions as in the previous decades, combined with the increasing risks associated with the slave trade on Atlantic waters, was, in turn, reflected in the diminished revenues resulting from the lease of the African monopoly contracts. The contracts of Angola yielded far less revenues to the Royal Exchequer than in the previous decades, not only in the sums deposited in the Kingdom, but in the breadth and extent of the commodities deposited in the factory of Luanda as well. The significant drop in Atlantic slave enterprises was also a reflection of the coordinated raids of the Inquisition to track down Portuguese New Christians during the 1630s and 1640s in Lima, Cartagena, and New Spain. Slaving networks which had once extended to the Atlantic region, connecting the different Portuguese outposts in Africa to Spanish American settlements and European commercial centres, suffered a considerable blow and were massively reduced. Its agents were forced to redirect their efforts towards other circuits or economic activities.

The downturn in the number of slave voyages to the Spanish colonies becomes visible by the comparison of the latest estimates of the trade, where the massive ‘waves’ registered during the years of the Angolan campaigns and the height of the Portuguese *asientos* in the 1620s were followed by a considerable drop in the 1630s, and virtually vanished from the legal channels in the 1640s, as its official routes were suspended. The combination of fiscal problems of the Spanish Monarchy and the

escalation of the conflict with the Dutch in the Atlantic region deeply affected the South Atlantic slave circuits that appeared to have flourished just fifteen years earlier. The occupation by the Dutch of Recife and Pernambuco in 1631, and São Tomé in 1637, were the first signals that heralded the collapse of the Iberian slave trade during the Union of Crowns, which culminated in the eventual loss of Luanda itself in 1641.

This thesis has examined the formal and informal mechanisms of the Iberian slave trade to Spanish America during the Union of Crowns (1581-1640). By focussing on Angola, a territory traditionally regarded as a periphery in the vast realm of the Habsburg Monarchy, the intention was to integrate the process which led to the Portuguese military occupation of West Africa with the development of Spanish American colonial societies. The Portuguese occupation of Angola and the conquest of Ndongo had considerable consequences for the formation of Spanish American colonial societies, yet it is still vastly underrepresented in many histories on the transatlantic slave trade, as well as in the imperial and financial narratives of the Spanish Monarchy. In the scope of this thesis, the inception and development of a trans-imperial and transatlantic slave trade enterprise was crucial for shaping the overseas economies of the two different Iberian imperial spaces, integrating different commercial circuits, creating new colonial markets, and linking the Spanish Caribbean settlements in America with the Portuguese commercial outposts on the West Coast of Africa. The events that took place on the West Coast of Africa in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century are fundamental for understanding the composition and growth of Spanish America's urban centres and port-cities in the seventeenth century, not only due to the massive rates of captives transported in from West Central Africa by Portuguese merchants, but also due to the administrative and financial apparatus that accompanied this evolution and its expansion in the metropolis.

The economic, military, and administrative policies implemented in Angola by the Portuguese were closely intertwined with the development of Spanish Caribbean colonial societies, with the period of the Union of Crowns witnessing an increasing dilution of, and fluidity between the separate imperial spheres, especially in the Atlantic space. The wars on the West Coast of Africa were contemporary with Spanish's own imperial enterprises in the Americas; The development of the Spanish Atlantic Caribbean economies was in turn empowered by the intermingling of the financial mechanisms of both Crown's slave enterprises. The vast number of Angolan

slaves resulting from the Angolan wars which entered Spanish American ports and integrated the Hispano-Caribbean societies during the Union of Crowns enabled the colonisation of the mainland and the development of colonial economies, overlapping elements from an Iberian, American and African worlds which would come to shape the nature of the Iberian colonial experiences in this territory. The transport of slaves from Africa to America during the Iberian Union formed a bridge between the Caribbean colonies in America and the commercial entrepôts in the West African Coast, making the Portuguese occupation of Angola and the colonisation of America by the Spanish not only a contemporary, but also a mutually reinforced enterprise.

By framing the different stages of the Portuguese occupation of Angola within the broader imperial framework of the Habsburg Monarchy, the different military and economic policies for the provision of slaves coming from this territory become much clearer. The breakthroughs in the conquest of Angola were made only after the integration of the Portuguese empire into the Spanish Monarchy, in the mid-1590s, when Luanda was placed under royal tutelage and the system of Governors was implemented. The military offensive registered in Africa matched the development of the economic mechanisms surrounding the slave trade, with the adjudication of the first colonial contract for the slave rights of Angola (1587-1593) and the establishment of the Spanish system of the *asientos* (1595). A trans-Imperial Iberian perspective shows that those same links extended to the Hispano-American colonies, and that the Habsburg politico-fiscal agenda directed from Madrid had as much of an impact on the shaping of the Portuguese enterprise in Angola during the Union of Crowns. The financial policies for regulating the slave trade implemented by the Spanish Monarchy, together with its administrative reform in 1595, reflect a much broader strategic and economic role of this particular activity for the Habsburg Crown. Not only was the supply of slave labour fundamental for the destinies of Caribbean colonies, where slaves supported the local economies and the shipment of the much desired bullion back to Seville, but the financial administration of the slave trade itself became increasingly important for the Monarchy as a source of fiscal income.

The profits and revenues generated by the lease of slave provision contracts could be employed to balance the increasing expenditure of the Royal Exchequer. This study addressed the legal and financial organisation of the trade equally, from the earlier issuing of trading licences to the creation of public private partnerships between the state and private merchants for a joint exploration of the slave *asientos*, and the lease

of the African colonial monopolies. By mapping the logistics and apparatus surrounding the acquisition and organisation of voyages in Iberia, and the development of the legal structures surrounding the slave trade all the way to America, historiographical narratives which have portrayed the holders of the *asientos* as the only persons able to benefit and profit from this enterprise, are contested. Rather, evidence is shown on how those same persons involved in the provision of the slave *asientos* and African colonial contracts were supported by, and integrated into much wider commercial networks, and the different ways in which they faced the challenges and managed the legal (and illegal) risks of this trans-imperial enterprise. The sources used in this dissertation also provide new data regarding the administrative and legal structure of the different slave leases of the two Iberian Crowns – the *asientos* and the African colonial contracts –, and challenges traditional accounts which take their institutional framework for granted by presenting them as a single, unified and integrated revenue.

Finally, this dissertation sheds light on cross-cultural trade on Africa's markets, and the role informal networks played in Angola. The empirical research captures some of the strategies and dynamics of local groups from Luanda and on-the-spot agents involved in the slave trade, and attempts to explain how their business operations and slave capture strategies, linked and intermingled with the distant credit operations in the metropolis or in America. From the first project for the establishment of a European foothold in Africa, headed by Novais, to the conquest of Ndongo by Vasconcelos, the transformations that Angola underwent from a political, military and mostly, economic standpoint were highly illustrative of the different phases and stages of the Portuguese establishment in Africa. The changes regarding the royal instructions for the acquisition and capture of African slaves were accompanied by the development of the fiscal mechanisms for the provision of slaves by both Iberian Crowns. The economic and political models were developed side by side, as the wars in Angola were driven as much by obvious imperial and territorial motives, as by economical in the capture of slaves. The slave trade connected the two Iberian empires, having been essential for the Spanish Atlantic Empire's early colonial economies and the Portuguese occupation in West Africa. This close and interconnected relationship strongly influenced and shaped the commercial and military strategies for Angola undertaken by the three different Habsburg Monarchs during the period of the Union of Crowns. Portuguese advances in Angola, and the

Spanish economic expansion in America, were contemporary, intersected, and mutually reinforced ventures.

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APPENDIX I

List of Angola's Governors (1575-1640)

Paulo Dias de Novais (1575-1589)

Luís Serrão (1589-1591)

André Ferreira Pereira (1591-1592)

Francisco de Almeida (1592-1593)

Jerónimo de Almeida (1593-1594)

João Furtado de Mendonça (1594-1600)

João Rodrigues Coutinho (1601-1603)

Manuel Cerveira Pereira (1603-1607)

Manuel Pereira Forjaz (1607-1611)

Bento Banha Cardoso (1611-1615)

Manuel Cerveira Pereira (1615-1617)

António Gonçalves Pita (1617)

Luís Mendes de Vasconcelos (1617-1621)

João Correia de Sousa (1621-1623)

Frei Simão Mascarenhas (1623-1624)

Fernão de Sousa (1624-1630)

Manuel Pereira Coutinho (1630-1635)

Francisco Vasconcelos da Cunha (1635-1639)

Pedro César de Meneses (1639-1641)

APPENDIX II

MONOPOLY CONTRACT OF ANGOLA SIGNED WITH DUARTE DIAS HENRIQUES

Contrato de Angola Congo, e Loango, que se fez com Duarte Dias Henriquez por tempo de oito anos, que começarão por dia de São João Bautista do Anno de 1608

(impresso em Lisboa em 1609)

Anno do nascimento de nosso Senhor Jesu Christo de mil seiscientos e oito, aos vinte e quatro dias do mês de Outubro do dito anno, na cidade de Lisboa nos Paços del Rey nosso senhor na casa do Conselho de sua Fazenda, estando presente o senhor Don Estevão de Faro do Conselho de Estado de Sua Magestade, E vedor de sua fazenda, E os mais senhores do Conselho della ao diante al nados, pareceo Duarte Dias Anriquez morador nesta dita cidade, E disse, que elle era contente de contratar, como defeito contratou o trato E avenças do Reyno de Angola pera o Brasil, E Indias de Castela: E assi os resgates dos reyno de Congo, E Loango, que ate gora pertencerão ao contrato de São Thome, E se desmembrarão delle, E se ajuntaram a este dito contrato de Angola por virtude de hua carta de sua Magestade de dezoito de Agosto deste dito anno, E composição que se fez com Jorge Rodrigues da Costa contratador de São Thome, E com as condições E preços nas avenças que se podião fazer pelas provisões que sobre isso forão passadas, as quaes avenças será elle contratador obrigado as pessoas que as quiserem fazer pelo modo adiante declarado, não entrando neste contrato nenhuns metais nem especiarias, descobertas, nem por descobrir dos ditos reynos de Angola, Congo, E Loango, porque descobrindo-se, ou colhendo se as ditas especiarias, ou metais, serão pera a fazenda de Sua Magestade: o qual contrato toma pelo preço, E com as condições adiante declaradas.

PRIMEIRA

Com condição, que elle dito contratador toma o dito contrato E avenças por tempo de oito anos presente de seiscientos E oito, E acabarão por outro tal dia do anno de seiscientos e dezasseis: E isto sem embargo de lhe estar arrematado o contrato de Angola somente por aver de começar a correr de são João do anno passado de seiscientos E sete, porquanto sua Magestade o ouvo assi por bem, o qual anno fará por conta da fazenda do dito Senhor. E o dito contrato de Angola, Congo, E Loango, toma elle dito contratador por preço E contia de vinte e cinco contos de reis em dinheiro de contado em cada hum dos oito anos destes contrato, a saber, vinte E hum conto de reis que da pelo contrato de Angola somente, e os quatro contos de reis por os resgates dos reynos de Congo, E Loango, que se a este contrato ajuntarão com o dito he, a qual contia pagará à fazenda de Sua Magestade, E nella entrão quatrocentos mil reis em cada hum dos ditos oito anos que serão applicados pera a obra pia de roupa da enfermaria do Hospital de todos os Santos desta dita cidade de Lisboa de que lhe sua Magestade tem feito esmola. E assi pagará mais o hum por cento

do preço de todo este arrendamento, que he ordenado pera obras pias, no qual arrendamento todo dos ditos oito anos se montão ao dito respeito duzentos contos de reis, os quais pagará elle contratador à fazenda de sua Magestade pella maneira seguinte, a saber: quarenta E nove contos de reis nos anos de seiscentos E onze, E seiscentos e doze em quatro pagas iguais de seis em seis meses cada hua, de que a primeira em que montão doze contos duzentos E cinquenta mil reis será por dia de São Joam do dito anno de seiscentos E onze, E outros doze contos duzentos cinquenta mil reis por fim do dito anno, E outros dize contos, duzentos E cincoenta mil reis por são Joam do anno de seiscentos E doze, E os outros doze contos duzentos e cinquenta mil reis por fim do dito anno. E os cento cinquenta e hum contos pagará elle contratador nos cinco anos seguintes em dez pagas iguais de seis em seis meses cada hua a rezão de quinze contos E cem mil reis cada hua, de que a primeira das ditas dez pagas será por São Joao de seiscentos e treze: E a segunda no fim do dito anno. E assi sucessivamente irao correndo os ditos pagamentos de modo que o derradeiro pagamento será em fim do anno de seiscentos e desasete, posto que este contrato se acabe por são Joao do anno de seiscentos e dezasseis, E as avenças e respeitos dellas feitas de vinte e três de Junho deste anno por diante dos navios que entraram em Angola, cujas avenças forem feitas do dito dia vinte e três de Junho em diante, que he o tempo em que começa a correr este contrato, feitas pelos officiais de sua Magestade pera o Brasil, ou India, ou outra qualquer parte foram por conta delle contratador, E o dinheiro que dellas tiverem recebido os ditos officiais, o entregarão a elle contratador, ou a seus feitores, ou procuradores sem lhe a isso ser posta duvida. E em caso que o dinheiro das ditas avenças feitas depois dos ditos vinte E três de Junho a respeitos dellas que estiver arrecadado em Angola for carregado em receita ao Feitor de Sua Magestade, ou a qualquer outro official a que pertencer a arrecadação delle E estiver despendido em cousas do serviço do senhor lhe passara da contia que for a elle contratador conhecimento em forma, o qual lhe será tomado em pagamento pelo tesoureiro da casa da Mina [Joao Alves Soares] a quem he obrigado acodir com o preço deste contrato no primeiro pagamento que lhe ouver de fazer, ao qual tesoureiro sera levado em conta o dito conhecimento em forma com o traslado desta condição. E não estando a dita contia de dinheiro que estiver arrecadado despendida como atras he declarado, E o official aquém estiver carregada em receita, E tiver em ser a dita contia, a entregará logo a elle contratador, ou a seus procuradores, E com seu conhecimento, E esta dita condição lhe será levada em conta, E assi lhe pertencerão as avenças que se fezerão na casa da India, e Mina depois dos ditos vinte e três de Junho deste dito anno, de escravos de Angola, Congo e Loango

II

Com condiçam que o primeiro pagamento deste contrato pagara em Angola ao Thesoureiro que sua Magestade la tiver nas mercadorias que o Governador de Angola apontar, que sirvão de dinheyro para pagamento dos soldados, pelos preços que se assentaram com os officiaes da fazenda de Sua Magestade nesta cidade com tal que não seja magarijeta, E isto avendo o sua Magestade por bem que la se faça este pagamento, E querendo sua Magestade que se la pagem mais pelo tempo em diante, o que pagara na forma sobre dita. E do que montar nas ditas mercadorias, que assi la entregar, lhe sera

passado conhecimento em forma para com elle ca no Reyno requerer neste Conselho provisão para lhe ser tomado em pagamento do que dever deste contrato

III

Com condição, que elle contratador poderá mandar levar as ditas partes para os resgates que ouver de fazer todos os vinhos, E Margarideta que para eles lhe forem necessários. E que outrosi poderão levar as pessoas que com elle contratador se concertarem, E fizerem avenças pelo modo atras declarado.

III

Com condição que poderá navegar per si, E por avenças em cada hum anno para Indias de Castella, E peru a terça parte das peças que em Angola, Congo, E Loango se resgatarem, E carregarem o que sera com licença da Coroa de Castella, donde avera as licenças para navegar para Indias, E avendo elle a dita licença a fazenda de sua Magestade lhe não ficara por isso em obrigação alguma, E as ditas pessas não pagarão mais direitos alguns à Coroa deste Reyno, E a dita navegação de escravos se não fara para Indias por via do Brasil, nem pollo Rio da Prata.

V

Com condição, que todo o Marfim que o dito contratador resgatar em todo o tempo que durar este contrato nos ditos Reynos de Angola, Congo, E Loango, o poderá tirar, E navegar para esta cidade por si, ou por seus feitores sem por isso ser obrigado a pagar direitos alguns a fazenda de sua Magestade, assi nas ditas partes como neste Reyno, E antes que se embarque o Marfim o levarão a casa da feitoria do dito contratador obrigado a mandar trazer com elle certidão do feitor, E officiaes da dita feitoria em que declare a quantidade, E peso do dito Marfim para por ella ser desobrigado dos direitos delle.

VI

Com condição, que sua Magestade mandara passar ao dito contratador as provisões que forme necessárias para beneficio, E boa arrecadação deste contrato pela ordem, e parecer do Conselho da Fazenda.

VII

Com condição, que por quanto no Brasil, E capitancias que há nelle há negocio de peças de escravos de Angola que elle contratador poderá mandar para beneficio deste contrato seis feitores, ao Brasil, E dous a Angola, de qualquer nação que sejam sem obrigação de darem fiança, algua, com tanto que não sejam Ingreeses, nem Franceses, enm dos Rebeldes. E assi poderá ter neste Reyno dous Feitores, E assi elle contratador, como os ditos feitores uzarão de todos os privilégios, E liberdades que gozão os contratadores das Alfandegas

deste Reyno, E assi poderá ter mais os escrivães, E guardas que lhe forem necessárias para boa arrecadação do rendimento deste contrato, os quais com os ditos feitores apresentara neste conselho da Fazenda para nelle serem vistos, E aprovados, E os ditos feitores, que assi tiver em Angola, sera para feitorizarem o dito trato, E cobrarem o Rendimento delle com os escrivães da feitoria, que sua Magestade nella tem provido, os quais escrivães servirão com os ditos feitores, E terão cuidado de vigiar, E olhar pelos resgates, E verem que os regimentos que sobre eles se derem sejam conformes aos de sua Magestade. E querendo o dito contratador ter na dita feitoria mais alguns escrivães o poderá fazer para escreverem em outros libros a receita, E despesa do dito trato, E o mais que compri iuntamente com os escrivães da feitoria que por sua Magestade são providos aos quais se dará juramento dos sanctos Evangelhos pelo Provedor da Fazenda de sua Magestade do dito Reyno de Angola para que bem E verdadeiramente sirvão, guardando em tudo o serviço de sua Magestade, E justiça as partes

VIII

Com condição que falecendo os escrivães, E mais officiaes da feitoria, E dos navios que por este contrato elle contratador pode por, ou alguns deles, possa o seu feitor por outros escrivães, E mais officiaes, todas as vezes que falecerem, sem se nisso entremeter o Provedor, ou Corregedor do dito Reyno de Angola sendo lhe primeiro dado juramento na maneira atras declarada

IX

Com condição, que sua Magestade não mandara dar licença a nenhua pessoa de qualquer calidade, E condição que seja do dia que cometer este contrato em diante, para poder hir resgatar, nenhuns escravos, nem as mercadorias que elle contratador por bem delle pode resgatar nos ditos Reynos de Angola, Congo, E Loango, nem seus limities, nem dará licença a pessoa algua para poder tirar peças dos ditos resgates digo Reynos, para Indias de Castela, ou Peru sem licença dele contratador, nem mandara novar cousa algua que seja em prejuyzo deste contrato, nem porá novos direitos nos escravos de Angola, Congo E Loango, E somente ele contratador poderá dar as tais licenças as pessoas com que se concertar na forma, E contia declarada neste contrato, E o dito contratador não poderá fazer mais avenças no derradeiro ano do seu contrato que aquelas que tiver feitas em cada hum dos sete anos primeiros dele por rata de maneira que ferão iguais das avenças que se fizerem, E fazendo elle mais avenças faram por conta da fazenda de Sua Magestade para se a todo o tempo saber as que tem feitas, E fizeram no tempo deste contrato

X

Com condição que hindo aos ditos Reynos de Angola, E Congo, E Loango, alguns navios resgatar sem licença, E horden dele contratador, E emquanto durar o tempo deste contrato se perderam os tais navios, E mercadorias que nele forem achadas os dous terços para a fazenda de Sua Magestade, E o outro terço para o dito Contratador, excipto os navios, artelharia, arcabuzes, piques, lanças, e mais armas, Polvora, E monições que lhe forem

achadas, porque tudo isto se cobrara para a fazenda de SM, assi pelos officiaes deste Reyno, a que pertencer como pelos de feitoria do dito Reyno de Angola, sem o dito contratador ter disso cousa alguma, E antes de se recolherem os tais navios, E fazendas se sentencerao primeiro pelo provedor da fazenda das ditas partes, ou pelo feitor, E officiaes da dita feitoria, E depois de serem sentenciadas as taes fazendas se carregara as duas partes della, E assi os navios com todos os seus aparelhos, artelharia, Armas, e monições, que forem achadas em receita sobre o dito feitor, E a terça parte das fazendas somente se entregara ao dito contratador, ou a seus feitores por este capitulo sem mais outra provisão

XI

Com condição, que os navios das avenças, que o dito contratador fizer por bem deste contrato, E conforme as condições delle no derradeiro anno farao por conta delle contratador as avenças dos navios que partirem em companhia das Naos da India posto que cheguem a Angola depois de dia de São Ioão do anno de seiscentos, E dezasseis, em que se acaba este contrato, e sahirao dos portos do dito Reyno, te o fim do dito anno de seiscentos e dezasseis que são seis meses, e não entrando, e sahindo os ditos navios, nos tempos acima declarados farao por conta da fazenda de sua Magestade os direitos que deles ouverem de arrecadar.

XII

Com condição que os navios em que estiverem feitas avenças, nam seram tomadas, enm embargados, em nenhuma maneira, e os escravos, E marfim que se desencaminhar, pertencera ao dito contrato, E nenhuma pessoa poderá resgatar Marfim, se nam ele contratador, ou quem tiver sua licença

XIII

Com condição que, sucedendo nos ditos Reynos de Angola, Congo, E loango, guerra que empida o resgate no tempo deste contrato, SM terá respeito a perda, que nisso ouver, E tomando o Governador, que for de Angola alguma fazenda delle contratador, sera descontado o preço della do dinheiro deste contrato conforme aos tempos em que costar que foi tomada sendo a tal fazenda ara despreza [sic] do serviço de SM, E do que montar na fazenda que lhe assi for tomada apresentara o conhecimento em forma, ou certidão autentica para neste Reyno requerer por elle provisão para lhe ser tomado em pagamento do que dever de seu contrato

XIII

Com condição, que os Provedores da fazenda de SM, e os mais officiaes foram com os Mestres, Pilotos, E Marinheiros, E toda a mais gente dos navios que levarem peças de escravos todas as diligencias que lhe forem requeridas, E nenhum provedor nem official hira a bordo dos navios nem dará nelles dessorpacho em nenhuma parte sem ser presente o

feitor deste contrato o qual estará no Porto onde morarem os mais officiaes para que por sua culpa nam se deixe de dar pecho

XV

Com condição, que as dividas, que deverem a ele contratador deste contrato se cobrem como fazenda de Sua Magestade

XVI

Com condição, que os officiaes das fazendas dos defuntos, E ausentes do Brasil, E angola não entenderão em nenhuma maneira com as fazendas dos feitores deste contrato, que la morrerem, E suscederão [sic] nellas seus procuradores avendo hos, E não os avendo suscederão as pessoas que eles em seus testamentos declararem

XVII

Com condição, que este contrato, e avenças delle não correrão na casa dos contos como até agora correrão, E poderá elle contratador fazer as avenças em hua casa sua para o que lhe sera dado num livro deste conselho da Fazenda, E as avenças que no Brasil se fizerem se virão resgistar nelle da feitura dellas em hum anno primeiro seguinte sob pena de se perderem para à fazenda de sua Magestade, E todas as avenças se registrarão no livro da casa da Mina a saber, as que se fizerem aqui dentro em hum ano as quais avenças do Brasil se farão por hum escrivão da fazenda de SM ou da justiça, que para isso nomearão os Provedores da fazenda das Capitánias das ditas partes

XVIII

Com condição, que os escravos que vierem de Angola a este Reyno em naus da India, ou qualquer outra embarcação pagarão a sisa na cassa das herdades conforme ao Regimento della, E em Angola pagarão a elle contratador o quarto, E vintena que deverem

XVIII

Com condição, que o Governador nem a Camara de Angola não possam impedir aos moradores, E estantes no dito Reyno de qualquer calidade que seja que mandem ao resgate, E feiras, que quiserem com seus pombeiros, E não farão estaque nem feira particular para si antes serão todas gerais.

XX

Com condição, que o Governador não possa obrigar à conquista aos Armadores nem pessoas dos navios que forem com avenças, ou avençarem antes de entrar no Porto de

Angola, e os deixe livremente fazer suas avenças, digo armações sem lhe tomar fazenda da que levarem para seus resgates

XXI

Com condição, que todos os resgates de escravos somente que novamente se abrissem por toda a costa de Angola da parte do sul pertencerão a este contrato no tempo que durar, sem por isso lhe ser feyto alteração nenhuma, nem cousa em prejuízo d'elle

XXII

Com condição, que em todo o estado do Brasil não poderá o Governador geral, nem os capitães das Capitánias d'elle tomar dereitos alguns dos escravos que aos portos daquele estado forem ter antes darão todo o favor, E ajuda aos feitores d'elle contratador, para que os possam cobrar como fazenda de sua Magestade

XXIII

Com condição, que todos os escravos, E peças de que Joam Nunez Correa cobrou, E levou dos direitos que pertenceam a este contrato, E se cobrarão, E pagaram assi e da maneira se cobrarão pelo dito João Nunez, E sua Magestade lhos fora sempre bons a elle contratador, E o defendera de quem lho contradicer

XXIII

Com condição que poderá elle contratador fazer avenças nesta cidade de Lisboa para o Brasil as pessoas que quizerem avençar pelos tempos, e preços costumados conforme fez Ioão Roiz Coutinho, E seus procuradores, E no Brasil poderá fazer as mesmas avenças em cada hum dos ditos oito anos de escravos que ajao de hir para o Brasil, E as pessoas com quem avençar poderão levar as mercadorias costumadas para o resgate

XXV

Com condição que dará elle contratador vinte e cinco mil cruzados em fiança ao Tesoureiro da Casa da Mina a saber dez mil cruzados que deu em dinheiro a Manoel Gomez da Costa a quem sua Magestade mandou que os entregasse à conta dos setenta mil ducados que o dito Manoel Gomez avia de aver para os bastimentos da Armada da Coroa de Castela, que se fez o ano passado de seiscentos E sete de que apresentará quitação de como lhos tem entregues a qual lhe o dito Tesoureiro da casa da Mina tomara em fiança nos ditos dez mil cruzados, dos quais o dito contratador há de ser pago em si mesmo do primeiro pagamento que for obrigado fazer do dito contrato neste Reyno com os interesses deles a razão de oito por cento, que começarão a correr do dia que constar que os entregou ate ser deles pago. E os quinze mil cruzados para comprimento dos ditos vinte, e cinco mil cruzados, dará dez mil deles em juro de dezasseis o milhar, que não

sejao da casa da India, nem da casa da Mina, e os cinco mil cruzados nos ditos juros, ou em fazendas de raiz, a satisfação do Thesoureiro da casa da Mina que lhe há de tomar as ditas fianças. E quando o dito Contratador se pagar dos ditos dez mil cruzados, e interesses deles lhe tomaraá o dito Thesoureiro da casa da Mina a dita quitação em pagamento, E por ella, E esta condição se lhe pasará provisão para lhe serem os ditos dez mil cruzados, E interesses levados em conta, E o dito Contatador lhe dará outra tanta contia de dez mil cruzados de fiança em juros, E fazendas de raiz, ou escritos de homens de negocio de que o dito Thesoureiro seja contente.

XXVI

Com condição que tanto lhe for rematado este contrato lhe mandara sua Magestade dar Alvará de correr para que possa administrar, E cobrar o dito contrato, tendo elle Contratador dado a fiança que he obrigado pela maneira atras declarado.

XXVII

Com condição, que dará ele contratador por hua vez para a junta, dous mil cruzados pagos de contado, dez dias depois de rematado este contrato.

XXVIII

Com condução que SM sera obrigado a lhe fazer bom o dito Contrato de Angola, congo, E Loango, durante o tempo dos ditos oito anos sem embargo do arrendamento de João Roiz Coutinho, E de qualquer outro, E lo defendera de quem o contradizer

XXIX

Com condição, que se o dito Contratador tirar alguns escravos e Marfim dos ditos resgates do Congo, E Loango, e os mandar, ou trazer pro si, ou por seus procuradores a ilha de S Thome, não pagara dos ditos escravos, E Marfim, direito nenhum nem outra cousa de entrada, nem de venda. E saindo alguns dos ditos escravos da dita ilha de S. Thome pera Indias se pagarão de cada him deles os dous ducados, dos que chegarem a Indias. E isto conforme a hua escritura que Joao Roiz Coutinho governador, E contratador que foy de Angola, fez com Baltezar Roiz de Chaves contratador que também foy de S. Thome, a qual escretura se refere o lanção do dito Duarte Dias.

O qual contrato visto pelo senhor Vedor da Fazenda, E pelos mais Senhores do Conselho della ou ouveram por bom, E se obrigaram em nome de SM a em todo o cumprir E o dito Contratador disse que elle o aceitava, E se obrigava ao cumprir inteiramente com todas as clausulas, condições, E obrigações, nelle declaradas, E nam o comprindo em parte, ou em todo pagar, E satisfazer por sues bens, E fazenda moveis, E de rais, que a isso obrigou todas as perdas, E dannos que a fazenda de SM por isso receber, E por firmeza do que

dito he, o Senhor Vedor da Fazenda, E os mais Senhores do Conselho della, mandaram fazer este contrato neste livro dos contratos a honde assinaram. E assi o dito Contratador, testemunhas que presentes foram, E assinarão, João Rabello, E Manoel Roiz, E Joao de Torres, E eu Ruy Dias de Menezes o fiz escrever. Joam Alvares Soares o fez escrever

Dom Estevão de Faro

Eu El Rey faço saber aos que este Alvara virem que eu vi este contrato de Angola que se fez no conselho de minha fazenda com Duarte Dias Anriqueuz por tempo de oito anos que comessarao por dia de São Ioao Baptista deste anno presente de seiscentos e oito por preço, E contia de vinte e sinquo [sic] contos de reis cada anno pagos pella manera declarada neste dito contrato o qual aprovo, E confirmo, E mando que se cumpra com todas as condições, E declações que se nelle contem posto que este não passe pela chancelaria sem embargo da Ordenação em contrario. Francisco de Abreu o fez em Lisboa a vinte e sinquo de Outubro de seiscentos E oito. Ioão Alvares Soarez o fez escrever

REY

Dom Estevão de Faro

Alvará de confirmação do contrato de Angola que se fez no Conselho da Fazenda com Duarte Dias Henriquez por tempo de oito anos que começarão por dia de São João Baptista deste anno presente de seiscentos e oito por preço, e contia de vinte E sinquo contos de reis cada ano como asima se contem, E que este não passe pella Chancelaria.

Registado Ioão Alvarez Soarez

Registado este contrato no livro quarto dos contratos da casa da Mina a folhas cento e quarenta E dous em dezanove de Feverero de seiscentos E nove Antonio Carneiro da Sylva

Duarte Diaz Henriquez tem Registado o seu contrato no livro dos Registo desta casa como assima parece, E assim tem satisfeito com as fianças que tinha obrigação de dar em virtude do dito contrato das quais fianças o Thesouero Antonio da Syva esta satisfeito de que pasamos esta por nos assinada em dezanove de fevereyro de seiscentos e nove anos
Antonio da Sylva. Antonio Carneiro da Silva

AGS, Secretarias Provinciales, Lib 1473 ff. 184-190v

APPENDIX III

List of the proceedings of the *asiento* brought in the Indies fleet (1609)

Fleet of Tierra Firme

Fleet Ship	Money registered	Sent via	Source	Origin + Ship	Registered by	Total value (<i>maravedts</i>)	Notes
	2 Silver ingots + 79 pesos	Cartagena	2/3 from the proceedings of 35 slaves (<i>piezas de esclavos</i>)	Smuggled through various voyages	Luis Gomes Barreto (factor)	532,932	Total was 1.094.806 mrs. 561,000 used to pay to Luis Gomes Barreto for the administration of Vaz Coutinho's asiento.
Galeon Capitania (flagship)	14 Silver ingots (evaluated at 3,492.038 mrs / 3.269 pesos)	Cartagena	250 licences	Guinea: Ship Maria della Concepcion	Luis Gomes paid by Cristobal Pinheiro	4,609,206	Arrived In 31/1/1609 with registry issued in 8/7/1607 for 60 slave pieces
Captain Gaspar Vargas	+ 2.269 pesos 3 Silver ingots + 3.226 pesos + 1 <i>tomin</i>	Cartagena	103 licenses	Angola: Ship Maria del Rosario	Antonio Tinoco (shipmaster)	1,649,679	The ship was destined to Brazil, " <i>arribada</i> " in Cartagena, judged as "non-malicious"
Galeon Almiranta	21 silver ingots + 11.608 pesos + 6 <i>tomines</i> + 1 ½ <i>peso de oro</i>	Cartagena	539 licenses	Angola + Guinea: Ships Nuestra Señora del Rosario / Nuestra Señora della Gracia /	Gaspar Afonso, Roque Fernandez, Antonio Rodrigues do	8,569,481	Registered from 3 different voyages (1607- 1609). The ships carried licences for 200 slaves each, but only carried

Captain Santos de Zabaleta	474 pesos + 2 <i>tomines</i>	Cartagena	8 licenses + <i>aduanilla</i> tax	San Diego y San Francisco	Rego (shipmasters)	122,996	181, 181 and 177 respectively
	6.753 Pesos + 4 <i>Reales Corrientes</i>	Tierra Firme and Veragua	156 licences (130 licences + 20% - arrived 129)	Guinea: Ship Rosario Angola: Ship Santa Maria	Manuel de Sousa Coutinho (factor) paid by Pedro Perez Antonio Mendez Delcon (Shipmaster)	2,066,534	The ship was destined to Cartagena, but landed in Portobello due to a storm. Due to the sickness of slaves, they were authorized to be unloaded until they recovered. The register was made in the Treasury of Panama
Fleet Galeon	954 Pesos + 3 <i>tomines</i>	Cartagena	Licenses from a ship that was lost in the lagoon of Maracaibo	N/A Ship Maestre Avis Gonçales	Jorge Fernandes Gramaxo	259,590	Captain Jorge Fernandes Gramaxo paid 159,375 <i>maravedis</i> (425 pesos) for the licenses of the lost ship. The remaining licenses were charged
Captain Manuel de Fira	11 Silver ingots + 11.070 pesos + 6 <i>tomines</i>	Cartagena	190 licenses	Angola: Ship Nuestra Señora de la Esperanza	Francisco Nunes	3,342,131	

	14.665 Pesos + 4 <i>tomines</i>	Cartagena	249 licenses	N/A: Ship San Juan Baptista	Fracisco Gomes Sardinha	3,989,016	<i>Registro</i> from 10/11/1606 – Arrival in 12/8/1608
Galeon San Martin Captain Rodrigo de Valladares	766 Pesos + 7 <i>tomines</i>	Santa Marta	37 slaves	Angola: Ship Maestre de la Concepcion	Gaspar Correa	591,626	The 37 Angola slaves had escaped from a ship lost in the Rio Grande de la Magdalena

New Spain

Fleet Ship	Money Registered	Sent via	Source	Origin	Registered by	Total value (<i>maravedís</i>)
Nau capitana Nuestra Señora de los Remedios Captain Domingo de Eguibar	13.842 Pesos	Veracruz	Slave licences in the Caja Real of the port	Caja Real Veracruz	N/A	3,765,024
Ship Nuestra Señora de Begoña Captain Lucas de Urquiaga	6.912 Pesos + 3 <i>tomines</i>	Veracruz	Duties belonging to the Asiento	Fees and tariffs of the asiento	N/A	1,762,365 (1,880,166 - 153,801 to cover administrative costs)
Ship Nuestra Señora de la Concepción Captain Juan de Vergara	47.400 Pesos	Veracruz	Licences from the the Asiento	Caja Real Veracruz	N/A	12,892,800

Ship San Pedro	18,750 Pesos	Veracruz	Licences from the Asiento	Caja Real Veracruz	N/A	5,100,000
Captain Manuel de Cabrera						
Ship La Esperanza	32,000 Reales	Santo Domingo	Licences from the Asiento	Caja Real Santo Domingo	N/A	1,077,120
Captain Esteban de Arce						
Ship San Pedro	121 reales	Santo Domingo	Licences from the Asiento	Caja Real Santo Domingo	N/A	329,425
Captain Melchior de Acosta						

TOTAL: 50,135,945 *maravedís*

Consigned to Juan Rodríguez Coutiño: 128,996 *maravedís*

Consigned to Gonzalo Vaez Coutiño: 46,282,413 *maravedís*

Consigned to both: 3,724,536 *maravedís*

Expenses with freight, fleeting, and avería: 3,302,940 *maravedís*

Total liquid from Juan Rodríguez Coutiño: 119,969 *maravedís*

Total liquid from Gonzalo Vaez Coutiño: 43,114,286 *maravedís*

Total liquid from both: 3,598,786 *maravedís*

AGS, *Contaduría Mayor de Cuentas*, 3^o época, leg. 2959 “Relacion de las partidas de Indias de la renta de los esclavos”

**APPENDIX IV
CONTRACTS AND COMMERCIAL AGENTS IN THE ANGOLA TRADE**

Doc. ID	Date	Type of Contract	People	Port of Departure	Ship	Stopover 1	Stopover 2	Port of Arrival
C1, Cx.1, L.3, f. 58	1600	Companhia	Diogo and Francisco della Carreira, Bernardo Cevallos	Seville	Santo António	Angola		Cartagena
C1, Cx.1, L.4, f.14v	1600	Fretamento	Diogo della Carreira, André Preto	Lisbon	Santo Antonio	Canary Islands	Angola	Cartagena
C2, Cx.23, L113, f.32	1613	Obrigação	João de Argomedo, Alonso Ferreira, Pedro Navarro	Lisbon	Santiago to Nuestra Señora de la Concepción	Luanda	Havana	Veracruz
C2, Cx.22, L111, f.78	1617	Procuração	André Ximenes, Luis de Figueiredo	Lisbon	-	Angola/Brazil		Trindade (Tucuman)
C2, Cx.22, L111, f.132	1617	Fretamento	Manuel Ferreira, Gaspar Pacheco, João Sinel, Luís Ferreira	Lisbon	São Jorge			Angola
C2, Cx.22, L111, f.135	1617	Procuração	Gaspar Pacheco, Jorge Leitão	Lisbon	São Jorge	Angola		Spanish Indies/Brazil
C2, Cx.23, L113, f.9	1617	Contrato	Diogo and Jorge Coronel, Francisco Fernandes	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Nazaré	Madeira		Spanish Indies/Brazil
C2, Cx.23, L113, f.60	1618	Procuração/Passageiro	Francisco Gomes Sardinha, Jerónimo Nunes	Lisbon	Santa Cruz			Angola
C2, Cx.23, L113, f.78	1618	Fretamento	Cosme Gonçalves, Heitor Mendes de Setúbal, Domingos Simón de Acuña	Aveiro	Nossa Senhora do Socorro	Cadiz/ Sanlucar	Angola	Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.23, L116, f.4	1619	Fretamento	Francisco Gomes, Francisco Ferreira	Lisbon	Espirito Santo	Sevilha/ Cadiz		Angola

C2, Cx.23, L116, f.35	1619	Contrato e Obrigação	Duarte Coronel Henriques, Sebastião Vaz de Azevedo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Piedade	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.23, L116, f.44	1619	Contrato e obrigação	João de Argomedo, Sebastião Vaz de Azevedo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Piedade	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.23, L116, f.53	1619	Contrato e obrigação	Manuel Drago, Sebastião Vaz de Azevedo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Piedade	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.23, L116, f.56	1619	Contrato e obrigação	Nicolau de Castilho, Sebastião Vaz de Azevedo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Piedade	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.23, L116, f.104	1619	Contrato e Obrigação	Alvaro and Domingos de Matos, Alvaro and Afonso Mendes de Lião	Lisbon	San Gabriel	Madeira	Angola	Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L117, f.13	1619	Contrato e Obrigação	Alvaro and Domingos de Matos, Luis Nunes de Sousa	Lisbon	San Gabriel	Madeira	Angola	Spanish Indies
C15, Cx.42, L195, f.77	1620	Contrato e obrigação	João Correia de Sousa, Fernão da Costa Solis	Lisbon	-			Angola
C2, Cx.24, L118, f.87v	1620	Letra	António Fernandes de Elvas, João de Argomedo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora do Rosário	Angola		Cartagena
C2, Cx.24, L118, f.100v	1620	Quitação	António Fernandes de Elvas, João de Argomedo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora do Rosário + another	Angola		Spanish Indies

C2, Cx.24, L118, f.113	1620	Fretamento e Contrato	Duarte Dias Henriques, João Afonso, Bartolomeu Baião	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Candelaria	Algarve	Angola	Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L119, f.25	1620	Contrato, fiança/credito, obrigação	Luís Henriques Reinel, Luis Nunes de Sousa	Cadiz	São Francisco	Angola		Cartagena
C2, Cx.24, L119, f.32v	1620	Carta de Fretamento	Pedro Coelho, Martim Gonçalves	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Nazaré	Madeira		Angola
C2, Cx.24, L119, f.51v	1620	Contrato e Obrigação	João de Argomedo, João Gomes	Lisbon	San Josef	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L119, f.84v	1620	Contrato e obrigação	João Moreira, Sebastião Gomes, Luís Nunes de Sousa	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Ajuda	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L119, f.107	1620	Contrato e obrigação	João de Argomedo, Baltasar Vicente, Juan Mendez de Carballo	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Conceição	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L119, f.135v	1620	Contrato e obrigação	Luís Nunes de Sousa, Francisco Vieira, Gonçalo Preto	Lisbon	Anjo São Rafael	Rio de Janeiro	Angola	Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L120, f.4	1620	Contrato e obrigação	João de Argomedo, Francisco Vieira, Gonçalo Preto	Lisbon	Anjo São Rafael	Rio de Janeiro	Angola	Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L120, f.7	1620	Contrato e obrigação	João de Argomedo, Baltazar Vicente	Lisbon	Nossa Senhora da Conceição	Angola		Spanish Indies

C2, Cx.24, L120, f.57	1620	Obrigação e contra mestre	Duarte Dias Henriques, João Gomes	Lisbon	San Josef	Angola		Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.24, L120, f.78	1620	Contrato e obrigação	Luís Nunes de Sousa, Damião and António Bravo	Lisbon	Santo Antonio	Cadiz	Angola	Spanish Indies
C2, Cx.27, L133, f.104	1623	Quitação	Luís Alvares Vila Lobo, Jerónimo Gonçalves	Lisbon	São Pedro (?)	Angola		Veracruz (?)
C2, Cx.28, L138, f.33	1624	Procuração	Miguel van Vensen, Jacinto Torres, Miguel Rodrigues, Gonçalo Preto Pinhão	Lisbon	São Rafael	Angola		Hispaniola
C2, Cx.30, L147, f.59, f.61v	1626	Escritura e declaração (contrato)	Maria de Freitas, Jacinto da Silva, Jerónimo da Rocha	Lisbon	São Pedro	Angola		Spanish Indies/ Havana (?)
C15, Cx.49, L228, f.38	1628	Procuração e Obrigação	Roque Ferreira, Francisco Ruiz Torres	Lisbon		Angola		Cartagena
C2, Cx.36, L182, f.134v	1635	Obrigação	Pedro de Passos, Gregório da Veiga de Vasconcelos	Lisbon		Angola		Cartagena

Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, *Cartório Notarial de Lisboa* 1 (Caixa 1); 2 (Caixas 16, 17, 22-24, 28-30); 15 (Caixas 42, 48, 39)