

MARY C. KARASCH

Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850



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TO MY PARENTS
Robert J. and Catherine E. Karasch
IN GRATITUDE

Contents

List of Illustrations *ix* List of Tables *x*
Acknowledgments *xiii* Introduction *xv*

1. The Nations of Rio 3

“The Nations of Color.” The African Nations. The African Origins of the Cariocan Nations. West Central Africa. East Africa. West Africa

2. The Crossroads: The Slave Market of Rio de Janeiro 29

The Marketing of New Slaves. The Valongo. The Marketing of *Ladinos*. The Auction House. Retail Stores, Advertisements, and Personal Contacts. The Interior Trade

3. Boundaries: A Slave’s Guide to the City of Rio de Janeiro 55

Walls. The New People. The End of the Line. Institutional Barriers. The Armed Services. The Catholic Church. Monopolies

4. *As Almas*: Those Who Died 92

Deaths and Death Rates. Births and Baptisms.
Comparative Rates

5. Under the Whip 111

Physical Abuse. Imprisonment. Prison Diseases. Living Conditions. Clothing. Public Health. Health Care. Working Conditions. Diet

6. “The Sorcerers’ Weapons”: Diseases 146

Infectious-Parasitic Diseases. The Digestive System. Diseases of the Respiratory System. Diseases of the Nervous System. Diseases of Early Infancy. Diseases Directly Related to Pregnancy and Childbirth. Diseases of the Genitourinary System. Accidents and Violence. Diseases of the Circulatory System. Rheumatic and Nutritional Diseases. Miscellaneous Diseases, Ill-Defined and Unknown Causes of Death. Summary

CONTENTS

7. Porters and Property: The Functions of Slaves in Rio de Janeiro 185

Gardeners and Hunters. Porters and Muleteers. Boatmen and Sailors. Factory
Workers and Quarrymen. Lamplighters and Street Cleaners. Craftsmen and
Artisans. Musicians and Artists. Peddlers and Servants.
Supervisors and Property Owners

8. Samba and Song: Afro-Cariocan Slave Culture 214

Languages and Literacy. Social Conduct. Dress. Art. African Cuisines. Musical
Instruments. Songs. Dances. Theatrical Dances. The *Entrudo*. Funerals

9. "Belonging": Religious and Social Groups 254

"Children of the Christian God." "Zambi's Children": The African Religions.
Images and Symbols. The Judas Ritual, the Devil, and Evil Spirits. Spirits of the
Dead. The Virgin Mary and Other Saints. Children of Allah and Olorun: Islam
and Candomblé. The Unknown Religions. Marriage and Family
Groups. "Brothers and Sisters": Associations

10. Runaways and Rebels 302

Withdrawal. *Quilombos*. Return of Fugitives. Suicide. The Return to Africa.
Violent Resistance. Nonviolent Resistance

11. The Letter of Liberty 335

Legal Liberations. Individual Manumissions. The Freedpersons.
The Manumission of Africans. Forms of Manumission. Ex-Slaves. Advantages of
the Freed Status. Postscript

Appendix A: African Sources for the Slave Trade to Rio
de Janeiro, 1830-1852 371

Appendix B: Causes of Slave Sickness and Death at the
Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 1833-1849 384

Bibliography 391 Index 409

Illustrations

- Brazilian Blacks. From Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Voyage Pittoresque dans le Brésil, par Maurice Rugendas*, translated by M^r de Golbéry (Paris, 1835). 5
- Africans: Cabinda—Quiloa—Rebolo—Mina. From Rugendas. 11
- Map of Africa: The Origins of the African Nations of Rio de Janeiro. 16
- Arrival in Rio de Janeiro. From Rugendas. 30
- The Slave Market of the Rua do Valongo. From Jean Baptiste Debret, *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil . . .*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1834-1839). 37
- Map of the City of Rio de Janeiro in 1831. 56
- An Employee of the Government with His Family and Slaves. From Debret. 67
- A Brazilian Lady at Home. From Debret. 72
- The Burial of a Black Child. From Debret. 93
- A Chain Gang at a Tobacco Store. From Debret. 119
- A Public Whipping of Slaves at a *Pelourinho* and Blacks in the *Tronco*. From Debret. 123
- A Slave House. From Rugendas. 127
- A Poor Family at Home. From Debret. 129
- A Slave Woman Porter. From Jean Baptiste Debret, *Viagem Pitoresca e Histórica ao Brasil: Aquarelas e Desenhos que Não Foram Reproduzidos na Edição de Firmin Didot—1834* (Paris, 1954). Courtesy of Fundação Raymundo Ottoni de Castro Maya, Rio de Janeiro. 189
- The Cask Carriers and Black Men of Different Nations. From Debret. 190
- Slave Shoemakers. From Debret. 202
- The Black “Venuses” of Rio de Janeiro. From Debret, 1954. 208
- The Marketwomen of Rio de Janeiro. From Sir Henry Chamberlain, *Vistas e Costumes da cidade e arredores do Rio de Janeiro . . .*, translated by Rubens Borba de Morães (Rio de Janeiro, 1943). 212
- Slave Women of Different Nations. From Debret. 222
- Brazilian Charms and Amulets. From Thomas Ewbank, *Life in Brazil . . .* (1856; reprint, Detroit, 1971). 225
- Black Musicians and Their Instruments. From Debret, 1954. 235
- The Old African and His Instrument, the Oricongo. From Debret, 1954. 237
- The *Jogo da Capoeira*. From Rugendas. 246
- The Funerals of a Mozambique Woman and the Son of a Black King. From Debret. 251
- Collection for the Maintenance of the Church of Rosário. From Debret. 260
- The Black Surgeon. From Debret. 265
- The Judas Ritual and Devil Images. From Debret. 276
- The Marriage of Slaves of a Rich Household. From Debret. 288
- The Iron Collar, the Punishment of Fugitive Slaves. From Debret. 303
- Black Women of Rio de Janeiro. From Rugendas. 336

Tables

- 1.1. Comparative Percentages of African and Brazilian Slaves in the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1832-1849 8
- 1.2. Summary of African Sources for the Slave Trade to Rio de Janeiro, 1830-1852 12
- 1.3. The Nationality of Slaves Buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia in 1833, 1838, and 1849 13
- 1.4. Customhouse Registries of National Origins, 1821-1822 14
- 1.5. The Nationality of Slaves in the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1832 15
- 1.6. The Percentage of Slaves from Each Region of Africa, 1795-1852 15
- 2.1. Age of Africans Imported into Rio de Janeiro, 1838-1852 32
- 2.2. The Percentage of Imported Africans by Age Group, 1830-1841 33
- 2.3. The Percentage of Imported Africans by Sex, 1830-1841 34
- 2.4. Comparative Age Structure of Imported Africans (1838-1852) and the Slave Population of São Paulo in 1836 34
- 2.5. Ethnic Origin of Slaves from Bahia Imported into Rio de Janeiro in 1835 52
- 2.6. Ethnic Origin of Slaves Dispatched to Minas Gerais in 1831-1832 53
- 3.1. Estimated Growth of the Slave Population of Rio de Janeiro, 1799-1872 61
- 3.2. Total Population of the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1799 62
- 3.3. Total Population of the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1821 62
- 3.4. Police Census of 1834 by Nationality and Sex 63
- 3.5. Total Population of the City of Rio de Janeiro in 1838 65
- 3.6. Census of 1849 66
- 3.7. Male Occupations in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1834 69
- 3.8. Female Occupations in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1834 73
- 3.9. Black and *Pardo* Brotherhoods of Rio de Janeiro, 1753-1852 84
- 4.1. Total Number of Deaths and Death Rates in the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1840-1851 94
- 4.2. Age, Sex, and Nationality of Slaves Buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia in 1849 95
- 4.3. Age at Death of Slaves Buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 1833-1849 96
- 4.4. Comparative Age Structure of Male and Female Slaves Buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 1833-1849 97
- 4.5. Life Span of Imported Africans, 1830-1860 98
- 4.6. Age at Death in Rio de Janeiro, 1833-1849 101
- 4.7. Child Mortality at the Foundling Hospital, 1814-1851 102
- 4.8. Number of Baptisms and Birth Rates in the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1840-1851 105
- 4.9. Slave Baptisms in the Court of Rio de Janeiro, 1860-1869 106
- 4.10. Comparative Birth and Death Rates in the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1840-1851 109
- 5.1. Slaves Whipped in the Calabouço in 1826 125
- 5.2. Deaths of Slaves in the Calabouço, 1859-1870 126

TABLES

- 5.3. Slave Burials in the Cemetery of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 1824-1851 133
- 6.1. Known Causes of Death by Percentages, 1833-1849 148
- 6.2. Ten Leading Causes of Slave Death at the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 1833-1849 149
- 6.3. Causes of Death of Slaves Buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, 1695-1839 150
- 6.4. Patients Treated at the Santa Casa da Misericórdia for Tuberculosis, 1840-1842 150
- 6.5. Patients Treated for Yellow Fever in Engenho Velho, February-May, 1850 158
- 7.1. Slaves from Piauí at the Imperial Gunpowder Factory in 1844 197
- 7.2. Slaves of the Ironworks of Ipanema Who Were Unable to Work in 1847 198
- 8.1. Students in Rio de Janeiro in 1834 217
- 9.1. Cariocan Saints of the Nineteenth Century 269
- 9.2. Recorded Marriages in Rio de Janeiro, 1835-1852 289
- 9.3. Recorded Marriages in the Parishes of Rio de Janeiro, 1840-1847 290
- 9.4. Intermarriage in the Parish of Engenho Velho, 1764-1828 292
- 9.5. African Marriages in Engenho Velho, 1800-1828 293
- 9.6. Marital Status of the Parents of Freed and Free Persons of Color Who Married in Engenho Velho, 1800-1828 297
- 10.1. Ethnic Origins of Prisoners in the Calabouço, 1826-1837 305
- 10.2. Sex of Prisoners Jailed in the Calabouço, 1826-1837 306
- 10.3. Age and Sex of Fugitive Slaves, 1821-1830 306
- 10.4. Fugitives and *Quilombolas* in the State of Rio de Janeiro, 1826 309
- 10.5. The Return of Freed Slaves to Africa, 1853-1855 324
- 10.6. Slave Violence in Brazil, 1808-1844 328
- 11.1. The Sex of Owners Who Manumitted Slaves, 1807-1831 343
- 11.2. The Civil Status of Owners Who Manumitted Slaves, 1807-1831 343
- 11.3. The Occupations of Men Who Manumitted Slaves, 1807-1831 344
- 11.4. The Marital Status of Women Who Manumitted Slaves, 1807-1831 345
- 11.5. The Manumission of Freedpersons by Sex, 1807-1831 346
- 11.6. The Average Prices of Freedpersons, 1807-1831 346
- 11.7. The Manumission of Freedpersons by Nationality, 1807-1831 348
- 11.8. The Manumission of Freedpersons by Color, 1807-1831 349
- 11.9. The Manumission of Freedpersons by Age, Sex, Nationality, and Color, 1807-1831 349
- 11.10. The Nationality of African Freedpersons, 1807-1831 351
- 11.11. The Forms of Manumission, 1807-1831 353
- 11.12. Letters of Liberty, 1860-1869 368

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Introduction

THE NATURAL beauty of the city of Rio de Janeiro fascinated nineteenth-century foreigners who stopped en route during their world voyages. As their ships anchored offshore in Guanabara Bay, they admired the red-tiled and whitewashed houses in the shadow of tropically forested mountains. One discordant note, however, was the visitors' view of a slave ship as it, too, entered the port area with its human cargo. Such a harbor scene foreshadowed what tourists of the nineteenth century would see on shore, but others, unprepared, were surprised at the nature of the population. From the time the visitors were rowed ashore until they settled in a private home or hotel, they were surrounded by black slaves with cicatrized faces, filed teeth, and African styles of dress. Especially during the heat of midday when whites deserted the streets, foreigners often felt that they had landed not in the capital of Brazil but in Africa.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the testimony of travelers reveals that Rio was unique not only for its natural beauty but also for its large African slave population. The two elements were inseparable from the atmosphere and the vitality of the city; yet, what historians and amateur antiquarians have chosen to remember about Rio is its lost beauty, now transformed into glass skyscrapers and automobile-clogged highways. Except for one chapter by

Vivaldo Coaracy and passing references in other histories of Rio de Janeiro, historians of the city have largely ignored its African slaves.¹ In fact, most urban histories of Rio create the impression that Rio was a Luso-Brazilian city of white faces and European culture; but it was not, as any careful reading of the travel literature reveals.

One reason for such a disparity in the sources may be due to differences in attitudes. Cariocan slaveowners and their descendants chose to write about what interested them in the first half of the nineteenth century: the exciting flight of the Portuguese court to Rio in 1808; the Brazilian independence movement and Pedro I's declaration of independence from Portugal in 1822; the establishment of the First Empire under Dom Pedro I, who ruled from 1822 until his return to Portugal in 1831; the turbulent years of the Regency when Brazilians governed in the name of his son Pedro II; and the consolidation of power in the hands of the youthful emperor Pedro II in the 1840s, which was to lead to the political stability of the Second Empire to last until 1889.² The dramatic events of Brazil's national formation attracted elite authors of the period and political historians thereafter, although on the whole, the early nineteenth century is one of the more neglected periods in Brazilian historiography.

¹ Vivaldo Coaracy, *Memórias da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro*, 2nd ed., vol. 3, *Coleção Rio 4 Séculos* (Rio de Janeiro, 1965): 349-386. For the histories of Rio de Janeiro consulted for

this book, see the secondary sources in the bibliography.

² A summary in English of these events is in C. H. Har-
ing, *Empire in Brazil* (New York, 1968).

For these reasons, elite sources rarely have detailed information on slave life and culture. In fact, one can read column after column of newspapers from that period and not even know that slavery existed in the city, except when they contained debates about the abolition of the slave trade, or carried advertisements in which slaves were bought and sold, or reported on a sensational crime involving a slave. Even abolitionist newspapers of the 1840s seldom yield much useful and specific detail on slaves. The newspapers of the period generally accepted the institution of slavery and did not question it nor seek to reform it by detailing cases of slave treatment.

Other elite sources, such as parliamentary debates, political tracts, correspondence, diaries, and so on, also rarely concerned themselves with slaves. Initially, I attempted to locate all such sources dealing with slaves in the city and quickly found that the search only yielded occasional tidbits of information. This is one reason why many Brazilian scholars who know the elite sources believe that little documentation on slavery survives in Brazil. Dr. Roderick J. Barman, who has read widely in the published and private writings of the Brazilian elite during the Empire, has encountered only scanty materials on slaves and slavery in Rio de Janeiro. The absence is to be explained in part, he believes, by "a tacit convention in elite circles that, unless the topic arose perforce, neither slavery as an institution nor slaves as a group were considered suitable for public or social discussion."³ Whatever the cause, Brazilian printed materials of the type that have survived in the North American South have yet to be located by Dr. Barman or myself.

In contrast, the foreigners who entered Rio in the nineteenth century did not regard slaves as an insignificant or unsuitable topic for publication. They were not part of a highly stratified slave society and did not share the same attitudes

about what not to discuss in print. Furthermore, many came with the express purpose of detailing "the horrors of Brazilian slavery" in order to sell their books to those with abolitionist sympathies in England, France, or North America. Still others accompanied scientific expeditions sent to investigate, classify, and describe the flora and fauna of tropical Brazil. They applied the same principles of scientific observation to the customs of Brazilian slaveowners and their African slaves, who were as interesting to them as Brazil's tropical birds. The scientific expeditions also employed skilled artists to capture in paintings, drawings, and published lithographs the customs and dress of the people of Brazil. The discovery and description of "exotic, tropical" Brazil in the early nineteenth century thus led foreigners to seek out slaves and information on slavery to the point that Brazilian slaveowners were "insulted" that they did not inquire about "good" society. Unlike Brazilian sources of the same period, the travel literature before 1850 is an exceptional and invaluable source for slavery in the city. No other slave society in the Americas had as many foreign visitors record their impressions of slavery there.

The bibliography at the end of this study is a selected list of the principal travelers' writings used as sources for this book. It was initially compiled from the invaluable *Bibliografia do Rio de Janeiro de viajantes e autores estrangeiros 1531-1900*, by Paulo Berger, which was first published in Rio in 1964. Although the title suggests that it is limited to Rio, the reproductions of the title pages of various editions also serve as a guide to travelers who visited other parts of Brazil. Its usefulness for the study of Brazilian slavery, however, is limited to those port cities and regions that were most often visited by foreigners in the nineteenth century.⁴

Although the travel literature is an essential

³ Personal communication of Dr. Roderick J. Barman, letter of 9 May 1984. His forthcoming book is *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1750-1850*.

⁴ See also the bibliography by Robert E. Conrad, *Brazil-*

ian Slavery: An Annotated Research Bibliography (Boston, 1977); Henrique L. Alves, *Bibliografia Afro-Brasileira: Estudos sobre o Negro*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro, 1979); and John D. Smith, *Black Slavery in the Americas: An Interdisci-*

source, it also has its limitations and must be used with care. Each tourist who stopped in Rio brought greatly differing skills in observation, description, and analysis depending on his or her social background, education, occupation, and length of stay in the city. Few were able to avoid ethnocentric criticisms or color prejudices, while most were unable to penetrate the true meaning of what they described or painted. Those who were the best sources for this study were those who lived in the city for more than two years, such as the Englishman John Luccock or the Frenchman Jean Baptiste Debret; however, the occasional brief visitors who accurately reported on what they personally observed often provide additional missing evidence.

Above all, the city of Rio has the richest extant pictorial record of slaves in nineteenth-century Latin America, since the foreigners also painted, drew, and even photographed the city's slaves. The most accurate artist of them all is the incomparable Jean Baptiste Debret, who, unlike most European artists of the period, painted recognizable portraits of Africans without stereotypical imagery, accurately recording the exact details of their African dress, musical instruments, and customs. While each of his drawings or paintings is an historical document in its own right, his detailed explanations of each picture include invaluable ethnographic and historical information. This book is deeply indebted to the richness of observation of this one Frenchman, who worked and painted in Rio for many years.⁵

Although the travel literature on Rio has been known to historians since the nineteenth century and both Brazilian and North American schol-

ars have used it for studies on slavery, Brazilians still believed as late as 1978 that they could not study Brazilian slavery because all the sources had been destroyed. In 1890 the abolitionist Rui Barbosa had issued the famous order to burn the papers, books, and documents regarding slavery in the Ministry of the Treasury in Rio. Although an official motive was to prevent former slaveowners from ever reestablishing legal control over their ex-slaves after the abolition of slavery in 1888, nonetheless, the fire destroyed priceless documentation on slavery, such as the tax records.⁶ A second, accidental fire in the 1960s burned the collection of manuscripts in the possession of the black brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary and St. Benedict.⁷ It is these fires that have led Cariocans (inhabitants of Rio) to believe that they cannot write the history of slavery for their own city or for Brazil as a whole. Furthermore, Cariocans tend to view Salvador, Bahia, rather than Rio, as the city in which African culture survived in Brazil, and so they have not looked for sources on slaves in their own city.

I initiated the research on this book in part because I was a foreigner and did not share these Cariocan attitudes. My training as a graduate student in African history with Jan M. Vansina and Philip D. Curtin and other scholars at the University of Wisconsin had taught me how to write the history of a people believed to have no history of their own and how to locate and use travel accounts, oral traditions, and written sources of the elite in order to write non-elite history. However, when I first went to Rio as a graduate student in 1968, I did fear that I would not be able to locate any manuscripts because of

plinary Bibliography, 1865-1980, 2 vols. (Westport, Conn., 1982).

⁵ Jean Baptiste Debret, *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil: Séjour d'un Artiste Français au Brésil*, 3 vols. (1834; reprint, Rio de Janeiro, 1965); and the Portuguese translation, *Viagem Pitoresca e Histórica ao Brasil*, trans. and ed. Sérgio Millet, 3 vols. in 2 tomos. (São Paulo, 1954).

⁶ On what was and was not burned in 1890-1891, see Robert W. Slenes, "O que Rui Barbosa não Queimou: Novas Fontes para o Estudo da Escravidão no Século XIX."

Estudos Econômicos 13, no. 1 (Jan.-Apr. 1983): 117-149. A witness to the first burning was the African Custódio, a customhouse worker, age 108, who wanted to see the "complete destruction" of the documents that attested to the "martyrdom" of his race. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁷ The brotherhood's manuscripts were formerly at the Church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário e São Benedito on Rua Uruguaiana. There is now a Museu do Negro (Museum of the Black) attached to the church, which has been under renovation since the fire.

the 1890 fire. At this point, Robert E. Conrad's previous research on abolition and his personal advice were most reassuring, and my eventual location of some of the most important documents from the period of the abolition of the slave trade, 1830-1850, are due to his direction.

The initial project for the book grew out of my master's thesis on the Angolan-Brazilian slave trade, a paper on slave mobility in Rio de Janeiro prepared for a seminar in comparative slavery directed by Philip D. Curtin and Thomas E. Skidmore, and ultimately my dissertation on slave life in Rio de Janeiro.⁸ The master's thesis had led me to question traditional Brazilian interpretations of the ethnic origins of Cariocan slaves, while work on the dissertation acquainted me with travel accounts, newspapers, and other scattered documentation in diverse sources. My dissatisfaction with the lack of manuscript sources for many of my generalizations on slave treatment, culture, and manumission, however, led me to undertake additional research in Rio. Two more summers in Rio in 1972 and 1973 finally led me to the types of manuscript sources I had looked for as a graduate student: the notarial registries with manumissions before 1830; police correspondence with the ministers of justice on the control of the slave population; the burial registries of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, petitions of slaves to the emperors about cruel treatment; and wills and court cases. The staffs at the archives of the Arquivo Nacional and the Santa Casa were indispensable in helping me to locate these sources. Although certain types of documents, such as slave petitions to the emperors, may not exist in other Brazilian cities, many notarial registries, already studied for Salvador and Paratí, are yet to be fully researched in the rest of Brazil.⁹ Even plantation slaves ap-

pear in urban notarial registries because rural owners recorded transfers of property rights and manumissions in cities and towns such as Rio, Salvador, and Paratí.

The correspondence of the ministers of justice with police officials and governors throughout the empire is mandatory for scholars researching the theme of slave control and resistance, as well as many other aspects of slavery and social history. The chiefs of police of Rio in the early nineteenth century were responsible for an unusual diversity of urban affairs and reported on all aspects of urban life, often in great detail. Since they were required to report to the minister of justice, their correspondence records valuable information on slaves and urban life.

One of the richest sources for this book were the burial records of slaves at the Santa Casa da Misericórdia. Although they may be unique to Rio, I suspect that other Santa Casas in Brazil also kept death registries on the slaves they buried. A careful search of the brotherhood's archives in other cities may yield similar, although possibly not as complete, information on the causes of slave deaths (Appendix B). Only further research in other Brazilian port cities may clarify whether Rio's slaves had unusually high mortality rates for urban slaves in Brazil.

One additional source developed in 1977-1978, when I returned to Brazil on a Fulbright to teach at the University of Brasília. Since I had been able to locate only a few written descriptions of Afro-Cariocan religions in the nineteenth century, I then attempted to work back in time, while on vacations in Rio, by interviewing mediums and attending Umbanda and Candomblé centers in an attempt to understand contemporary Afro-Brazilian religions. Unfortunately, I never made contact with anyone who

⁸ Mary C. Karasch, "The Brazilian Slavers and the Illegal Slave Trade, 1836-1851" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1967); and "Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1972).

⁹ Stuart B. Schwartz, "The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: Bahia, 1684-1745," *Hispanic American*

Historical Review 54, no. 4 (Nov. 1974): 603-635; Katia M. de Queirós Mattoso, *Entre Esclavo au Brésil XVI-XIX* (Paris, 1979), pp. 201-227; and James P. Kiernan, "The Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: Paraty, 1789-1822" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1976).

could push the time period before 1910. I suspect that such people still live; I hope other researchers will be able to interview them before they die. Nonetheless, the chapter on slave religion could not have been written without my gaining an understanding of what was practiced in Rio in the 1970s.

While at the Umbanda centers in particular, I became fascinated with the Catholic saints' images used there for African spirits and deities. It was these images that then led me to try and establish their meaning to Cariocan Catholics and slaves in the nineteenth century. Before 1978 I had not noticed the descriptions of saints' images in the travel literature, but once I knew which ones to look for I realized that Jean Baptiste Debret, Thomas Ewbank, and F. Friedrich von Weech had left many fascinating descriptions of popular Catholic practices of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Further explorations in the small towns near Rio or in the interior in which many similar beliefs and rituals still survive sharpened my understanding of what appeared in nineteenth-century sources. Chapter 9 thus abandons previous approaches to the study of slave religion as assimilation or syncretism to Roman Catholicism and stresses the active role of slaves in the evolution of their own African religions in the city.

My extended treatment on slave culture could not have been written without the opportunity to live and do research in the interior of Brazil in 1977-1978. In Brasília at that time, numerous exhibitions of Brazilian art and folklore were brought to the city. Cultural patterns and material culture that occur in the travel literature of Rio also yet survived in the small towns and villages of Goiás and Minas Gerais. My observations in and near Brasília thus facilitated my understanding of many customs or items of

material culture previously unnoticed in my sources.

Teaching in Washington, D.C., at the Catholic University of America in 1981-1983 enabled me to complete my research on Brazilian popular Catholicism and to use the resources of Washington's libraries to locate the last rare medical histories and travel accounts. An unexpected bonus was the opportunity to attend numerous artistic and cultural events and visit museums with significant African art collections, such as the Museum of African Art. In particular, the National Gallery of Art's exhibition and catalogue on Kongo art,¹¹ as well as interviews with African scholars in Washington, refined some of my interpretations of African influences on Cariocan slave culture.

Thus, in reconstructing slave life and culture I have had to turn to many nontraditional historical sources: contemporary folklore and material culture, art history, religious traditions of the twentieth century, burial registries, nineteenth-century medical theses, notarial registries, police correspondence, petitions by slaves to protest cruel treatment, and travel accounts. While it is true that significant fires have destroyed much irreplaceable documentation on slavery in Rio, yet enough survives in foreign travel accounts and Cariocan archives to reconstruct a little of what it was like to be a slave in Rio de Janeiro and to challenge many myths about the nature of Brazilian slavery.

Myth one, as Robert E. Conrad maintains in *Children of God's Fire*, is generally described as the Freyre thesis of benevolent masters whose gentle treatment made their slaves' lot in Brazil less rigorous than in North America. As Conrad sums up, Freyre's theories were in part based on the "inventions of former defenders and apologists of Brazilian slavery."¹² I would add that they

¹⁰ Debret, *Viagem Pitoresca*; Thomas Ewbank, *Life in Brazil* . . . (1856; reprint, Detroit, 1971); and F. Friedrich von Weech, *Brasiliens gegenwärtiger Zustand und Colonialsystem* (Hamburg, 1828).

¹¹ Robert F. Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four*

Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds (Washington, D.C., 1981).

¹² Robert E. Conrad, *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* (Princeton, 1983), pp. xx-xxiii.

were also derived from the opinions of many travelers who briefly visited Rio and reported on the well-dressed slaves of wealthy Cariocans. Foreigners whose contact was with elegant household servants could only conclude that Brazilian slaves were better treated than their own servants or urban workers in Europe or North America. Because Gilberto Freyre's works were among the few translated into English, his ideas on Brazilian slavery have informed an entire generation of North American scholars, including Frank Tannenbaum.¹³ They have also influenced popular myths about slavery held by whites in Brazil, if not by blacks, although Brazilian scholars now working on slavery are challenging his "myth" of the benevolent master.¹⁴

A second myth derived from Freyre that informs popular beliefs in Brazil is that Brazil was settled by culturally superior West African slaves. In part, Freyre based his conclusions about the West African origins of Brazilian slaves on the research, including the collection of oral traditions, conducted in Salvador in the early twentieth century by Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, Manuel Querino, Arthur Ramos, and others. The more recent studies of Donald Pierson, Pierre Verger, Katia M. Queirós Mattoso, and Stuart B. Schwartz continue to lead Brazilians to think of Salvador as the unique cradle of African culture in Brazil. On the other hand, many Brazilians assume that what happened in Salvador, Bahia, was typical of Brazil as a whole; but as Pierre Verger and others have carefully documented, Salvador was the exception because of its specialized connection through the tobacco trade with one section of the coast of

West Africa.¹⁵ Its slave origins were sharply distinct from those in the south of Brazil, as my ethnic samples in chapter 1 clarify.

A third myth, often repeated to me by Cariocans, was that Rio, unlike Salvador, had lost its African traditions. On the contrary, I would argue, the city of Rio has also preserved many African customs and religions, but they have come primarily from West Central and East Africa. Furthermore, the city of Rio provides an equally important case study of nineteenth-century slave life, because Rio was the principal marketplace through which slaves, originating in West Central and East Africa, were distributed to the interior provinces of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo, where the great coffee plantations were carved out of the tropical forests. In other words, the city of Rio was closely connected with the coffee boom of the nineteenth century, whereas Salvador was linked to the declining sugar economies of the Northeast, and by the 1840s it was actually selling off some of its slaves to Rio. In fact, more Africans were imported into Rio de Janeiro in the nineteenth century than to Salvador. Almost a million Africans passed through or near the port of Rio. While the majority did not remain in the city, enough were kept there to influence the national origins of Cariocan slaves and hence their culture.

Another mistaken idea is that slaves labored only as field hands on plantations in Brazil. Consequently, there have been few studies on urban slavery. Most substantive works on Brazilian slavery are either general in nature on all aspects of plantation societies and master/slave relationships or quite specific to one state.¹⁶ The major-

¹³ Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1946).

¹⁴ Jacob Gorender, *O Escravismo Colonial* (São Paulo, 1978).

¹⁵ Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, *Os Africanos no Brasil*, 3rd ed. (São Paulo, 1945); Manuel R. Querino, *A Raça Africana e os seus Costumes* (Salvador, 1955); Arthur Ramos, *The Negro in Brazil*, trans. Richard Pattee (Washington, D.C., 1939 and 1951); Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia* (Chicago, 1942); Pierre Ver-

ger, *Bahia and the West African Trade (1549-1851)* (Ibadan, 1964); and *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le golfe de Bénin et Bahia . . .* (Paris, 1968); Mattoso, *Entre Esclave*; and Schwartz, "Manumission," pp. 603-635.

¹⁶ For principal studies on Brazilian slavery, see the updated bibliography in Conrad, *Children of God's Fire*, as well as his *Brazilian Slavery. An Annotated Research Bibliography*. One author who takes urban slavery into account in his general discussion on Brazilian slavery is Jacob Gorender in *O Escravismo Colonial*, pp. 451-467.

ity of scholars rightly concentrate on plantation slavery, because most slaves worked on plantations, but urban slavery has not yet been systematically studied. Even less of an emphasis has been placed on urban slave life and culture. Thus, it is most useful to study slave life and culture in Rio, simply because it has not been done before, except in a piecemeal fashion for Salvador.

Another reason for choosing Rio is that so many historians have based their generalizations about the nature of Brazilian slavery on travelers who went only to Rio. The conclusions they reached about slavery and race relations in all of Brazil were actually developed from observing household slaves in Rio without real knowledge of the customs of the city or without taking into account diverse forms of slave employment and living conditions in the rest of Brazil. All too often the case of richly dressed slaves living in apparent luxury in the mansions of Rio was made to equal the standard of living of all slaves in the city or even of field hands on rural plantations. Thus, a detailed study of slave life in Rio is especially important in order to bring together the sources on Cariocan slavery. In fact, this study challenges the theories of Gilberto Freyre and others and attempts to explain how slave life in an urban environment could be as difficult as in a plantation area and may in fact have been more deadly due to the city's specific disease environment.

As this study is localized to one city, it also concentrates on one time period. Although many conclusions regarding slaves may be true before or after this period, some are unique to the years 1808 to 1850. There are several reasons for selecting this particular time. First, these years permit an historian to follow transformations in slave culture from their colonial antecedents

into the nineteenth century. In most slavery studies, the lack of data does not allow an in-depth examination of changes in slave life and culture. This city's variety of sources, some of which are colonial while others reflect "modern" changes after 1822, facilitate description of changes in cultural patterns. We can document, for example, the manner in which slave dress evolved from the colonial styles of the 1790s to the French fashions of the 1860s. Wherever possible, I have attempted to illustrate the process in which various aspects of slave life and culture evolved over time.

Second, in the first half of the nineteenth century, slavery in Rio was at its height. Neither before 1808 nor after 1850 would slaves, especially African slaves, so dominate the life of the city. In simply numerical terms, this period saw the largest number of slaves, almost 80,000 in 1849, live and work in Rio. Not even after 1850 when the population of the city as a whole doubled and tripled in size did the number of slaves approach those counted in the census of 1849.¹⁷ Furthermore, no other city in the Americas even approached Rio's slave population in 1849. New Orleans, for example, had only 14,484 "bondsmen" in 1860.¹⁸ Thus, the years 1808 to 1850 were the most important period in the history of slavery in Rio, and Rio had the largest urban slave population in the Americas.

Furthermore, these dates delineate two important events that sharply set the character of the period. In 1808 the arrival of the Portuguese court in flight from Napoleon's armies transformed a quiet colonial outpost into the center of an empire. The harbor opened to the ships of the world, and the city prospered and grew in population. In order to pursue this new development, the Prince Regent Dom João VI, Portuguese noblemen and merchants, and the Eu-

¹⁷ Census of 1849 (table 3.6). In 1870 there were only 50,092 slaves in the rural and urban parishes of the Município da Corte. Serviço Nacional de Recenseamento, *Resumo Histórico dos Inquéritos Censitários Realizados no Brasil*, Docs. Censitários, Série B, no. 4 (Rio de Janeiro, 1951),

pp. 22-23.

¹⁸ In 1860 the "number of Negroes" in New Orleans included 10,939 "free Negroes" and 14,484 "bondsmen." John W. Blassingame, *Black New Orleans, 1860-1880* (Chicago, 1973), pp. 1-2, 9.

ropeans attracted to the Court of Brazil all required labor. Their demand for slaves spurred the renewal of the slave trade. Whereas the decline of the gold mines in Minas Gerais had lowered the importation of slaves to perhaps an average of 10,000 slaves a year prior to 1808, the arrival of the royal court quickly pushed the average to above 20,000 with the sovereign himself sharing in the business (chapter 2). As a result, the date 1808 also marked the beginning of the significant nineteenth-century African trade to Rio de Janeiro, which brought so many West Central Africans to the city.

Throughout the period and in spite of British abolition efforts, the slave trade supplied Rio with new Africans, whose comparatively low prices made it possible for even ex-slaves to purchase new Africans in the slave market. Consequently, slave ownership by both men and women was widespread in the city, and middle-income individuals, craftsmen, and even those accounted as poor could own slaves. But the slave trade did not last forever. Legally abolished in 1830, it was finally ended in 1850, and thus 1850 marks another significant watershed date in the history of slavery in the city. First, the continuous importation of slaves no longer renewed the African population, and the slave population began to change in ethnic make-up, especially as slaves from Salvador and other northeastern ports were shipped south to Rio. Second, slave prices rose rapidly in the 1850s and restricted ownership. Third, the increasing demand for labor on nearby coffee plantations drained slave labor from the city, and occupations formerly held by Africans were taken over by poor white immigrants. Finally, deadly epidemics of yellow fever and cholera ravaged Rio after 1850, and cholera, in particular, killed so many slaves that slaveowners sent the survivors to their rural estates to protect their investments. Instead of nat-

urally increasing, the city's slave population actually declined after 1850.

Thus, the period 1808-1850, which was one of growth and expansion in the urban economy and in the international slave trade, pinpoints an extraordinary chapter in the history of urban slavery. Despite opinions to the contrary, a considerable—actually overwhelming—amount of information survives on the slaves of Rio. Although almost all tax records have been destroyed, enough other material exists to suggest the quality of slave life in this important period, when the African slaves predominated in the streets of Rio. Because of the wealth of travel literature, newspaper advertisements, and documentation that is peculiar to this period, the sources also require a concentration on the first half of the nineteenth century, before Europeans stopped writing travelogues or Brazilians became self-conscious about owning slaves. Only at the height of slavery in Rio and before crucial events changed its character could the wandering European and the slaveowner who accepted slavery as a part of the natural order record a little of what it was like to be a slave, but above all an African-born slave, in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

As this study is centered on one city and time period, it also concentrates on only one social group within Rio: its almost 80,000 slaves. To the extent that a North American historian can piece together their story, this book attempts a slave-centered approach, similar to that of George P. Rawick, John W. Blassingame, Eugene D. Genovese, and other North American scholars who have reconstructed slave life and culture in the southern United States;¹⁹ or of Colin A. Palmer, Frederick P. Bowser, and George Reid Andrews, who have attempted the same for Latin America.²⁰ But it goes beyond these studies, because it specifically deals with a

¹⁹ George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, vol. 1, *From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community* (Westport, Conn., 1972); John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the*

Antebellum South, 2nd ed. (New York, 1979); and Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1972).

²⁰ Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mex-*

slave population that was largely African by birth and, furthermore, that was primarily from West Central and East Africa. While Palmer and Bowser also deal with African slave populations in their studies of colonial Mexico and Peru, the nature of colonial sources usually dictates that few specifics remain on African culture in the colonial period. Even the noted Brazilian colonial historian, A.J.R. Russell-Wood, in his *The Black Man in Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil*, was unable to locate the types of sources available for nineteenth-century Rio.²¹ Only one recent book details closely patterns described in nineteenth-century Rio, and that is "Alas, Alas, Kongo" by Monica Schuler in which she describes the retention of Central African cultural patterns, but in a predominantly rural setting in Jamaica.²²

Was Rio unique? I suspect not, but at this point it is hazardous to generalize, before comparable nineteenth-century studies are conducted for major cities that also received significant numbers of Central and East Africans. In any case the goal of this study is not to make sweeping generalizations, because they abound in the field of Afro-Brazilian studies, but to locate and describe the realities of slave life and culture as slaves themselves experienced them. As Carl N. Degler and Robert E. Conrad have already suggested,²³ there may have been a harsher slavery in Brazil, or at least in Rio, but only future case studies, such as this, will be able to document this emerging hypothesis for all of Brazil.

Without an understanding of the realities of slave treatment and living conditions, one cannot then fully appreciate the formation of Afro-Cariocan slave culture or even of contemporary customs in Rio. The hardships of slavery led

slaves to create cultural and religious forms to help them cope and survive as slaves. Two examples may clarify this process. In the nineteenth century, slaves commonly hid their anger and their complaints about their owners behind the facade of music and dance. In the 1970s during carnival in Rio the people still danced and sang to the lively beat of the samba rhythm, but the words they sang so joyfully often hid bitter comments about slavery in the past, the high cost of living in the present, or police repression. Even in the 1970s one could not interpret the meaning of the samba music without also understanding the difficult lives of the slum-dwellers of Rio.

Second, the people of Rio fondly recall the old black slaves (the *prêtos velhos*) of Rio as individuals who suffered greatly while enslaved, but who, through their suffering, were purified and reached a more elevated spiritual plane from which they now return to help all those who invoke them, and to work with them for the good of the community. When they descend and possess mediums, in contemporary belief, they cause the mediums to feel their pain and even to limp as if crippled while they are in trance. Contemporary religious beliefs, while reflecting the hardships of slavery, also suggest some of the ways in which slaves and their descendants explained that suffering within a spiritual context.

Therefore, this book challenges stereotypes held both in North America and Brazil that the conditions of slavery so traumatized slaves that they became passive victims who totally absorbed the European culture of their masters. Rather, we intend to show how slaves became active participants in the evolution of their own rich Afro-Cariocan culture—a culture that has continued to attract and acculturate those of European an-

ico, 1570-1650 (Cambridge, Mass., 1976); Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru 1524-1650* (Stanford, 1974); and George R. Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800-1900* (Madison, Wis., 1980).

²¹ A.J.R. Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil* (New York, 1982).

²² Monica Schuler, "Alas, Alas, Kongo" (Baltimore, 1980).

²³ Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York, 1971), pp. 67-75; and Conrad, *Children of God's Fire*, pp. xvi-xxiii.

cestry, many of whom now worship the gods from Africa.

Our study begins with a detailed examination of the diversity of origins of Rio's slaves. This complex introductory chapter, as well as Appendix A, includes the largest and most detailed ethnic samples from West Central Africa known for Brazil and refutes most Brazilian studies on the African origins of slaves sent to Brazil in the nineteenth century. Since Rio de Janeiro was the principal port of debarkation for the one million Africans who passed through or near the city between 1800 and 1850, it also helps to document the West Central African origins of those shipped to the plantation regions of Rio, São Paulo, and Minas Gerais in the nineteenth century. The "Central Africanness" of the city's slave population is thus fundamental to an understanding of the "sources" of Afro-Cariocan slave culture.

The following chapter examines the marketing of these Africans in the Valongo, the principal slave market of Brazil. Based on manuscript sources and travelers' reports, chapter 2 clarifies the age and sex of imported Africans and documents the number of children and teenagers in the African trade to Rio. Since Africans were introduced to urban life after sale in the Valongo, chapter 3 on the city of Rio follows in order to introduce readers to the demographic, social, political, and economic structures of the city from a slave's viewpoint.

Chapters 4-6 focus on those who did not survive but died at early ages and the causes of their exceptional mortality. Tables are based on unique burial records that recorded age at death by nationality and disease, and they document that those who died were teenagers and young adults, if African-born, or children and teenagers under nineteen, if Brazilian-born. The additional calculations of crude death and birth rates for slaves, as well as for free people for comparative purposes, provide one of the few such demographic studies for nineteenth-century Brazil. Among the statistics in this section is a

life-span sample that establishes how long 682 Africans survived in the city; only one-third lived more than sixteen years in Rio. Why so many died at such young ages is then documented through a study of slave treatment, punishments, living conditions, diet, and diseases. The single greatest killer of slaves was tuberculosis, and chapter 6 shows that the ten leading causes of slave deaths were diseases associated with low socioeconomic conditions, not exotic tropical diseases. These three chapters should challenge the Gilberto Freyre thesis of the "mildness" of the Brazilian slave system and make a major contribution toward an understanding of the high costs for Africans of enslavement in Brazil. While many, if not most, slave studies have focused on the mortality of the Atlantic passage, this is the first study to document statistically the high mortality of slaves in Brazil.

Succeeding chapters then take up the story of those who survived the seasoning process and examine their adaptation to or resistance to slavery. Chapter 7 surveys their occupations and how they were used as skilled and manual workers of an urban economy in transportation, manufacturing, arts and crafts, sales and services, and management. The following two chapters document their lives apart from their owners when they pursued their own forms of music, songs, dances, funerals, religion, and family and associational life. A principal contribution here is the description and identification of the African origins of many types of material culture and religious ritual, as well as an analysis of the lack of marriage and family life for most slaves. The overall objective of chapters 8 and 9 is to document the process of cultural change over time and the manner in which slaves blended many cultural traditions into a new Afro-Cariocan culture that has continued to influence contemporary Brazilian culture.

The final chapters examine the theme of resistance to slavery via individual acts of violence against their owners, thefts, crimes, and escapes.

INTRODUCTION

Based on police correspondence, chapter 10 surveys the various forms of resistance used by slaves to fight their owners and escape slavery. One of the more surprising findings was the large number of *quilombos* (settlements of fugitive slaves) that existed in or near the city. Chapter 11 ends the book with a study on manumission that questions Frank Tannenbaum's theories on the ease and frequency of manumission in Latin America.²⁴ A sample of manumission letters reveals that those who were freed tended to be black women because they purchased their freedom. In other words, manumission was seldom a free gift of a benevolent owner; it usually had to be earned with years of obedient service before a slave woman would be permitted to purchase her freedom or that of her child. The book concludes with a brief look at the status and living conditions of freedper-

sons and the decline of slavery in Rio after 1850.

On the whole, *Slave Life* should lead to a significant revision of North American views of Cariocan slavery and urban slave culture. To date most historians have tended to concentrate on plantation studies in Brazil or on the masters; this is the first Brazilian study to focus on the slaves themselves in an urban setting. Since most Brazilians still believe that such a history cannot be written, due to the myth that all the slavery manuscripts were destroyed at abolition, one of the most important contributions of this lengthy study is to demonstrate the immense variety of documentation that still survives on slaves. It is my hope that this book will serve as a guide to future research on slave life in Brazil in other regions and time periods, as Brazilians prepare to celebrate in 1988 the 100th anniversary of the abolition of slavery.

²⁴ Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, pp. 61-65.

**Slave Life
in Rio de Janeiro
1808-1850**

1

The Nations of Rio

IN AN ALIEN city, African slaves sat by the doors of the shops and mansions, singing of their longing for family and homeland. Their “plaintive refrains” touched other foreigners, European travelers, who stopped to listen. On street corners or at work, the Africans reminisced about their past lives along the Zaire or Zambesi rivers. They played the musical instruments of Africa and honored the “old gods.” Even after years as slaves in Rio, they dreamed of returning to Africa, like the carpenter who built his house to face the ocean and Africa. A few were able to buy passage back to Africa, but most had to console themselves with the belief that after death they would return home. As one German traveler observed, their favorite words were “my land and my nation.”¹

Not only Africans remembered their homelands. Slaves from the United States, Cuba, northern South America, Uruguay, and Argentina had also come to live in Rio, while Brazilian-

born slaves had journeyed from all over the Empire of Brazil via coastal sailing ship or overland caravan.² In fact, some Brazilian-born slaves lived farther from their birthplaces in terms of days of travel than slaves born in Luanda, Angola. Immense distances and months of travel separated Brazilian-born slaves from their lands as surely as the South Atlantic kept Africans from theirs.

To begin the study of slave life and culture in Rio de Janeiro we must take up the favorite words of the Africans and explore the origins of the city’s slaves. On one level our concern is with the historical identity of the communities they had to leave behind in Africa; on another it is with the “new nations,”³ the new communities, and the new identities they evolved as slaves in the midst of diverse cultures. The “foreignness” of Cariocan slaves is what informed their entire experience. Cariocan slave society was inherently different because most slaves had been

¹ John MacDouall, *Narrative of a Voyage to Patagonia and Terra del Fuégo* . . . (London, 1833), pp. 200-201; H. Furcy de Bremoy, *Le Voyageur Poète, ou Souvenirs d'un Français dans un coin des deux mondes*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1833), 2:110-111; A. D'Assier, *Le Brésil contemporain*, pp. 26-28, as cited in Roger Bastide, *Les Religions Afro-Brésiennes* . . . (Paris, 1960), p. 114; and C. Schlichthorst, *O Rio de Janeiro como é, 1824-1826*, trans. and ed. Emmy Dodt and Gustavo Barroso (Rio de Janeiro, 1943), p. 140. Schlichthorst uses “my land and my nation” (*minha terra e minha nação*).

² References to slaves from other countries in the Western Hemisphere occur in advertisements and police records. *O Diário do Rio do Janeiro*, 4 Oct. 1821, p. 31, announced that Maria, a half-*cabra mulata*, who spoke Spanish since she had come from Buenos Aires, had fled

with her year-old daughter. Slaves from Argentina and Uruguay were the most frequently mentioned individuals from the Americas, probably because of the active trade between Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Rio.

³ In nineteenth-century Rio, *nação* (nation) was the preferred term for any group of Africans from a small tribe to a large kingdom. It referred not only to a small ethnic group or large state the Africans left behind but also to the new group they created in Rio. Unless otherwise noted, “nation” will be used only in its nineteenth-century Cariocan context. In no way is this usage meant to suggest that Cariocan slaves created independent nation-states or that these states correspond to modern African nation-states.

forced to leave everything and everyone of meaning behind. For these outsiders,⁴ there were no extended families to ease the burden of slavery nor familiar cultures to sustain links with past generations. Families, cultures, and communities had to be forged anew in the city. The challenge for a slave in Rio was to create a meaningful life amid disparate individuals who shared few values, to create one group from the chaos of many.

Slave society was also different because the majority of slaves came from West Central Africa. Without an understanding of these origins, little is comprehensible about the formation and evolution of slave life and culture in the city. For centuries people in Central Africa had dealt with ethnic diversity, developed common religious traditions, and shared cultural forms; these skills they transmitted to Brazil where they undoubtedly used similar techniques for dealing with cultural diversity.⁵ The "Central Africanness" of the city's slave population is thus fundamental to the understanding of the entire process of cultural change in the city. For this reason we must begin the study of slave life and culture with a detailed examination of the lands and nations of origin.

"The Nations of Color"

In the nineteenth century, the major divisions of the slaves of Rio were based on birthplace: Af-

rica or Brazil (Census of 1849, table 3.6). Once slaveowners made the distinction between those born in Africa and those born in Brazil, they proceeded variously in the labeling of their "merchandise." They "sorted" Brazilian slaves by color but Africans by national origin, since from the owners' perspective all Africans were "black." A Brazilian slave might be Antônio *crioulo* (black) or Maria *parda* (mulatto), while the Africans would be Antônio Angola or Maria Mozambique.⁶ Amerindian slaves born in Brazil were classified by color or tribal origin, depending upon changing governmental policies toward Indian slavery.

Although slaveowners recognized that Indians and Africans came from different nations, they generally ignored the regional origins of Brazilian slaves. In a few cases provincial origin took precedence, but for most Brazilian slaves their color was their "nation." In nineteenth-century Rio, the major "Brazilian nations" of Rio were the *crioulo* (*crioula*),⁷ *pardo* (*parda*), and *cabra*; *crioulo* and *pardo* slaves maintained identities and communities as separate from one another as from the African nations.

Of the color terms for Brazilian slaves, the most common was *crioulo*, which generally applied to the black born in Brazil (though occasionally to Africans born in Portuguese colonies of Africa). Although *negro* (*negra*) and *prêto* (*preta*) sometimes served for Brazilian blacks, the terms were more likely to be used for Africans;

⁴ For concepts of the slave as an "outsider," see Igor Kopytoff and Suzanne Miers, "African 'Slavery' as an Institution of Marginality," in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison, Wis., 1977), pp. 14-18.

⁵ Common religious traditions of Central Africa: Willy de Craemer, Jan Vansina, and Renée C. Fox, "Religious Movements in Central Africa: A Theoretical Study," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18, no. 4 (Oct. 1976): 458-475.

⁶ Of all the newspapers of the period, *O Diário do Rio de Janeiro* has the best selection of fugitive ads. *O Correio Mercantil* and *O Jornal do Comércio* also carried these ads, but they are not so complete as in the *Diário*. Many of the conclusions in this chapter are based on a careful reading of

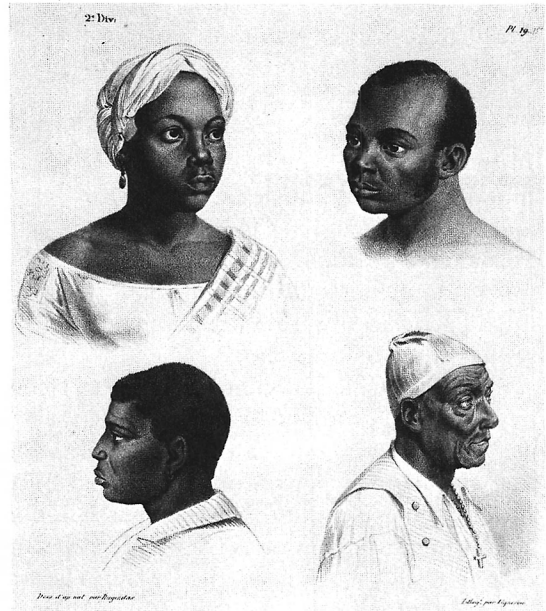
the advertisements in the newspapers as well as other sources for the period. Only specific references to a particular ad will be cited.

⁷ The feminine form appears in parentheses. Owners called a male slave by the masculine form, such as Antônio *pardo*, and a female slave by the feminine form, such as Maria *parda*. On the social stratification of slaves by color, see chapter 3. The term "nations of color" is my own, and I have not seen *nação* used with *crioulo*, *pardo*, or *cabra*. However, Cariocans did apply "nation" to the Indians, such as "the Botocudo nation." In modern usage, *crioulo* means any black person. In the nineteenth century, however, it could also refer to those born elsewhere in the Americas, as well as those born in the Portuguese African colonies.

Brazilian blacks apparently preferred *crioulo* (*crioula*), since it signified Brazilian birth, in which they took pride. *Negro* was less acceptable to them; it was almost synonymous with *escravo* (slave), and *negro* alone often implied African slave. *Prêto*, however, seems to have been a somewhat more neutral term for black, especially in cases in which the nationality or civil status of a black person was unknown.

Another variant of black was *moleque*. In newspaper advertisements masters used *moleque* for young black boys and men between the ages of six and thirty. Although youthfulness was a part of the meaning of *moleque*, the word was often employed derogatorily toward adult men. The diminutive form, *molequinho*, often designated a very young or small black male, while an older man or large boy was *moleção* or *molecote*. Although creoles were also called *moleques*, the term was usually applied to African boys. On the other hand, the feminine form, *moleca*, was uncommon. Very young or small black girls were identified as *negrinhas* or *crioulinhas*, but for older girls the preferred term was *rapariga*, until they reached the age of fourteen or fifteen, when they became *prêtas* or *crioulas*. It seems that black girls reached adolescence earlier than the *moleques*, and the differences in word usage may reflect different societal attitudes toward black teenagers.

African *crioulos* generally originated in one of the Portuguese colonies of Africa, such as Cape Verde, Ilha do Príncipe, São Tomé, Angola, or Mozambique. Therefore, a slave born in Luanda, the capital of Angola, was called a *crioulo de Luanda*. Similarly, *crioulo de* also occurred in reference to other provinces of Brazil; for instance, a black born in Bahia was a *crioulo da Bahia*. An alternate term, indicating only Brazilian birth, was *natural de*; Antônio, *natural de Minas*, would have been Anthony, native of Minas Gerais. The name of a town, city, or province might also be used. In other words, *crioulo de Luanda* or *natural de Minas* indicated assimilated black slaves from the Portuguese empire or



Brazilian Blacks. From Johann Moritz Rugendas, *Voyage Pittoresque dans le Brésil*, par Maurice Rugendas, translated by M^r de Golbéry (Paris, 1835).

slaves born in Brazil. In each case, the slave was expected to speak Portuguese and share something of the culture of his or her owner. It is not clear from the sources if African and Brazilian *crioulos* formed common communities in Rio, or if *crioulos* from the various provinces of Brazil joined with the blacks born in Rio. There are some indications that Bahian and Paulista *crioulos* formed distinct communities in the city, and evidence that African Minas from Bahia did so, especially after 1835.⁸ In any case, official docu-

⁸ Correspondence of 1837 between the police and the minister of justice reveals a preoccupation with Mina slaves and freedpersons from the province of Bahia who were living in Rio. In fact, Eusébio de Queirós in a letter of 23 February 1837 even recommended to the minister of justice that the solution for the "dangerous Minas" whose number was increasing in Rio was "to make them leave for their own country." Arquivo Nacional (hereafter AN), IJ6 174, Secretaria de Polícia da Côrte, Ofícios com anexos (hereafter Polícia).

ments tended to group *crioulos* from various Brazilian provinces with those born in Rio, and possibly the same process occurred among slaves.

The most common provincial origins of Brazilian slaves living in Rio were the provinces (now the states) of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, and São Paulo; and in the Northeast Bahia and Pernambuco. Maranhão and Rio Grande do Sul were found more often after 1850, while the other provinces were only minimally represented in Rio before 1850.

Similar provincial designations were attached to the second group of Brazilian slaves, the *pardos* (*pardas*). Owners used the term *pardo* to define a mulatto, a person of African and European parentage, and the *pardos* themselves used it to distinguish themselves from the *crioulos* and other racially mixed groups in the city. The separate identity of *pardos* is obvious from their religious brotherhoods, militia regiments, and signatures on official documents. The 1834 census of Rio also clarifies occupational distinctions between free *pardos* and free blacks (table 3.7). The German traveler Meyen summed up the feelings of *pardos* when he reported that the *pardos* of Rio were a distinct group that took pride in being *pardos*. Furthermore, he warned that one properly addressed a mulatto as *pardo*, since *mulato* (*mulata*) was the less polite word, and masters often used it as an insult. He also claimed that the proud *pardos* of the city disdained blacks and felt themselves to be the equal of whites. In official documents scribes tended to record *pardo*, while in fugitive advertisements owners were less careful to offend *pardos* and freely used *mulato*, in particular *mulatinho* for very young or

small children. Also frequently attached to either *pardo* or *mulato* in the fugitive ads were the adjectives *escuro* (dark) and *claro* (light). In fact, there were many light *pardos* who could pass as whites.⁹

The third major category of color in Rio was *cabra*, which is a more difficult term to interpret. It seems to have been a pejorative term for racially mixed slaves, and, unlike *crioulo* and *pardo*, terms that connote pride in identity, there are no positive images attached to *cabra*. The French traveler Debret used *bodé* (male goat) for male slaves of mixed black and mulatto ancestry, and *cabra* (female goat) for female slaves. In fact, most sources employed *cabra* for the racially mixed of both sexes, which must have been especially insulting to male slaves. In the context of official usage, *cabra* seems to have defined the least esteemed Brazilian slaves of the city, those of indeterminate ancestry and racial mixture. Thus, when a scribe recorded the identities of Brazilian slaves, he generally used three terms: *crioulo*, *pardo*, and *cabra*, in other words, black, mulatto, and other mixtures. The German planter Weech actually employed the term "cabre gente" for the "mixed races" or "colored people."¹⁰

Because of such usage, the *cabra* category probably included the other racially mixed slaves, such as the *cafuzos* or *caribocos*, as well as the Indians of unmixed origins. In the interior of Brazil, *cafuzo* (*cafuzo*) usually indicated a person of African-Indian ancestry. On the other hand, travelers, such as Weech, Meyen, and Debret called persons of mixed Indian-African ancestry *cariboco* or *ariboco*, although a modern definition of 'cariboca' is *mestizo*.¹¹ Both *cafuzo* and

⁹ On the usage of *pardo* and *mulato*, see F. Friedrich von Weech, *Reise über England und Portugal . . .*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1831), 2:1; and F.J.F. Meyen, *Reise und die Welt . . .* (Berlin, 1834), p. 76. *Diario*, 13 Oct. 1821, p. 95, has an ad for two slaves called "mulato claro," one of whom was so white he could pass as a white man in terms of skin color and hair texture.

¹⁰ Weech, *Reise*, 2:1, for example, employs *cabra* for a person of mulatto-black ancestry and *cabre gente* for the

"mixed races, which are called colored people." See also Jean B. Debret, *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Brésil: Séjour d'un Artiste Français au Brésil*, 3 vols. (1834; reprint, Rio de Janeiro, 1965), 2:1. One fugitive ad also described a slave from Pernambuco as a dark "mestizo cabra." *Diario*, 13 Dec. 1821, p. 40. See also n. 2 above for a half-*cabra mulata*.

¹¹ João E. Pohl, *Viagem no interior do Brasil, empreendida nos anos de 1817 a 1821*, trans. Teodoro Cabral (Rio de Ja-

cariboco appear in the sources for Rio, and it is probable that those of mixed Indian-European parentage were also enslaved in Rio. Were these the *cariboco* slaves, or did the term apply to both Indian-European and Indian-African mixtures? In any case, these groups were rare in Rio, and apparently most scribes simply listed them as *cabras* in official records.

Although Indian slavery was illegal in Rio during the first half of the nineteenth century, the “first Brazilians” were also “made merchandise of,” and foreign travelers and government bureaucrats recorded their presence in the city.¹² As early as 1819 and 1826, the travelers Leithold and Mansfeldt observed that Botocudo Indians were used as slaves in Rio, and as late as 1846 the chief of police complained to the minister of justice that Indians were being imported into the Court and held along with their owners’ “true slaves.” By this time the number of Indians in the city had grown so large that the city council ordered an accounting of all Indians who were “in service” in Rio, but the police were unable to halt the illegal enslavement of Indians in the Court.

Of the Indian “nations” forced into service in Rio, travelers identify the Botocudo, who lived in the provinces of Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo; and police correspondence of 1845 confirms that Botocudo boys from São Matheus of the Province of Espírito Santo were being sent to Rio, where they were treated “as if they were slaves.” One group of boys had actually been ac-

quired by a naval officer from their elders, who had exchanged them for “diverse objects.” He had then shipped them to serve his wife in Rio.

Other Indians were acquired by “right of conquest” in the frontier wars of the period. Planters or military officers who captured and kept prisoners of war sometimes took their captives with them when they moved to Rio. In such cases, the Indian slaves traveled from as far as the interior of Mato Grosso or Goiás to serve in the city. One captain brought a group of the Quinquinão of Mato Grosso to Rio and handed them over to the city council, which was to feed, dress, and baptize them, and admit them to the “service” of the city. Such Indians are representative of the war captives of the nineteenth century who were forced to enter public service as manual laborers, or to serve as recruits in the armed services. As drafted soldiers, public and private “servants,” and illegal slaves, Indians from near Rio and the distant provinces formed a small but distinct group, who seem to have suffered some of the worst maltreatment because of their low status and tenuous legal position.

Thus, the Brazilian nations, which were divided by color, included the original inhabitants of the land (the Botocudo and others), the racially mixed populations of all of Brazil (the *cabras*), the proud descendants of Africans and Europeans (the *pardos*), and the nationalistic blacks born in Brazil (the *crioulos*). Of diverse cultural and regional backgrounds, the Bahian *pardo* was quite different from the Maranhão *crroulo*, who felt lit-

neiro, 1951), p. 82, noted that *cafuzos* were rare in the city and that they regarded the black slaves with displeasure. On the *cariboco* or *arboco*, see Weech, *Reise*, 2:1; Meyen, *Reise*, pp. 75-76; Debret, *Voyage*, 2:1, and *Pequeno Dicionário Brasileiro da Língua Portuguesa*, 11th ed., s.v. “cariboca.”

¹² On Indian slavery in Brazil, see Agostinho Marquês Perdigão Malheiro, *A Escravidão no Brasil: Ensaio Histórico-Jurídico-Social*, 3 vols. in 2 tomos (1866; reprint, São Paulo, 1944), tomo 1: 187-335. According to Antônio Americano do Brasil, *Súmula de história de goiás*, 2nd ed. (Goiânia, 1961), p. 81, the “carta regia” of 5 September 1811 gave “the privilege of the slavery of the Indians” to those who settled along the Araguaia and Tocantins riv-

ers. Indians in urban Rio: Debret, *Voyage*, vol. 1, especially pls. 20, 22, 25; Weech, *Reise*, 2:1; Theodor von Leithold and L. von Rango, *O Rio de Janeiro visto por dois prussianos em 1819*, trans. and ed. Joaquim de Sousa Leão Filho (São Paulo, 1966), p. 38; Julius Mansfeldt, *Meine Reise nach Brasilien im Jahre 1826* (Magdeburg, 1828), pp. 100-101, 114; Thomas Ewbank, *Life in Brazil . . .* (1856; reprint, Detroit, 1971), p. 323; AN, IJ6 204, Polícia; IJ6 207, Polícia; Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, formerly the Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico do Estado da Guanabara (hereafter PHAEG), 44-4-57, Índios Existentes no Município da Côte, 1845; and PHAEG, 39-3-77, Assistência dos Índios, 1831.

tle in common with the *cabra* of Minas Gerais or the Botocudo from Espirito Santo. Color and regional origin divided the Brazilians from each other, and the city of Rio may have been more foreign to the new slave from rural Pernambuco than to the African *crioulo* from urban Luanda. The Pernambucan would have to adapt to urban life, learn a new regional dialect, and change to a regional culture as strange to the rural northeastern as to a rural Angolan. The mere fact of Brazilian birth did not mean that an individual would escape the trauma of adaptation to the life of a slave in an alien city. Only the small minority born in urban Rio would avoid this initial period of cultural and physical adjustment.

The African Nations

The Brazilian nations of color were not in the majority, however. As early as 1832, table 1.1 suggests that as little as 9.8 percent of a sample of slaves were Brazilian by birth. Almost three-fourths (73.3 percent) of the sample were African. Since many Africans were brought into Rio in the drive to import slaves before the end of the slave trade, this sample may accurately reflect the proportion of Africans to Brazilians in the early 1830s. On the other hand, the Santa Casa sample for 1833 reveals that at least half of those buried in the cemetery of the Santa Casa were African, but because of the large propor-

tion of unknown nationalities in the sample, it is difficult to establish the precise proportion of Africans. Nonetheless, it is striking that in 1833, 1838, and 1849 the doctors consistently identified about one-fourth of those buried at the Santa Casa as Brazilian. Finally, there is one census for the city of Rio that recorded the ethnic origin of the city's slaves. The Census of 1849 reveals that the Africans then comprised 66.4 percent of the city's slave population, while the Santa Casa sample for 1849 recorded nearly the same percentage (63.5). In fact, the percentage of Africans within the total slave population must have been even larger, since many slave-owners hid Africans, illegally imported after 1830, from the census takers.¹³ Depending on the period, therefore, the percentage of Africans in the slave population of the 1830s and 1840s ranged between two-thirds and three-fourths of the slave population.

To establish the specific identities of this African slave majority is indeed a difficult task because of Rio's extraordinary ethnic diversity. Unlike Salvador, Bahia, which tended to receive a more restricted sample of ethnic groups from West Africa, Rio had no such bias toward that region, but drew its slaves from West Central and East Africa. In order to organize this complex

¹³ Difficulties in census slave figures: chapter 3, nn. 18-22.

TABLE 1.1
Comparative Percentages of African and Brazilian Slaves in the
City of Rio de Janeiro, 1832-1849

Nationalities	Tax Records 1832	Santa Casa da Misericórdia			Census of 1849
		1833	1838	1849	
African	73.3	50.0	50.8	63.5	66.4
Brazilian	9.8	25.2	26.7	26.3	33.6
Unknown	16.9	24.8	22.5	10.2	—

SOURCES: Tables 1.5, 1.3, 3.6

discussion, we need to explain the following: general terms that identified Africans in Rio; ethnic names recorded by foreign travelers in the nineteenth century; and names of the nations that survive in a contemporary Afro-Brazilian religion. After a clarification of these three categories, we can proceed to a fourth, i.e., the known populations imported into the city.

One reason that so much information on African origins survives in the Rio archives derives from the slaveowners' methods of identifying their slaves. Instead of attaching their own family surname to a slave's Christian name, they preferred the formula of Christian name plus African "nation." In some cases, however, a nickname, occupation, or prominent physical characteristic replaced the nationality. When newspapers advertised slaves, they also added descriptions of ethnic scarifications, brand marks, hairstyles, and physical deformations, such as filed teeth. Thus, the combination of an African surname plus further physical descriptions labeled an individual as African.

When owners did not know a slave's nationality, they employed several terms to indicate African birth, one of the most common of which was a slave's Christian name plus *de nação*, such as Antônio *de nação Angola* (Anthony of the Angolan nation). When the slave was of unknown name or nation, the phrase was *negro (negra) de nação*, or alternately, *um Africano* (an African). *Negro de nação* should not be confused, however, with *escravo de nação* or *escravo nacional*. In official correspondence that included slaves owned by the government or the royal family, the appropriate term was *escravo de nação* or national slave, and such an individual could be of African or Brazilian nationality.¹⁴

Other methods of calling attention to African nationality reveal a slave's degree of assimilation.

Negro novo (new black) defined the person who was a recent import, while *buçal* applied to both the new African and the one who had not learned Portuguese or Brazilian customs after many years as a slave.¹⁵ In contrast, if an African spoke Portuguese and behaved as an assimilated African, then the proper term was *ladino (ladina)*. Although a Christian name plus *ladino* was usually sufficient to identify the assimilated African, sometimes the description also included the slave's former nationality, such as *ladino de nação Angola* (*ladino* of the Angolan nation). The above terms were also often further qualified to reveal an African's degree of assimilation from partially to fully *ladino*. When half-assimilated, an African was known as *meio* (half) *buçal*, *meio ladino*, or *meio novo*.

Additional terms that designate African nationality were those for freedpersons. A freedman born in Africa was known as *Africano forro* (*Africana forra*) or *Africano liberto* (*Africana liberta*). Such an individual had once been enslaved and had been legally manumitted (see chapter 11). A second group, distinct from the freedpersons, were the *Africanos livres*, hereafter free Africans, who had been captured while on a slaveship, freed by a Court of Mixed Commission, and entrusted to a prominent slaveowner for a period of service in Brazil. In a few cases, however, *Africano livre* referred not to these individuals but to the free African immigrant who had voluntarily migrated to Rio. In 1831 nine Angolans arrived in Rio with passports that declared that they were free Africans. Their arrival touched off a series of correspondence on what the police perceived as the problem of free blacks who worked in Rio as street peddlers. In fact, the number of free African immigrants was so large that the government wanted to restrict their future voluntary migration from Africa

¹⁴ *Escravos de nação*: AN, Cod. 572, Armário 4, Livro 8, Papeis da Casa Imperial, 1808-1868.

¹⁵ When Miguel Monjolo disappeared, his master suspected that he had been kidnapped because he appeared

to be a *buçal*. After ten years in his owner's house, he still could not (or would not?) speak Portuguese. *Diario*, 25 Oct. 1821, p. 176.

and to coerce their emigration back to Africa.¹⁶

In contrast to these general terms that point to an entire continent, foreign travelers provide more specific clues to the identification of the Africans of Rio. In some cases they recorded the actual names of ethnic groups, such as the Libolo of Angola, but generally they only repeated the names used in Rio for African nations or ports in Africa that were given to them by their Cariocan informants. They are useful, however, because they pinpoint the existence of some specific ethnic groups in Rio and identify how Cariocans perceived African ethnic groups before 1850.¹⁷

Although the foreigners who recorded African origins in Rio were often misleading, some were fairly accurate. Carl Seidler reported that most of Rio's slaves came from Cabinda, Congo, Benguela, and Moçambique, while Armitage was more complete. To these four he added the Angolas, Caçanges (Kasanje), Quilimanes, Inhambanes, and a note that in the Cabinda group he was including the "various tribes" of Congos as far as Angola. Schlichthorst, however, omitted Cabinda, Benguela, Quilimane, and Inhambane from his list of Congo, Angola, Cachange (Kasanje), Moçambique, and Mombaça. Even more comprehensive lists appear in a French and a German account. According to the French traveler Dabadie, the major nations of Rio were the Minas, Cabinda, Congo, Angola, Moange, Benguella, Mozambique, Mucena (Sena), Quilimane, and Inhambane. Of particular interest is

the importance he gives to the East African nations, including the Rios de Sena region of Mozambique. In addition to these groups, but excluding the Moange, Mucena, and Inhambane, the German Weech listed the Anjicos, Monjolas, Gabãos, Capundas, Reboas, Mombassas, and Cajenges.

Finally, the historian Melo Morais Filho recorded a tradition from the city of Rio in which seven nations attended the coronation of an African king and queen. Although he did not include the Cabindas, he reported the seven nations as the Minas, Congos, Cassanges, Cabundás, Rebôlos, Benguelas, and Moçambiques.

Since these names were so common in the nineteenth century, it is hardly surprising to discover them preserved within Umbanda, a modern Afro-Brazilian religion. In grouping the *orixás*, or spiritual entities, in the seventh or African line, Umbandistas divide the spirits into seven groups, each with its own chief: People of the Coast, Congo, Angola, Benguela, Moçambique, Loanda, and Guiné.¹⁸ In other words, the names of nineteenth-century nations have now become the names of phalanxes of spirits.

These diverse authors suggest that there were at least seven major nations in nineteenth-century Rio, as well as several minor ones. The most important were the Mina, Cabinda, Congo, Angola (or Loanda), Cassange (or Angola),¹⁹ Benguela, and Moçambique. The less numerous ones, often incorporated within the principal na-

¹⁶ On the freed or emancipated Africans, see Robert E. Conrad, "Neither Slave nor Free: The *Emancipados* of Brazil, 1818-1868," *HAHR* 53, no. 1 (Feb. 1973): 50-70. *Africanos livres* who fled from their "masters" were also advertised in the newspapers. For example, "Fled on the fourteenth of the month, the *Africano livre* Oracio, age 8 to 9 . . .," *Diario*, 17 Jan. 1840, p. 4. On the free African immigrants, see AN, IJ1 181, Ministério da Justiça, Registro de Avisos (hereafter Justiça, Avisos), fol. 73; and AN, IJ6 165, Polícia, 1831-1832.

¹⁷ The order of each traveler's list has been rearranged so that the terms move from West to Central to East Africa. Carl Seidler, *Dez Anos no Brasil*, trans. and ed. Bertoldo Klinger (São Paulo, 1941), p. 238; John Armitage, *The History of Brazil . . .*, 2 vols. (London, 1836), 1:367; Schlichthorst, *O Rio*, p. 138; F. Dabadie, *A travers l'Amé-*

rique du Sud, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1859), p. 40; Weech, *Reise*, 2:89, 92; and Melo Morais Filho, *Festas e Tradições Populares do Brasil*, rev. and ed. Luís da Câmara Cascudo (1895; reprint, Rio de Janeiro, 1967), p. 397. A lengthy list of Africans appears in Mello Barreto Filho and Hermeto Lima, *História da Polícia do Rio de Janeiro . . .* (Rio de Janeiro, 1942), p. 178. There is no source for the list or date, but the inclusion of many West Africans suggests that the authors used a post-1850 sample.

¹⁸ The chiefs of the seven phalanxes are *Pai* (Father) Cabinda, King Congo, *Pai* José d'Angola, *Pai* Benguela, *Pai* Jerônimo, *Pai* Francisco, and *Pai* Guiné (Zum Guiné). Laudemir Pessoa, *Ritual de Terreiro Umbandista* (Rio de Janeiro, n.d.), pp. 29-30.

¹⁹ My reason for choosing Cassange rather than Loanda is that the Kimbundu-speaking people in and

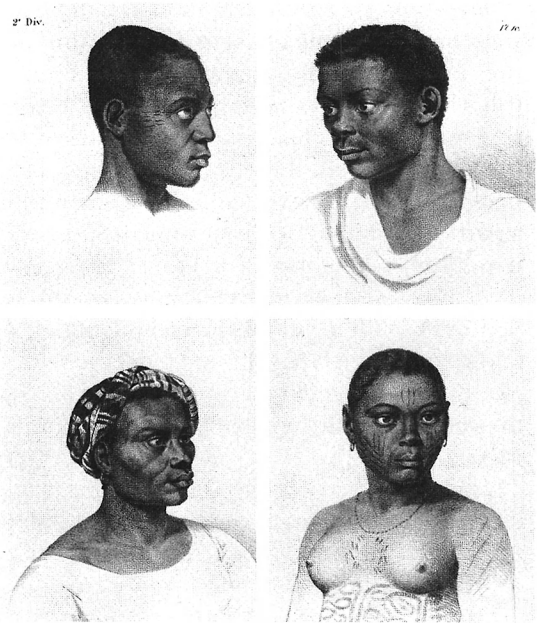
tions, were the Gabão, Anjico, Monjola, Moange, Rebola (Libolo), Cajenge (Jinga?), Cabundá (Mbundu), Quilimane, Inhambane, Mucena, and Mombaça. Clearly, these imprecise terms generally denote ports of export or vast geographical regions, but at least they direct attention to West Central Africa and East Africa as the probable homelands of most of Rio's Africans. Even without this usefulness, however, the list is important, because it reveals how African slaves and their descendants defined and grouped themselves as nations within Rio.

The African Origins of the Cariocan Nations

In the documentation on slaves in Rio, the seven nations frequently appear as slave surnames. What is uncommon, however, are documents that record specific ethnic groups soon after importation into the city. Although limited in number, such sources exist, and they pinpoint the historical origins of thousands of slaves. The tables that follow and appendix A have been compiled from these documents.

The first important sample of ethnic groups is the *Africanos livres* records held at the Arquivo Nacional together with the papers of captured slave ships preserved at the historical archives of Itamaratí in Rio (appendix A). When the British and Brazilian governments were engaged in the suppression of the slave trade to Brazil, they established a Court of Mixed Commission in Rio. When slaves were captured aboard slave ships, they were brought before the court. If they had been imported unlawfully into Brazil, the court judged them to be "free Africans." After so-

near Luanda were usually grouped with Angola, when Cassange appeared on the same ethnic list, to distinguish Lunda-Tchokwe-speaking populations from the Mbundu. On the other hand, Angola could refer to the Lunda-Tchokwe populations on lists in which only the two terms Luanda and Angola appeared. Finally, Angola alone would include Luanda and Cassange, and indicate all peoples under Portuguese control and those to the east



Africans: Cabinda—Quiloa—Rebolo—Mina.
From Rugendas.

called emancipation, the problem, in the court's view, was what to do with sick, exhausted Africans who could not survive another voyage back to Africa where they might be reenslaved. The court's solution was to release them to the influential slaveowners of Rio, who were to educate, train, and care for them for up to fourteen years, in compensation for which they were to serve their "benefactors" without payment. Since the British and Brazilian governments had to account for each of 11,008 free Africans for more than fourteen years, they used each one's ethnic identity for record-keeping.²⁰

along the major trade routes to Cassange and the Cuanza River.

²⁰ A summary of what happened to the *Africanos livres* appears in Conrad, "Neither Slave nor Free," pp. 50-70. For the total number of *emancipados* as 11,008, see Brazil, Ministério da Justiça, *Relatório do Ministério da Justiça* (Rio de Janeiro, 1869), p. 134. See appendix A for all sources used on the *Africanos livres*.

The ships' papers held at Itamaratí did not always have the same detailed ethnic listings, but they are critically important, because they establish where some of the ships traded on the coast of Africa.²¹ While many of the papers are incomplete or damaged, there is often enough information to determine the general region in which a particular ship traded. Knowing the port of origin is most important for ethnic groups that have the same name in two or more regions. Appendix A is the result of the compilation of the known ethnic groups collected from the free Africans' records, and it is obviously the most comprehensive of all the tables. Table 1.2 summarizes appendix A.

The second major collection of ethnic groups derives from the death certificates of the slaves buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórdia in 1833, 1838, and 1849 (table 1.3). Upon a slave's death, an owner, who wanted an inexpensive

burial in a church cemetery, sent the body to the Santa Casa. Before burial, however, a doctor had to identify the slave by nationality and certify the cause of death. The handwritten notes for each slave have been preserved at the archive of the Santa Casa, and the tables are the result of the tabulation of the 3,147 individuals who died in 1833, 1838, and 1849. They reveal shifts in ethnicity between 1833 and 1849, clarify the relative proportions between Brazilian and African slaves buried at the Santa Casa, and serve as a useful comparative list to others that exist for Rio.

An earlier sample of ethnic origin for 1821-1822 also exists. Recorded by Maria Graham, it reported on the ethnic origins of slaves as registered in the customhouse upon arrival in Rio (table 1.4). Ten years later a police record of taxes paid on 621 slaves in 1832 reveals similar patterns of ethnicity (table 1.5). Finally, table

²¹ The ships' papers may be found at the Arquivo Histórico de Itamaratí, III, Coleções Especiais, 33, Comissões Mistas (Tráfico de Negros) (hereafter Itamaratí, III, Tráfico), Lata 2, Maço 2, Embarcação *Assuceira* (*Aceceira* on its passport), 1838-1841; Lata 4, Maço 3, Emb. *Brilhante*, 1831-1838; Lata 7, Maço 2, Emb. *César*, 1837-1838; Lata 8, Maço 6, Emb. *Continente*, 1833-1834; Lata 10, Maço 1,

Emb. *Delgente*, 1838-1839; Lata 12, Maço 1, Emb. *Duqueza de Bragança*, 1834; Lata 14, Maço 3, Emb. *Especulador*, 1836-1839; Lata 16, Maço 4, Emb. *Ganges*, 1830-1839; Lata 19, Maço 2, Emb. *Leal*, 1838-1839; Lata 25, Maço 1, Emb. *Orion*, 1834-1835; Lata 25, Maço 2, *Paquete de Benguela*, 1840-1841; and Lata 28, Maço 1, Emb. *Rio da Prata*, 1830-1835.

TABLE 1.2
Summary of African Sources for the Slave Trade to Rio de Janeiro, 1830-1852

Regions of Africa	Number	% of Angola	% of West Central Africa	% of Sum Total
West Africa	62			1.5
West Central Africa	3,220			79.7
Congo North	1,300		40.4	32.2
Angola	1,855		57.6	45.9
Northern Angola	768	41.4	23.85	19.0
Southern Angola	1,069	57.6	33.2	26.45
Angola ^a	18	1.0	0.56	0.45
West Central Africa ^a	65		2.0	1.6
East Africa	722			17.9
Unknown	37			0.9
Sum Total	4,041	100.0	100.0	100.0

SOURCE: Appendix A ^a Unidentified

THE NATIONS OF RIO

TABLE 1.3
The Nationality of Slaves Buried by the Santa Casa
da Misericórdia in 1833, 1838, and 1849

Nationalities	1833	1838	1849	Total	Nationalities	1833	1838	1849	Total
<i>AFRICANS</i>	479	530	726	1,735	Moçangue, Caçange				
<i>West Africa</i>	34	23	53	110	(Cassange?)	1	—	1	2
Cabo Verde, Camarão ^a	—	2	—	2	Muiambe	—	—	1	1
Calabar	10	6	4	20	<i>East Africa</i>	103	81	108	292
Mina	24	14	47	85	Inhambane,				
Nago	—	1	1	2	Munhenbane	9	8	9	26
Ussá	—	—	1	1	Lourenço Marques	26	—	—	26
<i>West Central Africa</i>	278	377	530	1,185	Macua	1	—	—	1
<i>Congo North</i>	90	156	281	527	Mougão	—	2	—	2
Cabinda	45	55	119	219	Mozambique	62	67	86	215
Congo	37	81	137	255	Quelimane	5	3	11	19
Monjollo, Munjolo	8	20	25	53	Sena	—	1	2	3
<i>Angola</i>	178	215	238	631	<i>Africans Unidentified</i>	3	2	5	10
<i>Northern Angola</i>	91	126	111	328	Canja, Bucambique	1	—	1	2
Ambaca, Cambambe	—	2	—	2	Caçanxa, Camugo	—	—	2	2
Angola	42	72	65	179	Climane	2	2	—	4
Cabundá	4	2	3	9	Maimben, Nogô	—	—	2	2
Cacaje ó Angola,					<i>Unknown African Origin</i>	61	47	30	138
Encoches	—	—	2	2					
Cassange	23	29	16	68	<i>BRAZILIANS</i>	242	279	301	822
Muxicongo	—	1	—	1	<i>Color Known</i>	122	194	218	534
Bangala, Bangela	—	1	1	2	Cabra	2	4	2	8
Rebollo	19	14	19	52	Crioulo	96	168	190	454
Luanda	—	1	—	1	Crioulo da Bahia	—	1	—	1
Camundongo	—	—	2	2	Pardo	24	21	24	69
Quiçamane	1	1	2	4	Pardo da Bahia,				
Songo	2	3	1	6	do Rio	—	—	2	2
<i>Southern Angola</i>	87	89	127	303	<i>Color Unknown</i>	120	85	83	288
Benguela	82	88	123	293	Natural da Côte	—	—	1	1
Gangella	5	1	4	10	Natural de Mereti,				
<i>West Central Africa</i>					de Minas	—	2	—	2
<i>Uncertain</i>	10	6	11	27	Pernambuco	—	—	1	1
Moange, Muange	4	2	7	13	Innocents (babies,				
Mofumbe	1	2	1	4	children)	96	67	58	221
Bugumbe, Genga,					Newborns	24	16	23	63
Mofunde ^b	1	1	1	3	<i>Unknown Nationality</i>	238	235	117	590
Gongo	3	1	—	4	Sum Total	959	1,044	1,144	3,147

SOURCE: Archive of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, Livros dos Obitos, Lata 1, 1833, for all months but July and October, which were missing; Lata 3, 1838, for all months but August, September, November, and December, which were missing; and Lata 10, 1849, which has all twelve months

^a Henceforth, one slave per place name, when there are two different names

^b Bugumbe is from 1833, Genga is from 1838, and Mofunde is from 1849

THE NATIONS OF RIO

TABLE 1.4
Customhouse Registries of National Origins, 1821—1822

Regions of Africa	1821		1822		Total Number	% of Sum Total
	Number Imported	% of Sum Total	Number Imported	% of Sum Total		
<i>West Central Africa</i> ^a	15,201	71.77	18,430	73.92	33,631	72.93
Congo North: Cabinda	3,106	14.67	7,578	30.39	10,684	23.17
Angola	12,095	57.11	10,852	43.52	22,947	49.76
Ambuiz [Ambriz]	220	1.04	—	—	220	0.48
Angola	7,452	35.18	6,437	25.82	13,889	30.12
Luanda	2,788	13.16	1,542	6.18	4,330	9.39
Benguela	1,635	7.72	2,873	11.52	4,508	9.78
<i>East Africa</i>	5,627	26.57	6,504	26.09	12,131	26.31
Muzambique	2,543 ^b	12.01	3,249	13.03	5,792	12.56 ^c
Quilumana	3,084	14.56	3,255	13.06	6,339	13.75
<i>Unlocated: Ambuehe</i> ^d	352	1.66	—	—	352	0.76
Sum Total	21,180 ^e	100.00	24,934	100.01	46,114	100.00

SOURCE: "Custom-house entries at Rio for the years 1821 and 1822," as reprinted in Maria Graham, *Journal of a Voyage to Brazil* . . . (London, 1824), pp. 228–229

^a The place names in the original were Cabinda, Ambuiz, Angola, Luanda, Benguela, Muzambique, Quilumana, and Ambuehe. The original tables were arranged by month. The arrangement of this table is my own.

^b This is close to the 2,941 slaves exported from Mozambique to Rio in 1821, and the difference may be due to mortality in transit. See table 5 in Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), p. 213.

^c The 1821 percentages for Mozambique and Quelimane are close to those from British consular reports for 1824–1825 reprinted in Joseph C. Miller, "Legal Portuguese Slaving from Angola: Some Preliminary Indications of Volume and Direction, 1760–1830," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 62 (1975): 155. He gives the following breakdown for each region as Luanda (27 percent), Cabinda, Zaire (18 percent), Benguela (14 percent), Quelimane (14 percent), Ambriz (13 percent), and Mozambique (12 percent).

^d Is this a form of Buea in Cameroon?

^e In the original, the total is 21,199, which seems to be due to a printing error in the total for January. Instead of the total of 2,914 in the original for January, we have used 2,874, the sum of the Mozambique, Ambuehe, Cabinda, Luanda, and Benguela slaves imported in January.

1.6, a composite of appendix A and the tables above, as well as the previously published tables of Herbert S. Klein and Philip D. Curtin, clarifies the changing proportions of slaves imported into Rio between 1795 and 1852 (see also chapter 2). The following conclusions on the ethnic origin of the African slaves of Rio are based on these tables.

West Central Africa

The first and most obvious conclusion is that the majority of Rio's slaves were imported from West Central Africa. Before 1811, as table 1.6 re-

veals, as many as 96.2 percent of the sample had come from that area. Never so dominant afterwards, however, slaves from West Central Africa did not fall below 66 percent. In no period did West Africa come close even to a quarter of the trade to Rio, since fewer than 2 percent were imported directly from West Africa. The higher percentage (6 to 7 percent) of West Africans living in Rio reflects the trade in slaves between Bahia and Rio, especially after 1835. Finally, the growing importance of East Africa in the nineteenth-century trade is reflected in the percentage of East Africans in the city (between 16.8 and 26.4 percent depending on the period). It

THE NATIONS OF RIO

TABLE 1.5
The Nationality of Slaves in the City of Rio de Janeiro, 1832

	Number		Number		Number		Number
<i>AFRICANS</i>	455	<i>Angola</i>	176	<i>Southern Angola</i>	77	<i>BRAZILIANS</i>	61
<i>West Africa</i>	30	<i>Northern Angola</i>	99	Benguela	74	Cabra	5
Cabo Verde	1	Ambaca	3	Ganguella	3	Crioulo	48
Calabar	6	Angola	39	<i>Uncertain: Moanje,</i>		Pardo	8
Mina	23	Cabundá,		Mohanje	7		
<i>West Central Africa</i>	303	Camundá	3	<i>East Africa</i>	120	<i>UNKNOWN</i>	
<i>Congo North</i>	120	Cassange	26	Inhambane	7	<i>NATIONALITY</i>	105
Cabinda	57	Rebollo	21	Macuá, Mecena	2		
Congo	52	Camundongo	1	Moçambique	98	Sum Total	621
Munjolla	11	Quiçama	4	Quelimane	13		
		Songo	2	<i>Unknown African Origin</i>	2		

SOURCE: Arquivo Nacional, Cod. 388, Polícia, Imposto de Escravos, 1831–1833

TABLE 1.6
The Percentage of Slaves from Each Region of Africa, 1795–1852

Regions of Africa	Slave Ship Samples					City of Rio Samples	
	(1) 1795–1811	(2) 1817–1843	(3) 1821–1822	(4) 1825–1830	(5) 1830–1852	(6) 1832	(7) 1833–1849
West Africa	1.2	0.8	—	—	1.5	6.59	6.34
<i>West Central Africa</i>	96.2	71.1	72.93	73.1	79.7	66.59	68.3
Congo North	0.6	25.4	23.17	28.1	32.2	26.37	30.4
Angola	95.6	45.7	49.76	45.0	45.9	38.68	36.37
Unknown, Uncertain	—	—	—	—	1.6	1.54	1.56
East Africa	2.3	24.5	26.31	26.86	17.9	26.37	16.83
Unknown	0.4	3.7	0.76	—	0.9	0.44	8.53

Sources: (1) Table 4 in Herbert S. Klein, "The Trade in African Slaves to Rio de Janeiro, 1795–1811: Estimates of Mortality and Patterns of Voyages," *Journal of African History* 10, no. 4 (1969): 540; (2) Table 69, Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Wis., 1969), p. 240; (3) Table 1.4; (4) Table 4.2, "Number of Slaves Shipped to Rio de Janeiro, 1825–1830," Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton, 1978), p. 77; (5) Table 1.2; (6) Table 1.5; and (7) Table 1.3.

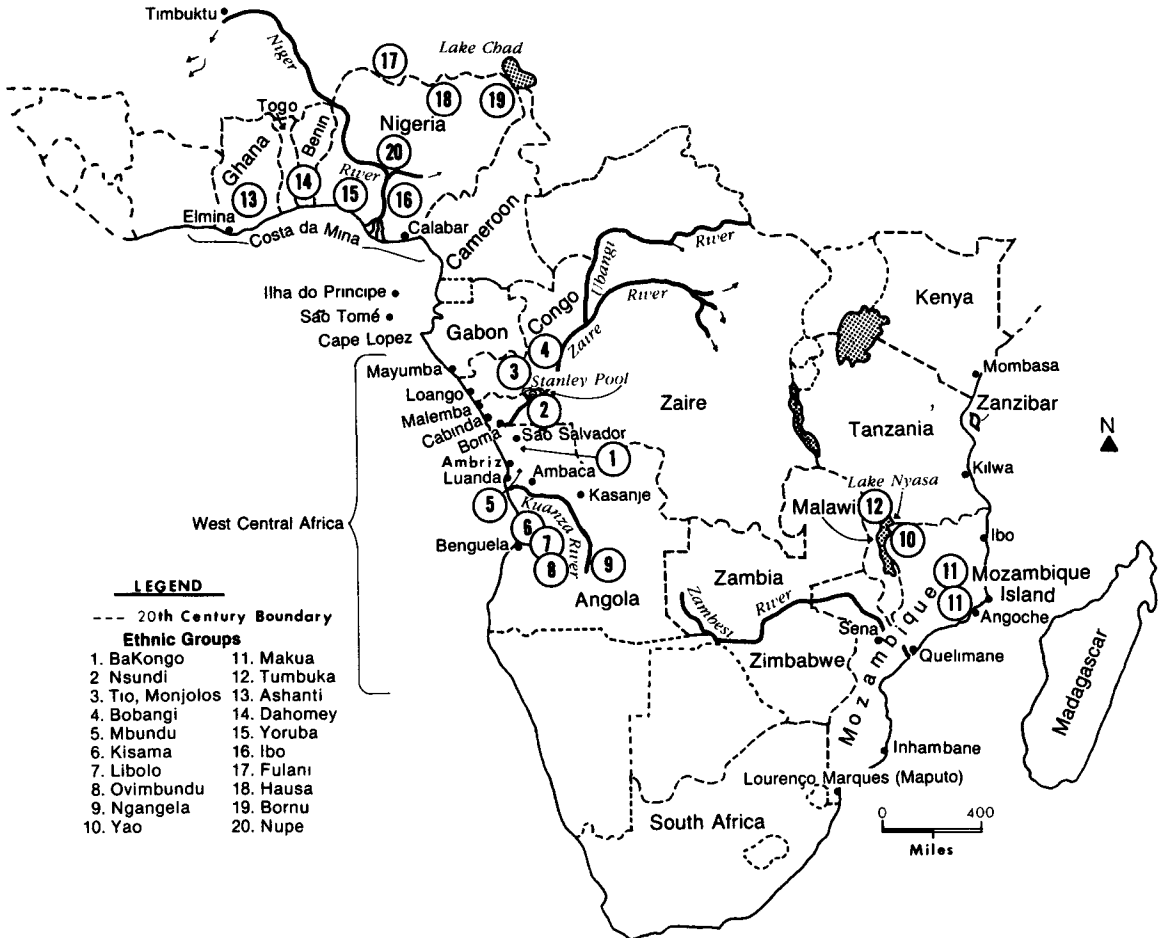
was in West Central Africa, followed by East Africa, that most Africans in Rio found their homelands.

In the nineteenth century the area of West Central Africa was usually divided into three major regions: Congo North (Cabinda), Angola, and Benguela. The meaning of these terms varied widely, however, and slave-trade usage was not consistent with actual ethnic identity or even

Cariocan national names. Clarification will be made, insofar as possible, of nineteenth-century African or slave-trade usage and of the major ethnic groups and their stereotypes in Rio. Minor ethnic groups not covered in the text are located in appendix A.

The first major region known as Congo North in the nineteenth century defined the area from Cape Lopez to and including the mouth of the

THE NATIONS OF RIO



Africa: The Origins of the African Nations of Rio de Janeiro.

Zaire (Congo) River.²² It should probably be extended to include individuals who came from as far north as the Muni River and the Gabon estuary, which are north of Cape Lopez, as well as to those who were traded through the entire Zaire River system. Slave traders from Rio some-

times picked up slaves from the entire coast of Congo North and loaded them as one cargo. When they reached Rio, these peoples were called Cabindas, while a minority were named Gabão (Gabon). In almost any compilation of the major nations of Rio, the Cabindas were a group

²² On the regional divisions of the slave trade, I have followed Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Wis., 1969), pp. 240-241, and passim. Many conclusions on general patterns of the slave trade to Angola are based on my master's thesis, "The Brazilian Slavers and the Illegal Slave Trade, 1836-1851" (University of

Wisconsin, 1967). Helpful for the period 1825-1830 is table 4.2, "Number of Slaves Shipped to Rio de Janeiro, 1825-1830, by Regions and Ports of Africa," in Herbert S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton, 1978), p. 77.

invariably ranked almost as large as the Angolas or Congos, and in table 1.6, the region of Congo North consistently scored between 23 and 32 percent of the Africans after 1817. Clearly, Congo North was one of the most important regions of the nineteenth-century trade.²³

Who were the Cabindas? In the first place, Cabinda was a major slave-trading port just north of the Zaire River; thus, many slaves were known as Cabindas because they had been exported through the port of Cabinda. Slave traders from Rio used Cabinda as a major base for their commercial operations along the entire coast north to Cape Lopez and beyond and for connections with the markets of the Zaire River, such as Ponta da Lenha²⁴ and Boma, and the highly important trade of the Tio Kingdom at Stanley Pool (also known as Malebo Pool) and the Zaire and Ubangi Rivers beyond. As early as 1817, the travelers Spix and Martius observed that most of the slaves imported into Rio were Cabindas and Benguelas. By the period 1825-1830, Klein's study of 428 ships that were importing slaves into Rio reveals that 141 came from Congo, including 26 that had traded at Molembo (Malemba), 95 at Cabinda, and 20 at Rio Zaire. Overall, 28.1 percent of all ships importing slaves into Rio had traded in the region of Congo North.

Obviously, Cabinda was most important in the slave trade before 1830, but by the 1840s it had taken on an even more dominant role in the illegal slave trade. Because of British pressure on slave-trading ports at the mouth of the Zaire

River and at Luanda in the 1840s, much of the trade that had once passed through Luanda shifted to the north. Slaves who would have once been exported from the mouth of the Zaire were marched overland to safer sites at Cabinda or the barracoons further north, such as Malemba, Loango, and Mayumba. Whatever their original ethnic group, even if from northern Angola, slaves shipped from Cabinda and points north were all called Cabindas in Rio. These shifting slave-trade patterns in the 1830s and 1840s, however, produced a more diverse ethnic mix among the Brazilian Cabindas.

The Nsundi, the Teke or Tio, and the Gabon, for instance, were associated with the trade of Cabinda and the north. According to Debret, the Cabindas imported into Rio were divided into two major groups, the Cabindas *d'agoa doce* (of the sweet or fresh water) and the Cabindas Mossoudas.²⁵ The latter are most likely the Nsundi, who lived close to the coast and salt water, because alternate spellings of Nsundi are Mossunde and Mussundi. The "fresh water" Cabindas are more difficult to identify, but Debret's usage of "sweet water" may point to those traded via the fresh water routes of the interior, that is, the Ubangi and Zaire rivers.

Much more important in Rio were those slaves known as Angicos and Monjolos, who were easily identified by their distinctive facial scarification.²⁶ In Africa, north of the Zaire River, the Tio (Teke) used "five or six shallow parallel lines drawn from the brows, down over the cheek-

²³ Slaves and the slave trade at Cabinda, Loango, and ports north to Cape Lopez and connections with the trade of the Congo River: Henry J. Matson, *Remarks on the Slave Trade and African Squadron*, 2nd ed. (London, 1848), pp. 24-25, 40; Phyllis M. Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast 1576-1870* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 116-135; Jan Vansina, *The Tio Kingdom of the Middle Congo 1880-1892* (London, 1973), pp. 252, 254; Johann B. von Spix and Carl Friedrich P. von Martius, *Viagem pelo Brasil*, trans. Lucia Furquim Lahmeyer and ed. B. F. Ramiz Galvão and Basilio de Magalhães, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro, 1938), 1:112; and Klein, *Middle Passage*, p. 77.

²⁴ There is little agreement in the sources on the spelling of Ponta da Lenha. Other versions are Porto da

Lenha, Ponta da Linha, and Porto da Linha.

²⁵ Debret, *Voyage*, 2:76, pl. 22.

²⁶ Anjicos and Monjolos: Debret, *Voyage*, 2:114; Vansina, *Tio*, p. 153; p. 448, n. 24: "Tio slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came to be known as Monjorros, Moncongues (in part only) and 'scratch-face' . . . Monjorro is linked with Monsol, an area in the kingdom, near its capital already mentioned by Dapper (before 1660)." One of the best descriptions of the Anjico in Brazil occurs in Mansfeldt, *Meine Reise*, p. 95. See also João Maurício Rugendas, *Viagem Pitoresca Através do Brasil*, trans. Sérgio Milliet (São Paulo, 1967), p. 92; Debret, *Voyage*, vol. 2, pl. 22 (no. 11, described as a Monjola, has the "scratch face"); and Weech, *Reise*, 2:92.

bones to the chin," and in Rio foreign artists and fugitive advertisements described the "scratch-face" Monjolo in similar fashion. In the colonial period, the term for the Tio (Teke) in Brazil had been Anjico or Angico, but by the nineteenth century it was seldom used in preference for Monjolo. Perhaps this was because of changing slave-trade usage in Africa, since Tio slaves by the nineteenth century were "known as Monjorros" and "scratch-face," i.e., those traded by the Tio, such as the Bobangi, as well as the Tio themselves who were enslaved and sold to Rio. Appendix A, which lists several variations of their names, suggests that the Tio were a significant group within the city, who formed part of the Monjolo nation of Rio.

In the city of Rio the Angicos or Monjolos had the reputation of being a numerous, good-looking, astute, and courageous people, prone to revolt and to resistance if abused. In fact, Weech described them as a freedom-loving, proud, and stubborn people, who made good slaves if they were well treated. If not well treated, they often committed suicide.

A final group from north of the Zaire River were the Gabão (Gabon) of the modern country of the same name. They were generally exported from barracoons in the Gabon estuary and the vicinity of Cape Lopez, and were more significant in the city than the few listed in appendix A because of the stereotypes about them in the travel literature. Travelers reported that the Gabon had a poor reputation as slaves and that they were "impatient" with slavery and suicidal. They were also noted for unusually high mortality. Even the records from one ship that had imported Gabon slaves confirms the stereotype. Within five months of arrival in Rio, 54

percent of the slaves on the *Santo Antônio* had died. Such exceptional mortality may have been due to coastal diseases, since the region of Gabon in the nineteenth century was infamous for its deadly fevers.²⁷

Also associated with Congo North were the Congo, who were among the most numerous nations of Rio. But to identify a Congo is most difficult. As was mentioned earlier, those known as Congos in Rio were sometimes the BaKongo of northern Angola and southern Zaire, but many other ethnic groups besides the BaKongo were called Congos. In slave-trade usage, any individual exported through the markets linked with the vast trading network along the Zaire River and its tributaries was a Congo.²⁸ Obviously, the slaves who came from the Zaire River region included thousands of ethnic groups. Because of the vagueness of the term, the slaves listed as Congo have been placed with Congo North in appendix A, because the slave trade of the coast north of the Zaire River was so closely linked with the trade of the Zaire River that it is impossible to separate the two. Specific BaKongo groups, however, such as the Muchicongo of São Salvador, have been included under the category of modern northern Angola, although they may have been exported via the Zaire River trading network and would be known as Congos in Rio. Where specific ethnic origin is known, we have located individuals within the modern country of Africa rather than as part of a Cario-can nation of the nineteenth century. However, the decision to place Congo with Congo North is clearly based on slave-trade usage.

Within the city of Rio, Congos were often perceived in positive terms.²⁹ From their owners' perspective, they made some of the best slaves

²⁷ Slaves from Gabão and the slave trade of the Gabon coast: K. David Patterson, *The Northern Gabon Coast to 1875* (London, 1975), pp. 48-89; Rugendas, *Viagem*, p. 92; Robert Walsh, *Notices of Brazil in 1828 and 1829*, 2 vols. (London, 1830), 2:332. AN, Cod. 398, Polícia, Africanos remittidos á Correção, 1834-1835, fols. 3-15. Perhaps the reason for the high mortality was fevers contracted by the slaves while waiting in the barracoons for shipment to

Rio. When the French set up a base in Gabon, they also "suffered severely from the climate and tropical diseases." Patterson, *Northern Gabon*, pp. 108, 116.

²⁸ On the length and extent of the trade routes to the interior both north and south of the Zaire River, see Vansina, *Tio*, maps on pp. 252 and 254.

²⁹ Rugendas, *Viagem*, p. 92; Pohl, *Viagem*, p. 84; João B. A. Imbert, *Manual do Fazendeiro . . .*, 2nd ed., 2 vols.