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Seaports in the First Global Age
Portuguese Agents, Networks and Interactions (1500-1800)
Seaports in the First Global Age. Portuguese Agents, Networks and Interactions (1500-1800)

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Arrival of a Portuguese ship, anonymous, c. 1600.
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CHAPTER 12. A COMMODITY OR A PERSON? SLAVE INTERACTIONS IN PORTUGUESE MARITIME SOCIETIES

Amélia Polónia¹
Ana Sofia Ribeiro²

1. SLAVES IN PORTUGAL

Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade have become a primary focus of international historiographical and academic debate over the past forty years. Although Portugal was a major participant in the transatlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades and one of the largest plantation holders in the Americas and Africa, this subject has largely been ignored by Portuguese historians. We know little about Portugal’s role in slavery and slave trade during the first global age (1500-1800). Although the scarcity of data source accounts for part of the problem, it does not totally explain why Portuguese historiography has avoided something that was both one of the main factors and one of the main projections of European expansion and colonial settlements, and that had an impact upon millions of people. Slavery is in fact one of the major elements to be considered against the background of the making of a new world, and an element that encompassed the world between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. The impact of such a forced movement and transfer of people, languages, material culture, religious practices and practical knowledge is one of the foremost elements in building a global world, and not only - not even mostly - in economic terms.

Despite these basic assumptions, historians have so far focused primarily on formal and official registers of that traffic, analyzing them from an institutional, administrative and statistical point of view.¹⁴ Two main domains of debate have prevailed: the study of the traffic, mainly the African traffic to

¹ University of Porto/CITCEM.
² CIDENUS/CITCEM.
colonial territories (mostly America), and the study of slaves as a workforce in colonial territories. In the case of the early modern age, a period for which sources are scarce, Portuguese historiography has provided some approaches in recent years that highlight key aspects, such as the role of the Portuguese as suppliers of slaves for the Spanish Indies and the presence of slaves in these territories. Recent studies on Angola were unable to avoid the subject of the slave trade, mostly from an Atlantic history perspective, while the legal and institutional aspects of the traffic have also been subjected to scrutiny.

However, new insights are needed. Saunders authored one of the few studies discussing the presence of slaves in Portuguese society. This study provides demographic indicators, based on foreigner's descriptions of Portuguese cities, and elaborates on the living conditions of slaves in Portugal. Travel literature also yields some insights on this subject, complemented by an in-depth examination of Portuguese legislation on slaves, while others have also contributed to this perspective.

The demographic weight of slaves in Portugal is unclear, with the exception of the information provided in Fonseca’s studies of the south of Portugal. Neither their real contribution to the metropolitan Portuguese economy, nor their integration (or lack of it) in the host communities, has so far been researched. More recent works show how slaves (mainly African) created a group consciousness in Portuguese cities by using existing confraternities as an organizational scope for their interaction, with the dissemination of the Nossa Senhora do Rosário confraternities as a paramount example.

Recent approaches focusing on certain Portuguese seaports and maritime communities have also contributed to a clarification of this silent presence. The gathering of different sources of information, researched from differing theoretical and methodological perspectives, has allowed new historical dynamics to be captured that were not reflected in the discourse and data provided by more traditional approaches.

Seaports have been the natural target of these studies as they are assumed to have been central points of reception of Portuguese overseas expansion projections. However, even if these maritime communities were, as claimed, more permeable to the presence of alien elements, it is debatable whether the presence of slaves was more relevant in these communities than in their hinterland and surrounding villages. It should not be forgotten that Évora, the capital of Alentejo and the second seat of the Portuguese court during the sixteenth century, was simultaneously one of the main Portuguese slave markets.

This chapter seeks, therefore, to further the debate on the presence of slaves in Portuguese seaports. On a first level, it aims to analyze the weight to be assigned to slaves in the demographic structures of maritime societies in certain Portuguese seaports, while also assessing the role played by slaves in the labor market. On a second level, it seeks to understand the degrees to which this social group was integrated into or excluded from those communities, and the methods applied, from three different perspectives: religious, economic and social. The chapter also presents data from five case studies, each based on a different Portuguese maritime community: Vila do Conde, Leça da Palmeira (on the north-western Atlantic Coast), Lisbon, Tavira (in the Algarve) and Angra (on the island of Terceira, Azores).

Leça da Palmeira was a small parish at the Leça river estuary, slightly north of Porto. Its population in the early modern period was mainly rural and agricultural. However, the village, located near the sea and alongside the river, was known to have a significant concentration of seafarers, including ship's captains, pilots and sailors. The village was a satellite port for Porto, the main city in the region and the second-largest in the Portuguese kingdom.22

Even though it was a small village, the port of Vila do Conde, 30 kilometers north of Porto, had a distinct maritime and urban profile. Its population in 1527 was around 3600-4000 and seems to have reached 6000 in 1602. About 60 percent of its population in the sixteenth century was dedicated to maritime activities, including trade.16

Lisbon was the main center of the national and colonial economy. In about 1550, Portugal's capital city numbered about 100,000 souls, according to Cristóvão Rodrigues de Oliveira.23 The 1557-32 demographic census had previously recorded around 60,000 inhabitants in the capital, which was also the country's busiest port. Lisbon was a truly maritime and cosmopolitan city, home to the country's largest community of merchants, as well as being the seat of the largest shipyards and of the administrative and logistical infrastructures that sustained Portugal's overseas empire. Socially it was very different from the other maritime cities in the country as it had a large aristocracy, gravitating around the king, as well as clergymen and a huge number of people performing public functions within the local and central administration. The percentage represented by the maritime population therefore appears diluted compared with other smaller communities living off the sea and the maritime expansion. The demand for slaves would consequently also be quite different from that in the rest of the country. Lisbon was not only the capital of the kingdom, but also the capital of an overseas empire.

Tavira was one of the busiest port cities in the Algarve, in the south of the kingdom. It had one of the largest populations in the region, with 1567 households in 1527 and 1474 in 1617,20 corresponding to about 6000 inhabitants.22 Even though the port was experiencing problems with siltation towards the end of the sixteenth century, the decreasing economic role of Portuguese strongholds in Morocco and intense Moorish privateering seem to have been the leading factors in the town's declining cycle. Some studies emphasize the role it played as a great maritime center in the sixteenth century as a result of its close smuggling and legal trade links with Seville/Cadiz/Huelva, the Portuguese Moroccan settlements and the Iberian Atlantic archipelagos of Madeira, the Azores and the Canary Islands.21 The goods transacted included slaves imported to Andalusia.22

Angra, lastly, was the most important Portuguese port in the North Atlantic and where ships returning from the Cape route, the South Atlantic, Brazil and the Castilian Indies all stopped before reaching European ports. Known in literature as 'Little Lisbon' (Vitorino Magalhães Godinho called it 'Lisboa Pequena'), Angra had a significant harbor infrastructure, a strong presence of the king's administration and a large maritime community to provide the services required by the port.23 Despite being located outside the metropolitan territory, its port dynamics and similarities with the metropolitan communities justify its being included in the analysis of the Portuguese metropolitan port cities, as far as the presence of slaves is concerned.
2. DEMOGRAPHIC WEIGHT OF SLAVES IN PORTUGUESE MARITIME COMMUNITIES - AN ASSESSMENT

It is hard to obtain even an approximate idea of the effective ratio of slaves to the rest of the population in Portuguese maritime societies. The almost total absence of a population census in early modern Portugal, and the marginal value that central and local administrations attached to slaves as subjects, are key reasons for the lack of such data in historical records. Some historians have nevertheless tried to access this reality through parish records by establishing the ratios of baptized, crismados (confirmed baptized) and dead slaves in the overall population. There are, however, serious limitations to these sources. First, the lack of serial data within a parish and the existence of differential representativeness of data among different parishes make comparative studies almost impossible. The variability of available data for the same chronologies, as well as the frequent absence of baptism, confirmation and death records, alongside the varying accuracy of the registers, also affects the reliability of the trends established and, to an even greater extent, their comparison.

According to the Ordenações Manuelinas (the ‘General Ordinances of the Kingdom’), owners were obliged to baptize slaves, subject to certain conditions and terms. If the slave was under the age of 11, the owner had one month (after the slave’s birth or acquisition) to order the baptism. If the slave was 11 or older, this term was extended to six months. Nevertheless, it is certainly possible that some owners may not have acted accordingly, while some slaves may also have been baptized before arriving in a community.

On the other hand, slaves’ access to church sacraments was highly dependent upon several variables. Firstly, slaves could be baptized before boarding the ships in which they were transported and, therefore, would not require baptism at their place of arrival in the kingdom. Secondly, we do not know the degree of slaves’ mobility within the kingdom and so they could have lived most of their life in one town, but have died in another. This makes comparisons between baptism and death registers as a means of assessing their presence problematic. Thirdly, their access to the sacraments depended heavily on the will of the owner. Under these conditions, it is almost impossible to quantify the real presence of slaves within a community.

Another reason for the potential misrepresentation of the numbers of slaves arriving or being born in a specific place may also be the general lack of precise infant mortality records. This applies even in respect of the native Portuguese population, and it is a factor that considerably reduces the reliability of any data.

In the case of the cities, towns and villages analyzed here, the researchers’ assessments were based mainly on baptism records, although some data on episcopal confirmation and death records were also examined as control variables. Some results can be examined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>VILA DO CONDE</th>
<th>LEÇA DA PALMEIRA</th>
<th>LISBON</th>
<th>ANGRA</th>
<th>TAVIRA</th>
<th>ALL PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slaves/Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Slaves/Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Slaves/Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1535-1550</td>
<td>9/1480</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>459/15074</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>152/5105</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1551-1560</td>
<td>61/3969</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>15/1804</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>688/13957</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600-1650</td>
<td>124/3022</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>47/1341</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>13558/525</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651-1700</td>
<td>119/4247</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>459/15074</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1365/32740</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>313/12718</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>63/3145</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>459/15074</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Diachronic evaluation of slave population rates in baptism registers

With regard to the overall percentage of slaves among the local population in table 12.1, we observe that, for a period of two centuries, slaves represented only 2 to 4 percent of the total numbers of people baptized in the maritime towns under evaluation. There is a similarity between the two northwestern port cities, Vila do Conde and Leça da Palmeira. A significant difference is

24 Ordenações Manuelinas (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1984), IV, 300-304

25 The number of cases only 18 of the 35 punished. No data remain for the other 17 punished in Lisbon. There are no continuous series in the remaining parish records.
The slave population of Lisbon may be even more underrepresented than in the other villages and towns considered in this sampling. It should be remembered, however, that we do not have data for almost half of the parishes in Lisbon. Hypothetically, therefore, the slave population in those parishes could have been more sizeable than the available figures suggest. Secondly, Lisbon had a larger population than the other villages and towns considered and it was therefore more difficult for a priest to check whether every soul had already been baptized. This ecclesiastical laxity meant that slave owners could easily ignore their moral duty. If we compare the Lisbon results with the death registers in table 12.2, we can see, for example, that the percentage of slave deaths is higher than the percentage of baptisms. It is likely, therefore, that most of the slaves in Lisbon arrived as adults and so did not undergo baptism there. It could be argued, again as a hypothesis, that internal reproduction was possibly not, at that time, the main vehicle for increasing or even maintaining the slave population in Lisbon. This could have been a much more mobile population and one that did not leave behind proof of its daily existence within the city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>VILA DO CONDE</th>
<th>LEÇA DA PALMEIRA</th>
<th>LISBOA</th>
<th>ANGRA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slaves/Total population</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Slaves/Total population</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1551-1600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>259/4395</td>
<td>5.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601-1650</td>
<td>62/2190</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0/1609</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651-1700</td>
<td>97/3340</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>16/1283</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159/5530</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>16/2352</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.2: Diachronic evaluation of slave population rates in death registers


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27 Furtado, Escravos e Senhores: O Porto de Vila do Conde no século XVI, p. 197.
30 Fonseca, Escravos e Senhores no Lisboa Quinhentista, p. 193.
31 Table 12.2 only covers 159/4395 slaves. No data remain for the other 159/4395 slaves. There are no complete years in the remaining parish records.
When comparing the percentage of baptized local slaves with the percentage of confirmed slaves or deaths, it cannot automatically be assumed that slaves in most communities would have arrived as adults and perhaps already have been baptized. The death rate of slaves in Vila do Conde between 1600 and 1700 was approximately 2.9 percent.\textsuperscript{32} Although the death register could be expected to provide a more accurate reflection of the actual slave population living in the town, these data tend once again to misrepresent the reality. Besides the already mentioned low rates of child deaths in the registers, there are other potential explanations for the low numbers of slave deaths registered. The primary reason for registering a death was not the fact of the death itself, but instead the administering of the sacrament of extreme unction. One of the reasons for the low number could therefore be owners who were less sensitive to the salvation of their slaves’ souls or their own responsibility for arranging burial. Another reason to register a death was to take note of the deceased’s will and any further spiritual recommendations and donations concerning the salvation of his soul. Since slaves could not own property, there was no particular need in this respect to register their deaths, given the absence of legal dispositions and pious obligations. On the other hand, such differences could reflect a high mobility of this specific group in such communities. The probability of being sold was higher in maritime communities, where the circulation of goods and people was more intense, and so those born in one community could quite conceivably die in another.

Researchers searching for additional evidence of the presence of slaves in those communities consequently have to rely on another ecclesiastical source: the registers of confirmations. In the case of Vila do Conde, the data in the confirmation registers from around 1625 to 1637 show slaves comprising around 8 percent of the overall population; in other words, almost double the previous indications.\textsuperscript{33} Along with baptism and the Eucharist, the Catholic Church considers confirmation to be a sacrament of Christian initiation and it was administered mainly to children and younger people.

\textsuperscript{32} Polânia, A Expansão Ultramarina num perpectivo local. O porto de Vila do Conde no século XVIII (172), The present study provides additional data.

\textsuperscript{33} Polânia, A Expansão Ultramarina num perpectivo local. O porto de Vila do Conde no século XVIII (172), The present study provides additional data.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Period} & \textbf{VILA DO CONDE} & \textbf{LIÇA DA PALMEIRA} & \textbf{LISBOA} & \textbf{Total/} & \textbf{Total/} & \textbf{Total/} \\
 & \textbf{Total/} & \textbf{Total/} & \textbf{Total/} & \textbf{Slaves} & \textbf{Slaves} & \textbf{Slaves} & \textbf{Slaves} & \textbf{Slaves} & \textbf{Slaves} \\
\hline
1551-1600 & 27/296 & 9.1 & 8/533 & 1.4 & 83/1200 & 6.91 & & & \\
1601-1650 & 56/725 & 7.7 & 56/452 & 12.4 & & & & & \\
1651-1700 & & & & & & & & & \\
Total & 83/1021 & 8.1 & 64/1005 & 6.4 & 83/1200 & 6.91 & & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 12.3 Biannual evaluation of slave population rates in confirmation registers.}
\end{table}


For Vila do Conde, efforts to identify slaves in overall sets of other registers, including notarial and Misericórdia records, in particular those that register indentures or their burials,\textsuperscript{35} show substantially higher numbers, as demonstrated in figure 12.1. The figures for 1631-1640 are quite impressive and indicate an increasing number of slaves in this community during the seventeenth century, as confirmed by the above registers. Let us not forget, however, that the numbers from 1620 to 1640 include also the confirmation registers, pointed out above as responsible for the identification of higher number of slaves in the village.

When comparing these numbers with those provided for other Portuguese cities, it would seem apparent that the percentage of slaves who died or were confirmed in Lisbon - 6 to 7 percent of the population - is relatively similar to the percentages in other maritime centers. According to Saunders, 6 percent of Porto’s total population around 1540 was slaves,\textsuperscript{36} while Seville is said to have had around 8 percent in 1565.\textsuperscript{37} Other regions in the south of the country, both at the coast (Setúbal) and in the hinterland (Évora), recorded 5 percent of their total populations as being baptized slaves.\textsuperscript{38} It is worth noting that the proportion of slaves was higher in areas with smaller total populations (7.8 percent on average in the second half of the sixteenth century in Ribatejo, and 6.8 percent in the remainder of the country).

\textsuperscript{34} The dates cover only 19 of the 35 parishes. No data remain for the other 17 parishes in Lisbon. There are no continuous series in the remaining parishes.

\textsuperscript{35} LUCIM, Livros de receita e despesas, 1622-1625.

\textsuperscript{36} Saunders, A Social History of Black Slaves and Freemen in Portugal, 1141-1851, 103.

\textsuperscript{37} Alessandro Zelii, "Escravos no Atlântico a Epoque Moderna", Annales Econdmiques, Sociétés, Civilisations, 47, 1993 (91), 53.

\textsuperscript{38} Fernandes, Escravos do Sul do Portugal, séculos XIV-XVI (17 and 24).
for Baixo Alentejo in the same period).\textsuperscript{39} The most plausible explanation for this is the need for extra labor in those regions, with free men being attracted by the prospect of better wages in the maritime cities or better opportunities overseas. It should also be noted that Ribatejo was near Lisbon and so pressured by demands from the capital, especially the shipbuilding industry’s need for woodcutting and rope-making,\textsuperscript{40} while Alentejo included Êvora, which, as stated before, was the second seat of the Portuguese crown in the sixteenth century. Fonseca argues that the lower number of slaves in seaport areas after the sixteenth century was a consequence of slaves being exported to the Americas, where demand for such labor was more intensive. In Portugal, by contrast, demand diminished during the seventeenth century, and eventually most of the slaves were born in the kingdom.\textsuperscript{41} This argument is not supported, however, by the empirical evidence provided by Vila do Conde and Leça da Palmeira since higher rates of slaves were documented in these places in the seventeenth century. The exception to this trend was Tavira which, by the end of the sixteenth century, was losing population in direct proportion to its declining overseas trade. This could mean that the increase or decrease in the numbers of slaves in a society was dependent on the latter’s economic dynamism and on its access, either directly or through its seafarers, to slave markets overseas.

Data from Leça da Palmeira and Angra in the Azores suggest that, by the mid-seventeenth century, the numbers of slave baptisms were relatively stable. In the case of Leça da Palmeira, 95 percent of baptized slaves were newborn infants, while 75 percent were born in the parish.\textsuperscript{42} In Angra, almost 70 percent of baptized slaves had a slave mother identified, which indicates that internal slave reproduction had also become the main source of the slave population.

One final question still to be answered concerns the ethnic and cultural background of these slaves. Were they exclusively or mainly African? Data on this issue are even scarcer.

In the case of ethnicity, while only black slaves are mentioned in Leça, the presence of Chinese, Japanese and other Eastern slaves is also documented in Vila do Conde.\textsuperscript{43} This ethnic variety also occurred in other ports with an early role in overseas navigation, such as Lisbon or Tavira.\textsuperscript{44} Despite a clear prevalence of black Africans, the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century saw the co-existence of multiple races and ethnicities among slaves in Vila do Conde. The few explicit references to slaves’ racial origins in that sample show that black slaves prevailed, comprising about 65 percent of the total. To those should be added the 18 percent of mulattoes, alongside those referred to in the sources as chinos (from China, meaning the Far East) and bieus, the meaning of which is unclear. The mention of a “Jewish” slave and one from India, without further reference to their ethnicity, completes a framework in which the prevalence of black slaves from São Tome and Guinea is a fact and in which slaves from the East or Mozambique appear only exceptionally.

A total of 73 percent of the slaves in Lisbon were of African origin, but the number of Asians was also relevant (22.6 percent). Military conflicts in North Africa, when many slaves were captured and the 1492 conquest of Granada by the Castilian Catholic crown meant that slaves from the Maghreb and the Iberian Peninsula itself represented 5 percent of those identified in Lisbon for the second half of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{45}
3. SLAVE OWNERSHIP IN PORTUGAL: ECONOMIC VALUE VERSUS SOCIAL STATUS

Leaving aside the huge proportion of unknown professions or occupations, the largest number of slave owners in the smaller maritime communities comprised pilots, merchants and ship’s captains. That is not surprising as it was those men who were mainly responsible for the trading and transportation of slaves. This trend can thus be easily understood by the nature of the traffic and the intense involvement of these professions in it. Evidence on the slave trade in Portuguese seaports can be confirmed by case studies from Porto and Vila do Conde.

In Angra and Lisbon the main slave owners, with the exception of merchants, were noblemen, public officials and clergymen. In Vila do Conde and Leça, too, there were significant numbers of slave owners outside the seamen’s universe, with many of these owners being clergymen and public officials. Both groups were wealthy and enjoyed a prestigious position in those urban centers. Still, the social and demographic scenario of Angra and Lisbon were very different from those in the smaller communities. Angra and Lisbon had larger populations, while Lisbon was also the capital of the kingdom. The role of the court, and the gravitating aristocracy, added to the ecclesiastical and civil institutions inherent to such centrality, meant a lot in terms of the performing elites. Besides an economic capacity, owning slaves had an important social meaning and was a way of conveying the owner’s social status.

Women were also significant owners, representing around 30 percent in Leça da Palmeira and 25 percent in Vila do Conde, while the percentage for Angra was 6 percent. Despite the lack of quantitative data, Fonseca emphasizes that the majority of slave owners in Lisbon with an unknown professional status were women, usually widows. This reflects women’s increasing role in maritime societies, as stressed by Polónia, and also the needs imposed by the absence of men working overseas. The absence of men often meant that women had to take over activities traditionally performed by men, or had to hire, or buy, someone else to take on those tasks. Owning a slave was an easy and inexpensive way of doing so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFESSIONAL STATUS</th>
<th>VILA DO CONDE (1531-1640)</th>
<th>LEÇA DA PALMEIRA (1601-1700)</th>
<th>ANGRA (1583-1699)</th>
<th>LISBON (1551-1600)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noble</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Royal family</td>
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<td>258</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>1065</td>
<td>1507</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>38</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>2489</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>2796</td>
<td>3996</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.4: Professional status of slave owners

These assumptions are not at odds with other data available on the occupations of slaves in maritime societies. We can, in fact, discern some trends, even if variety prevails: slaves could be craftsmen, fishermen or farm workers. It is also normal to find slaves working as seafarers on board ships, or as wage workers in urban shops or in public works, with their wages being paid to their masters and, at times, to the slaves themselves.51 These slaves engaged in employment were known as negros de ganho. In populations with a higher social share of seafarers, the number of slaves working on board ships was higher, and these slaves could work simultaneously as servants of their masters and as members of the crew.

Some testimonies are available on the presence of slaves within crews. A notarial record refers to a young slave, biete, listed among the belongings of Francisco Fernandes, resident in Vila do Conde and who fell sick on the carrack Santa Amaro when coming back from India in 1619. The slave acted as his servant on board.52 The second example is provided by Maria Baia, widow of the pilot Manuel Barbosa and who issued a power of attorney to Jacome Martins Seixas, also a pilot, requiring him to take her slave, Francisco, with him to be sold in Brazil, the Canary Islands or the Spanish Indies, specifying that "he was allowed to have him at his service during the said trip providing him with good treatment of his person".53 In a context in which, as is well known, each crew member was responsible for meeting his own daily needs during long trips, these kind of tasks performed aboard by slaves were extremely important. Having slaves to fulfill these tasks reduced the difficulties of relying on a crew boy, or the need to spend large sums of money on a personal servant.

These roles could also be associated with other roles, such as crew members, for which owners would receive payment, or at least some kind of stipend. In 1660 a widow demanded that her son, a seafarer, "should give her half of the wage earned by the said Joane her slave, from which he would earn from the trips he would do with him".54 In 1868, the powers delegated by Sebastião Afonso Gaio, a pilot, to Manuel Antonio, seafarer, included responsibility for managing the third part of his carrack, Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem, and for taking care of his servants and slaves on the said vessel.55 Finally, the widow of Pedro Álvares Barcelos, a pilot, issued a power of attorney covering all the wages due to Pedro, her slave, from the round trip from Lisbon to São Tomé.56 Those performances concurrently created opportunities for escaping slaves. This is what happened to another widow, who demanded the capture of Pedro, her slave, who had disappeared after the death of her husband, a pilot, and over whom she claimed to have power and property as his owner.57

On the vessels, whether overseas or in the kingdom itself, some of these slaves, mostly those known as chinos, i.e. of Eastern provenance, performed tasks requiring the trust of their masters. In 1596, Maria Carneira from Vila do Conde gave a power of attorney to Belchior, her slave, in order to allow him to collect all her debts and income.58 In Lisbon, in 1599, Baltasar Rodrigues instructed in his will that the Indian slave António Rodrigues should continue in the service of his wife. However, the brothers of Misericórdia were also allowed to use António’s services "to collect debts and bills from Lisbon Misericórdia because he is trustworthy, experienced in difficult charges and knows the merchants very well".59

Such slaves also worked in internal maritime transportation, in the daily supply of fresh goods to the cities, with some working on boats crossing the river Tagus to and from Lisbon. Bastião, an Indian slave belonging to the merchant Diogo Fernandes, delivered wheat from the south of Portugal to Lisbon in a small boat, while a Turkish slave was responsible for carrying flour from the boats to the city barns.60

In Lisbon, slaves frequently appeared in roles involving the performing of public works. Some were employed by the municipality.61 Others employed in public works could even belong to private persons, as in the case of Martinho, who belonged to the widow of João Vidalva and was employed as a mason working on the fortress repairs in 1591 in the king’s service, and who was eventually freed.62

51 Duras, "O Parteiro e a Estrada do Passado no Porto do século XV", 41
52 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 15, ff. 195
53 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 29, ff. 34.
54 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 1, ff. 14.
55 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 1, ff. 109-110.
56 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 1, ff. 78-79.
57 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 1, ff. 77.
58 ARN CRUCZ, 1º cartório, 1ª série, c. 3, ff. 102-103.
59 ABN, Fundo Nacional, 1º cartório, c. 17, c. 43, ff. 148.
60 Foramina, Exames de Senhoras no Lisboa Guinhentas, 252.
61 Foramina, Exames de Senhoras no Lisboa Guinhentas, 245.
62 ABN, Fundo Nacional, 1º cartório, c. 2, c. 1, ff. 6-8.
Most of the slaves identified in north-western maritime villages were, however, women providing domestic services or working in an urban context. In Vila do Conde, 275 of the 403 slaves identified between 1535 and 1620, or 68.2 percent of the total, were women. In urban places of more significant dimensions, such as Lisbon, these female slaves provided a variety of services in the streets. Some descriptions of the city reveal that there were "50 black women selling boiled and purée plums. Another 50 were daily selling angel hair pasta and beans... Others had the task of selling olive oil". 

These slaves were in the service of their owners. In 1538, Isabel de Cáceres obtained a license to have two slaves selling in the streets. In 1594, the tailor Toribio de Leon bought Luzia Fernandes at a slave auction. It was intended that she should serve him within the domestic space for six months but, after that, she would stay in the city streets "earning" her own income. She was to give him two viñéns each day, with any extra money she could earn to be saved to buy her freedom.

These people provided important daily services to the city, with some working as professional clothes washers and earning 300 reis a week in the service of their masters. The same system was used for the women responsible for collecting the population's excrement and who earned a small stipend for their owners.

The lives of these slaves involved close daily contacts with their owners in very much the same way as between masters and servants. Their situation in the kingdom, even if they were deprived of liberty and frequently subject to mistreatment, would seem to have had less in common with that of slaves working in plantations or mining overseas than with that of metropolitan servants.

Even in Portugal, however, slaves constituted a labor force and were seen in law as personal assets of their owners. They were also seen, in the metropolitan space, as external signs of social power and representation: owning slaves was regarded as evidence of wealth and prestige in a society where owning colonial goods added to one's reputation.

But slaves were individuals, and those societies did indeed perceive them as such. How then did these individuals fit into the daily life of Portuguese maritime communities? Did any effective integration occur? Can one identify any signs of social belonging? The analysis of this topic will include both the religious and the social dimensions, which are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.

4. SOCIAL BELONGING - THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

The religious performances of slaves were an inevitable reflection of the Christianity to which they had been converted. Baptism was compulsory for slaves, whether newborn or imported, as their masters were responsible for their religious education. Consequently, the administration of sacraments, compulsory for the overall population since the Council of Trent, was a frequent practice, even for slaves. Their Christian practices and social recognition varied, however, with some masters showing great concern about their performance as Christians, as indicated by their submission to the sacrament of confirmation, which was not really compulsory for the overall population. As noted before, slaves constituted 6 percent of total confirmations in the early seventeenth century in Leça da Palmeira and Lisbon, and 8 percent in Vila do Conde. In both confirmations and baptisms, their sponsors were frequently other slaves, thus demonstrating the recognition of slaves as sponsors or godparents of other slaves.

Religious practices accompanied slaves until their death. Extreme unction was applied regularly. As the slaves were baptized, the owner was morally obliged to provide them with the last sacrament, being the final absolution of their sins, as well as burial. The places of their graves vary, however, as some of them were treated as indigents and buried by the Misericórdia House (a fraternity that used to provide burials for criminals and the homeless). The same institution arranged burials of some slaves in the Misericórdia church.
yard; the slaves' masters were expected, however, to pay a fee for that. Some slaves were given proper graves in the village churchyard or even inside the church precinct, although those — including the case of a mulatta belonging to Sebastião Alves and who was buried with all the sacraments within the Vila do Conde parish church — were the exceptions. The situation in Lisbon was similar. One exception, however, was the slave of Gaspar Tibau, from the parish of Lumiar, who was buried "in the Church, in front of Saint Valentine," Vicência, the slave of Branca Carneiro, meanwhile was buried in front of the main door of the Monastery of Belém, "from the outside." More significant is the fact that some slave burials were occasionally associated with the celebration of masses and other religious rituals. In 1619, for instance, the burial of a married female slave of Thomas Pires was supplemented by five masses and offers to the church for her salvation. In 1620, a mass was celebrated and an offer given when a female slave and her little boy were buried, while when another female slave was buried in 1621, Gaspar Pais, her owner, paid for a mass celebrated by six priests and an offer. In 1628, meanwhile, Luís Cambado, slave of Maria Machada, was buried with a mass celebrated by ten priests, with two offers also having been given to the church on the same occasion, while, in 1629, Ana Dinis, a freed slave, was buried with a mass celebrated by four priests and an offer was given. All this happened in Vila do Conde. When the Indian slave of Brites de Aguiar died in Lisbon in 1587, her master ordered five masses for her soul and an offer of six tortes on her behalf, while Marcos Lopes, the owner of the slave Martinho, ordered a sung mass for the latter. Offering missals (alms) was a means of ensuring the salvation of a slave and, as documented, was a common procedure, as in the very small seaport of Vila do Conde. The same is documented in Lisbon, where Gaspar Tibau offered the church one cruzado on behalf of his slave's soul.

It is worth noting that the targets of these religious indicators are almost exclusively women who seem to have been domestic servants, most certainly dedicated to their masters and some of them possibly more than that. The gifts and the money spent on these religious displays suggest the existence of feelings of affection nurtured by slave owners towards their slaves and which seem to disregard the social stigmas of slavery. The presence of these affective ties is also reflected in the fact that these accompanying persons paid for the slaves' burial, or even for the subsequent celebration of periodic masses on behalf of their souls.

The administration of the sacrament of marriage between slaves, by contrast, was rare and even exceptional. In Lisbon, only 4.4 percent of the total marriages involved slaves. Out of those 337 marriages recorded with slaves, 250 were celebrated between slaves. However, 20 percent of these unions were celebrated between male slaves and free women (usually former slaves), while only 6 percent involved female slaves and free men. Owners rarely promoted marital consortium. Most frequently, slaves sought to marry without obtaining the consent of their owners. When Alexandre and Catarina Rodrigues, both slaves, married in 1597, they did not ask the permission of their owners since the female slave's master would most probably have refused consent. Nevertheless, the priest still agreed to marry them. When Simão and Lucélia married in Lisbon Cathedral in 1600, the owner of the female slave protested and argued that the marriage was illegal as it would adversely affect the owner's income. The priest, however, arranged for a special license to allow such marriage.

Questions relating to the property of any descendants and the obstacles to selling married slaves, which would imply separating those united by a church sacrament, could explain the owners' reluctance. The instability of these ties and the obligations created by the sacrament made religious marriage a difficult problem for slave owners. In addition, slaves, and particularly female slaves, were targets of sexual behavior that usually positioned them on the fringes of the official patterns. Illegitimate relations between slave owners and their slaves were not uncommon, and illegitimacy rates within this group were...
consequently very high.\textsuperscript{85} This can be seen in both Vila do Conde and Leça da Palmeira, where studies of such behavior have been conducted. In Leça da Palmeira, for example, 48 percent of the fathers of newborn slaves were not themselves slaves.\textsuperscript{86} The illegitimacy rate in Angra was 54 percent,\textsuperscript{87} while slave baptisms in Lisbon indicate a rate of 70 percent.\textsuperscript{88} It should be noted that some of these children were born from informal sexual intercourse between slaves, sometimes between slaves of the same owner, and sometimes between slaves belonging to different masters. Mesquita argues that a certain tolerance towards the informal sexuality (and reproductive potential) of slaves was common. In Angra, it was common for the ecclesiastical authorities to consent to such behavior. The bishop D. Manuel Gouveia, for example, had one slave, Catarina, whose child was baptized in 1588, while Maria da Graça, a slave of the canon Francisco Correia, had daughters and one son baptized between 1680 and 1688, with the owner - as was common in those days - being the godfather.\textsuperscript{89}

In Lisbon, 70 of the 93 children whose father was known, but who were considered illegitimate, were children of free men. As Fonseca suggests, some of these women were forced into prostitution, sometimes for the benefit of their owner.\textsuperscript{90} There is documentary evidence, albeit scarce, of explicit paternity of the mother's owner. Gaspar de Paiva, living in Alfama (Lisbon), recognized his three-year-old son Domingos in 1592,\textsuperscript{91} declaring that "he had this son from his Indian slave, a bengala, whose son he begot while being married but living in India". António Vaz Magro died unmarried in Mina and had a son, Pero Vaz Magro, from a slave. Vaz Magro's mother pledged to feed and teach her son's child.\textsuperscript{92}

Some masters freed their children, even if they were not the owners of the mother. Gonzalo Fernandes, for example, was a member of the Lisbon municipality and the father of Isabel, who was two years old in 1597. Her mother was an Indian slave called Catarina, who belonged to Filipa Coelho and her husband Brás Correia, a nobleman in the service of the Estado da Índia. Gonzalo Fernandes paid the couple 9000 reais to free his daughter, claiming to be motivated by a desire "to relieve his conscience".\textsuperscript{93}

Other indicators, from sources such as wills and manumission letters (cartas de alforria), confirm a similar trend for Vila do Conde. This in turn leads to the question of slaves' social conditions within Portuguese seaport communities.

5. SOCIAL INCLUSION – ATTITUDES TOWARDS SLAVES IN MARITIME SOCIETIES

The registers of daily life attest to the existence of some ambiguous phenomena. Indeed, the historian faces examples of both marginalization and of apparent social inclusion.

Race was a stigma, alongside the condition of slavery. Although the color of a person's skin was not the only criterion for hierarchizing people, it was the paramount consideration. That is why black slaves seem to have been more marginalized than mulattos and Eastern slaves. Slaves, particularly those from Africa, tended to produce feelings of mistrust among the population. The Church tried to forbid specific entertainment behaviors involving slaves, such as dancing and singing, which were seen as sinful luxuries and as proof of the presence of the devil in a person's body.\textsuperscript{94} A 1644 regulation in Angra forbade blacks from Guinea from staying in the city streets, within the walls. While not in their master's home, they were only allowed to work outside the city walls.\textsuperscript{95} Slaves were seen by the local authorities as potential criminals, an attitude that also extended to freed slaves. An example of this can be seen in the deliberations of the Vila do Conde municipality in 1618 and 1621, whereby prostitutes were condemned to expulsion because they received in their homes slaves and black servants who were considered burglars and criminals.\textsuperscript{96} Similar deliberations of the Porto municipality confirm that there, too, slaves were...
marginalized and seen as potential criminals and, therefore, as constituting a
danger to the security of the city.97

In Porto, slaves are also mentioned in judicial proceedings and in pardon
documents, although not necessarily associated with very serious crimes. Cas-
es of minor theft, insults and physical assaults tend to prevail. In such cases,
the slave’s expulsion from the village through a compulsory sale was frequent;
the owner was also commonly required to pay the costs and usually went on
to punish the slave severely.98

There are, however, testimonies that indicate a significant social inclusion
of slaves. These testimonies appear largely in notarial records, namely in man-
umention letters (cartas de alforria), as well as in wills and powers of attorney.
They are also mentioned in purchase and selling contracts, donations and
marital dowries, albeit normally merely as a commodity or property.

The granting of freedom to a slave was rare. The reasons invoked for freeing
them varied, with the most commonly mentioned reasons being the quality
and dedication of their service, the advanced age of the slave and the slave’s
lack of utility. It could also happen that a slave was able to buy his or her free-
dom, using money earned through work or received from the houses of the
Misericórdia and the Confraternities of Nossa Senhora do Rosário das Homens
Pretos (the Confraternities of the Black Men of Our Lady of the Rosary) as charity.
99 The aim of this latter Institution was to protect black people, both slaves
and free men, and especially the most deprived, as in the case of the Lisbon
slave Leonor Fernandes, a very old Jalo who was blind in her right eye and
whose owner was paid 5000 reais by the confraternity for her freedom.

Torrão notes some of the reasons why owners agreed to release these slaves:
as some owners declared, they would do that as a way “of discharging the sins
of my soul”, or of pleasing their slaves “who have always served me well”. An-
other reason was the wish to obtain some liquid assets for use in an emergency.
as in the case of Estêvão Loureiro, who released his slave Gaspar in order to
raise sufficient funds to rescue his own son from captivity in Ceuta.100

Freedom, however, did not guarantee self-sustainability. The granting of
freedom by the owner usually came with an undertaking to provide additional
material support to the freed slave. Although many records attest to lives of
misery and begging among freed slaves, others show concern for their welfare.
There is documentary evidence of wills granting sums of money or amounts
of cereal, to be provided on a regular basis, or even the granting of real estate
properties, with most of this evidence being from the monographic and
micro-analytical study of Vila do Conde.101 An example of this is Madalena
Ramires, an unmarried woman who left her slave Catarina 10,000 reais in her
will, as well as her clothes, her bed and a small house in the village. An addi-
tional sum of money “to struggle for her life” and ten measures of cereal per
year during Catarina’s life were also granted.102 Luísa Pereira granted her two
freeslaves, a mother and daughter, 15 measures of cereal throughout the life-
time of the mother and until the daughter reached the age of 12.103

There are also cases in which the owner provided his slaves with a house,
but in a different village, so that he would not insinuate the feelings of his family
and neighbors. These include the case of Pedro de Azevedo, a priest in a ru-
ral parish near Vila do Conde, who stated in a notarial deed that “I have been
asked by my sister to leave these slaves something to support their lives. In my
homeland I will not let them anything because it would offend my brothers,
so I decided to leave them a house in Vila do Conde, the one I bought at the
square from Pedro Martins Correia, which I grant to them to comply with my
sister’s wishes, because of the many good things they did to me, and because,
for the last thirty years, I could count only upon them, suffering my imperti-
nences, aches and misery”.104

Bequesting properties, goods and commodities to slaves so as to ensure
their future could take other forms. Take, for example, the will of Maria de
Barros, unmarried and living in Vila do Conde in the eighteenth century, and

97 Monopoly rights from 1495 (July 28), forbidding the use of weapons by any slave, either Moor or Christian, and whether white
or black, and considering them "servos de mão descobertos e governáveis, que se não regerem temporadamente como animos verda-
deis do servidão", INP, 3111, n. 1, f. 11. 98-100.
98 AINV, br. 50, 1-2.
de Vila do Conde no século XV", 3, 354-355, 363-364, 377; Catarina, Eneasse e Confraternidades locais, 564; Manuel Sanches, "Em busca
dos escravos nos Cartões Notariais Religiosos entre senhores e escravos nas prescrições, alforrias e testamentos", Congresso Inter-
nacional de Contratos e Escravos nas Sociodades Abissol-Abissimistas, April 9-13 (Lisbon: Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas - Uni-
versidade Nova de Lisboa, 2002).
100 Torrão, "Em busca dos escravos nos Cartões Notariais Religiosos entre senhores e escravos nas prescrições, alforrias e testa-
mentos".
102 AINV, 1121, n. 1, f. 48.
103 AINV, 1121, n. 1, f. 48.
104 AINV, 1121, n. 1, f. 48.
In a different register, and documenting a different concern, Manuel Ribeiro, an illegitimate son of D. João Ribeiro Gayo, from Vila do Conde, Bishop of Malaca, freed Marçal Ribeiro, his illegitimate son (homem bailo), servant of Beatriz de Couros, a lady from the aristocracy of the village, even though he was already a free man. He did that, he stated, in order to allow him to prove his status as a free man (which he was already) and to avoid being treated as if he was a slave.111

Notarial registers also include examples of slaves acting as the legal representatives of their masters in performing tasks of great responsibility, such as collecting goods and money overseas, and selling patrimonial assets, which implied a great deal of trust.112

6. CONCLUSION

Does this evidence point to a real integration of slaves in early modern Portuguese maritime societies? We would argue that there are various examples of reliable evidence that show slaves actively participating in the societies they lived in. The status and conditions of slaves in Portugal differed from those in the colonies. By living with their masters on a permanent basis, taking care of them until they died and raising their children, they interacted with society more as servants than as slaves. As Barros states for the seaport city of Porto, a slave could move through the streets and even find paid work, notwithstanding his being a slave.113 Despite the lack of liberty, slaves were seen as persons and individuals, equal in the eyes of the sacraments and eventually recognized by society as partners, even if not as social equals.

The constant social adaptation experienced by these maritime communities in this period and the cosmopolitan and open-minded approach to new realities eventually contributed to the framework we were able to access in the sources. This framework appears to demonstrate slaves’ increased role in the community, with the close contact with their owners and masters, their long-term co-existence, and the personal, physical and daily contact and closeness creating a structure within which slaves were indeed considered as persons.

105 ASMVC, Livro 2º dos Registros, II 85.
106 CB, CH, 2º cent., cx. 15, lv. 7, fl. 125v.
107 CB, CH, 2º cent., cx. 14, lv. 66, fl. 72v.
110 ASMVC, Col. 1, esp. 32, fl. 1-11.
111 ARC, AGD, 2º série, lv. 5, fl. 127v-129v.
112 Anuário e Anais, 1ª comunidade escrava da justa de Padrao, “208.
The testimonies in the sources that document their marginality are rare compared with the wealth of evidence revealing not only their integration in the villages, but also the ties of gratitude, affection and care that some individuals cherished towards them. But maybe these indications of integration in the sources prevail precisely because they were the exception and not the rule. Further research is consequently needed in order to sustain this new approach to slavery and slave conditions in Portugal and Europe.