

ON THE TRAIL OF THE RETURNED AND ESCAPADE SLAVE DEALERS TO PORTUGAL: THE “INTELLIGENCIA SAQUAREMA” IN THE SERVICE OF COMBATING THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE AFTER 1850¹

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ABSTRACT

With the approval of Law no. 581 of September 4, 1850, also known as the Eusébio de Queirós Law, the Imperial Government began to adopt different means to repress the action of slave dealers in the national territory. This subject has been successfully treated for some time now by specialized historiography on the final years of the traffic of Africans to Brazil. Taking a slightly different path, this article turns to the means employed by the Imperial Government abroad for that same purpose. In this sense, its attention falls on the intelligence service developed by Brazilian consular agents in Portugal in the 1850s, to follow the traces of slave dealers returned and fugitives to Portugal after the tightening of anti-slave trade measures in the Empire.

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KEYWORDS

Slave Trade – Eusébio de Queirós Law – Saquarema Diplomacy.

NO RASTRO DOS TRAFICANTES RETORNADOS E FORAGIDOS PARA PORTUGAL: A “INTELLIGENCIA SAQUAREMA” NO COMBATE AO TRÁFICO ATLÂNTICO DE ESCRAVOS DEPOIS DE 1850

RESUMO

Com a aprovação da Lei nº 581 de 4 de setembro de 1850, amplamente conhecida por Lei Eusébio de Queirós, o Governo Imperial passou a adotar diferentes meios no intuito de reprimir a ação dos traficantes de escravos no território nacional. Tema este que já há algum tempo vem sendo tratado com sucesso pela historiografia especializada nos anos finais do tráfico de africanos para o Brasil. Tomando um caminho um pouco diferente, este artigo se volta para os meios empregados pelo Governo Imperial no exterior para aquele mesmo fim. Nesse sentido, sua atenção recai sobre o serviço de inteligência desenvolvido pelos agentes consulares do Brasil em Portugal na década de 1850, no intuito de acompanhar e relatar às autoridades brasileiras os rastros dos traficantes de escravos retornados e foragidos para Portugal após o endurecimento das medidas anti-tráfico no Império.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Tráfico de Escravos – Lei Eusébio de Queirós – Serviço de Inteligência Saquarema.

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The Imperial Government has applied all the means at its disposal, and all the legal resources at its disposal, to prevent the reappearance of the traffic, and in this effort it has been zealously assisted by the authorities of the Empire.

It is due to the active vigilance and efforts of these authorities that there has not been a single landing of Africans since December 1852.

Our agents in countries, which the slave dealers have tried to choose as the theater of their infamous machinations, have exercised the same vigilance and prevented, in agreement with the British authorities, any attempt to continue the traffic.

(...)

When news arrived that a Portuguese ship named *Laura* (formerly *Rosa*) had passed through the islands of Terceira and Madeira from Lisbon, suspecting that it was destined for slave trade, this Ministry immediately addressed the Justice Department, and also sent circulars to the presidents of the maritime provinces, to call for greater vigilance from their respective authorities regarding that ship.⁴

The epigraph that opens this text is part of the exposition on combating the traffic of Africans made by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Empire Antonio Paulino Limpo de Abreu (future Viscount of Abaeté), in his *Relatório* (Report) from 1853 presented to the General Legislative Assembly. At the time of its writing, the diplomacies of Great Britain and Brazil diverged with respect to which party took the credit for the achievement of the suppression of the slave trade for the Empire. In the view of the first, the achievement was the result of the diplomatic and military campaign for abolitionism led by Your Britannic Majesty's Government for almost half a century. From the Saquarema's point of view, despite of the British pressure, the Government of His Imperial Majesty, which, as of 1850, would have obtained the necessary means (read: the monopoly over the forces of

⁴ *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1853*. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Universal Laemmert, 1854, p. 12. All the Ministerial reports from Brazil Empire are digitalized and available for consultation on the Website from the Center for Research Libraries, in the collection Brazilian Government Documents (Documentos do Governo Brasileiro), henceforth CRL/BGD. <http://ddsnext.crl.edu/brazil>.

violence of the Imperial State) to effectively restrain the illegal slave trade in Brazilian territory, deserves all the credit.

The controversy dominated the historiography of the nineteenth century, dragged on throughout the twentieth century, shifting from one side to another, and is still a point of disagreement in specialized historiography on the closing of the Atlantic slave trade to Brazil.⁵ Although it is not the purpose of this text to defend one paradigm or another, it does have its attention focused on one side of this history, since the focus of all its discussion revolves around the vigilance exercised by the *Intelligencia Saquarema* over the actions of the slave

5 Related to the nineteenth historiography, perhaps the most expressive pieces from the British and Saquarema point of view are, respectively, from CHRISTIE, William Dougal. *Notes on Brazilian Question*. London: MacMillan & Co., 1865, extraordinary minister of Queen's Victoria plenipotentiary along with D. Pedro II's Court between 1859-63 and, NABUCO, Joaquim. *Um estadista do Império: Nabuco de Araújo, sua vida, suas opiniões, sua época*. Rio de Janeiro: Garnier, 1897, 2v., which is a biography of one of the most eminent political persons from the Second Reign, being one of the most quoted books of the pertinent historiography for Brazil Empire. In the twentieth century, the British position was supported by various brazilianists authors such as MANCHESTER, Alan K. *Preeminência inglesa no Brasil*. Trad. Janaína Amado. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1973; GRAHAN, Richard. *Grã-Bretanha e o início da modernização no Brasil (1850-1914)*. Trad. Roberto Machado de Almeida. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1973; CONRAD, Robert Edgar. *Tumbeiros: o tráfico escravista para o Brasil*. Trad. Elvira Serapicos. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985; and more recently BETHELL, Leslie. *A abolição do comércio brasileiro de escravos. A Grã-Bretanha, o Brasil e a questão do comércio de escravos, 1807-1869*. Trad. Luís A. P. Souto Maior. Brasília: Senado Federal, 2002; while the Saquarema position was significantly marked in the works of RODRIGUES, José Honório. *Brasil e África: outro horizonte*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1964, v. 1; BEIGUELMAN, Paula. O encaminhamento político do problema da escravidão no Império. In: HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de (org.). *O Brasil Monárquico*, v. 5: reações e transações. São Paulo: Difel, 1969. p. 189-211. (História Geral da Civilização Brasileira; t. 2; v. 5); CARVALHO, José Murilo de. *A construção da ordem: a elite política imperial/Teatro de sombra: a política imperial*. 4ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2008, among other authors and titles. In a perspective which is critical and conciliatory of both parts, with no pretension to be exhaustive, we can cite RODRIGUES, Jaime. *O infame comércio: propostas e experiências no final do tráfico de africanos para o Brasil (1800-1850)*. Campinas: Ed. da Unicamp, 2000; PARRON, Tâmis. *A política da escravidão no Império do Brasil, 1826-1865*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2011; GUIZELIN, Gilberto da Silva. *Comércio de almas e política externa: a diretriz atlântico-africana da diplomacia imperial brasileira, 1822-1856*. Londrina, Eduel, 2013; e MAMIGONIAN, Beatriz G. *Africanos livres: a abolição do tráfico de escravos no Brasil*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2017.

dealers who, after the approval of Law No. 581 of September 4, 1850, popularly known as the Eusébio de Queirós Law, moved to Portugal.

In the eighteenth century dictionary of Latin and Portuguese words by Jesuit priest Raphael Bluteau, the term *intelligencia*, in addition to intellectual faculties, was also associated with the knowledge of information obtained by secret means for a specific purpose.⁶ In the nineteenth century diplomatic language of the reports of the Foreign Ministers of the Empire, the term *intelligencia* was recurrently used to refer either to the good relations of Brazil with other countries, or to the understanding given by the imperial diplomacy to a specific point of a treaty or a celebrated convention.

In a third, less usual case, the term was still associated with the cooperation between consular agents of Brazil and other countries in obtaining information about the operationalization of the Atlantic slave trade, especially, as stated by the minister José Maria da Silva Paranhos (future viscount of Rio Branco) in his Report of 1856, “in countries where the action of speculators can be feared, and especially in the United States, Portugal, Spain and their possessions where it seems certain that the smugglers have established the main bases of their operations.”⁷ In this sense, what I refer to here as the *Saquarema Intelligencia* should be understood as the structuring of a minimally modern information service by the Conservative Party (also-known as Saquaremas), who ruled uninterruptedly between September 1848 and May 1862, to assist in achieving their national policy aimed at eradicating the Atlantic slave trade.⁸

6 BLUTEAU, Raphael. *Vocabulário português & latino*. Coimbra: Colégio das Artes/Off. Pascoal Silva, 1728, v. 4, p. 159. <http://dicionarios.bbm.usp.br/pt-br/dicionario/edicao/1>.

7 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1856*. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Universal Laemmert, 1857, p. 20.

8 We follow here the interpretative line of Ilmar Mattos who describes the period between 1848 and 1862 as the time of the Saquarema hegemony in the conduction of the imperial political life, even at the time of the so-called Conciliation Cabinet (1853-1857) that united the Luzias (i.e. the Liberal Party) and Saquaremas, and, in his understanding, served to consolidate the “Saquarema direction” in the governmental and administrative conduction of the imperial

Generally speaking, historiography has paid little attention to the intelligence service developed by the Imperial Government to monitor the movements of slave dealers who have escaped the country after 1850. The reasons for this are understandable, starting with the sources. Regarding the existing documentation on the tactics of repression of the slave trade from Africa to Brazil, the British sources are, without a question, the best known and most revisited. I am referring here to the records produced by the agents of the British Government directly involved in the suppression of the Atlantic slave trade, as follows: officers of the squadrons based off the coasts of Africa and Brazil; judges of the Joint Commissions for the judgment of the seized ships maintained at strategic points on the African and American coasts; as well as consuls and diplomats stationed in the main slave ports on both shores of the Atlantic.

This documentation, as observed by Herbert Klein, began to be collected, systematized, and published in the British Parliamentary Papers soon after the first legal restrictions on the African trade were imposed by British legislators in the final decades of the eighteenth century, and continued until the complete abolition of the transoceanic slave trade in the mid- nineteenth century.⁹ It is, after all, this documentation that served as the basis for the studies of several Brazilianists who, throughout the twentieth century, became interested in some of the multiple facets of the history of the African slave trade to Brazil, and whose works had (and continue to have) significant influence on the research developed by Brazilian historians.

A good example, but not the only one, is the work of the English historian Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade* (1970, 1st edition in Portuguese 1976), recurrently cited and reproduced in the texts of Brazilian authors. Through the work of Bethell, a British Intelligence Service highly specialized in combating slave tra-

State implemented in the predecessor cabinet headed by the so-called "Saquarema Trinity". See MATTOS, Ilmar Rohloff de. *O Tempo Saquarema*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1987.

9 KLEIN, Herbert S. Novas interpretações do tráfico de escravos do Atlântico. *Revista de História*. São Paulo, number 120, p. 3-25, 1999. doi: <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9141.v0i120p3-25>.

ding emerges, supplied with privileged information obtained through a large network of informants recruited from the Brazilian civil service and even from the Rio de Janeiro slave-trading community, such as Joaquim de Paula Guedes Alcoforado, to whom, in exchange for his cooperation, the British Secret Service Fund paid over 5 thousand pounds sterling during the years 1850-1, and over 2 thousand pounds in 1852.¹⁰

Although Bethell recognizes that from 1850 onwards the Imperial Government tried to apply the same means used by Great Britain in policing the slave trade, the author restricts his observations in this regard to demonstrate the more active and regular participation of the Imperial Navy ships in the repression of the slave trade in the Brazilian coast, insisting, though, in connecting the amplification of Brazilian naval surveillance to the information obtained by the British Intelligence Service. Even contemporary Brazilian historiography, which in the last 30 years has taken a new perspective in the final period of the traffic of Africans to Brazil, even questioning the extent and limits of English pressure as an explanatory premise for its extinction, while it was successful in demonstrating the several ways in which the Imperial Government tried to end the Atlantic traffic through a repressive policy of national proportion carried out by institutions such as the Navy Auditor Court and the Justice Ministry,¹¹ it did not advance much in the analysis of the extra national efforts employed by the Saquaremas in solving the question of the international smuggling of slaves into the Empire.

So, in the following pages, based on Brazilian sources, especially the *Relatórios da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros* (Reports of the

10 BETHELL, Leslie. *Op. cit.*, p. 397.

11 For an analysis of the role played the Navy Audit Court in combating the slave trade see RODRIGUES, Jaime. *O infame comércio... Op. cit.*; MAMIGONIAN, Beatriz G. *Africanos livres... op. cit.* Regarding the role of the Justice Ministry as the national articulator of repression against the importation of new Africans see BEZERRA NETO, José Maia. O africano indesejado. Combate ao tráfico, segurança pública e reforma civilizadora (Grão-Pará, 1850-1860). *Afro-Ásia*. Salvador, number 44, pp. 171-217, 2011, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.9771/aa.v0i44.21239>.

Foreign Office of Brazil) and the consular correspondence of Brazilian agents in Portugal, I try to bring some progress to this discussion. In the end, I hope to demonstrate the need for further investigations into the role of imperial diplomacy, especially its consular corps in combating the trafficking of Africans to Brazil. For if it is true, as Paulo Roberto de Almeida claims, that until the late 1840s Brazilian diplomacy “was engaged in the unglamorous task of containing the impetus of those who intended to cut off the supply of black arms to the great monoculture plantations,”¹² it is also true that after 1850 it was one of the main means employed by the Saquaremas to achieve that end.

On the trail of slavers returned to Portugal

As it is already common sense, many of the slave dealers who lived in Brazil until around 1850 were from Portugal.¹³ However, in view of the stricter repressive measures against the African traffic by the Imperial Government due to the enactment of the Eusébio de Queirós Law, many of them decided to return to their country of origin taking large sums of money with them. Between March 1850 and March 1851, according to the estimates of the British Consul in Lisbon, 300 to 400 individuals connected to the slave trade voluntarily left Brazil to Portugal, taking with them an estimated capital of 400

12 ALMEIDA, Paulo Roberto de. O Brasil e a diplomacia do tráfico (1810-1850). *Locus: Revista de História*. Juiz de Fora, v. 4, number 2, , 1998, p. 8. <https://periodicos.ufjf.br/index.php/locus/article/view/20466>.

13 These traders, involved not only in the slave trade, but also in Rio de Janeiro’s supply and connection trade with other parts of the Portuguese Overseas Empire, would have rooted their interests in Brazil to such an extent at the time of the Joanne Government’s presence in Rio (1808-21) that they not only chose to remain in the country after the monarch’s return to Portugal, but also supported Brazil’s independence process in order to safeguard its commercial interests, including the Atlantic slave trade. See more about this in DIAS, Maria Odila Leite da Silva. *A interiorização da Metrópole e outros estudos*. São Paulo: Alameda, 2005, pp. 7-37.

thousand pounds sterling;¹⁴ for comparison, until mid1850s, the Imperial Government paid an average of 350 thousand pounds sterling per year to the amortization of Brazil's foreign public debt.¹⁵ In 1852, it is estimated that another 140 smugglers had returned to Portugal, and a single deposit made in this period by a returnee in a Portuguese bank was around 1,200,000.00 pounds sterling;¹⁶ a very high amount for the financial standards of the nineteenth century, even more if we take into account that only the first installment of the loan contracted by the Imperial Government with the bankers of the City of London, in 1824, was around 1,300,000.00 pounds sterling.¹⁷

But not all of them left, it is true. Between 1852 and 1856, many Portuguese smugglers opted to formalize their naturalization as Brazilian citizens.¹⁸ Those who decided to do that certainly did so because, as a rule, the majority of the slave capital was spread out in various branches of investment in Brazil, such as urban and rural properties, slaves, loans to be received, stocks and insurance policies, even dividends from the government's public debt. In such a way that once the slave trade was abolished, the once-slave dealers who chose to remain in the country redirected their spare capital into the construction of railroads, the expansion of coffee farming, and high-risk banking transactions in the Empire's main commercial centers. Indeed, as one keen observer of those events wrote:

The African traffic having been extinguished, the large amount of capital that was employed in this anti-Catholic turnover, reflected to our

14 BETHELL, Leslie. *Op. cit.*, p. 398.

15 ALMEIDA, Paulo Roberto. *Formação da diplomacia econômica no Brasil: as relações econômicas internacionais no Império*. 3.ª ed. rev. Brasília: FUNAG, 2017. v. 1, p. 248.

16 FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico: tráfico ilegal de escravos e comércio lícito em Angola, 1830-1860*. 1996. 262f. Dissertation (History). Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 1996, p. 153.

17 ZILLOTTO, Guilherme Antonio. *Dois séculos de dívida pública. A história do endividamento público brasileiro e seus efeitos sobre o crescimento econômico (1822-2004)*. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2011, p. 25.

18 RODRIGUES, José Honório. *Op. cit.*, p. 201.

main commercial centers in search of new employment (...) and as the capital of the slavers tended to seek a more useful employment in the country, it was necessary to explore the material improvements that until 1852 had been entirely abandoned.¹⁹

Looking for social compensation in the eyes of public opinion, which no longer showed as much sympathy for the slave dealers as before, they also directed part of their fortunes raised from the tragedy of slavery and human trade to humanitarian and philanthropic causes. Meanwhile, support for public health institutions, such as the *Santa Casas de Misericórdia* hospitals (Holy House of Mercy), was a popular practice among the former slave traders. A notorious example of this trajectory is that of the Portuguese, naturalized Brazilian and settled in Bahia, Joaquim Pereira Marinho, Count of Pereira Marinho, patron of the *Santa Casa de Misericórdia* of Salvador, whose entrance to the building has a statue in his honor that is not even remotely reminiscent of his slaveholding past.²⁰

A similar action of Joaquim Pereira Marinho was practiced by those Luso-Brazilian slave dealers who chose to return to Portugal. An

19 SOARES, Sebastião Ferreira. *Esboço ou primeiros traços da Crise Comercial do Rio de Janeiro, em 10 de setembro de 1864*. Rio de Janeiro: Eduardo & Henrique Laemmert, 1865, p. 33. For further analysis of the speculation caused by the extinction of the Atlantic slave trade see also LEVY, Maria Barbosa. *História da Bolsa de Valores*. Rio de Janeiro: IBMEC, 1977; LOBO, Eulália Maria Lahmeyer. *História do Rio de Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: IBMEC, 1978; CALDEIRA, Jorge. *Mauá, empresário do império*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995; SCHULZ, John. *A crise financeira da abolição: 1875-1901*. São Paulo: Edusp/Instituto Fernand Braudel, 1996, among others.

20 See XIMENES, Cristina Ferreira Lyrio. *Joaquim Pereira Marinho: perfil de um contrabandista de escravos na Bahia, 1828-1887*. Salvador: UFBA, 1999. In 2020, in the midst of the international controversy around the removal of monuments in honor of subjects linked to the slave trade and/or European colonialism over Africa, in Europe and the United States, the discussion around monuments in honor of conquerors, dictators, and slave dealers, such as the statue in honor of Joaquim Pereira Marinho, also arose in Brazil, see more about it in COSTA, Camila. *Quem foi Joaquim Pereira Marinho, o traficante de escravos que virou estátua na capital mais negra do Brasil*. *BBC News Brasil*. London, June 12, 2020. Available at: < <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/brasil-53013733> >. Accessed on May 10, 2021.

exemplary case, but obviously not the only one,²¹ is that of Tomás da Costa Ramos, known as *Maneta*. According to the statement Alcoforado gave to the Brazilian and British authorities in the early 1850's, *Maneta*:

(...) was the first one that used [from 1845 to the end of 1846-47] the steamships to bring blacks to Brazil. The strangled steamships *Thereza* and *Providência*, which made two trips and, in the end, was imprisoned in the Zaire River [known today as Congo] because its machinery was broken; it made five trips, went from Rio equipped, ready and dispatched to the Azores or elsewhere, and at the end of 60 to 70 days, scandalously entered Campos [dos Goytacazes] or [the] Capitania as a cargo ship, having already left its cargo. The use of a machine to filter or make drinking water resulted in all their cargo, days after they arrived, dying. This small steamer that could only hold or receive on board 400 blacks, came to transport 1,200 (...)²²

21 The list of Luso-Brazilian slave traders who took refuge in Portugal after 1851 is extensive. Taking as her analysis the Central-African slave ports between the 1840a and 1870s, Maria Cristina Wissembach follows, for example, the continuity and diversification of the illegal and legal businesses of Francisco Antonio Flores, former representative of the Rio de Janeiro slave firm Amaral & Bastos Company, of which he was also one of the partners, see: WISSENBACH, Maria Cristina Cortez. *As feitorias de urzela e o tráfico de escravos: Georg Tams, José Ribeiro dos Santos e os negócios da África Centro-Occidental na década de 1840. Afro-Ásia*. Salvador, 43, pp. 43-90, 2011; and, from the same author, see also: *Dinâmicas históricas de um porto centro-africano: Ambriz e o Baixo Congo nos finais do tráfico atlântico de escravos (1840-1870). Revista de História*. São Paulo, n. 172, pp. 192-193, jan./jun. 2015. On the other hand, with an eye to the East African coast, José Capela has retrieved the biography of Joaquim Ferreira dos Santos, a Luso-Brazilian slave trader whose "fable-like fortune", as the author characterizes it, resulting from the slave trade on the Mozambican coast, was invested in multiple benefits in the area of health and education in Portugal in the 1850a and 1860s, earnings his master the title of Count of Ferreira, the respect of public opinion and insertion in the circles of the Portuguese political and governmental elite, see: CAPELA, José. *Conde de Ferreira e Cia. Traficantes de escravos*. Porto: Afrontamento, 2021. These are just two, among countless cases that the space of this article does not allow us to address.

22 See "Cópia reservada – [Relatório de Joaquim de Paula Guedes Alcoforado sobre] o tráfico de africanos do ano de 1831 a 1853", transcribed by Thiago Campos Pessoa. In: XAVIER, Regina Célia Lima; OSÓRIO, Helen (org.). *Do tráfico ao pós-abolição: trabalho compulsório e livre e a luta por direitos sociais no Brasil*. São Leopoldo: Oikos, 2018, p. 203. For more information about Tomás da Costa Ramos see: FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico...*, *op. cit., passim*; BEZERRA NETO, José Maia. *O africano indesejado...*, *op. cit.*; PEREIRA, Walter Luiz Carneiro de Mattos;

Shortly before the enacting of the Eusébio de Queiroz Law, the Imperial Government was informed by its agents in the Kingdom of Sardinia (northern Italy) that the so-called *Maneta* had ordered the construction of a new ship in the port of Genoa, apparently to be used in the traffic of Africans, which, to throw off the British cruisers, he named *D. Pedro II*, equipping it with the Coat of arms of Brazil, so that it could pass as a ship of the Imperial Navy and travel safely to Rio de Janeiro, where, it was believed, it would finally be prepared to launch into the oceanic traffic of Africans.²³

Under the watch of *Intelligencia Saquarema*, it seems that the ship *D. Pedro II* never even debuted in slave trading, having been sold a few years later in Bremen (Germany), as Limpo de Abreu proudly said "due to [Costa Ramos'] discouragement in carrying out that criminal enterprise".²⁴ Everything indicates, however, that the sale of ship *D. Pedro II* was only "*para inglês ver*" (i.e. "for English eyes only"). This is because, after being expelled from Brazil and already settled in Lisbon, Costa Ramos attempted, like so many other returned slave dealers, to get rid of the reputation of being a slave trader. So that, associated to other returned slavers, he invested in various licit businesses, such as the construction of the railroad connecting the Portuguese municipi-

PESSOA, Thiago Campos. Silêncios atlânticos: sujeitos e lugares praieiros no tráfico ilegal de africanos para o sudeste brasileiro (c. 1830 – c. 1860). *Estudos Históricos*. Rio de Janeiro, v. 32, n° 66, pp. 79-100, jan.-abr. 2019, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S2178-14942019000100005>; ALBUQUERQUE, Aline Emanuelle de Biase. *De "Angelo dos retalhos" a "Visconde de Loures": a trajetória de um traficante de escravos (1818-1858)*. Recife: UFPE, 2016, *passim*. And for more information regarding Alcoforado's cooperation with the British and Brazilian authorities see: FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. O Relatório Alcoforado. *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos*. Rio de Janeiro, number 28, p. 219-29, 1995; PESSOA, Thiago Campos. A "Delação Alcoforado" e o comércio ilegal de africanos no Vale do Café: notas de pesquisa. In: XAVIER, Regina Célia Lima; OSÓRIO, Helen (org.). *Op. cit.*, p. 165-96; BETHELL, Leslie. *Op. cit.*, p. 352-3, 397.

23 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1851*. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Universal Laemmert, 1852. Annex A: Relação entre o Brasil e a Grã-Bretanha. Questão do Tráfico, number 10 e 11, p. 14-5.

24 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1854*. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Universal Laemmert, 1855, p. 21.

palties of Barreiro to Vendas Novas and Setúbal.²⁵ However, without ever abandoning the illegal slave trade.

Nevertheless, in December 1853, news from Lisbon alerted the Imperial Government that two ships named *Guerra* and *Trajano* respectively, initially thought to be the property of Bernardo José Machado, were armed in the city of Porto, in northern Portugal, with the purpose of sailing to the African coast, where they intended to load slaves and then land them in Havana.²⁶ In a new communication, dated March 13, 1854, the Consul General of Brazil in Lisbon, Vicente Ferreira da Silva, communicated to Rio de Janeiro that, from inquiries made by his agent in Porto, “I could know that these ships are not property of Bernardo José Machado, (...) but of Tomás da Costa Ramos, [called] by antonomasia *Maneta*, now resident here.”²⁷

In a second correspondence dated March 14, 1854, Vicente Ferreira da Silva reported to Limpo de Abreu that he had just learned that the schooners *Guerra* and *Trajano* had, in fact, headed to the Angolan coast, “arriving at Novo Redondo [present-day Sumbe], where they received a boatload of slaves, with which they continued their trip towards Havana.”²⁸ About fifteen days later, in a new communication to Rio de Janeiro, Ferreira da Silva communicated that, according to an article published in the March 27 edition of the *Periódico dos Pobres*, from the city of Porto, the ship *Trajano* had been intercepted in the surroundings of the island of Cuba, while the ship *Guerra* had been sunk by an English cruiser. “The news of these facts”, especially regarding the hypothetical sinking of the second ship, seemed “very premature” to him, so that he assumed it was a rumor deliberately spread “as a strategic measure to divert attention away from those

25 FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico...*, *op. cit.*, p. 153, see note 9.

26 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1854*, *op. cit.*, Annex B: Repressão ao Tráfico de Escravos. Emancipação dos Africanos Livres, number 18, p. 19-20.

27 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved office number 9, from March 13, 1854.

28 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved office number 11, from March 14, 1854.

ships”,²⁹ perhaps waiting for an opportunity to land their vessels somewhere on the vast coast of the Empire.

As a result of the alert issued by the Consulate General of Brazil in Lisbon, the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the Empire, in coordinated action with the portfolios of Justice and the Navy, issued orders to the presidents and naval authorities of the coastal provinces to be on the alert for a possible incursion of the slave ships *Guerra* and the *Trajano*, “recommending that in case both or any of these boats dare to dock at any point on the coast, they be seized with the slaves they are carrying and the captain, pilot, and entire crew arrested, in accordance with the laws in force.”³⁰

The concern that the *Maneta*’s slave ships could deviate from their original route to Cuba and head to the Empire was still justified by the fact that the Brazilian consular agent in Portugal reported that the schooner *Guerra*, after being loaded, would have left Angola under the command of the Venezuelan Benito Derizans, another well-known figure among the slave traders operating in Brazil in the mid-nineteenth century.³¹ Originally Venezuelan by birth, Benito often presented himself as a Brazilian. Perhaps he did so due to his close ties to the Brazilian slave trade and the Luso-Brazilian trading community. To illustrate how close these ties were, in 1842, Benito was arrested in Benguela by British naval officers aboard the *Santo Antonio* while the ship was waiting for a shipment of slaves. Thanks to the documentation found on board the *Santo Antônio*, the English inspectors deduced that the ship actually belonged to the slave trader from Salvador Francisco Félix de Souza, the famous *chachá*, one of the biggest importers of Africans in nineteenth century in Bahia, established in

29 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved office number 12, from March 28, 1854.

30 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1853*, op. cit., Annex B, number 18, p. 19-20.

31 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved offices from March 13, 14 and 28, 1854. For more information about Benito Derizans see NERÍN, Gustau. Falsos brasileños: las trayectorias africanas y americanas de los negreros españoles Derizans y Ravirosa (1831-1863). *Relea*, Foz do Iguacu, v. 1, number 1, p. 69-85, jan./jun, 2016. <https://revistas.unila.edu.br/relea/article/view/537>.

Ajudá (called Whydah by the English), in the kingdom of Dahomey, on the coast of West Africa.³²

A decade later, Benito was still active in the slave circuit between the Gulf of Benin and the Bay of Todos os Santos, this time commanding the galleota *Relâmpago*, owned by Marcos Borges Ferraz Nobre, another prominent slave dealer in the Salvador square. Leaving Onim (called Lagos by the English) in 1851 with around 820 slaves, the *Relâmpago* was encountered and persecuted by the Brazilian vessel *Itapagipe* near the island of Itaparica, where it stranded on October 29, 1851. In order to escape apprehension, Benito ordered the immediate abandonment of the ship. Of the approximately 500 to 700 slaves remaining from the sea crossing then dumped into the sea, in the end only 285 survived, the rest having either drowned on the way between the ship *Relâmpago* and Pontinha beach, or languished from starvation and exhaustion shortly after touching land. Benito, however, was not captured.³³ Curiously, the journey of *Relâmpago* marks not only the last known landing of slaves on the coast of Bahia, but also the last shipment of slaves organized by *Obá* (king) Kosoko, of Onim, dethroned shortly afterwards by the British imperialist forces in the region.

As reported in the March 23, 1852 edition of the Rio de Janeiro periodical *Correio da Tarde*, Benito was indicted in absentia along with 32 other individuals for the crime of African import.³⁴ However, Benito continued living quietly in Bahia, using a false identity, until around 1856-7, when he was finally arrested in Angola by officers of the Portuguese Royal Navy.³⁵ In the meantime, as the information in possession of the *Intelligencia Saquarema* attests, Benito remained involved

32 NERÍN, Gustau. *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

33 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 73-4. VERGER, Pierre. *Fluxo e refluxo do tráfico de escravos entre o Golfo do Benin e a Bahia de Todos os Santos. Dos séculos XVII a XIX*. São Paulo: Corrupio, 1987, p. 436-8, 570-5; RODRIGUES, Jaime. *O infame comércio...*, *op. cit.*, p. 156-8.

34 HDBN, *Correio da Tarde*, March 23, 1852.

35 NERÍN, Gustau. *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

in clandestine activities, along with his former Luso-Brazilian partners, such as *Maneta*, but focused on supplying the Cuban slave market.

As can be seen, the *Intelligencia Saquarema* established a constant surveillance over Tomás da Costa Ramos from the first days of the Eusébio de Queirós Law. Nevertheless, all the information gathered by the Brazilian agents about the movements of *Maneta* the profiteer and the people associated with him, such as Benito Derizans, Francisco Ruviroza y Urzellas (about whom we shall speak later), and the ships presumed to be his property, were promptly and repeatedly passed on by Limpo de Abreu to Sir Henry F. Howard, extraordinary minister plenipotentiary of Great Britain in Rio de Janeiro (1853-5), which shows the attempt by the Imperial Government to establish a cooperative relationship between the intelligence services of the two governments.³⁶

Another slave dealer who returned to Portugal and tried to keep a low profile was Antonio Severino de Avellar, who even adopted the pseudonym Antonio Silvestre to get rid of the stigma of being a slave dealer.³⁷ Between late October and early November 1853, the ship *Laura*, consigned by Avellar, successfully landed a new shipment of African slaves in Cuba. The news, obtained firsthand by British agents and passed on to the Imperial Government,³⁸ was received with surprise by the General Consul of Brazil in Lisbon, charged by Minister Limpo de Abreu for having omitted information on the subject. In response, Ferreira da Silva, justified:

Your Excellency - If I had been properly informed by my delegates in Madeira and Terceira [in the Azores] of the suspicions regarding the movements which, last September, the Portuguese schooner *Laura*, [whose captain was] Silvério Severino de Avellar [Antonio's cousin],

36 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1854*, op. cit., Annex B, number 17, 18, 19, 20 e 21, p. 18-22.

37 This was the nickname adopted by Avellar in his correspondences with other private slave traffickers since 1850. See FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico*, op. cit., p. 88-ss.

38 CRL, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1853*, op. cit., Annex B, number 10 e 11, p. 9-11.

[who] left this port of Lisbon for Terceira, with a limestone, on August 30 (...), in light of the energetic efforts of the Imperial Government to abolish the slave trade, I would be pleased to inform Your Excellency; however, in accordance with Your Excellency's orders, I will demand from the above-mentioned vice-consuls an explanation for their silence on the matter; and I will also endeavor, through myself and through the vice-consuls of this dependency, to find out if there are any individuals in this District who are involved in the aforesaid traffic, so that I may inform Your Excellency of everything.³⁹

When asked to explain why he did not immediately inform the Consulate General about the suspicions of the *Laura's* engagement in African traffic, the vice-consul of Brazil in Madeira justified that the *Laura* had entered the port of Funchal on September 25, from Angra do Heroísmo, in the Azores, to "see if he could take colonists (...) and knowing from the captain of the port that he could not find them at once, he did not anchor, and left for Faial," returning to the Azores on the same day, a reason that prevented him from examining whether there was equipment inside the ship that would reveal its real intentions. As he added, moreover, until he received the Consulate General's interpellation, the Vice-Consulate did not know "whether the destination of the ship was malicious or not, because many others arrive at this port looking for shipment or settlers for different countries, and when they don't find [them] they return immediately without suspicion".⁴⁰

In fact, the practice of covering up the slave trade by means of false recruitment of colonists, carried out by Avellar, was a new stra-

39 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved office from January 12, 1854. According to Ferreira, one of the utilized strategies by Avellar to guarantee the necessary secrecy of his operations was to employ Family members. With due effect, besides Silverio, another cousin who was hired by Avellar was João Carlos, who worked as if he was a consul from Hamburg in New York, "an strategic job to ease the acquisition of ships for the ilegal traffic", so that "it was João Carlos who indicated about the ships which could be acquired by his cousin Antonio Severuno de Avellar", see FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico...*, op. cit., p. 88.

40 AHI 251/03/02, Copy number 2 of February 18, 1854 attached to the reserved office of March 28, 1854.

tegy and still little observed by the international suppressing authorities. It arose, precisely, in the wake of the increased demand for free and cheap labor verified with the repression of the slave trade,⁴¹ and was noticed, at first, in the middle of the 1850's, on the east coast of Africa, by the Portuguese and British authorities in Mozambique, who began to denounce the departure of African slaves to the French island of Reunion, in the Indian Ocean, under the denomination of colonists, although in conditions analogous to slavery.⁴² At the end of that decade, the United States commercial agent in Luanda warned his government that the practice was also becoming popular on the west coast of Africa.⁴³

In response to the same question, the Vice-Consul of Brazil at the port of Angra do Heroísmo, in the Azores, declared "that the reason for the silence of this Vice-Consulate on the subject alluded to" was due to the fact that "the schooner *Laura* (...) had no other evidence to suggest its destiny", or the involvement in the slave trade presents no other indications to conjecture of the destination attributed to it", which is, of involvement in the slave trade, "but to contain a few hulls of water, larger than those that could be considered necessary for its crew, and to have received in this port some barrels of bread flour". "Circumstances", in his understanding, "of little importance, when it was said that the ship was going [lawfully] to Madeira to engage a load of colonists".⁴⁴ Still, in order to prevent the situation from ha-

41 It is not the focus of this paper to go deep into a so complex topic as the increasing need of free and cheap workforce facing slavery extinction. We limit to say that this was a global phenomena, whose ideas can be better followed in BLACKBURN, Robin. *A queda do escravismo colonial: 1776-1848*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2002; and TOMICH, Dale. *Pelo prisma da escravidão: trabalho, capital e economia mundial*. São Paulo: Edusp, 2012.

42 See GONÇALVES, Paulo Cesar. Na vaga do trabalho escravo: o tráfico de trabalhadores engajados de Moçambique para a Ilha de Reunião no pós-abolição da escravidão colonial francesa. *Tempo*. Rio de Janeiro, v. 20, number 42, p. 578-603, set./dez. 2019. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2237-101X02004203>.

43 See HORNE, Gerard. *O sul mais distante: o Brasil, os Estados Unidos e o tráfico de escravos africanos*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010, p. 210-1.

44 AHI 251/03/02, Copy number 1 of the 1th office of January 16, 1854 attached to the private office of march 28, 1854.

ppening again, the Vice-Consul in the Azores rushed to assure his superior in Lisbon:

(...) that from now on I will not fail to report anything that occurs, and may, even remotely, have some connection with the subject that gives rise to this correspondence, beginning by informing you that on November 12 [1853] the Portuguese brig *Nova Tentativa*, [whose captain was] Augusto Cesar de Mesquita, sailing from Rio de Janeiro via London and Liverpool, to which the same sinister slave-trading plot is also attributed in that city, anchored in the bay of this city. This ship only took 24 hours to land the passengers and their luggage, heading soon after to the island of Faial - days later, the same ship returned here to drop off a passenger, an operation it performed under sail, then put to sea -. This brig, as well as the other schooner *Laura* came here to receive orders from Antonio Severino de Avellar, who was then in this city, and from where lately (December 6) left to London in the Portuguese schooner *Respeito* (...)⁴⁵ [my highlights]

The news presented to the Consul General in Lisbon by his subordinates in Madeira and the Azores was transmitted without delay to the Imperial Government. With this information, the Imperial Government intended to improve its vigilance not only on Avellar, but also on other slave dealers. Thus, in order to make it more difficult for the slave traffickers to use the false allegation of engagement in the transport of colonists, Limpo de Abreu, by circular of 24 March 1854, instructed the Empire's consular agents to follow the provisions foreseen in articles 35, 36, 37, 39 and 41 of the Decree 708 of 14 October 1850, which regulated the execution of the Eusébio de Queirós Law.⁴⁶

The articles of that Decree, mentioned by Limpo de Abreu, established that:

⁴⁵ *Idem, ibidem.*

⁴⁶ AHI 251/03/02, Reserved office number 17 of May 6, 1854.

Art. 35: When any [national] vessel is destined to transport colonists, or to any other licit trade, that imperiously requires the existence on board of one or some of the signs mentioned in art. 32 [which describes the signs that constitute legal presumption that a vessel is employed in the slave trade, it must justify this need before the Auditor of the Navy, specifying the signs for which it requests permission.

Art. 36: The Auditor will never admit these justifications unless the initial petition states the owner of the vessel, the charterer, and the captain; and unless the first two, at least, are reputable people, well respected, and not suspected of being interested [*sic*] in trafficking, which, in addition to the inquiries he will have to make himself, will be the object of examination by known and accredited witnesses.

Art. 37: Before judging the justification, the Auditor of the Navy will order the publication by the press, for 8 days, of notices stating the names of the vessel, the owner, and the charterer, and the signs whose permission is requested, declaring that this is made public so that those who have reason to suppose that the vessel is destined for the slave trade may complain.

(...)

Art. 39: The justification judgment will have to be published in the press, and this publication as well as the public notices mentioned in art. 37, will have to be attached to the original process, and to the copy that has to be kept in the registry office.

(...)

Art. 41: The licenses must contain the name of the owner and the charterer; a statement of the trip and its purpose, and of the signs mentioned in art. 32 that are permitted; the duration of the license (never more than two years) with the express condition that it will be considered *ipso facto* without effect if the vessel's name is changed, or if the owner or charterer changes, and in any of these hypotheses the license renewal must be preceded by a new justification at the Navy Audit Office.⁴⁷

In practice, the circular of March 24, 1854 transmitted to the Brazilian consuls the competence conferred on the Auditors of the Navy,

47 See Decree number 708, of October 14, 1850.

by the Eusébio de Queirós Law, to inspect and judge national ships in transit through foreign ports. However, in view of the questions raised as to its applicability, the circular of March 24 was replaced by the circular of October 27, 1854, applied by the Justice Session of the Council of State, which instructed imperial consular agents, in the “case where a vessel is destined to transport colonists, or to another licit trade, which imperatively requires the existence on board of any or some of the signs” listed by Decree 708 of October 14, 1850 as indications of presumption in the slave trade, to require those interested in doing so to apply directly to the competent authorities in the Empire for the necessary justification.⁴⁸ In any case, it is important to note that, targeting Avellar, the Imperial Government reinforced the impediments so that the Brazilian vessels in transit abroad would not be easily co-opted by the illicit activities of the slave traders.

In order to identify where Avellar ran his illegal businesses from, the Imperial Government ordered its agents to redouble their surveillance of his overseas trip. The Empire was assisted in this effort by Great Britain, whose network of informants covered the northern and southern hemispheres as well as the eastern and western shores of the Atlantic. A little more than a year later, in a note dated September 20, 1855, the British Legation in Rio informed the Imperial Government that its agent in Luanda (it is worth noting that at the time Brazil had not yet managed to reopen its Consulate in Angola⁴⁹)

48 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1855*. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Universal Laemmert, 1856. Annex B, number 31, 32, 33 e 34, p. 42-5.

49 Since 1844 Brazil was pleading with the Portuguese Government the authorization to reopen its Consulate in Angola, closed in 1828. In 1854 the Portuguese Government agreed with the plead of the Imperial Government, though all the difficulties of the Imperial Government to find an adequate name to acquire all the representation, which only started in 1857. Moreover, as it was considered of extreme necessity for the African traffic repression, when the Brazilian representation in Luanda was opening, it had the *status* of General Consulate, which made it an autonomous representation and independent from the General Consulate in Lisbon. Since 1860, as the Angolan slave circuit decreased, the *status* of the consular representation in Luanda was downgraded too, and its autonomy with the General Consulate in Lisbon was surpassed little by little. This way, in the end of the Empire, the Brazilian consulate representation in Luanda was nothing more than an honorary vice-consulate. For more information about Brazil Empire

had learned “that the well-known slaver Antonio Severino de Avellar had left for the Zaire River (read Congo) with two sailboats in order to load them with slaves”. Although the most likely destination of the cargo was Havana, the British agents suspected that Avellar might try to land them between Bahia and the town of Campos in the north of the province of Rio de Janeiro; for this reason the *charge d'affaires* of the British Government in Brazil requested that the imperial cruisers intensified patrolling on the coast between the two provinces until around October 15 or 20.⁵⁰ It was also known that one of the sailboats would be under the command of Augusto Cesar de Mesquita, the same Mesquita who had piloted the *Nova Tentativa* reported by the Brazilian vice-consul in the Azores in 1853.⁵¹

Despite the reinforced patrols made by the imperial wars vessels along the Brazilian coast, Avellar’s sailboat, piloted by Mesquita, managed to land a little over 200 Africans on the Pernambuco coast on October 11, 1854, initiating the famous episode known in historiography as the landing of Sirinhaém. Perhaps because he believed in the success of that expedition, Avellar decided to return to Brazil to personally take care of its conclusion. It is ironic that he left Lisbon, on board of the English steamer *Tamar*, from Southampton, bound for Rio de Janeiro, the day after his slave ship arrived in Sirinhaém.⁵²

It is likely that the choice of the *Tamar* was not by chance, since the steamer had a stop in Recife, where Avellar certainly expected to receive news of the landing. The news he got there, however, was certainly not what he expected to receive. This was because, although the slave ship had made the landing, the imperial authorities had rescued most of the slaves and had begun a raid, closely monitored by British

Consulate in Angola against the slave trade in the Atlantic see GUIZELIN, Gilberto da Silva. *Dois côsules de Sua Majestade em Luanda: relações Brasil-Angola, de Ruy Germack Possolo a Saturnino de Souza e Oliveira (1822-1861)*, to be published by Edusp.

50 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1855*, op. cit., Annex B, number 1, p. 1.

51 *Ibidem*, number 4, p. 3.

52 HDBN, *Correio Mercantil*, November 21, 1855.

diplomatic agents in Rio and Recife, to identify and prosecute those involved in the shipment.⁵³ Avellar had to imagine, therefore, that the imperial authorities would be on his trail. In fact, having arrived in Rio de Janeiro on November 5, Avellar took refuge in his residence in Niterói probably intending to leave the country as soon as possible. However, before being able to do so, the slave dealer was arrested 10 days later by police authorities in Rio de Janeiro. After being interrogated, Avellar was sent to Pernambuco, where the process against those indicted in the Sirinhaém landing crime was taking place. And once sentenced, he was deported to Portugal, on February 20, 1856, on the same steamer that had brought him a few months earlier from Europe.⁵⁴

The news of Antonio Severino Avellar's arrest was reported in the main daily newspapers of Rio de Janeiro.⁵⁵ Among the great press of

53 As it is generally known, what happened in Sirinhaém caused a great diplomatic *imbroglio* between Great Britain and Brazil, although the imperial authorities had been able to rescue most of the African slaves, 60 of them were misguided, under the British eyes and the connivance of local authorities from province of Pernambuco. For more information see CARVALHO, Marcus Joaquim Maciel de; CADENA, Paulo Henrique Fontes. A política como "arte de matar a vergonha": o desembarque de Sirinhaém em 1855 e os últimos anos do tráfico para o Brasil. *Tempo*. Rio de Janeiro, v. 20, number 42, p. 651-77, set./dez. 2019. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2237-101X02004206>.

54 A few weeks after Avellar had been deported, his nephew José Severino de Avellar Lemos, noticed in the carioca press the "extraordinary auction", to happen at 10 o'clock in the morning on March 6, at Largo da Memória (now Rink Square), number 109, in Niterói, "of all the objects (...) belonging to Mr. Antonio Severino de Avellar (...) with expensive furniture, jacarandá modern furniture, with modern tables, magnificent china and English dinnerware bought in London, according to the man's wishes, crystals, silverware, and expensive Porto silverware (modern piece)", and the following slaves, "José, Jorge, Pedro and Anicelo, perfect construction workers; Helena, a perfect maid, tailor, washer; Joana, washes, irons and cooks; Maria, idem, with two children", see HDBN, *Correio Mercantil*, March 4, 5, 6, 1856. Antonio Severino de Avellar's auction must have been a success, because less than a week after the event, the *Correio Mercantil* announced, in its section of exits from Rio de Janeiro, that "leaves today for Lisbon and scales in the Portuguese steamer Maria II (...) dr. José Severino de Avellar Lemos, his aunt, and a cousin, Antonio José de Oliveira", see HDBN, *Correio Mercantil*, of March 10, 1856.

55 HDBN, *Jornal do Commercio*, November 16 and 18, 1855; *Correio Mercantil*, November 17, 1855; *Correio da Tarde*, November 16, 1855; *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*, November 17, 1855. It is noteworthy, however, that the carioca press which emphasized Avellar's prison and his

the Rio de Janeiro Court, the most enthusiastic about the fact was the *Correio da Tarde*, which published:

We know that Antonio Severiano [*sic*] de Avelar has just been arrested in Niterói, as an indictment for the crime of promoting [African] traffic. If we have words of disapproval, when the government practices in a way that deserves them, we also do not avoid praising it, when it performs its duties.

Today it is common opinion that the government of Brazil, of whatever color the individuals who compose it are, sincerely wants the extinction of the slave trade. Mr. Nabuco [Minister of Justice] proceeds according to the governmental thought.

The arrest that we are now reporting reveals that if the slave trade is dead, as a colleague of the press said, the hope of reviving it is not dead in some; supposing that the time is propitious, because the epidemic [of cholera] has robbed many arms from agriculture.

We have already said so, and we still reiterate that all vigilance is still necessary on the persons of the smugglers.⁵⁶ [my emphasis]

The congratulations of the *Correio da Tarde* to the Imperial Government for Avellar's arrest, and the expression of its support for the maintenance of the Saquarema policy of maximum vigilance over slave dealers gains even more notoriety when we recall that, until the mid-1850s, this had been one of the main vehicles for the defense of the slave trade and slave dealers in the Rio de Janeiro press.⁵⁷

involvement into the landings of Sirinhaém was the *O Grito Nacional*, intercurrent newsletter, whose format looked like the *pasquins*, so common during the two previous decades, and that treated about this subject in the following editions, see HDBN, *O Grito Nacional*, of November 22, and December 15, 19 and 28, 1855 and January 04, 1856.

56 HDBN, *Correio da Tarde*, November 16, 1855.

57 ELTIS, David. *Economic growth and the ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Nova York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 115; BETHELL, Leslie. *Op. cit.*, p. 361. The change in the editorial line of the *Correio da tarde* is a clear indication of the accelerated loss of prestige of the slave dealers in the face of Brazilian public opinion from the 1850s on. For more information on the debate surrounding the slave trade issue in the Brazilian press of the nineteenth century, see: RODRIGUES, Jaime. *O infame comércio...*, *op. cit.*, *passim*; KODAMA, Kaori. Os debates pelo fim do tráfico no periódico *O Philantropo* (1849-1852) e a formação do povo: doenças, raça e escravidão. *Revista Brasileira de História*. São Paulo, v. 28, n° 56, pp. 407-430, 2008, doi: <http://>

But not everyone saw Avellar's arrest as an act of the Saquarema policy of zero tolerance against the Atlantic slave trade. In a note dated December 13, 1855, addressed to minister Paranhos, William Stafford Jerningham, in charge of the British Legation in Rio de Janeiro, insinuated that the decision to arrest the Portuguese slave dealer had only been taken after the exchange of confidential correspondence between him and the Brazilian minister that took place two days before the arrest, in which Jerningham reported the negligence of the Empire's central authorities and of the local authorities in Pernambuco in solving the Sirinhaém case.⁵⁸ The accusation was refuted by Paranhos who, in a note dated February 3, 1856, stressed

that the arrest of Avellar was not determined by the interference of the British Legation in this business, and that the Imperial Government was informed of everything that could be known in this Court about the case in question when the first note from Mr. Jerningham was received.⁵⁹

We will not go into the merits of the accusations exchanged between Jerningham and Paranhos.⁶⁰ For the purposes of this text, it is important to show that with the progressive improvement of the *Intelligencia Saquarema* the divergences between the information gathered by the agents in Brazil and Great Britain became evident. In the second half of the 1850s, the Saquarema diplomacy made an effort to

doi.org/10.1590/S0102-01882008000200007; JESUS, Paulo César Oliveira de. *O fim do tráfico de escravos na imprensa baiana, 1811-1850*. Salvador: UFBA, 2004.

58 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1855*, *op. cit.*, Annex B, number 9, p. 11-2.

59 *Ibidem*, number 10, p. 13-7.

60 For a recent analysis of the merits of this discussion see CARVALHO, Marcus Joaquim Maciel de; CADENA, Paulo Henrique Fontes. *op. cit.*

demonstrate that the accusations of new landings of Africans made by the British Legation were unfounded.

Not only Portuguese slave dealers

A final case quite illustrative of the commitment with which the *Intelligencia Saquarema* attempted to follow the actions undertaken by slave dealers who fled the Empire to Portugal after the Eusébio de Queirós Law can be seen in the developments of the case reported by the Consul General of Brazil in Lisbon, in his reserved letter of April 12, 1856, around the departure of the *patacho Roberto* "from the port of São Martinho, district of Leiria, on the night of 8 to 9 [of March] (...) to which is attributed the fate of the slave trade".⁶¹ This letter is also accompanied by a sheet taken from the *Diário do Governo*, the official newspaper of the Portuguese government, which contains the transcript of the minutes of the March 29, 1856 session of the Chamber of Peers (equivalent to the Senate), in which the Portuguese Minister of the Navy explained the events in Leiria.

As explained by the minister to the honorable Portuguese peers, it drew the attention of the local port authorities the fact that "in such a small port, and where business is not many, there is the circumstance that a ship is putting supplies" on board, and deny anchoring at the pier, remaining anchored under sail, thus avoiding the inspection work of local authorities. Another reason that aroused suspicion was the fact that "the owner of that ship," Alexandre Magno Fernandes, had "been in port a few days before, and being called to the arsenal's inspection, replied that he was seriously ill, and that the ship was no longer his".

As if all this unusual movement were not enough, the *patacho Roberto* still left the port of Leiria on the cover of darkness without having his passports and registration stamped by the local port authorities, which put in check the statement initially given that he would

61 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved office number 12, of April 12, 1856.

continue to the Mediterranean. Thus, under suspicious circumstances, the Minister of the Portuguese Navy reported that he had issued orders to the naval stations overseas, as well as to the Portuguese consuls, to proceed with the immediate capture of that vessel as soon as they saw it.⁶² Likewise his Portuguese colleague, the Minister of Justice of the Empire, Nabuco de Araújo, as soon as was informed of these facts by the Brazilian agent in Lisbon, ordered the presidents of the coastal provinces to be “vigilant about the destination and the project of the *patacho Roberto*, providing for its detention and pursuit of the criminals”.⁶³

The concern of the Portuguese and Brazilian authorities about the *patacho Roberto* had, after all, some justification. Through the independent investigation carried out by the Consulate General of Brazil in Lisbon it was discovered, moreover, that the individual originally indicated as the owner of the *patacho*, Alexandre Magno Fernandes, had sold it a few days before his departure to a man named José Antunes da Costa, a trader in Luanda Square. However, according to the Brazilian consular agent, this information could not be confirmed by the “practical people of that stop,” that is, by individuals with some degree of knowledge of the operation of the slave trade in Angola co-opted as informants by the *Intelligencia Saquarema*; which, he suggested, might be a false lead launched by the traffickers themselves in order to throw off the scent of the repressive authorities. “Authorizing therefore”, as Vicente Ferreira da Silva confided to Paranhos, “the information that I also have that the real owner [of the *patacho Roberto*] is a Spanish man, whose name I have not yet been able to find out”, knowing only that he was in Lisbon a year ago, coming from Angola, where “he was employed in the illicit slave trade”.⁶⁴

62 AHI 251/03/02, Exerpt from the *Diário do Governo* (Portugal) March 29, 1856 attached to the reserved office number 12, of April 12, 1856.

63 Reserved office of the Minister of Justice to the President of the Province of Grão-Pará, of May 17, 1856 apud NETO, José Maia Bezerra. O africano indesejado... *Op. cit.*, p. 182.

64 AHI 251/03/02, Reserved Office number 12, of April 12, 1856.

Although somewhat vague, the information obtained by the *Intelligencia Saquarema* about this so-called Spanish man, believed to be the real owner of the *patacho Roberto*, allows us to believe that he was none other than the notorious Catalan slave dealer Francisco Ruviroza y Urzellas. Ruviroza y Urzellas is believed to have entered the illegal African trade in the 1830s. According to the *Slave Voyages* database, Ruviroza y Urzellas commanded at least three expeditions to Havana at that time: the first in 1831, piloting the *Indagadora*; the second in 1833, leading the *Tres Manueles*; and the third the following year in command of the *Jacinto*.⁶⁵ In the 1840s, the Catalan slave dealer migrated to the Brazilian slave circuit as a major financier of slave expeditions, and even established a permanent residence in Rio de Janeiro between 1844 and 1853. There is also evidence that, after he was expelled from the Empire, he returned illegally for a short period in 1857, taking refuge in Cananéia, on the southern coast of São Paulo, to evaluate the possibility of landing Africans near Santos, which apparently did not happen.⁶⁶

As reported by the abolitionist newspaper *O Grito Nacional* (apparently financed by funds and information from the Secret Service Fund of the British Legation in Rio de Janeiro) Ruviroza y Urzellas did business with other well-known “Galician human slave dealer” a pejorative term to identify the Portuguese established in Rio de Janeiro, such as Tomás da Costa Ramos (the *Maneta*), Manuel Pinto da Fonseca (once the most popular and prestigious man in Rio de Janeiro’s court in the 1840’s, according to a statesman of the Empire), José Antonio de Souza Bastos (who gave his name to the very important firm Amaral

65 Slave Voyages database. Voyages number 1233, 1286 e 1313. See: <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>.

66 The information is from NERÍN, Gustau. *Op. cit.*, p. 75-80, which was based on the registers about Ruviroza y Urzellas from the British Parliamentary Papers. The origin of the information about this slave dealer presented by FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico...*, *op. cit.*, p. 108-12, comes from the interrogation of Ruviroza y Urzellas and their agent, João Baptista de Souza, to the police of Rio de Janeiro, as well as from letters exchanged between them between 1853 and 1855.

& Bastos), among others.⁶⁷ In 1853, due to his involvement in the *Camargo* slave trading scheme, which had landed 500 Africans earlier that year in Bracuhy, on the southern coast of Rio de Janeiro, in the vicinity of Angra dos Reis, Ruviroza y Urzellas was finally expelled from the Empire, and then headed for Lisbon, where several of his former associates were already present in the pages of *O Grito Nacional*.⁶⁸

According to the news transmitted to Rio de Janeiro by Brazilian agents in Lisbon, after leaving Brazil, Ruviroza y Urzellas would have made a quick trip to Tenerife, in the Canary Islands archipelago, off the coast of West Africa, "to meet with a person there, whose name is unknown, but of whom it was known that he had been a clerk" at the Court in Rio; having returned to Lisbon in December 1853, where he established residence. The news also reported that Ruviroza y Urzellas had sent at least three slave ships to Havana in 1853. It was known that "one had come to the rescue with 400 negroes, and the other", which had run aground on the coast, "had landed only 200 or a little more", with "another 200 and 7 men from the crew" appearing later. There was no news of the third ship.⁶⁹ Like Avellar, after leaving Rio de Janeiro Ruviroza y Urzellas did not live only in Lisbon. In 1855, the *Intelligencia Saquarema* received news that he had spent some time in Havana before moving to New York, in the United States, where he met his associates of the infamous "Portuguese Company" who were still trafficking Africans from Manhattan Island.⁷⁰

67 HDBN, *O Grito Nacional*, May 4 and July 9, 1850.

68 HDBN, *O Grito Nacional*, April 3, 8 and 15, 1853. About the landing of Bracuhy see ABREU, Martha. O caso do Bracuhy. In: CASTRO, Hebe Maria Mattos de; SCHNOOR, Eduardo (org.). *Resgate: uma janela para o Oitocentos*. Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1995, p. 163-95.

69 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1854*, op. cit., Annex B, number 18, p. 19.

70 HDBN, *O Grito Nacional*, December 19, 1855. For more information about the performance of the "Portuguese Company", in which the slavers mentioned here had participation, see: MARQUES, Leonardo. Um último triângulo notório: contrabandistas portugueses, senhores cubanos e portos norte-americanos na fase final do tráfico transatlântico de escravos, 1850-1867. *Afro-Ásia*, Salvador, number 53, pp. 45-83, 2016.

Nevertheless, by the time of the second half of the 1850s, Ruviroza y Urzellas maintained at least two operating factories on the Atlantic coast of Africa: one at Cape Lopez (in present-day Gabon), the other on the Congo River in Angola. The second one was managed in 1856 by Guilherme da Silva Correia, also known as Guilherme do Zaire,⁷¹ who, as the Catalan historian Gustau Nerín describes:

(...) amplió las instalaciones de Punta da Lenha con una nueva factoria en Boma, en las orillas del río Congo, a decenas de kilómetros del mar, donde se encontraba el gran mercado esclavista del reino del Congo. La nueva factoria de Boma tenía capacidad para recibir 1.400 esclavos. Al parecer, entre los principales socios de don Guilherme y Roviroza ("Mr F..." en la correspondencia) figuraban el comerciante neoyorquino Machado, quien les conseguía buques con bandera norteamericana, el plantador Mazorra, que compraba los esclavos em Cuba, el negociante João José Lima Vianna, que invertia en el negocio, y el negrero brasileño Cunha Reis, que organizaba los transportes.⁷²

As we can see, there were strong indications that the Spaniard considered to be the real owner of the *patacho Roberto* was indeed Ruviroza y Urzellas; who, coupled with his ties to other slave traders in Brazil, made even more real the risk that the aforementioned *patacho* might try to land new Africans in the Empire.

For a brief moment, it was even considered that the so-called *patacho* had managed to accomplish such an inauspicious trick. The news of the sullen and sneaky departure of that ship from the port of São Martinho in early March was still fresh in Rio de Janeiro when, in June 1856, the Portuguese schooner *Emilia*, owned by Joaquim Teixeira Brasil & Cia., piloted by Manuel Augusto Machado, arrived in the city from the Azores with Portuguese settlers on board. The British diplomat at the Imperial Court suspected that the schooner *Emilia* was, in fact, the disguised *patacho Roberto*.

71 About Guilherme da Silva Correia (also known as Guilherme do Zaire) see FERREIRA, Roquinaldo. *Dos sertões ao Atlântico...*, op. cit., p. 93-106.

72 NERÍN, Gustau. *Op. cit.*, p.77-8.

There was also the suspicion that the boat “might also be”, as Jer-ningham believed, “the one of the same name that had already been used to transport emancipated African slaves from Bahia to Lagos [Onim], where they would not have reached had it not been for the help provided by a British ship”.⁷³ Faced with the suspicions raised by the British diplomat, the police of the Court verified the authenticity of the identity of the schooner, the owners, the captain, and the documents attesting to the good faith of the colonists transported by the ship. After these inspections, it was finally established that this *Emilia* was neither the first *Emilia* who had abandoned to their fate in Aguê the free Africans she had brought back to Africa the year before, nor the *patacho Roberto*.⁷⁴ This slave ship, as communicated a few months later by the Consul General of Brazil in Portugal, was arrested by a Portuguese cruiser while sailing through the sea of Angola.⁷⁵

Conclusion: Talking as equals

Thanks to the efficient intelligence service developed by Brazilian consuls, especially but not only by the Consulate General of Brazil in Portugal, as demonstrated here, already in the first years of the Eusébio de Queirós Law, the Imperial Government gathered firsthand news concerning the operation abroad of the infamous slave trade. This new reality had an impact, in the first place, on the modernization of the rudimentary Intelligence Service of the Saquarema administra-

73 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1856*, op. cit., Annex D, number 24, p. 54. About the other vessel *Emilia*, mentioned by the British consul, see VERGER, Pierre. *Op. cit.*, p. 614.

74 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1856*, op. cit., number 25, p. 55. Some advertisements at *Correio Mercantil*, at the time the schooner *Emilia* remained docked in Rio as it waited for the end of the diligence opened by the police, reinforce that it was actually engaged in the licit transportation of settlers. In one of these advertisements we read: “onboard of the schooner *Emilia*, arriving from Faial [Azores] there are two women who seem to be [sic] nannies; go on board of the same schooner to engage”; in another advertisement we can see: “on board of the schooner *Emilia* there are some settlers to be engaged; to make a deal, go into the schooner”, see HDBN, *Correio Mercantil*, July 03 and 25, 1856.

75 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1856*, op. cit., number 28, p. 57.

tion. This resulted in the Empire's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gaining autonomy from the information transmitted by the Secret Service of the British Foreign Office.

At the final stage of this process, if not the absolute elimination, at least a considerable reduction of embarrassing situations for the central and provincial authorities of the Empire, who, until 1850, were routinely harassed, as Gilberto Freyre writes with his peculiar irony, by the "descriptions or characterizations so exact" provided by the British consuls "of the ships suspected of smuggling (...) that some of these mysterious ships have only just left their official papers to take to the seas".⁷⁶

A clear proof that the *Intelligencia Saquarema* had, in fact, empowered the imperial diplomacy to deal on an equal footing with British diplomacy regarding the Atlantic movement of slave traders can be seen in the diplomatic notes exchanged in 1854 between Sir Henry F. Howard and Limpo de Abreu about the slave ships *Guerra* and *Trajano*, about which we spoke earlier. Since the notes are quite elucidative of what we intended to demonstrate throughout this text, they deserve to be reproduced in their entirety so that we do not lose sight of the significant change in treatment between the diplomatic services of Brazil and Great Britain on the question of combating the Atlantic slave trade. Let us begin, then, with the note of January 21, from Howard to Limpo de Abreu, which opens the discussion:

Sir. - I have the honor to inform You Excellency that I have received communication from Lisbon that two Portuguese ships - the *Guerra* and the *Trajano* - had left the Douro two months ago for the coast of Africa, under strong suspicion of being used in the slave trade.

It is said that these ships belong to three notorious slave dealers, Tomás da Costa Ramos, Riverosa [*sic* y Urzellas] and [João Pedro da Costa] Coimbra, who are members of the association organized in Lisbon for that traffic, which has ramifications in this country; and it is presumed that, if there is any opportunity, they will not fail to try to land slaves on

76 FREYRE, Gilberto. *Inglezes no Brasil. Aspectos da influência britânica sobre a vida, a paisagem e a cultura do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editor, 1948, p. 312.

the coast of Brazil.

This presumption seems to be confirmed by the fact that lately a well-known slaver arrived in this capital [Rio de Janeiro] from Luanda aboard the Portuguese vessel *Lice*.

I therefore thought it convenient to bring these circumstances to the attention of Your Excellency, in case your attention had not been drawn to them, so that the Imperial Government may adopt the measures it seems most effective to prevent any landing of slaves in the territory of the Empire, and to frustrate the designs of the dealers, who are indefatigable in the continuation of their nefarious slave trade.⁷⁷(74)

Three days later, Limpo de Abreu replied the following to Howard:

The undersigned, being grateful for the communication made by Mr. Howard, has the honor to tell him in reply that the news to which Mr. Howard's note refers to was properly transmitted to the Imperial Government.

Prior to this the Imperial Government had learned by news coming from Lisbon on last December 14 that Riverosa [*sic* y Urzellas] had previously been in that city, and for around three months had left for Tenerife to meet there with a person, whose name is unknown, but of whom it was known that he had been a clerk in this city.

Riverosa [*sic* y Urzellas] was said to be back in Lisbon on December 14 last, and was trying to establish a house.

It was said that he had sent three ships with African slaves to Havana; one of which had arrived to the rescue with 400 slaves, and another had touched down on some basses on the coast [of Cuba], only landing 200 or a little more, apparently another 200, and seven crewmen.

There is no news of the third.

The same news reports state that Tomás da Costa Ramos intended to send a ship to the coast of Africa to take slaves and land them in Havana, and that the captain who was to take charge of the ship in Porto had already left Lisbon aboard the steamer *Duque do Porto*.

As a consequence of this news, and of others that have come to the knowledge of the Imperial Government, this Ministry has sent the circular to the presidents of the coastal provinces, and by the Ministries of Justice and of the Navy, all the appropriate measures have been taken

77 CRL/BGD, *Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 1854*, op. cit., Annex B, number 17, p. 18-9.

to put an end to any attempt to land Africans in the territory of the Empire, or to seize the slaves, and to punish, according to the laws, the authors and accomplices of the attempt, if unfortunately the landing cannot be avoided, which is not to be expected.

The notorious slave agent Manuel Domingos Dias Pereira, who came from Luanda aboard the Portuguese ship *Lice*, was arrested as soon as he arrived in this capital, and the Imperial Government decided to take him out [*sic*] of the territory of the Empire.⁷⁸ (my emphasis)

Limpo de Abreu's response to Howard's January 21 note was without precedent. Ever since Great Britain began ostensible maritime patrols between Africa and Brazil to suppress the Atlantic slave trade, especially from the late 1830s onwards, the officers of the British fleet stationed in South America claimed to be informed on a daily basis by the British espionage service present in the main slave ports of the Atlantic world. Such was the reach of the British intelligence network that, according to David Eltis, "in the 1840s, the commander of a British cruiser is said to have written: 'no slave ship could arrive or leave any port in Brazil 230 miles north or south of Rio de Janeiro without my knowing' [their whereabouts]".⁷⁹

The exacerbated confidence mixed with a peculiar arrogance regarding the effectiveness of the British espionage network on the transatlantic slave trade extended visibly into the outrageous attitudes of the subsequent occupants of the British Legation in Rio in the 1830s and 1840s. The January 23, 1854 note from Limpo de Abreu to Howard, however, evidences a new moment in Anglo-Brazilian bilateral relations in which the British Legation had ceased to be the Imperial Government's main and exclusive source of information on the slave trade, now fed, almost on a daily basis, by its own network of informants abroad.

The Empire's achievement of informational autonomy in relation to the Atlantic traffic in Africans did not occur smoothly with Great

78 *Ibidem*, number 18, p. 19-20.

79 ELTIS, David. *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

Britain, the former holder and purveyor of all information. In fact, it can be said that it marks the beginning of friction between the British view and the Saquarema view regarding the laurels for closing the importation of slaves to Brazil. In fact, in a communication of March 28, 1855 to Lord Clarendon, Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1853-8), Howard warned: "The Viscount of Abaeté," the title given to Limpo de Abreu in December 1854,

continues to claim for Brazil all the credit for the suppression of the slave trade, saying (...) that it is undeniable that the extinction of the slave trade in the Empire is solely and exclusively the effect of the legislative measures decreed by the Chambers, and by the means employed by the Government [of the Empire].⁸⁰

As, at the time of the statement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Empire, it is not necessary to presume, therefore, in view of what has been exposed here, that Limpo de Abreu was referring - not to say boasting - of the efficient intelligence service managed in recent years by that Secretary of State.

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80 Howard to Clarendon, May 28, 1855 apud CHRISTIE, William Dougal. *Op. cit.*, p. 220.

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