Slavery in Brazil: Brazilian Scholars in the Key Interpretive Debates¹

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Among the countries where colonial slavery existed, present-day Brazil has undoubtedly produced the richest and most abundant research into this terrible part of its history.² But due to linguistic barriers, this decisive contribution to the understanding, and therefore the memory, of the institution of slavery is little known outside Brazil’s borders. Nonetheless, Brazilian research on the history of slavery has been in continual dialogue with North American schol-

1. Translated from the French by Thomas Scott Railton. I would especially like to thank Silvia Hunold Lara and Sidney Chalhoub, with whom I drafted the first outlines of this historiographical paper. It also owes a great deal to numerous discussions that I had with João José Reis, Robert W. Slenes, Hebe M. Mattos, Keila Grinberg, Marcus Carvalho, and Mariza de Carvalho Soares. All of my thanks to my translator, Thomas Scott-Railton, to my copyeditor Terre Fisher, to Keila Grinberg, Hebe Mattos, and Silvia Lara, for their attentive reading and feedback on earlier drafts, and to Rebecca J. Scott for her advice on the final text. Thanks also to my students in Paris and Ann Arbor who, through their reactions, showed me how to become more clear and precise. Finally, thanks to Martha S. Jones who helped me to better understand the links between Brazilian and U.S. historiography. An earlier version of this text appeared in French in *Brésil: quatre siècles d’esclavage. Nouvelles questions, nouvelles recherches*, ed. Jean Hébrard (Paris: Karthala and CIRESC, 2012), under the title “L’esclavage au Brésil: le débat historiographique et ses racines” (pp. 7–62).

2. This was the conclusion reached by two historians—one Brazilian, the other from the U.S.—in the preface to one of the most recent English-language overviews of the history of slavery in Brazil: Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010). They write: “In fact, one could argue that the Brazilian historians and economists are doing more studies on their institution of slavery than is now occurring in the United States, despite the imbalance in the size of the historical profession in the two countries” (p. ix).

arship, which has in turn produced a number of the finest specialists in the field,³ some of whom have ended up at Brazilian universities.⁴ Brazil's system of forced labor was the largest and most continuous of all the slave societies in the Atlantic world, and it molded Brazilian ways of life and culture in complex ways.

Brazil was the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery, on May 13, 1888, and Portugal was one of the first European empires to make slavery the primary tool of its colonization of the Atlantic world. The colonists who landed in Brazil in 1530 to establish sugar cane plantations and mills to process the cane—an enterprise that had been proved successful on the island of Madeira—quickly turned to servile labor to clear and cultivate the land. The first contingents of slaves were drawn from the native populations, but this course rapidly revealed itself to be impractical. The epidemic diseases brought from Europe decimated the indigenous populations even more quickly when Indians were concentrated together to labor. And the Jesuit missionaries who arrived alongside the first colonists had other projects in mind for the indigenous peoples: They believed that conversion depended on a rejection of native culture, and that the latter would result once the Indians had become wage-earning rural workers rather than slaves. The Tupi themselves did not take to agricultural work, which they considered subsistence labor proper only for women.⁵ Being good warriors, they did not hesitate to revolt or attack the European plantations. So when the Portuguese crown, trying to satisfy the Company of Jesus, placed strict regulations on the enslavement of Indians in Brazil, colonists looked to the transfer of African captives from the other side of the Atlantic, a turn of events that the Jesuits were not the last to benefit from.⁶ The comfortable profits being produced by the plantations further stimulated the transition. By 1570, the first slave ships had arrived in Brazil, and they did not stop arriving until 1850, when the trans-Atlantic transfer of captives to Brazil was finally effectively outlawed. Between these two dates, four to five million Africans were shipped overseas to work and live as slaves in the plantations, mines, and cities of Brazil.⁷

3. Among others, in alphabetical order, Bert Barickman, Laird Bergad, Kim D. Butler, Robert Edgar Conrad, Thomas Flory, Dale Graden, Richard Graham, Sandra Lauderdale Graham, Kathleen Higgins, Thomas H. Holloway, Mary C. Karasch, Elizabeth W. Kiddy, Herbert S. Klein, Hendrick Kraay, Elizabeth Ann Kuznesof, Colin M. MacLachlan, Mary Ann Mahoney, Jeffrey D. Needell, the late A.J.R. Russell-Wood, Stuart B. Schwartz, and Stanley J. Stein.

4. Notably at the Unicamp, as was the case with the late Peter L. Eisenberg, and with John M. Monteiro and Robert W. Slenes.

5. They were, however, effective lumberjacks when, during the first phase of development in the newly discovered continent, the Europeans asked them to prepare cargoes of brazilwood (*pau-brasil*) in exchange for metal tools and European artisan products.

6. See Carlos Alberto de M. R. Zeron, "Les jésuites et le commerce d'esclaves entre le Brésil et l'Angola à la fin du XVI^e siècle," in *Brésil: quatre siècles d'esclavage*, pp. 65–82.

7. The data on the slave trade were first collected in a systematic manner by Philip D.

One of the finest non-Brazilian specialists in Portuguese colonial slavery wrote in 1988 that it was impossible to pen a page of Brazilian history without the question of slavery forcing its way into the discussion.⁸ And yet, a proper history of the institution of slavery and its effects on life in the country or on the lives of the free or captive men and women who inhabited it was relatively late in the making. Nonetheless, in the 1970s, while Brazil was still under the military dictatorship installed in 1964, the history of slavery became a central focus of intellectual debate, including heated disputes over politics and memory. Once this had begun, nothing could stop the rush of research or the sheer intensity of argument that still characterizes this extremely rich area of Brazilian academia.

It would be presumptuous to imagine that one could write an exhaustive summary of Brazilian academic work on slavery. The last synthesis, published in English by two eminent specialists in slavery's demographic history, and which cites more than five hundred titles (books and articles) in its bibliography, did not presume to be comprehensive, settling instead on providing the reader with a dispassionate and cumulative survey of the historiography.⁹ I will show the same prudence, at least concerning the most recent and most prolific period, which began when students who had received their training in the five or six doctoral schools that carried on this scholarship to the end of the 1990s (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Belo Horizonte and Campinas) began to spread out across the country. I will limit myself to describing how the historical debates around slavery took shape in Brazil, and the process by which researchers, engaged also in international discussions on these questions (particularly parallel work going on in the United States), built up this immensely rich and constantly expanding field.¹⁰

Curtin. See *African Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1969). David Eltis proposed a few revisions in his *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). The full ensemble of available material is today accessible in an online database: The *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (www.slavevoyages.org). On the topic of this exceptional documentation see *Extending the Frontiers: Essay on the New Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, ed. David Eltis and David Richardson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). A summary of the data was recently published in the form of an analytical atlas by David Eltis and David Richardson. See *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

8. Stuart B. Schwartz, "Recent Trends in the Study of Slavery" in *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 25, 1 (1988): 1–25.

9. See Klein and Luna, *Slavery in Brazil*.

10. I have not tried to assemble a full bibliography. It would be far too large to be given here without drastic and necessarily subjective choices. One should look to Joseph C. Miller's general bibliography, which is up to date through 1996, concerning the work by Brazilians and Brazil scholars: *Slavery and Slaving in World History. A Bibliography*, vol. 1, 1900–1994, (New York: Krauss International Publishers, 1993); vol. 2, 1992–1996, (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999). For the years after this, one should consult the journal *Slavery and Abolition's* Annual Bibliographical Supplement, which appears each year in the final issue.

Before and After the Atlantic Trade: Indians and Blacks in Brazilian Historiography

Brazilian intellectuals and researchers did not truly address the question of slavery until fairly recently. When the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (IHGB) was created in 1838 to undertake the mission of writing the history of the country, it was more concerned with what place the Indians would occupy rather than the roles played by African slaves.¹¹ In the nineteenth century, the question of slavery—though it lay at heart of every debate—was only a true field of study for the jurists who were confronted with the difficulties of writing a civil code specific to Brazil. The three volumes by legal scholar and abolitionist Agostinho Marques Perdigão Malheiro, *Escravidão no Brasil: ensaio histórico, jurídico e social*, published in 1866, were for a long time among the few works available on the topic.¹²

In the period following abolition, the focus of interest turned to the “black man” rather than the ex-slave. Intellectuals in post-slavery Brazil wondered what to do with the African portion of their society, and how to protect this population from its alleged “defects.” Raimundo Nina Rodrigues put the question before the medical faculty of Salvador, doing so from a perspective that was not entirely free of the pseudo-scientific stereotypes current at that time.¹³ But the tone changed very quickly, and by the 1920s, many voices were raised across Brazil ridiculing the pseudo-science of racial (or geographic) determinism.

In Salvador, Arthur Ramos¹⁴ succeeded his mentor, Nina Rodrigues, and from a perspective more in line with the developing field of anthropology, rein-

11. There is now an abundant Portuguese-language body of work on the Institute and its historical project in Brazil. See, for instance, Temistocles Cezar, “Lições sobre a escrita da história: as primeiras escolhas do IHGB. A historiografia brasileira entre os antigos e os modernos,” in *Estudos de Historiografia brasileira*, eds. L. M. B. Pereira das Bastos et al. (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2011): 93–124. In French, see Armelle Enders, *Plutarque au Brésil: Passé, héros et politique (1822–1922)* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2012).

12. Perdigão Malheiro, *Escravidão no Brasil: ensaio histórico, jurídico e social* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1866). There is also a *facsimile* edition in 2 vols. (São Paulo: Edições Cultura, 1944). For the legal difficulties involved in inscribing slavery into the Brazilian civil code, see Keila Grinberg, “Eslavagem, citoyenneté et élaboration du code civil au Brésil (1855–1917)” in *Brésil: quatre siècles d’esclavage*, pp. 309–329.

13. Raimundo Nina Rodrigues published his first great anthropological book in French in Salvador: *L’Animisme fétichiste des nègres de Bahia* (Salvador, BA: Reis e Comp., 1900), but his seminal work *Os Africanos no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia Editoria Nacional, 1922) would only be published after his death in 1904 in Paris, where he had traveled to attend a medical congress.

14. Arthur Ramos became known around the world for *O Negro Brasileiro: etnografia religiosa e psicanálise* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1934), translated into English as *The Negro in Brazil* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publishers, Inc., 1939). He also died young, in 1949 in Paris, where he was directing the social sciences department of UNESCO.

terpreted concept of “primitivism” within a culturalist framework: The residual stigmas of slavery were not inscribed in the African “race,” but in the ways of life of those who had been enslaved and their descendants. A near contemporary in Recife, Gilberto Freyre, coming from a long line of Pernambuco sugar mill owners, followed in Ramos’s footsteps. But unlike Ramos, Freyre left Brazil to do his studies going to the United States, going first to Texas, then to Columbia University in New York, where he joined Franz Boas’s circle. There, he acquired solid sociological and anthropological training. In the U.S. he discovered a post-slavery society under the most rigorous apartheid, against which the American anthropologist and his students sharpened their arguments. Freyre did not come empty-handed; he brought to the debate his first-hand knowledge of Northeastern Brazilian society, upon which Boas’s students drew eagerly.¹⁵ Returning to Brazil after two trips to Europe (one of which, during the coup d’état of 1930, had been a forced exile), he published in 1933 the book that would create a decisive break in the way the racial question was viewed in Brazil: *Casa-grande e senzala*.¹⁶ He picked up on Ramos’s thesis, that alleged “defects” of black Brazilians were the result of the painful experience of living in a slave society, but added to this an anthropological explanation that took into account the vices as well as the virtues of that society. According to Freyre, Brazilian men and women, black or white, were products of a social order, the patriarchal order, that was born on the colonial sugar plantation, more specifically, in its “big house” (*casa grande*) where the master and slaves lived together. Out of these encounters came the *mestiçagem* (“mixture”) that was so characteristic of Brazilian society, and which Freyre interpreted as an opportunity rather than a degradation of the “races” involved. He also saw it as a mode of interracial relations that was less harsh than those of other colonial empires. The Portuguese colonist, Freyre maintained, did not refuse to see in the slave the human being who was placed in servitude, and he was able to distinguish between the slave’s status as a commodity and the race that society had assigned to him. Even if it was true that the violence characteristic of slave societies existed in Brazil, it did not necessarily result in the relegation of ex-slaves or their descendants to a devalued and immutable social category, nor did it prevent the step-by-step creation of a “racial democracy” through widespread manumissions, the gradual emancipations of the nineteenth century, and finally full abolition on May 13, 1888.

15. Thomas Skidmore, in his illuminating study of the roots of Freyre’s work in the United States, noted that the seeds of many of the important ideas in his work could be seen in his master’s thesis at Columbia University. See Thomas E. Skidmore, “Raízes de Gilberto Freyre,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 34 (February 2002): 1–20.

16. *Casa-grande e senzala: formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal* (Rio de Janeiro: Maia e Schmidt, 1933). Gilberto Freyre’s book was translated into English by Samuel Putnam in 1946 as *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-grande & senzala): A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (New York: Knopf, 1946).

By reformulating the problematic of post-slavery Brazilian society in this way, Freyre also created a space for comparative study for researchers from the United States, who, in the wake of Boas, were examining the intractability of the question of race in their own country. In the years before and after the Second World War, some among them would make this subject their own. Such was the case for Franklin Frazier and Melville Herskovits, who chose Brazil as a testing ground for their contradictory interpretations of post-slavery black cultures. Frazier saw only anomy in the Afro-Brazilian family structures in Salvador, while Herskovits thought he recognized the vestiges of African cultures. Both of them, however, understood the mixed-race society of Bahia through Freyre's lens.¹⁷ This was even truer for Frank Tannenbaum when he created a model of the dichotomy between Catholic and Protestant post-slavery societies, in which the former were characterized by "race mixture" while the latter were marked by racial segregation.¹⁸

Freyre's main thesis was so influential that, following the end of the Second World War, UNESCO would try to prove it scientifically, within the framework of its anti-racism programs, in a large study headed by the Swiss anthropologist Alfred Métraux. Indeed, UNESCO's department of Social Sciences in Paris had been directed by the Brazilian scholar Arthur Ramos, who throughout the war had fought tirelessly against Nazi ideas. Donald Pierson's study, *Negroes in Brazil*,¹⁹ which had been heavily influenced by Freyre's ideas, was chosen as the basis for the research project that took place from 1950 to 1951 in several regions, and which found that in Brazil, racism increased in proportion to an area's urban and working-class character. In a brief conclusion aimed at readers of *The UNESCO Courier*, Métraux did not distance himself radically from Freyre's ideas, even if he did temper their optimism by adding a question mark to the famous phrase of the now-elder scholar from Recife: "Brazil: land of harmony for all races?"²⁰

But Brazilian historiography in the 1950s was not limited to the explora-

17. Franklin E. Frazier, "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil," *American Sociological Review*, 7, 4 (1942): 465–478; Melville J. Herskovits, "The Negro in Bahia, Brazil: a problem of method," *American Sociological Review*, 8 (1943): 394–402 (with a response from Franklin Frazier, pp. 402–404). *Afro-Ásia*, a new Africanist journal created in Bahia in 1965, would reprint Herskovits's talk at the conference inaugurating the philosophy department at the Federal University of Bahia in 1942, considering it to be a mission statement: "Pesquisas etnológicas na Bahia," *Afro-Ásia*, 4–5 (1967): 89–106.

18. Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York: Beacon Press, 1947). The author cites Freyre on the first page of his work. Carl Degler would pick up on this problematic twenty-five years later, seeking to verify its most important conclusions through fieldwork, despite all of the critiques being raised as much in U.S. as in Brazil. See Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1971).

19. Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

20. Alfred Métraux, "Brazil: Land of Harmony for All Races?" *The UNESCO Courier*, 4 (April 1951): 3.

tions of race that Freyre's work had opened. Historians from the United States undertook close study of agrarian economies in Brazil, which had developed in quite different ways from those of the North American colonial plantations. The relatively late coffee boom drew a good deal of attention. The work of Stanley J. Stein on the Paraíba Valley would become a model for several generations of researchers who would, like him, try to understand the forms of transition between slavery and free labor. Warren Dean's 1976 monograph on Rio Claro in the São Paulo province, for example, would follow in the same vein.²¹

The São Paulo School: The Sociology of Slavery as a Mode of Production

In Brazil debates about race provided the initial push toward research into slavery. Among the sociologists Métraux had recruited to work in São Paulo was a young professor from the University of São Paulo (USP), Florestan Fernandes. He had been a student of the French academics who had helped found the College of Philosophy, Science and Literature in 1934, notably Roger Bastide. Mentor and student would reunite in 1955 to co-author the report of the UNESCO study's findings.²² In his introduction, Bastide demolished the premise that had launched the study. He contended that in the state of São Paulo, where an archaic world on its way out converged with a new world that had not known slavery, prejudice based on color was not erased, it simply changed its role. The racist ideology that had been used to justify the enslavement of Africans had become a means of essentializing class hierarchies. In the preface to the second edition, published in 1958, Fernandes renewed and refined this critique:

Taken as a whole, the sociological studies prove that "Whites" tend to view their own behavior indulgently, as if it were possible to reduce "Blacks" into slavery without being affected by the degradation of morals entailed by this enslavement. And in places where the traditional order was disintegrating the most rapidly, "Blacks" tended to have a more realistic understanding of the social obstacles they had to confront.²³

21. Stanley J. Stein, *Vassouras, a Brazilian Coffee County 1850–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957); Warren Dean, *Rio Claro: a Brazilian Plantation System, 1820–1920* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

22. UNESCO & Anhembi, *Relações raciais entre negros e brancos em São Paulo, ensaio sociológico sobre as origens, as manifestações e os efeitos do preconceito de cor no município de São Paulo, sob a direção dos professores Roger Bastide e Florestan Fernandes* (São Paulo: Editora Anhembi, 1955). Fernandes had started working on the same theme for Anhembi. The two projects were then combined.

23. Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, *Branços e negros em São Paulo* (réed. São Paulo: C^a Editora Nacional, 1959).

In this view, Freyre now became an example of one who was himself contaminated by the *preconceito de cor* (color prejudice).

Florestan Fernandes did not stop there. He put his own students to work sharpening this critique through fieldwork and historical research. Among these students, Fernando Henrique Cardoso—a future President of the Brazilian Republic—was charged with studying the Rio Grande do Sul, and Otávio Ianni would study Paraná. Both of them looked to the past for explanations of the specificities of contemporary societies. When their dissertations were published in 1962, Brazil gained a historiographical base for thinking about slavery, even if it had come out of sociology.²⁴

Cardoso and Ianni, using Marxism as their interpretive framework, characterized slavery (*escravatura*) as a mode of production and as a form of social organization.²⁵ Henceforth, the unique characteristics of Brazilian society would no longer be expressed in moral or psychological terms, but in economic ones. Slavery did not prevent the development of agrarian capitalism within the colonial mercantile system, but it would come into conflict with it. As a consequence, abolition was seen less as the result of human effort than as the collapse of the economic system. For Cardoso, the relationship of slave to master was one of domination “in its pure form,” which precluded any autonomy.²⁶ For Ianni, when the system “was running smoothly,” it self-regulated to thwart any rebellion, but when it malfunctioned, it offered the dominated an opportunity to occupy new spaces: a slave became a Black or a Mulatto, or he became a citizen.²⁷ As Stuart Schwartz would write several years later, this generation of scholars was less interested in slaves than in slavery itself, especially because, in the face of the economic modernity of nineteenth-century Europe, the institution seemed to have become archaic.²⁸

Cardoso and Ianni framed arguments based in substantial documentary evidence. And while this evidence consisted mostly of printed materials (newspapers, official publications by the provincial government, traveler’s accounts, politicians’ letters, etc.), it was gathered and used in a manner quite different

24. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Capitalismo e escravidão no Brasil meridional. O Negro na sociedade escravocrata do Rio Grande do Sul* (São Paulo: Difusão européia do livro, 1962); Otávio Ianni, *As metamorfoses do escravo. Apogeu e crise da escravatura no Brasil meridional* (São Paulo: Difusão européia do livro, 1962).

25. This debate focused on how to qualify the mode of production: feudal, semi-feudal, capitalist, or sui generis.

26. “Slavery is a system of domination in which we can see in its pure form the relationship that exists, which is obfuscated in other systems founded on the superposition of antagonistic class interests: the proper functioning of the system is maintained by the exercise of violence” (F. H. Cardoso, *Capitalismo e escravidão*, p. 313).

27. “When [the slave] acquires the first elements of a social or historical consciousness that [characterizes the condition of slavery], at that very instant he ceases to be one” (O. Ianni, *As metamorfoses do escravo*, p. 279).

28. Stuart B. Schwartz, “Recent Trends,” p. 2.

from Freyre's.²⁹ When Richard Graham, writing from the United States, assembled the first overview of the historiography in 1970, he noted this development: With the new generation, historical research had taken a decisive step forward, and slavery was their central preoccupation.³⁰ The "São Paulo group" that formed around these young researchers soon gained a new member, Emília Viotti da Costa, who would publish her thesis four years after her two colleagues.³¹ She too had continually denounced Freyre's illusions, and like others in her cohort she was first and foremost interested in historical transitions. She chose the coffee-producing region of São Paulo for her research because it contained two zones whose histories and destinies would be antagonistic. On the one hand, there was the valley of Paraíba, an early adopter of coffee-growing that had inherited the traditional plantation economy, with its large scale use of slaves from the Atlantic trade. On the other hand, the center and the east of São Paulo province would develop only in the second half of the century, following a modern and mechanized model in which workers from Europe and Creole slaves from the Northeast were combined. The resistance of longstanding slave-owning planters to the new demands of a capitalist economy and the coffee industrialists' choice of new and more efficient modes of production lay at the heart of her study. The central section of her thesis, moreover, provided a fresh description of slavery in the nineteenth century and represented its first overview in the Brazilian historiography. Contrasting urban slavery and plantation slavery, she described the relationships of domination and their violence, and made room for the diverse forms of contesting the established order: rebellions, escapes, *quilombos* (communities of maroon slaves), murders of overseers or masters, etc. Nonetheless, she did not see in these actions the early manifestation of a collective consciousness that could lead to an organized revolt such as the 1823 Demerara revolt in British Guyana.³² Instead, these were individual

29. In a note, Cardoso writes: "The systematic investigation of the inventories and testaments of the *estancias*' gaúcho landowners could bring a great deal of understanding to the activity and organization of these *estancias*. Sadly, this documentation remains unconsulted in the archives" (*Capitalismo e escravidão*, p. 64, n. 49). In fact, the only archival materials used by these two authors were historical sources published in the journals of the largest Brazilian archives.

30. "Rigorous historical methodology stood in sharp contrast to the sloppy amateurishness of the bulk of those who up to then had cultivated the historian's garden. They now critically examined the sources and made careful use of contemporary printed and manuscript materials." See Richard Graham, "Brazilian Slavery Re-Examined: A Review Article," *Journal of Social History*, 3, 4 (1970): 431–453.

31. Emília Viotti da Costa, *Da senzala à colônia* (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1966).

32. After a long period of relative silence caused by her expulsion from the University of São Paulo and her emigration to the U.S., Viotti da Costa wrote a magnificent book on the Demerara Revolt, which was one of the largest such movements, after the Haitian Revolution and Jamaican Insurrection. See *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood. The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Port. edition: *Coroas de glória, lágrimas de sangue: a rebelião dos escravos de Demerara em 1823* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998). The

reactions produced by the disintegration of a social and economic order, which was accelerated when free labor and slave labor confronted each other. From her point of view, abolitionist ideals developed and gave rise to a certain degree of sympathy among the free population (including some whites) for those who refused a condition that was increasingly perceived as inhumane and degrading. Viotti's reading of the sources remains, even today, exemplary. Implicit in her work are most of the themes that would be explored and brought to light by the generation that followed.

Richard Graham's landmark review essay underlined Viotti's foresight and hoped for continued scholarship in the direction of her work. Like her, he continued to think that the myth of a gentle slavery had to be denounced, but he suggested doing so with more reliable tools, particularly by using rigorous demographic history, the sources for which, he believed, were near at hand. He added that historians would not be able to understand race relations in contemporary Brazil if they did not look into the lives of free and freed people during the era of slavery. With a great deal of lucidity, he outlined what would be the major research questions of the 1970s and 1980s.

A History of Slaves: The 1970s and 1980s

One of the paradoxes of this period is that while the university reforms of 1968 would push the best São Paulo professors into exile—Fernandes, Cardoso, Ianni, and Viotti were among the seventy professors banned in 1969—it would also plant the seeds for modernization of the curriculum. In particular, the modernization of post-graduate degrees (the master's [*mestrado*], and the doctorate) would professionalize historical research in Brazil.³³ But only after things began to open up again, beginning in 1976, did the system become productive. In a relatively short period of time, numerous master's and doctoral dissertations laid the foundation for a shift from largely anthropological and sociological work to a wide-ranging archival-based historical scholarship. Slavery was one of the main issues this new cohort pursued.

The year 1988 marked the hundredth anniversary of the abolition of slavery, as well as the first year of new federal democratic constitution, and it provided

book provides a lucid summary of the evolution of historiography in her country and calls for combining the new approaches with the structural analysis of societies, which she considered irreplaceable. João J. Reis's review of the Portuguese translation of the book in *Afro-Ásia* (20–21 (1998–99): 382–388) is very enlightening on the debate going on during this time between Brazilian historians of slavery and their distinguished predecessor (cf. also E. Viotti da Costa, “Novos públicos, novas políticas, novas histórias: do reducionismo econômico ao reducionismo cultural: em busca da dialética,” *Anos 90*, 10 (1998): 7–22).

33. The Brazilian *mestrado* is the first step in post-graduate training, and generally requires extensive primary source research. University presses and private publishers have not hesitated to publish several of these master's theses as books.

an excellent opportunity to take stock of the scholarly production on slavery. In 1962 Cardoso had found only twenty-four works on slavery in Brazil. Edison Carneiro, in 1964, listed seventy works in his extensive bibliography on “the Black man” in Brazil; most of these were folkloric or ethnographic studies. Viotti cited some sixty works in 1966. Stuart Schwartz, in his historiographical study published on the hundredth anniversary of 1888, found more than a hundred.³⁴

For Schwartz, the extremely fruitful work done in the 1970s and 1980s was characterized by two large-scale transformations. The first was the introduction of quantitative methods, under the influence of English-language historical work and that of the *Annales* school. The second transformation involved the evolution from the study of *escravismo* (as a mode of production) to the history of *escravidão* (slavery), which is to say of slave society in its full three dimensions: forms of labor, social organizations, and cultural practices. One clear change was the systematic use of archival sources. Indeed, many such sources had survived, contrary to the long-standing myth that the Minister Rui Barbosa had destroyed them at the time of abolition.³⁵ A combination of fiscal-administrative exigencies and notarial practices brought from the Iberian Peninsula had resulted in an impressive level of documentation. Moreover, the lives of slaves were more likely to be recorded than those of free men and women. And while it is true that they were often spoken for or written for, sometimes their words or stances were directly recorded by the scribe’s hand. It is not surprising, therefore, that these documents supported the rise of a rich and prolific historiography.

The question of slavery filtered into every area of historical research: legal history, religious history, historical demography, economic history, social and cultural history, etc. On all sides arguments broke out between researchers from different generations or from contrasting professional cultures. I will list here only a few of the most illustrative examples.

Economic History: The Slave Mode of Production or the Birth of a Proto-Peasantry?

In the field of economic history, while the debate over how to characterize slavery as a means of production continued,³⁶ Ciro Flamarion S. Cardoso opened a

34. F. H. Cardoso, *Capitalismo e escravidão*; Edison Carneiro, *Ladinos e Crioulos: Estudos sobre o negro no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização brasileira, 1964); E. V. da Costa, *Da senzala à colônia*; Stuart Schwartz, “Recent Trends.”

35. Robert W. Slenes, “O que Rui Barbosa não queimou: novas fontes para o estudo da escravidão no século XIX,” *Estudos Econômicos*, 13, 1 (1983): 117–150; “Escravos, cartórios e desburocratização: o que Rui Barbosa não queimou será destruído agora?” *Revista Brasileira de História*, 5, 10 (1985): 166–196. See also, for the colonial period Anthony John R. Russell-Wood, “Brazilian Archives and Recent Historiography on Colonial Brazil,” *Latin American Research Review*, 36, 1 (2001): 75–105.

36. In the beginning, the debate ran between those who saw the Brazilian colony as an

new front in Brazilian scholarship by describing the ways in which slaves early on broke out of their assigned role as an endlessly exploitable labor force to raise small livestock and plant food crops on the miniscule plots of land they were allocated.³⁷ This activity, which took place at the very heart of the mercantilist plantation, provided slaves with sustenance in a more reliable manner than did depending on the manager. In certain cases, they were allowed to sell their crops at market in order to obtain the meager financial capital that could eventually purchase their freedom. Ciro Flamarion Cardoso's work on what Tadeusz Lepkowski called the *brecha camponesa* (peasant breach) and what Sidney Mintz referred to as "proto-peasantry," and which drew on empirical sources uncovered by Stuart B. Schwartz, is representative of the historiographical shifts that were occurring in the 1970s.³⁸ New questions were being asked and, importantly, a large number of young researchers were then available to take up these questions across the entire country. The Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) in Niterói became a breeding ground for these researchers. When Ciro Cardoso arrived there in 1979, he was joined by the great economic historian Maria Yedda Leite Linhares, who had been forced into retirement in 1969, before being reinstated by the 1980 amnesty law. Both scholars brought in many young and talented researchers who would devote themselves more

example of a feudal society (Oliveira Vianna, Gilberto Freyre) and those who, following Caio Prado Junior and his *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo: Colônia* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1953) saw the signs of a fairly advanced capitalist mode of production. There is an English translation of this very important book, *The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). Fernando A. Novais's dissertation, defended in 1973 at the USP, is the most developed example of this trend. It was published only six years later as *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial (1777–1808)* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1979). Novais examined in detail the colonial mercantilist model, which was in crisis in the Portuguese empire at the end of the eighteenth century, and placed slavery within the framework of primitive accumulation of capital (as labor force and as tradable good). But, like Caio Prado Jr., Novais did not attribute a special function to the colonial territory, which he interpreted primarily as an extension of the peninsular one. On the other side, Jacob Gorender's *O escravismo colonial* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1980), among others, advanced a revision of the Marxist dogma supported by a reinterpretation in the vein of *Reading 'Capital'* by Althusser and Balibar. Gorender described a slave mode of production specific to the colonial context in which the accumulation necessary to reproduce the economic cycle necessarily passed through the accumulation of slaves and therefore froze—and even destroyed—a large portion of the available capital.

37. Ciro Flamarion S. Cardoso trained at the University of Paris X under the direction of Frédéric Mauro. He wrote his dissertation on the colonial history of French Guyana ("La Guyane française [1715–1817]. Aspects économiques et sociaux. Contribution à l'étude des sociétés esclavagistes d'Amérique") and defended it in 1971.

38. See Ciro F. S. Cardoso, *Agricultura, escravidão e capitalismo* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1979), chap. 4; "The Peasant Breach in the Slave System: New Developments in Brazil," *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 25, 1 (1988): 49–57. On the *brecha camponesa*, see Tadeusz Lepkowski, *Haiti* (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1968), 2 vols. (particularly vol. 1, pp. 59–60). On the proto-peasantry, see Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine, 1974). Stuart B. Schwartz opened the empirical debate with "Resistance and Accommodation in Eighteenth-Century Brazil: The Slaves' View of Slavery," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 57, 1 (1977): 69–81.

or less directly to the history of slavery: Ronaldo Vainfas, Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro, Sheila S. de Castro Faria, João L. R. Fragoso, Manolo G. Florentino, and Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva, among others. The collective work *Es-cavidão e abolição no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 1988) directed by Ciro Flamarion Cardoso provided a platform for several of them and was the first achievement of the “Fluminense school.”

As Ciro Cardoso noted somewhat maliciously from his vantage in Niterói, comparative work able to dislodge the generalized models of the past could not be done from the campus of the University of São Paulo alone. This prediction was borne out, as over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, the most innovative strands of historical research emerged from constantly shifting locations.

Historical Demography: The Reinvention of the Slave Family

Historical demography, which became especially vibrant during the 1970s and 1980s, provides a good example of the new dynamic in the field. This began with Maria Luiza Marcílio's dissertation in geography (defended and published in France), in which she examined the demography of the state of São Paulo, Brazil's economic capital.³⁹ Marcilio eventually helped set up a center for the study of the historical demography in Latin America, based at the University of São Paulo (USP). Not long afterwards, a similar center was established in Curitiba (UFP). But researchers kept running into difficulties as they tried to incorporate demographic data on slaves into the standard collection and analysis models.

It was two young researchers, one from the United States and the other from Brazil but trained in Chicago, Robert W. Slenes and Pedro Carvalho de Mello, who showed the way by concentrating on the period between 1872 and 1888, which allowed them to draw on data from the first national census of 1872. The richly documented region of Minas Gerais, with its long history of mining and the raising of food stuffs, quickly became the main field of research.

In Minas Gerais, the colonial state's careful control over the extraction of gold and precious stones gave rise to a fastidious bureaucracy for whom slaves were the best evidence of the activity of their masters. Researchers from São Paulo's economics department, Iraci del Nero da Costa and Francisco Vidal Luna, took on the task of analyzing the data from Minas, while training many students who would go on to work in different regions, allowing more comparative work to be done. Very quickly, a new picture of the slave population emerged.⁴⁰ The demographers showed the predominance of small-scale slave

39. Maria Luiza Marcílio, *La Ville de São Paulo. Peuplement et population (1750–1850) d'après les registres paroissiaux et les recensements anciens* (Rouen: Presses de l'université de Rouen, 1968).

40. A summary of these first works can be found in “The Population of Minas Gerais: New Research on Colonial Brazil,” *Latin American Population History Newsletter*, 4, 1–2 (1984): 3–10.

owners with fewer than five slaves in mining, and, even more unexpectedly, [they discovered the same ratios in the agricultural small holdings—the *roças*—of Minas, the province of São Paulo, and even Paraná. They reinterpreted the *latifundia* model of the Northeast by showing that the gigantic properties were only partially exploited, and even then they employed only a limited number of slaves (sixty on average), given the prohibitively high costs of investment. The demographers also described how small-scale slave owners could be found at every level of society, and were as likely to be black as white, female as male. As a result, Brazilian society at the end of the colonial period and during the Empire was very open; the heads of black and white families might or might not own slaves, and if they did, they might be obliged to work beside them. The demographers also rejected the picture of a slave society in which a disproportionate number of men, since women's resistance to procreation limited births, created a need for constant resupply by the slave trade, both legal and illegal. Even if it were true that, from the beginning, the slave population of Brazil had had a negative natural rate of reproduction, in certain areas and in certain periods, economic and social circumstances resulted in a positive level of reproduction, similar to that in the white population. This was the case in Minas Gerais in the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, and in the province of São Paulo before the coffee boom.⁴¹

Such findings launched debates over the existence and role of the slave family. Florestan Fernandes had believed that families were practically nonexistent within the slave population. During the 1980s several researchers would revisit that supposed truth: Nizza da Silva, Nero da Costa, Gutiérrez, and above all, Slenes. A special issue of the *Estudos Econômicos* (vol. 17, 1987, no. 2) showed that, just as the model of the plantation with negative demographic growth was not universal, the image of the woman raising her children on her own or the family dispersed by successive sales were not the only realities in a country where the Church had always fought for the defense of religious marriage between slaves. This debate would bounce back in the 1990s when historians would ask whether the slave family could be considered an important instrument of resistance to the master's oppression from within the *senzala* (the slave quarters, and, by extension, the slave labor force).⁴²

41. A good summary of the demographic work of the 1980s can be found at the beginning of a later article by Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert S. Klein: "Slave Economy and Society in Minas Gerais and São Paulo, Brazil, in 1830," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 36 (2004): 1–28).

42. See, for example, the debate launched by Robert W. Slenes in 1999 with his book *Na senzala, uma flor: esperanças e recordações na formação da família escrava—Brasil sudeste, século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Nova Fronteira, 1999). He returns there to the question raised, four years earlier, by Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro in *Das cores do silêncio: os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista, Brasil século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995), namely, what was the impact of an owner's promises of manumission on the cohesion of immediate and extended families?

Social History: The Many Forms of Slave Resistance

A third area of debate, for the most part absent from the work of the first generation of researchers, only took on its full importance once historians stopped trying to understand why the Haitian Revolution was such a unique event in the history of slavery. Even if the numerous revolts recorded in the Brazilian archives never turned into a revolution, that did not mean they were not expressions of slave resistance.

In Brazil, it was large-scale *marronage* rather than revolts that initially drew the most attention. The Portuguese empire had experienced the first serious affair of this kind at Palmares. For years the rise and the suppression of this rebellion had been continually re-described and reinterpreted. Established at the beginning of the seventeenth century in what was at the time the Captaincy of Pernambuco, the *quilombo* (or *mocambo*) of Palmares consisted of several different communities of fugitive slaves and others whose livelihoods relied on farming. These communities constituted a kind of a republic. When the war between Holland and Portugal (1630–1654) destabilized the large-scale sugar plantations, the *quilombo* swelled to the size of several thousand residents (20,000 by the end of the seventeenth century). Under attack by both the Portuguese and the Dutch, Ganga-Zumba, one of the last leaders of the *quilombo*, tried to reach an agreement to capitulate to the Portuguese crown on relatively advantageous terms. But Palmares was definitively defeated in 1695. Neither archeological evidence nor recourse by Alves Filho to the Portuguese archives was able to modify the image of Palmares that had been presented by Eannes in 1938 and Carneiro in 1947.⁴³ It would only be in the final decade of the twentieth century that analyses informed by the methods of cultural history and by an evolving historiography would really change the framework for understanding this passage.⁴⁴

43. Sebastião da Rocha Pitta, *História da América Portuguesa, desde o anno de mil e quinhentos do seu descobrimento, até o de mil e setecentos e vinte e quatro* (Lisboa: Officina de Joseph Antonio da Silva, Impressor da Academia Real, 1730), livre 8, § 25–40; Joaquim Pedro de Oliveira Martins, *O Brasil e as colônias portuguesas* (Lisboa: Livraria Bertrand, 1880); Raimundo Nina Rodrigues, *Os africanos no Brasil*; Ernesto Ennes, *As guerras nos Palmares—subsídios para a sua história* (São Paulo: C^{ia} Editora Nacional, 1938); Edison Carneiro, *O quilombo dos Palmares* (São Paulo: C^{ia} Editora Nacional, 1958); Clóvis Moura, *Rebeliões da senzala: quilombos, insurreições, guerrilhas* (São Paulo: Ed. Zumbi, 1959); Décio Freitas, *Palmares: a guerra dos escravos* (Porto Alegre: Movimento, 1971).

44. Concerning the use of the Portuguese archives, see Ivan Alves Filho, *Memorial dos Palmares* (Rio de Janeiro, Xenon, 1988). We take special note of Maria Lêda Oliveira's publishing of the oldest document available on Palmares (early seventeenth century): "A primeira Rellação do último assalto a Palmares," *Afro-Ásia*, 33 (2005): 251–324. An initial summary of the reinterpretation of Palmares can be found in the contributions of João J. Reis and Flávio dos Santos Gomes in the collective book they edited, *Liberdade por um fio: história dos quilombos no Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996). For archeology, see in the same the contributions of Pedro Paulo and Abreu Funari. Flávio dos Santos Gomes published a summary of this story in *Palmares*

As scholars took the debate beyond Palmares, the full breadth of slave resistance became ever clearer: the *quilombo* no longer seemed to be the exception, but the rule. The archives contain examples of similar developments from all across the country. Vicente Salles (Pará), Waldemar de Almeida Barbosa (Minas Gerais), Pedro Tomás Pedreira (Bahia), and Mário José Maestri Filho (Rio Grande do Sul) were the first to delve into the pervasiveness of this form of opposition to the slaveholding order. Negotiations between local and provincial authorities to raise money and troops necessary to cope with such opposition and reports of militia captains or military officers narrating their successes or failures were there in the archives, ready to be used.⁴⁵ Revolt, even if it was destined to fail, hovered ever in the background, and evidence of it can be found in depositions taken by police, who naturally paid it close attention. What is most important is its continuity: this resistance movement never seemed to abate. At the end of the 1970s João José Reis, a young researcher, began to focus on the province of Bahia. He compiled a list of all the rebellions, large and small, that occurred one after another in the Recôncavo, before focusing his thesis on the most famous of them, which took place in Salvador in 1835 and is known under the name “Revolt of the Malês.”⁴⁶

At the same time, Brazilian historians were taking to the idea that the violence of oppression caused resistance to be expressed in various diffuse but effective ways. It became clear that, as in Saint-Domingue, the large-scale *marronage* (the *quilombo*) that worried planters and residents of smaller urban centers because of the violence that accompanied it, was paralleled by an endemic small-scale *marronage* (absences of a few hours or a few days), which obliged owners to compromise with slave communities where the desire for autonomy—even if such autonomy was fleeting—often won out over resignation. By combing through wanted notices for runaways, we can see that the motivation was more often slaves seeking to build a life as if they were freed-

(São Paulo: Contexto, 2005). It has been contested by Silvia Hunold Lara in an article written in French where she insisted on the “diplomatic” dimension of the event (“Marronnage et pouvoir colonial: Palmares, Cucaú et les frontières de la liberté au Pernambouc à la fin du XVII^e siècle,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 62, 3 (2007): 639–662). One of the most recent summaries comes from the authors of the collected volume edited by Flávio Gomez, *Mocambos de Palmares. Histórias e fontes—séculos XVI–XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: 7Letras & Faperj, 2010).

45. Vicente Salles, *O Negro no Pará sob o regime da escravidão* (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1971); Waldemar de Almeida Barbosa, *Negros e quilombos em Minas Gerais* (Belo Horizonte: W. de Almeida Barbosa, 1972); Pedro Tomás Pedreira, *Os quilombos brasileiros* (Salvador: Prefeitura Municipal do Salvador, Departamento de Cultura da SME, 1973); Mario José Maestri Filho, *Quilombos e quilombolas em terras gaúchas* (Porto Alegre: Escola superior de teologia São Lourenço de Brindes, Caxias do Sul, Universidade de Caxias do Sul, 1979).

46. João José Reis, “Slave resistance in Brazil, Bahia, 1808–1835,” *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 25, 1 (1988): 111–144. Reis had been working on this topic since his 1977 master’s thesis: “Slave Revolt in Bahia, 1790–1840” from the University of Minnesota; João J. Reis, *História da levante dos Malês–1835* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986). See also the English translation: *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

men far from their master, rather than engaging in armed struggle against their oppressors.

By shifting the scale in this way, other forms of violent resistance came to light, often just as resolute as *marronage* or rebellion. These are recorded in police registers and court decisions. If in 1972 Goulart linked suicide with escape,⁴⁷ researchers of the following decade—Maria Helena P. T. Machado, for example, in her 1985 master's thesis⁴⁸—would analyze suicides alongside crimes perpetrated against overseers, masters or their families.

The historiographic turn away from work by the São Paulo school was of such force that it led to sharp conflicts. Researchers in the Marxist tradition called those who were engaged in this reinterpretation “revisionists,” and neo-Freyriens (*neopatriarcalistas*) and their seeming deference to North American scholarship (and especially to Eugene Genovese) was bitterly denounced.⁴⁹ One of the first Brazilianists to have explored the new interpretive path that now came under attack was indeed based in the United States: Stuart Schwartz at the time was a professor at the University of Minnesota.⁵⁰ In contrast to the hypothesis that slavery represented a “pure” form of domination, this new interpretation advanced a more complex model in which accommodation to the slave system was constantly coupled with resistance. It gave back to slaves their free will and ability to act, even while they lived in one of the most constricting social systems imaginable.

The new generation in Brazil itself, who would publish their first books in the 1980s, had learned to read the archives in all their complexity, and they leapt on the resulting opportunity to explore the documents from many angles. Silvia Hunold Lara was without a doubt one of the most promising of these young historians, and the Marxist old guard would concentrate its fire on her book, *Campos de violência*.⁵¹

With the boldness that often characterizes a first book, Lara made no concessions to her predecessors. Drawing not only on her absolute mastery of the archives of the region on which she worked (Campos dos Goitacases), but also on her high level of historiographic sophistication, she argued that the relationship between slave and master cannot be reduced to one of dominance by

47. José Alípio Goulart, *Da fuga ao suicídio: aspectos da rebeldia dos escravos no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Conquista, 1972).

48. Maria Helena Pereira Toledo Machado, “Crime e escravidão: uma história social do trabalho e da criminalidade escrava nas lavouras paulistas, 1830–1888” (Master's thesis, University of São Paulo, 1985), which was immediately published under the much more explicit title: *Crime e escravidão: trabalho, luta e resistência nas lavouras paulistas, 1830–1888* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987).

49. Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

50. See his “Resistance and Accommodation in Eighteenth-Century Brazil.”

51. Silvia Hunold Lara, *Campos de violência. Escravos e senhores na capitania do Rio de Janeiro, 1750–1808* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1988).

imposition of the status of object and the daily exercise of brutal violence. All of the evidence suggests that the object/person contradiction is at the heart of the slaveholding relationship and that this contradiction was constantly manipulated and exploited. In the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, moreover, violence was a characteristic of social relationships of domination and was therefore not specific to slavery. She did not hesitate to go even further in her deconstruction of the Marxist dogma, arguing that while the exercise of violence was part of the master's strategy for dominating the slave, this violence appears as a "moderated physical punishment, measured, just, corrective, educative, and usually to set an example," and she adds, "For this reason, in words of masters, the colony's priests, and the Crown, as well as the slaves themselves, the practice of physical punishment appears unchallenged, even 'natural.'"⁵² She would never be forgiven for this. Jacob Gorender unleashed his fury upon her, and looked for the sources of her iconoclastic audacity in her readings of British and American post-Marxist historiography, and even in Kátia Mattoso's work, *Être esclave au Brésil* (*To Be a Slave in Brazil*), which had been translated from French into Portuguese a few years earlier (1982) and which was retrospectively read as a reactionary interpretation.⁵³ At the end of the 1990s, Sueli R. Reis de Queiroz would follow the same line of attack, but it was too late. Others on the left declined to close ranks behind the older Marxist view. João José Reis made it clear in a historiographic essay published in 1999 that there could be no turning back after Lara's advance.⁵⁴ It was Lara's book—and several others that accompanied or followed it—that opened a new approach in Brazil to the history of slaves—rather than just slavery—as "subjects" within a complex social dynamic with which they were in constant interaction. Beyond her attacks on the rigidity of the previous generations' models, Lara, who had read not only E. P. Thompson but also M. Foucault, diffracted the process of dominance and reinterpreted slave resistance. She saw it as not only a series of actions and reactions brought on by the violence of masters, but also as a series of tactics aimed at creating a better daily life, spaces of autonomy, and social bonds that would be able to protect these fragile existences with the final goal of a freedom that was never given but rather earned step by step, negotiation after negotiation. The agency of the dominated became accessible all of a sud-

52. Silvia Hunold Lara, *Campos de violência*, p. 342.

53. Jacob Gorender, *A escravidão reabilitada* (São Paulo: Ática, 1990); Kátia M. de Queirós Mattoso, *Être esclave au Brésil, XVI–XIX^e* (Paris: Hachette, 1979). The French version was translated in Portuguese in 1982 as *Ser escravo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Brasiliense) and in 1986 into English as *To be a slave in Brazil, 1550–1888* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), with a foreword by Stuart Schwartz.

54. Sueli Robles Reis de Queiróz, "Escravidão negra em debate," in *Historiografia brasileira em perspectiva*, ed. Marcos Cezar de Freitas (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 1998): 103–117; João José Reis "Slaves as agents in history: A note on the new historiography of slavery in Brazil," *Ciência e cultura*, 51, 5–6 (1999): 437–444.

den, and, most importantly, showed itself to be a legitimate new object of study for a rapidly growing historiography.

The special issue that *Revista Brasileira de História*, the official publication of the Association of Brazilian Historians (ANPUH), dedicated to slavery for the commemoration of the anniversary of emancipation exemplifies this evolution.⁵⁵ Opening with a translation from the third chapter of American historian Eric Foner's landmark work on Reconstruction, which was titled for the occasion "The Significance of Freedom" (*O significado da liberdade*),⁵⁶ the issue followed with work by Kátia de Queirós Mattoso, João José Reis, Sidney Chalhoub, Luiz Carlos Soares, Maria Helena P. T. Machado, Horácio Gutiérrez, and Robert W. Slenes. Silivia Hunold Lara was signatory both to the introduction and to a translation of an excerpt from the biography of Mahommah G. Baquaqua, a Brazilian slave in the nineteenth century who fled to the United States and then to Haiti, and whose life story was published in Detroit in 1854 in the context of the abolitionist movement.⁵⁷ All of the threads of the new history of slave agency are present in this issue, and the historiographic article by Maria Helena Machado⁵⁸ dives into them in all their subtleties, as well as noting the debt owed to Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll* and to Sidney Mintz's *Caribbean Transformations*.⁵⁹

From Anthropology to Cultural History, From Slaves to Free and Freed People

As we have suggested, the very first work on Brazilian slavery, done at the beginning of the twentieth century, had taken a pre-anthropological—one might even say folkloric—approach, focusing on the specificities of the culture that had come from Africa, defining it by the religious attitudes, forms of sociability and rituals, as well as customs and manners that were different from those of Europeans. Songs, dancing, cooking, and dress received the most attention. In the 1960s, a new approach to the subject came from the field of anthropology, which had been reestablished in Brazil by French ethnographers teaching at USP (Claude Lévi-Strauss and then Roger Bastide). On questions of Afro-

55. *Revista Brasileira de História*, 8, 16 (1988).

56. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

57. Mahommah G. Baquaqua, *Biography of Mahommah G. Baquaqua. A native of Zoogoo, in the interior of Africa*, edited by Samuel Moore (Detroit: Tribune Office, 1854). Concerning the same document, see the article by Paul Lovejoy, which was translated into Portuguese in *Afro-Ásia*: "Identidade e a miragem da etnicidade. A jornada de Mahommah Garbo Baquaqua para as Américas," *Afro-Ásia*, 27 (2002): 9–39.

58. Maria Helena Machado, "Em torno da autonomia escrava: uma nova direção para a história social da escravidão," *Revista Brasileira de História*, 8, 16 (1988): 143–160.

59. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1974); Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1974).

Brazilian religious anthropology, it was Roger Bastide, an initiate to *candomblé* in the 1940s, who showed the way. On his return to France, he would make it the topic of his dissertation: “Les religions afro-brésiliennes. Contribution à une sociologie des interpénétrations de civilisation” (Paris: Paris Lettres, 1958).⁶⁰ Pierre Verger, working from the Institut français d’Afrique noire (IFAN) in Dakar and then from Salvador, was excavating at the same time in the same vein.⁶¹

Historians were slower to return to the subject of culture. Influenced by medieval and early modern religious history, which was at the time in full swing in Europe (and especially in France), specialists in the colonial period, trained at USP and familiar with the Portuguese archives, would be the ones to take on the task. They naturally adopted a comparative approach, contrasting colonial realities to their metropolitan or, more generally, European equivalents. Caio César Boschi, who would go on to become one of the foremost specialists on the Lisbon archives, was less interested in the exoticism of *candomblé* than in the role of the *irmandades* (brotherhoods) in politically regulating the social and racial hierarchies of Minas Gerais during the height of the gold boom.⁶² The study of *irmandades* also provided an opportunity to understand how slaves and freedmen built these institutions that could bring them together and provide protection. Laura de Mello e Souza, who wrote her dissertation a little later under the direction of Fernando Antônio Novais but published it in the same year as Boschi,⁶³ analyzed the archives of the Portuguese Inquisition in Brazil in order to uncover the way popular religious practices, many of which had come with the slaves from Africa, were treated. She discovered that the Inquisition viewed these practices as not all that different from witchcraft in Europe in the same period. Luiz Mott, also drawing on Inquisition docu-

60. Bastide published two distinct books based on his dissertation: *Les Religions africaines au Brésil. Vers une sociologie des interpénétrations de civilisations* (Paris: PUF, 1960) and *Le Candomblé de Bahia* (Paris: La Haye, Mouton, 1958). The first would only be translated into Portuguese in 1971, then into English in 1978 as *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). The second was translated immediately: *O Candomblé da Bahia, rito Nagô* (São Paulo: C^{ia} Editora Nacional, 1961). See the very detailed bibliography of Bastide by Claude Ravelet in *Bastidiana, Cahiers d'études bastidiennes*, 3 (3^e trimestre 1993); the 2003 revised version is available online: <http://clauderavelet.pagesperso-orange.fr/biblio.pdf>.

61. Pierre Verger had begun to publish on the *candomblé* in Bahia and the Yoruba cults in 1951: *Orixás* (Salvador: Livraria Turista, 1951). For a detailed bibliography on Verger, go to the website of the Fundação Pierre Verger in Salvador (<http://www.pierreverger.org>).

62. Caio César Boschi, *Os leigos e o poder (Irmandades leigas e política colonizadora em Minas Gerais)* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1986). Ten years earlier, Julita Scarano had been a pioneer in this field with *Devoção e escravidão: A Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos no distrito Diamantino no século XVII* (São Paulo: C^{ia} Editora Nacional, 1976).

63. Laura de Mello e Souza, *O diabo e a terra de Santa Cruz: feitiçaria e religiosidade popular no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1986). An English translation is available: *The Devil and the Land of The Holy Cross: Witchcraft, Slavery, and Popular Religion in Colonial Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, 2003).

ments, investigated religious forms specific to Brazilian slavery, including the repression of sexuality.⁶⁴ In a similar manner, Ronaldo Vainfas would look to the Inquisition trials to reconstruct the colony's systems of religious and moral control.⁶⁵

However, the real question in social and cultural history did not emerge from the topic of religion in the colonial period; it arose instead out of increasingly detailed explorations by specialists on the nineteenth century of the worlds of the manumitted and free persons of color. There are several reasons for this, the most important being the abundance of administrative and legal documents generated in the process of manumission and then by the actions of the freedmen themselves in a society where they had a variety of means—economic, social, cultural—of representing and defending themselves. This time, it was in Bahia that the work began. In a series of exemplary studies on the provincial capital, Kátia Mattoso and her students provided the field an excellent contextual base for further work. By the middle of the 1970s they had produced a wide-ranging collective study on the *cartas de alforria* (letters of emancipation), and by the end of the same decade they had plunged into a new documentary stockpile: the wills and testaments of freedmen and women.⁶⁶ Mattoso would use much of this material for her book *Être esclave au Brésil*,⁶⁷ which was one of the first real syntheses of the social and cultural history of the slaves themselves (and not of slavery as a whole). It would be published in France in the late 1970s. Nonetheless, it was her student Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira's *mestrado* thesis, defended in 1979 and published almost immediately afterwards, that would mark the definitive turning point.⁶⁸ Through a close study of testaments, Oliveira brings the reader into the universe of freed women who became rich, purchased slaves, and often built up extraordinarily large and efficient networks in the socially and ethnically complex world of Salvador. This study launched in-depth explorations into manumission in the other regions of Brazil.⁶⁹ But it also marked the appearance of a new theme,

64. Luiz R. B. Mott, "Acontundá: raízes setecentistas do sincretismo religioso afro-brasileiro," *Revista do Museu Paulista*, 31 (1986): 124–147; "Uma santa africana no Brasil colonial," *D. O. Leitura*, 6, 62 (1987); *Escravidão, homossexualidade e demonologia* (São Paulo: Ícone, 1988).

65. Ronaldo Vainfas, *Trópico dos pecados: moral, sexualidade e Inquisição no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1989).

66. Kátia M. de Queirós Mattoso, "Propósito de cartas de alforria na Bahia, 1779–1850," *Anais de História*, 4 (1971): 23–52; *Testamentos de escravos libertos na Bahia no século XIX. Uma fonte para o estudo de mentalidades* (Salvador: Centro de estudos baianos, Universidade federal da Bahia, 1979). Also important is the parallel work done by Schwartz on the colonial period, see Stuart B. Schwartz, "A manumissão dos escravos no Brasil colonial—Bahia, 1684–1745," *Anais de História*, 6 (1974): 71–114.

67. Kátia M. de Queirós Mattoso, *Être esclave au Brésil*.

68. Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, *O Liberto: o seu mundo e os outros* (Salvador: Corrupio, 1988).

69. In Rio with Mary Karasch and her *Slave life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); in Parati with James Kiernan in his doctoral thesis, "The man-

one with a bright future. Côrtes de Oliveira's doctoral dissertation, defended in France in the early 1990s, provides an excellent example of this new thread, which examined how, between slavery and freedom, the ex-slave identity was refashioned as an identity based on belonging to an African "nation" (imposed by traders and owners). That identity would be re-appropriated and become an essential marker of solidarities, struggles, but also of conflicts within the black community.⁷⁰ This harkens back to a question put forward by João J. Reis in his 1986 study of the Malê Revolt: Was the refashioning of ethnic identities in the Americas an obstacle or an instrument in the struggle for freedom? We can already make out the two paths (which are in fact complementary) the answers to this question would take, and which have since been continually explored: Did slave resistance proceed through community solidarities or armed struggle?

New Archives, New Territorial Divisions, New Questions: The Current State of the History of Slavery in Brazil

The analytical methods that have been adopted since the hundredth anniversary of the 1888 emancipation—whether they came out of social and cultural history, the history of *mentalités* or, later, microhistory—have taken Brazilian historiography on slavery in a powerful new direction, although not all the bridges to quantitative history or Marxism have been burned. The historical production of the last twenty-five years has been as rich as it is complex. The researchers who came of age during earlier debates are now at the helm, and are making good use of their positions of leadership. Today, there are three generations at work. The first pioneered the affirmation of slave agency in the face of the Marxist old guard in the 1970s; this group has received a good deal of support from those who have continued with quantitative history and brought it into the service of the same causes. Second, their students, who expanded exploration of the archives by picking up on problematics identified by their mentors but pushing them further; and finally, the *mestrado* and doctoral students of the second group. Each large university center has in this way spread its influence across the entire country, as new universities were established and

umission of slaves in colonial Brazil: Paraty, 1822 (PhD dissertation, New York University, 1976); in Campinas with Peter L. Eisenberg's article "Ficando livre: As alforrias em Campinas no século XIX," *Estudos Econômicos*, 17, 2 (1987): 175–216, etc. As we can see, these are all American researchers, proof that Brazilian themes were immediately incorporated into the discussion going on in the United States, in which the publication of Ira Berlin's book, *Slaves without Masters. The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon, 1975) had been a landmark moment.

70. The dissertation was written and defended in France in 1992, where Kátia Mattoso was teaching at the time, under the title "Retrouver une identité: jeux sociaux des Africains de Bahia (vers 1750–vers 1890)."

new doctoral schools (*programas de pós-graduação*) created. If the end of the military period was marked by a professionalization of history, the two governments of Luiz Inácio *Lula* da Silva have overseen the massive expansion of Brazilian universities and the opening of positions to most of the high-quality researchers trained by the 1980s generation. At this point, it becomes tricky to summarize their production due to the rapidly increasing volume of work being done. This has only become truer as *mestrado* and doctoral works are systematically being posted online, further diversifying scholarly production.⁷¹

We can see the same threads in overviews attempted at the end of the 1990s⁷² and during the 2000s.⁷³ The great historiographical arguments of the 1980s and 1990s are still present; in fact, they have only grown more intense under the accumulation of empirical research. At the heart of this impressive volume of work, however, two important turns are clearly discernible. One began in the 1990s, when the most fruitful research was focused on judicial archives. Documents therein were considered to carry the voices of men and women who were trapped in the slave system but also cogs necessary to it. The other, beginning in the 2000s, was marked by the entry of Africa into the analytical scene. From that moment forward, the continent ceased to be simply the distant origin of a culture; it became a kind of fully engaged agent—economically, politically, socially—without which the story of slavery in the Americas would be incomplete.

The history of the academic journal *Afro-Ásia*, every issue of which is now available online, provides an excellent record of the development that has occurred since the 1990s.⁷⁴ Created in Salvador in 1965 by the Center for Afro-

71. The BDTD (*Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações*), a division of the Brazilian Ministry of Science and Technology, has made available online all of the masters and doctoral theses defended since 2000 (<http://bdt2.ibict.br/>). Several universities have also uploaded to their own websites older doctorates. We must keep in mind that *mestrado* dissertations in Brazil are often as important as doctoral ones and that a great number of them were and continue to be published immediately.

72. See, for example, the revised Portuguese reissue of Stuart Schwartz's "Recent Trends in the Study of Slavery" as "A historiografia recente da escravidão brasileira," in Stuart Schwartz, *Escravos, roceiros e rebeldes* (Bauru, SP: Editora da Universidade do Sagrado Coração, 2001), pp. 48–57, as well as the annotated bibliography (restricted to the problems of the transition from slavery to free labor) published in the United States by Rebecca J. Scott, Thomas C. Holt, Frederick Cooper, and Aims McGuinness: *Societies after Slavery: A Select Annotated Bibliography of Printed Sources on Cuba, Brazil, British Colonial Africa, South Africa, and the British West Indies* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), pp. 323–411.

73. Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery in Brazil*.

74. The journal *Afro-Ásia* is available online at <http://www.afroasia.ufba.br/>. A second journal, *Estudos Afro-Ásiáticos*, established in 1978 in Rio de Janeiro, aims to cover the same areas of research and debate. *Estudos* is more focused on the Afro-Brazilian question than its Bahian counterpart, and on its website it describes itself as "dedicated to the study of race relations in Brazil and the black diaspora, as well as the current situation and international relations of African and Asian countries." Nonetheless, it has given a lot of space to historians of slavery among its staff as much as in its columns. It has only been partially uploaded to the internet,

Oriental Studies at the University of Bahia, the journal took a complicated view of the legacy of colonialism. On the one hand, it tried to group together the oriental and occidental territories of the Portuguese Indies; on the other, it hoped to document the decolonization struggles in Africa. Perhaps above all, it wanted to be a forum for debates on the question of blackness in Brazil (essentially in the Bahia). From time to time it would touch upon the history of slavery, but initially it did not make this a central theme. Up until 1995, well after the end of the dictatorship, the journal's issues appeared only irregularly, but everything changed in 1996 when two young professors from the UFBA, Antônio Sérgio A. Guimarães (a sociologist) and João José Reis (a historian), both trained in the United States, took over its editorial direction.⁷⁵ In a few years, it would become the major publication on the history of slavery and its legacy in Brazil. Its production therefore provides an excellent vantage point from which to look into the dynamics of the field, even if some of its choices do, of course, reflect the specific character of the Bahian school.

Revisiting the Judicial Archives: Searching for Slave Voices

The reviews published in *Afro-Ásia* in 1996 are especially interesting because they look back to the beginning of the decade, as if to mark what had changed since 1988. In its announcement of the twenty-third edition of *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo* by Caio Prado Junior, once due homage had been paid to the illustrious forbearer, the reviewer laid out the limitations of his work.⁷⁶ His view of the colonial world, Marxist though it might be, no longer held up in the face of the advances of the new generation. The work reviewed immediately after Junior's is a perfect example of the turn that had taken place, and deals primarily with how to select and engage with the archives. This was Keila Grinberg's first book, based on her undergraduate thesis,⁷⁷ which had been published two years earlier in Rio de Janeiro. It demonstrated the utility of the judicial archives not only for social history but for legal history as well, by making the appeals court of Rio, whose dossiers she examined, not just the

which makes access to its issues and therefore any wide-scale analysis of its publication history more difficult. The general history journals (there are more than 400 in Brazil) are ranked by the CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior) from A1 to C (A1, A2, B1 to B5, C). *Afro-Ásia* has been ranked B1 in 2013.

75. Antônio Sérgio Guimarães would leave the UFBA for the USP the next year and step down from editorial responsibilities. In the team, he had been the specialist on Afro-Brazilian questions. João Reis would direct the journal until 2004, and still remains very active in it even today.

76. Caio Prado Junior, *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo: Colônia* (São Paulo: Editora brasiliense, 1973 [1st ed.]; 1994 [23^d ed.]).

77. The undergraduate degree is called the *bacharelado* and sometimes involves writing the equivalent of a U.S. honors thesis.

field in which she did her research, but an actor in its own right.⁷⁸ By bringing together a case study of the slave *Liberata* and a more general overview that observed a long sequence of cases brought by slaves and freedmen against their masters or former masters, most often to protect a manumission in progress or safeguard the freedom they had already obtained, she showed how the judicial machinery was often used by the “tutors” and lawyers of slaves (who could not act for themselves) to put forward the slaves’ interests against their owners and, in a sense, against the entire system of slavery itself. As Eduardo Spiller Pena remarks in the review, Keila Grinberg was not the first to have gone in this direction.⁷⁹

In fact, it is not much of a stretch to imagine that Grinberg’s young honors thesis director at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), Hebe Maria Mattos, had a hand in the matter. Mattos had defended her dissertation in 1993 (it was published in 1995).⁸⁰ She picked up on an issue that had already been raised by Sidney Chalhoub, and which would have a long future in Brazil: How the word “freedom” was defined and redefined by the different protagonists in the drama of slavery. Mattos had explored strategic moments when the term’s usage was altered along the long history of individual manumissions to the event of collective emancipation. Status boundaries could sometimes be crossed even before any manumission process was undertaken, for certain slaves were able to live “as if they were free” and this status henceforth enriched the meaning of “freedom.” After general emancipation, the newly freed sought to “silence” color terms—like *negro* (black)—that continued to stigmatize them. To support her arguments, Mattos used all the resources the archives had to offer. When freedom itself was on the line, as in cases of manumission or re-enslavement, she turned to the judicial archives. *Afro-Ásia* had missed the initial limited-edition publication of her book, but rectified this in 1998 when it was republished by a new press. The review was especially glowing and highlighted a link that had once again formed between U.S. and Brazilian historiography. This time the U.S. counterpart was not Genovese, but Eric Foner, whose book *Nothing but Freedom* had been translated into Portuguese

78. Keila Grinberg, *Liberata, a lei da ambigüidade: as ações de liberdade da Corte de Apelação do Rio de Janeiro no século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 1994).

79. Still a student at the time, Pena would several years later go on to publish a remarkable book on the way in which Brazilian legal scholars, at the moment when the law of the “free womb” was passed in 1871, began a debate over the contradictions that came out of the explicit acknowledgement of slavery in positive law. See *Pajens da casa imperial: jurisconsultos, escravidão e a lei de 1871* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2001).

80. Hebe Maria da Costa Mattos Gomes de Castro: “A cor inexistente: os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista. Brasil: século XIX” (Doctoral dissertation, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 1993). First published by the National Archives as *Das cores do silêncio: os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista, Brasil século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995), the book would be republished under the same title by Nova Fronteira (Rio de Janeiro, 1998).

in 1988.⁸¹ Hebe Mattos joined Foner in the argument that since the meaning of the word “freedom” had become a battleground in debates around emancipation, that concept itself had to be at the heart of research on slavery.

In its retrospective on the key moments of the 1990s, *Afro-Ásia* had somehow forgotten Sidney Chalhoub, who from 1989 had reinterpreted the role played by slaves fighting for manumission in discussions that surrounded the law of the “free womb” in 1871, and then again in the debate around the *Lei Áurea* (Golden Law, i. e., the final emancipation law) in 1888.⁸² He also popularized investigations into the word “freedom,” which his colleagues subsequently took up. For Chalhoub, the slaves themselves had created a “vision of freedom” (*visão da liberdade*), whose influence had spread as far as the production and interpretation of the law itself. Following Silvia Lara and the new perspectives she developed in the 1990s, Chalhoub, Mattos, and Grinberg represented a major break in the Brazilian historiography of slavery. With their work, the question of agency was expanded from armed struggle (*marronage* and revolt) to legal action (freedom suits and actions in defense of freedom) whose effects were more determinative of the evolution of a Brazilian slave society that offered no hope for success by armed revolt.

In the wake of these scholars, a new generation began work on this same question. *Afro-Ásia* took note, and its 2000 issue contains reviews of two new first books, those of Elciene Azevedo and Joseli Mendonça,⁸³ two *mestrado* theses from what was in the process of becoming the Campinas school, led by Silvia Lara, Sidney Chalhoub, and Robert Slenes. Beyond training new researchers, they had created a publication series, *Várias Histórias*, that drew primarily on their students, but was also open to important work coming from other universities (in particular the Federal University of Bahia).⁸⁴ Azevedo’s work

81. Eric Foner, *Nothing but Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1983). The book has been translated into Portuguese as *Nada além da liberdade: a emancipação e seu legado* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, Brasília, CNPq, 1988).

82. The dissertation, defended in 1989, was published the following year under the title *Visões da liberdade* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1990).

83. Elciene Azevedo, *Orfeu de carapinha: a trajetória de Luiz Gama na imperial cidade de São Paulo* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 1999); Joseli Maria Nunes Mendonça, *Entre a mão e os anéis: a lei dos sexagenários e os caminhos da abolição no Brasil* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 1999). These works were directed by Silvia Lara.

84. We should note in the follow-up to the *Várias Histórias* collection works on slavery that characterized the 2000s: Jaime Rodrigues, *O infame comércio: Propostas e experiências no final do tráfico de africanos para o Brasil (1800–1850)* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2000); Carlos Eugênio Libano Soares, *A capoeira escrava e outras tradições rebeldes no Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850* (2001); Eduardo Spiller Pena, *Pajens da casa imperial: jurisconsultos, escravidão e a Lei de 1871* (2001); Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio, *Nas trincheiras da cura: as diferentes medicinas no Rio de Janeiro Imperial* (2002); *Artes e ofícios de curar no Brasil: capítulos de história social*, ed. Sidney Chalhoub et al. (2003); *Direitos e Justiça no Brasil. Ensaio de história social*, ed. Silvia Hunod Lara et al. (2006); Walter Fraga Filho, *Encruzilhadas da liberdade. Histórias de escravos e libertos na Bahia (1870–1910)* (2006); Larissa Viana, *O Idioma da Mestiçagem. As irmandades*

brings the reader into the world of Luiz Gama, an ex-slave who became a poet and a lawyer, and who, in the last years of slavery, would defend anyone trying to protect or gain their freedom. In Mendonça's study, we can see the same process at work when, between the 1871 law of the "free womb" that declared any child born to a slave woman was "born free" (rather than manumitted) and the 1885 law that freed slaves over the age of 60, the Brazilian government created a formidable trap for the slave owners, which was used by all those who hoped to obtain their freedom through legal means.

In Belo Horizonte, Eduardo França Paiva followed suit, working under the direction of Douglas Cole Libby, one of the finest specialists on mine labor and a key player in the demographic research on Minas Gerais.⁸⁵ By studying both the last wills and testaments of the freedmen and court cases tied to the conditional manumission (*coartação*) that was so characteristic of Minas Gerais, whereby a slave is freed for a sum of money paid in installments and must continue working for the master until the total sum is reached, Paiva showed another aspect of slave resistance, one centered on slaves' gaining an understanding of the legal system and turning it against their owners.⁸⁶ Laura de Mello e Souza⁸⁷ explored a similar hypothesis in a discussion that was, once again, in dialogue with American researchers.⁸⁸ They took on the functions of manumission in colonial slave societies and the reciprocal roles of slaves, their masters, and the administration, given the considerably increased number of freed men and women in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. Although Mello e Souza had long considered manumission to have been invented by owners as a means of regulating their investments (which explains the frequency in Brazil and especially in Minas Gerais of slaves' purchasing their freedom), in her new book she went in a different direction, teasing out a greater complementarity among the different actors, thanks in part to the availability of cash that work in the mines provided and the resulting ability of slaves to invest this money in their freedom. In her investigation of Mariana she used, as had Paiva, the court cases initiated by slaves in the process of manumission by *coartação* against their masters. And even if she did not reach quite as strong a conclusion as

de pardos na América portuguesa (2007); Elciene Azevedo, *O direito dos escravos: lutas jurídicas e abolicionismos na província de São Paulo* (2010); Ricardo Figueiredo Pirola, *Senzala Insurgente* (2011).

85. Eduardo França Paiva, *Escravos e libertos nas Minas Gerais do século XVIII; estratégias de resistência através dos testamentos* (São Paulo: Annablume, 1995). The *mestrado* itself had been defended in 1993.

86. See, in French, "Revendications de droits coutumiers et actions en justice des esclaves dans le Minas Gerais du XVIII^e siècle," in *Brésil: quatre siècles d'esclavage*, pp. 113–130.

87. Laura de Mello e Souza, *Norma e conflito: aspectos da História de Minas no século XVIII* (Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 1999).

88. This time it was Kathleen Higgins, who had just published "*Licentious Liberty*" in a *Brazilian Gold-Mining Region: Slavery, Gender, and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Sabará, Minas Gerais* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

had Paiva or Kathleen Higgins in favor of the unique ability of slaves to make use of the justice system, she acknowledged that this system created a ambiguous border between statuses, in which the dynamics of reinforcing freedom or resisting re-enslavement became so common that they transformed the very meaning of captivity.⁸⁹

The haziness of the boundaries between legal statuses has progressively become a major focus of research. The slow evolution of Brazilian slave society over the course of the long nineteenth century, during which slavery never quite disappeared, offers many examples for study. If the groundwork has been done on manumission in its various forms, there was still much work to do. All these areas of uncertainty have been explored in the last few years, with extremely promising results.

The highly uneven application of the slave trade abolition imposed by Great Britain in 1815 offers another opportunity to explore these questions of status. Beatriz Mamigonian dove into the topic in 1995 by analyzing the archives of the mixed Anglo-Brazilian commission set up in Rio de Janeiro in 1819 to rule on the cases of Africans found on clandestine slave-trading vessels.⁹⁰ Though Mamigonian had not yet finished her dissertation, in 2000 *Afro-Ásia* gave her a platform to discuss the strange status of “free Africans” who were not slaves, but who were nonetheless condemned to forced labor (for individuals or in government workshops) and who, understandably, undertook legal action to free themselves from their condition. At the same time, those who thought they had rights over these “free Africans” used Brazilian diplomatic pressure to try to reclaim their “human capital.”⁹¹

89. “Manumissions by *coartação* contributed to the complication of an already quite complex social structure, creating vast areas of uncertainty between slavery and freedom. If it was already commonplace for freedmen to be brought back into captivity, it became even easier to do so with the *coartação*: the parties could disagree over the sum of the debt owed or the clauses decided on beforehand, obfuscate the length of the fixed term, and manipulate the dates. On the other hand, this confusion also benefited slaves who were in the process of being manumitted [. . .]: in this sense, the *cortação* system became one aspect of the strategies that slaves managed to elaborate with patience, courage, and, frequently, cunning.” Laura de Mello e Souza, *Norma e conflito*, p. 169.

90. Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian first wrote a master’s thesis on this topic, “Theatre of Conflicts: the Anglo-Brazilian Mixed Commission Court in Rio de Janeiro, 1827–1845,” (University of Waterloo [Ontario], 1995) followed by a doctoral dissertation: “To be a Liberated African in Brazil: Labour and Citizenship in the Nineteenth-Century” (University of Waterloo, 2002). Leslie Bethell, in England, had provided the political and diplomatic context of the abolition of the Atlantic trade in *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

91. Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian, “Do que ‘o preto mina’ é capaz: etnia e resistência entre Africanos livres,” *Afro-Ásia*, 24 (2000): 71–95; “José Majojo et Francisco Moçambique, marins sur l’Atlantique. Reconstruire les trajectoires de vie des esclaves à l’âge des abolitions,” *Brésil(s). Sciences humaines et sociales*, 1 (mai 2012): 103–124. The same phenomenon would be studied later in the Bahia by Ricardo Tadeu Caíres Silva in his *mestrado* and then his doctoral dissertation, defended in 2007 (see in *Afro-Ásia*, “Memórias do tráfico ilegal de escravos nas ações

Arguments made in favor of gradual abolition were not solely a matter of political positioning.⁹² Gradualism also provided its share of uncertainty regarding the *ingênuos* (children born free to slave women from 1871 on) or, after 1885 and the Saraiva-Cotegipe law (called the “law of sixty year olds”), over men and women whose ages were unknown. The countless answers given by the minister of agriculture to questions from local jurisdictions and provincial administrations, in which he tried delineate laws that were in the process of evolving, did nothing to clarify matters.⁹³

But the ambiguity over the status of persons is not simply reducible to the vagaries of the legal system. Modes of life—living as if free—also played an important role. And this experience could take multiple forms, from the radical break entailed in different forms of *marronage* to the anonymity of the cities, where segregation between whites and non-whites, free and unfree, did not rest on any clear criteria.

Flávio dos Santos Gomes and João José Reis,⁹⁴ as well as Marcus Carvalho,⁹⁵ have showed that *quilombolas* (maroon slaves who took refuge in clandestine communities) did not necessarily hide away deep in the heart of rainforest. Often, they would remain close to cities, not just so that they could resupply themselves with food, weapons, and new recruits by means of varying degrees of violence, but also so that they could trade peaceably when their gardens produced the foodstuffs that the large plantations did not bother to cultivate. From this point on, borders were erased and statuses became muddled and, once again, police and judicial archives offer us the possibility of delving into these ambiguities.

de liberdade: Bahia, 1885–88,” 35 (2007): 37–82), and in São Paulo by Enidelce Bertin in her doctoral dissertation, “Os meia-cara. Africanos livres em São Paulo no século XIX,” defended in 2006 at USP. Some excerpts from the latter were published with the title “Reivindicações e resistência: o não dos Africanos livres (São Paulo, séc. XIX),” *Afro-Ásia*, 40 (2009): 105–143.

92. See, for example, the rather acerbic exchange between Chalhoub and Needell in the columns of *Afro-Ásia* over the review of the latter’s book (*The Party of Order: the Conservatives, the State, and Slavery in the Brazilian Monarchy, 1831–1871*, [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006]) by the former: Sidney Chalhoub, “Os conservadores no Brasil Império,” *Afro-Ásia*, 35 (2007): 317–326 and Jeffrey D. Needell, “Resposta à Sidney Chalhoub e à sua resenha ‘Os conservadores no Brasil império,’” *Afro-Ásia*, 37 (2008): 291–301.

93. Sidney Chalhoub showed the role played by the novelist Machado de Assis in the process of interpretation. He had been, in the 1870s and 1880s, head of the bureau in charge of the supervision (and therefore the interpretation) of the law of the Free Womb for the Ministry of Agriculture; in 1878 he also became a member of the commission to reform the agricultural law; see Sidney Chalhoub, *Machado de Assis historiador* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003).

94. See João José Reis and Flávio dos Santos Gomes, eds., *Liberdade por um fio. História dos quilombos no Brasil*; Flávio dos Santos Gomes, *A hidra e os pântanos: mocambos, quilombos e comunidades de fugitivos no Brasil (séculos XVII–XIX)* (São Paulo: Editora UNESP & Editora Polis, 2005). This was in fact the belated publication of his doctoral dissertation, which he had defended in Unicamp in 1997.

95. Marcus Carvalho, “João Pataca et sa ‘tranquille’ bande du *quilombo* de Catucá,” in *Brésil: quatre siècles d’esclavage*, pp. 215–242.

Urban slavery offered a different set of possibilities. The Brazilian city was a space in which slaves occupied nearly every functional role in the services, artisan tasks, commerce, transport, festivals, etc., and were often the only link between the closed domestic space of the *sobrado*—the two-story middle-class home common in large colonial cities—and everything that had to do with supplying it (water, food, luxury goods, etc.) or assuring its sanitation (garbage removal).⁹⁶ Two specific forms of slave lives free from most constraints have been given particular attention: the *canto* and the *ganho*.⁹⁷ The first were autonomous organizations of slave labor in small gangs. These were often led by freedmen or slaves considered as such, and they made deals, most often in the transport of merchandise or people, carried them out, and divided up the benefits between the members of the group, who might belong to different masters. The *ganho* was the most common system of labor in the cities. It consisted of buying or renting a slave with specific skills—from street vendor to barber, water-carrier to street cook—and letting him or her work independently, asking only that at the end of each day or each week he or she bring back a prearranged sum. Any surplus would be the slave's to keep. Often the *ganhadeiro* (or the *ganhadeira*) would not return to the master's house at night, but would rent a place to sleep from one of the freedmen who often lived on the ground floor of the *sobrados*. This system of urban labor, which has been described by some historians,⁹⁸ was the context in which several modes of life developed, includ-

96. Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, "De portas adentro e de portas afora: trabalho doméstico e escravidão no Recife, 1822–1850," *Afro-Ásia*, 29–30 (2003): 41–78.

97. João José Reis would provide a precise definition of this in Salvador in his "A greve negra de 1857 na Bahia," *Revista USP*, 18 (1993): 17–21 and "De olho no canto: trabalho de rua na Bahia na véspera da abolição," *Afro-Ásia*, 24 (2000): 199–242. See also Maria José Andrade, *A mão-de-obra escrava em Salvador, 1811–1860* (Salvador: Corrupio, 1988); Cecília Moreira Soares, "As Ganhadeiras: mulheres e resistência negra em Salvador no século XIX," *Afro-Ásia*, 17 (1996): 57–71 (which is in fact a chapter of her *mestrado* dissertation, directed by João Reis and Kátia Mattoso: "A mulher negra na Bahia no século XIX" (UFBA, 1994). Urban slavery in the Bahia is, of course, given great attention in all of Kátia de Queirós Mattoso's social historical work, especially her *Être esclave au Brésil*.

98. In fact, urban slavery and the modalities specific to it in Rio de Janeiro were studied early on in the pioneering work of the American historian Mary C. Karasch, in her dissertation defended in 1972 ("Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808–1850"), published in English in 1987 under the same title by Princeton University Press and translated into Portuguese in 2000 as *A vida dos escravos no Rio de Janeiro (1808–1850)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras). After hers, the three principal works on the subject are those of Leile Mezan Algranti in his *mestrado* dissertation, defended at the USP in 1983 and published under the title *O Feitor Ausente: estudo sobre a escravidão urbana no Rio de Janeiro 1808–1822* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988); of Marilene Rosa Nogueira de Silva in her 1986 *mestrado* ("O Escravo ao Ganho: Uma nova face da Escravidão") published under the title *Negro na Rua: a nova face da escravidão* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1988); and that of Luiz Carlos Soares in his PhD dissertation defended in London in 1988, the essential parts of which can be found in Portuguese under the title *O povo de "cam" na Capital do Brasil: a escravidão urbana no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Faperj, 2007). For an outline of his conclusions, see "Os escravos de ganho no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX, Rio de Janeiro," *Revista Brasileira de História*, 8, 16 (1988): 107–142.

ing a life lived “as if free,” which we can examine through court cases. The slave city is therefore something quite different from a space of one-way subjugation and domination.⁹⁹ Even when increasingly draconian laws and regulations—especially when a revolt had just been put down—were to set out to constrain this strange freedom, there still existed, particularly in Rio de Janeiro, social groups on the margins of criminality that gave slaves the power to occupy urban spaces. This occupation was rarely contested, especially when, as in the case of the *capoeira* groups, the capacity for collective violence was put in the service of dubious political interests who, in turn, would provide protection.¹⁰⁰

When abolition finally arrived in 1888, the transition towards free labor would shift the status problem without erasing it completely. The ambiguity would no longer be between servitude and freedom but between the different degrees of citizenship.¹⁰¹ Following passage of the “free womb” law, the question arose as to whether the population of children declared free should be considered political actors or not when they reached adulthood at the turn of the century. As Keila Grinberg showed in her dissertation, the decisions made were fundamentally conservative, even among avowed abolitionists.¹⁰² During the transition to the Republic in 1888–1889, a legal sleight of hand that denied the right to vote to people who were illiterate would settle this question for many years to come.¹⁰³ The populations thus deprived of full citizenship were nonetheless active in the political sphere, both before and after abolition. Powerful solidarities allowed those who were living as free or had become free through emancipation to remain in social positions that their status did not guarantee them. This was the case, for example, with the *capoeira* groups of Rio de Janeiro in the mid-nineteenth century that Carlos Eugênio Líbano Soares has studied. The conflicts that arose among social groups living on the margins of freedom gave strong impetus to the idea that it would be dangerous to put

99. Juliana Barreto Farias, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, Carlos Eugênio Líbano Soares, and Carlos Eduardo Moreira de Araújo, *Cidades Negras. Africanos, crioulos e espaços urbanos do século XIX* (São Paulo: Alameda Editorial, 2006).

100. Carlos Eugênio Líbano Soares, *A negregada instituição: os capoeiras no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Divisão de Editoração da Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, 1994); *A capoeira escrava e outras tradições rebeldes no Rio de Janeiro (1808–1850)* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2001).

101. See Olívia Maria Gomes da Cunha and Flávio dos Santos Gomes, eds., *Quase cidadão: histórias e antropologias da pós-emancipação* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2007); Douglas Cole Libby and Júnia Ferreira Furtado, eds., *Trabalho livre, trabalho escravo: Brasil e Europa, séculos XVIII e XIX*, (São Paulo: Annablume, 2004).

102. Keila Grinberg, *O Fiador dos Brasileiros: cidadania, escravidão e direito civil no tempo de Antonio Pereira Rebouças* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2002). Her doctoral dissertation had been defended in 2000 at the UFF.

103. Decree of November 19, 1889. The 1881 Saraiva law already excluded the illiterate from voting, but because suffrage was then limited to property-holders, only the richest freedmen or free men were affected by the additional literacy requirement.

off a decision on abolition any longer.¹⁰⁴ However, after the law was passed, its immediate consequences for the labor market and social order seemed more dangerous still. As the authorities and elites set about trying to empty the law of its meaning,¹⁰⁵ the newly freed found themselves facing new struggles to protect not only their rights, however reduced, but also their dignity.¹⁰⁶

The *memória do cativo* (the memory of servitude) is still today strongly linked to the contradictory representations constructed during the early post-abolition period. A century after abolition, the constitution of 1988 conferred specific rights, in particular with regard to collective ownership of land, on communities descended from *quilombos* (the maroon communities), and commissions were created to determine which communities would be able to take advantage of this special status. From that moment on, historians and anthropologists testified to the way in which *quilombola* communities' memory of *marronage* had been formed out of the memory of slavery itself. *Afro-Ásia* opened its pages in 2000 with a first summary of this interaction between academics and the legal world over the scope of the term *quilombo*. One of the most interesting results of the discussion was a proposed reinterpretation of the law, turning the term *quilombo* into a symbolic memory of the larger slaveholding past, rather than limiting it to documented instances of resistance through *marronage*.¹⁰⁷ Hebe Mattos wrote an early essay in French about a specific example of the phenomenon of black settlements that could be construed as broadly "descended from" processes of escape from slavery.¹⁰⁸ Scholars had started the process, over the course of their investigations, of collecting and conserving documentary materials—including images, artifacts and oral accounts—that had, up until then, been neglected in Brazil.¹⁰⁹

The systematic exploration of the judicial archives thus allowed the second and third generations of Brazilian historians of slavery to document something that had long been only a hope: records demonstrating that men and women

104. Maria Helena Pereira Toledo Machado, *O plano e o pânico: os movimentos sociais na década da Abolição* (São Paulo: Editora da UFRJ & EDUSP, 1994).

105. Walter Fraga Filho, *Encruzilhadas da Liberdade: histórias de escravos e libertos na Bahia (1870–1910)* (São Paulo, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2006).

106. See in *Brésil: quatre siècles d'esclavage. Nouvelles questions, nouvelles recherches*, Sidney Chalhoub's contribution (« Solidarité et liberté. Les sociétés de secours mutuel pour gens de couleur à Rio de Janeiro dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle », pp. 283–308), which shows how, following abolition, the mutual aid organizations of black men did not limit themselves to charitable works, but become involved in the labor market for the profit of their members.

107. *Afro-Ásia*, 23 (2000) dossier "Remanescences de quilombos." The journal gives a platform to Richard Price, Valdério Santos Silva, Jean-François Véran, and Sheila Brasileiro.

108. Hebe Mattos, "'Terras de quilombo': citoyenneté, mémoire de la captivité et identité noire dans le Brésil contemporain," in *Brésil: quatre siècles d'esclavage*, pp. 329–360.

109. These iconographic and oral archives are preserved at the Laboratório de História Oral e Imagem (LABHOI) of the Universidade federal fluminense (<http://www.historia.uff.br/labhoi/>).

who had known captivity and slavery possessed an understanding of the situations in which they were held and the capacity to organize their lives, successfully or unsuccessfully, and deal with the consequences. The results of these hundreds of converging research projects have not disappointed. They have made it possible to redefine the field and begin to position it in a comparative international perspective, which will certainly be the next big step for Brazilian historians. Many researchers are already engaged in this effort, and their participation in conferences that are focused on geographic areas larger than Brazil is a good sign for new developments.

There were at the same time other advances—even if they were smaller-scale—that were not part of the general dynamic of the 1990s and 2000s. Here one can point to the researchers of this generation who have kept the political perspective in their sights, and who chose to focus on the Paraíba Valley, which had been a laboratory for modernity in imperial Brazil. The best example of this is the work of Ricardo Henrique Salles.¹¹⁰ Picking up on a tradition founded by Stanley and Barbara Stein's early research as much as by that of Viotti da Costa, Salles's work has brought to light a "second slavery" that was completely different from the slavery that existed in the Portuguese colonial world. This "second slavery" was born in the new mega-plantations that grew coffee—with more than 100 slaves—which arose in the nineteenth century, particularly in southeast Brazil. These operations affected every sector of the economy around them, from the most traditional to the most modern including, for example, construction work on the railroads. For Salles, the central focus was not on a social and demographic analysis of the *senzalas*, as Robert W. Slenes was doing at the time, but instead on framing this description within a larger political vision in which the large-scale planters and the imperial (and then republican) government were the main actors. Already an attentive biographer of Joaquim Nabuco, Salles revisited the Paraguayan War as well as the abolitionist movement in order to better understand the construction of the nation in its modernity as much as in its reality of slavery.¹¹¹ Rafael de Bivar Marquese adopted the same perspective. For him as well, the region of focus would be the Paraíba Valley and his primary subjects would be masters rather than the slaves. Nonetheless, it was less the politics of slavery than interested him than the way it was overseen—administratively as well as domestically—and the ideologies on which it rested.¹¹² One of the greatest values of his work is thus its broad

110. Ricardo H. Salles, *E o Vale era o escravo. Vassouras-século XIX. Senhores e escravos no coração do Império* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2008).

111. Ricardo H. Salles, *Guerra do Paraguai: escravidão e cidadania na formação do exército* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1990); Joaquim Nabuco, *Um pensador do Império* (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 2002); *Guerra do Paraguai. Memórias & Imagens* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Biblioteca Nacional, 2003).

112. His republishing of the *Manual do Agricultor Brasileiro* by Carlos Augusto Taunay (São

chronological scope (from the colonial world to post-slavery societies) and its comparative perspective (particularly with Cuba).¹¹³

The Reconfiguration of Africa: Cultural Heritage or Hub in the Network of Atlantic Circulation?

In a debate that took place at Yale University in October 2010, João José Reis declined the longstanding suggestion that Brazilian scholarship adopt the paradigm of “creolization,” an Afro-American process for which the Atlantic was the theater and slavery the point of origin.¹¹⁴ He reminded those present that the word *crioulo* in Portuguese was ill-suited to this idea, to the extent that it not only excluded anyone born in Africa but also, strangely enough, any person considered to be a mulatto. He argued that the term *ladino* (which came from an old Portuguese word meaning “clever”) was more appropriate for discussions of this phenomenon, since it was applied to Africans who had become fully integrated into Brazilian slave society and who were able to speak Portuguese, even while they continued to be seen as African. In this way, he restricted the notion of “creolization” as used in the U.S. historiography, to people whose ties to Africa were still visible despite adaptations they had made to the multiple and contradictory aspects of slave (or ex-slave) status and the modes of life associated with it. On the one hand, he emphasized the astonishing ability of slaves to create, in a land of servitude, a culture that was properly theirs as they inserted themselves into the gaps in a society that extended well beyond their own communities. On the other hand, he reaffirmed the irreducible role played by Africa in Brazil ever since the first slaves crossed the *calunga-grande* (the ocean, but also “death” in the vocabulary of Umbanda, an important Afro-Brazilian religion).¹¹⁵

For the past several years Brazilian historiography has been trying to re-think the role played by Africa. The 2003 decision by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s government to integrate the history of Africa into the national history taught in schools pushed scholars to seriously ask themselves whether they were up to the task of instructing students in a subject that, up until that point, had received little attention in Brazilian universities. Nonetheless, historians—particularly

Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001) would draw particular attention.

113. Rafael de Bivar Marquese, *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente. Senhores, letrados e o controle dos escravos nas Américas, 1660–1860* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004).

114. American Counterpoint: New Approaches to Slavery and Abolition in Brazil (12th Annual Gilder Lehrman Center International Conference at Yale University). João J. Reis’s contribution (“African Nations and Cultural Practices in Nineteenth Century Salvador, Bahia”) is available online at: <http://www.yale.edu/gle/brazil/papers/reis-paper.pdf>.

115. See Carlos Eugênio Marcondes de Moura, *A travessia da Calunga Grande: três séculos de imagens sobre o negro no Brasil, 1637–1899* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial, 2000).

those who worked on slavery—seemed to have anticipated this decision and certainly contributed to its having been made.

Once again, *Afro-Ásia* provides evidence of this development. Especially in this case because, in its own mission, the journal considered itself to be an Africanist publication and had, since the very beginning, devoted much space to the study of the African continent—paying particular attention to areas that had been under Portuguese colonial control—as well as to the Afro-Brazilian activism that had re-emerged in the years following the restoration of democracy, mainly in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador.¹¹⁶

Although in 1996 its primary focus had shifted to the history of slavery, *Afro-Ásia* continued to be an important participant in debates around the Afro-Brazilian movement. Even if it abandoned its traditional Africanist side, it almost immediately reintroduced an Africa focus in a new form.¹¹⁷ A 1997 homage to Pierre Verger, who had died the previous year in Salvador, provided the opportunity to revisit the slave trade in the way that Verger himself would have approached it, taking into account both sides of the Atlantic. This subject had been curiously understudied in Brazil until the 1990s.¹¹⁸ Its examination was not entirely innocuous, of course; the question of which heritage, West African or Bantu, had most marked the Brazilian populations of African origin had been around since Nina Rodrigues and Freyre, and contradictory characteristics had been attributed to one or the other culture in order to explain the rebelliousness of the first and the adaptive capacity of the second, who were brought over in large numbers starting in the seventeenth century. Luís Viana Filho had long ago shown how the source point of the Atlantic trade shifted over its history, bringing to the Portuguese New World populations of different origins and making slave society a melting pot that was quite different from any

116. For a recent overview, see Paulina Alberto, *Terms of Inclusion: Black Intellectuals in Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

117. The extent of this can be seen in the reviews, published three years after the journal's founding (*Afro-Ásia*, 17 (1996): 252–259), of two works by Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993) and *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993). For Gilroy, the black Atlantic was a fundamentally northern space whose links to the African continent remained mythical and which, in a certain sense, was not readily analogous to the case of Brazil.

118. For a long time, research on the Atlantic trade was limited almost exclusively to historians from the U.S. (Philip Curtin first, then David Eltis and David Richardson and, on Brazil more specifically, Herbert S. Klein). One of the first Brazilians who worked on this topic was Maurício Goulart (*A escravidão africana no Brasil (das origens à extinção do tráfico)* (São Paulo: Livraria Martins Editora, 1949), whose numbers, judged to be too low (2.5 to 3 million captives brought from Africa) and were revised in the United States by Robert Conrad and in Brazil by Luiz Felipe de Alencastro in the 1970s and 1980s. It was in this same period that the development of numerous regional studies permitted a consensus to be reached around a number, today estimated to be 5.5 million men and women.

abstract “African” identity.¹¹⁹ Pierre Verger reused Filho’s model of successive cycles: the cycle of Guinea, or Senegambia (second half of the sixteenth century), the cycle of Angola (seventeenth century), the cycle of the Mina Coast and the Gulf of Benin (eighteenth and early nineteenth century), the cycle of the clandestine trade (1815–1851), adding to it the precise year, 1770, when the Gulf of Benin superseded the Mina Coast. This model would continue to be refined with more attention given to individual ports of departure in Africa and arrival in Brazil. Manolo Florentino played a unifying role in this refreshed study of the slave trade, which *Afro-Ásia* did not fail to appreciate.¹²⁰

The shift began when young researchers temporarily abandoned the Brazilian archives for the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon and the national archives of Angola or Mozambique. Roquinaldo Ferreira was one of these, and *Afro-Ásia* published a chapter of his *mestrado* dissertation in 1999.¹²¹ He saw the slave trade on African soil as a commercial network that was not limited to the ports but that directed the activity of merchants who distributed captives wherever the demand was strongest. At the same time, he discovered how resistance manifested itself—including in the form of rebellions—even prior to the voyage to the Americas. He applied to the colonial territory of Angola the template of questions that had been worked out in studies of Brazil. Under his pen, Luanda became a city that was comparable to Salvador: The slave societies of the two colonial capitals had more similarities than differences. Some years later, the journal gave place on the same topics to another important researcher from York University, José Curto,¹²² but forgot for the moment the Brazilian scholar from Princeton also trained in York, Mariana Candido.¹²³

119. Luís Vianna Filho, *O negro na Bahia* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria José Olympio, 1946); see also Pierre Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

120. Manolo Florentino, Alexandre Vieira Ribeiro, Daniel Domingues da Silva, “Aspectos comparativos do tráfico de Africanos para o Brasil (séculos XVIII e XIX),” *Afro-Ásia*, 31 (2004): 83–126. In 1991, Florentino defended his dissertation on the traffic in slaves towards Rio de Janeiro: cf. Manolo Florentino, *História do tráfico atlântico de escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995; republished under the title: *Em costas negras: uma história do tráfico de escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro (séculos XVIII e XIX)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997).

121. Roquinaldo Ferreira, “Escravidão e revoltas de escravos em Angola (1830–1860),” *Afro-Ásia*, 21–22 (1998–1999): 9–44. Ferreira, who had worked several years in Angola for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database Project, wrote a doctoral dissertation in the U.S.: “Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650–1800” (University of California-Los Angeles, 2003). The first book published after his PhD, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), is based on new research.

122. José Curto, “Resistência à escravidão na África: o caso dos escravos fugitivos recapturados em Angola, 1846–1876,” *Afro-Ásia*, 33 (2005): 67–86.

123. Mariana P. Candido (Princeton University) defended her dissertation in Canada at York University: “Enslaving Frontiers: Slavery, Trade and Identity in Benguela, 1780–1850,” which was published in Spanish under the title *Fronteras de Esclavización: Esclavitud, Comercio e Identidad en Benguela, 1780–1850* (México: El Colegio de México, 2011). All the while asking

It was Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira's dissertation, directed by Kátia Mattoso and defended in France in 1992, that opened up a new direction in Brazilian historical scholarship, one that would immediately be taken up by others.¹²⁴ Oliveira, whose *mestrado* dissertation on freedmen in Salvador had caught the attention of scholars in 1979, published sparingly but had tremendous influence on what came to be called the Bahia school.¹²⁵ She picked up on the key arguments of her French doctorate in two articles published in São Paulo in 1996 and Salvador in 1997.¹²⁶ Once a demographic profile of the enslaved population had been put in place, she dedicated herself to tracing the social history of ethnic identities, whether assigned or asserted. She made sure to work with both sides of the Atlantic. The labels designating the assumed origins of slaves were tied to the chance circumstances of their capture, their transport overland, the way in which they were grouped in the African *feitorias*, and their subsequent sale to slave ships, but those designations were not taken up by the captain or his American clients alone. In the process of assigning origins, local accomplices, of African, European or mixed ancestry, also played a role: "The terms that were used to designate the origins of slaves were drawn as much from the repertoire of denominations used by the Europeans as from the terms used by local African populations to classify individuals who belonged to groups that they were familiar with."¹²⁷ This explains why these labels would be taken up as self-designations by the very people to whom they had been assigned, particularly when this allowed them to "distinguish themselves" from a more general "African-ness" that was too often conflated with color and servile status.¹²⁸ This was the starting point for a rich investigation into the assigning and assertion of "nations" as a social and cultural process that has had no real equivalent in any other historiography. Besides the traditional sources like parish registers, Oliveira plumbed the archives of the black Catholic lay brotherhoods, which are perhaps the most impressive and unique features of the Iberian Americas and which can be found in the colonial territories as well as in Spain and Por-

new questions, she conducted an investigation of Benguela in which she discovered material of a similar type to those uncovered by Ferreira in Luanda. See *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

124. Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, "Retrouver une identité: jeux sociaux des Africains de Bahia" (Université Paris IV, 1992).

125. M. I. Côrtes de Oliveira, *O Liberto: o seu mundo e os outros*.

126. M. I. Côrtes de Oliveira, "Quem eram os 'Negros da Guiné'? A origem dos africanos na Bahia," *Afro-Ásia*, 19–20 (1997): 37–73. See also: "Viver e morrer no meio dos seus. Nações e comunidades africanas na Bahia do século XIX," *Revista USP*, 28 (Dezembro-Fevereiro 1995–1996): 174–193. See, in French, "Minas et Jejes de Bahia. Qui étaient-ils en Afrique?" in *Pour l'Histoire du Brésil. Mélanges offerts à K. de Queirós Mattoso*, ed. François Crouzet, Philippe Bonnichon, and Denis Rolland (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000): 383–396.

127. M. I. Côrtes de Oliveira, "Quem eram os 'Negros da Guiné,'" p. 73.

128. Contrary to what linguists were doing in the 1960s (see, for example, Yêda Pessoa Castro, "Etnônimos africanos e formas ocorrentes no Brasil," *Afro-Ásia*, 6–7 [1968]: 63–81), she does not aim to "correct" the Brazilian deformations with an African "reality."

tugal.¹²⁹ In another pioneering study on Rio de Janeiro, Mariza de Carvalho Soares showed how a tiny group of slaves from the Minas Coast, the Mahi, used a religious brotherhood dedicated to Santo Elesban and Santa Efigênia (two “black” saints who were highly respected in the Portuguese empire), as a means of protection. This tack was especially efficient because it was strongly tied to identity and therefore strictly differentiated them from other African “nations.”¹³⁰ Here, the evocation of Africa was asserted not simply as a symbolic heritage but as a complex construction, which was nonetheless quite concrete, and which needed to be continually renegotiated, even within the brotherhood itself.

We can connect research on the role of “nations” with research on “African” rituals, such as the crowning of the King of Kongo or the “black ambassadors,” figures that can be found in public festivals both in Portugal and in its colonies. It is tempting to say that these rituals fall under the scope of Afro-Brazilian syncretism, from the point of view of music, dance, and festival, and to the extent that they brought together in the same public spaces master and slave, white and black, free and freed. But one might also take the view of Marina de Mello e Souza in her 1999 dissertation¹³¹ and of Silvia H. Lara in a recent and now classic article.¹³² Both argue that the same events took on dif-

129. In the French colonial empire, including Louisiana, the designation by “nations” was in widespread use in notarial and administrative documents. Nonetheless, in the absence of brotherhoods similar to those in the Iberian empires, their enumeration is useful primarily for a quantitative analysis of the flow of imported slaves. The one exception is Gwendolyn Midlo Hall’s database on Louisiana, and the research based on it in which she sought to analyze the different inheritances from Africa and the identities attached to them. See Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

130. Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *Devotos da cor: identidade étnica, religiosidade e escravidão no Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2000). See the English translation, *People of Faith: Slavery and African Catholics in Eighteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). For Bahia, see João José Reis, “Ethnic Politics among Africans in Nineteenth-Century Bahia,” in *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora*, ed. Paul Lovejoy and David Trotman (London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 240–264. A collective overview carried out five years later gives us an idea of the richness of this field of research; see *No labirinto das nações: Africanos e identidades no Rio de Janeiro, século XIX*, ed. Juliana Barreto Farias, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, and Carlos Eugênio Libano Soares (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 2005). For a discussion of the term “nation,” see Renato da Silveira, “Nação africana no Brasil escravista: problemas teóricos e metodológicos,” *Afro-Ásia*, 38 (2008): 245–301.

131. See Marina de Mello e Souza, *Reis negros no Brasil escravista: história da Festa de Coroação de Rei Congo* (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2002). Her work picks up on the text of her dissertation, directed by Ronaldo Vainfas and defended at the UFF in 1999. See also de Mello e Souza, “Reis do Congo no Brasil, séculos XVIII e XIX,” *Revista de História*, 152 (2005): 79–98, in which the author enters into discussion with researchers from the U.S. who are working on the same topics.

132. Silvia Hunold Lara, “Une fête pour les historiens: La *Relation* de Francisco Calmon

ferent meanings depending on whether they were viewed or experienced by Africans, black Creoles, or colonists. In this recent research, African identity is not only a creolized construction but also a kind of complicity since it only takes on meaning through a shared collective memory. It separated as much as it brought together the different segments of slaveholding society.

These historiographic turns become even more apparent when a specific area of research has been closely studied for decades. This is the case for religions that are called Afro-Brazilian. The continued interest of historians in this, one of the most prolific topics of Brazilian anthropology, combined with the historical dimension more and more frequently introduced into work by anthropologists themselves, has produced unexpected results. In Renato da Silveira's huge book on the *candomblé* of Barroquinha in Salvador, a close case study expands into a lengthy and detailed work of microhistorical erudition.¹³³ By contrast, anthropologist Luis Nicolau Parés and historian João José Reis, in different ways but in continual dialogue, have described the two poles of Bahian *candomblé*, Jeje and Nagô, from multiple vantage points.¹³⁴ For both of them, examining the formation of a Jeje "nation" and a Nagô "nation" in the eighteenth and especially in the nineteenth century was key, since these "nations" became the foundations of religious practices that could then be used, reciprocally, to identify those who practiced them. Parés challenged what he saw as a tendency of researchers (since Nina Rodrigues) to "Nagô-ize" the Bahian Afro-Brazilian world. They had focused on the Yoruba peoples from the southwest of present-day Nigeria and the southeast of the present-day Republic of Benin and their rituals (the *candomblé*), to the neglect of Gbe speakers (principally Ewe, Fon, and Aja) and the vast scope of practices of vodoun across a large region whose political capital had been the ancient kingdom of Dahomey, in the south of present-day Benin, since the eighteenth century. For Parés as for Reis, the tension between these two poles could be seen on both sides of the Atlantic, because the wars between the Oyó (predominantly Yoruba) and Dahomey (predominantly Jeje) resulted in masses of captives being sold into the Euro-

(1762) et la figure du Roi du Congo dans le Brésil colonial," in *Brésil: quatre siècles d'esclavage*, pp. 85–113.

133. Renato da Silveira, *O candomblé da Barroquinha: processo de constituição do primeiro terreiro baiano de keto* (Salvador: Edições Maiana, 2006).

134. João José Reis, "Candomblé in Nineteenth-Century Bahia. Priests, followers, clients," in *Rethinking the African Diaspora: the Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil*, ed. Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay (London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 116–134; *Domingos Sodré, um sacerdote africano: escravidão, liberdade e candomblé na Bahia do século XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008). From Luis Nicolau Parés see: "The 'Nagôization' Process in Bahian Candomblé," in *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*, ed. Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 185–208; *A formação do Candomblé: história e ritual da nação jeje na Bahia* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2006).

pean slave trade. From this point on, understanding the extremely complex relationship between the two “nations” and the two “religions”—themselves born in Brazil in the same tense environment—became a central question for anyone who wanted to work with the aspects of Africa that circulated from one side of the Atlantic to the other as these identities were being constructed.

The religions linked to the territories of the Kongo had just as decisive an influence in Brazil. They had their own anthropologists, and they found their historian in Robert S. Slenes.¹³⁵ In a series of exceptionally well-documented studies, Slenes showed how the cults of the *nkisi*, which traveled on slave ships departing from Luanda and Benguela, developed differently in the New World than those of the *orixas* or the *vaudous*. These cults were unique to nomadic societies that would incorporate into their rituals the divinities of the areas that they temporarily inhabited. Arriving in Brazil, their priests-turned-slaves introduced Amerindian divinities into their rituals in the same way, giving rise to new cults like the *Cabula*. In addition, it seems that the elements of these cults that made the voyage were precisely those that, in Africa, were used to restore the communal equilibrium when it had been destabilized by famine or war (cults of affliction). Slavery certainly received a good deal of attention, especially when rituals were accompanied by magical practices that aimed to restrict the power of masters or even to aid rebellion against them. Marcus Carvalho showed how the same connections crystallized around the *jurema*, itself born out of the confrontation between Bantu cults, Amerindian cults, and popular Catholicism, connections between protection and revolt at the frontiers of a world—that of the *quilombos* and the villages of the Pernambuco hinterland—where identities, black and white, European and Amerindian, were constantly exchanging their representations and forms.¹³⁶

To complete this tableau we must not forget Islam, which arrived in Brazil with the first importations of slaves, many of whom had been born in the historically Islamic regions of Senegambia. Their presence increased exponentially at the end of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century when jihads between neighboring territories plunged the Gulf of Benin into war and produced countless prisoners who were enslaved upon capture. Rendered quite

135. Robert W. Slenes, “*Malungu, Ngoma Vem!*: África Coberta e Descoberta no Brasil,” *Revista USP*, 12 (December–January–February 1991–92): 48–67; “A Árvore de *Nsanda* transplantada: cultos Kongo de aflição e identidade escrava no Sudeste brasileiro (século XIX),” in *Trabalho livre, trabalho escravo: Brasil e Europa, séculos XVIII e XIX*, ed. Douglas Cole Libby and Júnia Ferreira Furtado (São Paulo: Annablume, 2006), pp. 273–314; “Saint Anthony at the Crossroads in Kongo and Brazil: ‘Creolization’ and Identity Politics in the Black South Atlantic, ca. 1700/1850,” in *Africa, Brazil and the Construction of Trans-Atlantic Black Identities*, ed. Boubacar Barry, Élisée Soumonni, and Lívio Sanson (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), pp. 209–254. For more on this question see Marina de Mello e Souza, “Catolicismo negro no Brasil: Santos e minkisi, uma reflexão sobre miscigenação cultural,” *Afro-Ásia*, 28 (2002): 125–146.

136. Marcus Carvalho, “João Pataca et sa ‘tranquille’ bande du *quilombo* de Catucá.”

conspicuous by the Malê Revolt in Salvador in 1835, the presence of African Muslims produced a kind of terror among property owners and the authorities: Their practices and their culture—believers were often literate—were more worrisome than those of the African polytheists. João J. Reis and some of his colleagues at the Universidade federal da Bahia (UFBA) have been studying this question for quite some time through the lens of the 1835 rebellion and the records—particularly the famous amulets written in Arabic characters worn by the rebels—documenting the repression that followed.¹³⁷ But here again, at the turn of the 2000s the initial approach was profoundly transformed by integrating Africa, this time Islamic Africa, into the discussion. The way in which this shift occurred is especially clear when one compares the successive editions of Reis's large-scale investigation of the Malê Revolt and his last book, coauthored with two colleagues from Rio de Janeiro and Recife, on the marabout (*alufá*) Rufino.¹³⁸

The question that Reis originally asked about the 1835 revolt was quite simple: which dimension, religious, ethnic, or social, can best explain the intensity of the ties between conspirators that led to the insurrection or, inversely, to the forces of division that sank it? The 1993 revisions made when the book was translated into English offer the outline of a solution: It was less ethnicity or religion that made the difference than the distinction between Africans and creoles. It was the former who made up the majority of the combatants in the revolt. But why? In the 2003 edition, Reis took another step forward. He asserted it was “islamicized Nagô slaves” and not free men or freedmen who were on the front lines, and the contemporary fear of a possible jihad was a direct consequence of the evolution of slaves' demography: The most recently arrived slaves were frequently Muslim. But the reasons for the revolt take up less of the author's attention at the end of the book than the fact that it was the last of its kind. To address this issue, Reis's interpretation required him to return to Africa, where he discovered that the captives arriving in Bahia at the beginning of

137. These documents have been a source of fascination for historians. *Afro-Ásia* has published five articles on the subject: “Os documentos árabes do Arquivo do Estado da Bahia editados, transcritos, traduzidos e comentados por Rolf Reichert,” *Afro-Ásia*, 2–3 (1966), 4–5 (1967), and 6–7 (1968); Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche, “Luta religiosa ou luta política? O levante dos Malês de Bahia segundo uma fonte islâmica,” *Afro-Ásia*, 19–20 (1997); Nikolay Dobronravín, “Escritos multilíngües em caracteres árabes: novas fontes de Trinidad e Brasil no século XIX,” *Afro-Ásia*, 31 (2004).

138. See João José Reis, “Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The African Muslim Uprising in Bahia, 1835” (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1982); *Rebelião escrava no Brasil. A história do levante dos Malês (1835)* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1986); *Slave Rebellion in Brazil. The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); *Rebelião escrava no Brasil. A história do levante dos Malês em 1835*, Edição revista e ampliada (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003). See also: João José Reis, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, *O alufá Rufino: tráfico, escravidão e liberdade no Atlântico negro (c. 1823–c. 1853)* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010).

the nineteenth century were mostly warriors who had been taken prisoner in the internal conflicts between Islamic populations in the Gulf of Benin, while in the following years, it was not jihads that produced the slaves but razzias in central African regions. The Bahian “peace” of the second half of the nineteenth century could therefore be explained by the simple disappearance of potential combatants. The failure of the 1835 revolt also produced a phenomenon of equal importance: a severe repression that affected not only slaves but also free men, and had the effect of triggering an exodus that included both banishment and voluntary flight. Banishment to the African colonies, which was considered one of the most terrible punishments in the Portuguese arsenal of repression, became the more or less constrained choice for many individuals and families. The best known of these are the *Agudás* of Benin and from the larger Yoruba region (from which the word itself came, almost certainly derived from the city of Ajuda or Whydah) who have until today retained their customs and often the Portuguese language. Among them can be found many descendants of slaves who returned from Brazil, but also descendants of slave traders who had established bridgeheads on both sides of the ocean, as was the case with the most famous of them, a freedman from Bahia, Francisco Félix de Souza, better known under the title of *chachá* that the King of Dahomey bestowed upon him in 1821.¹³⁹

Brazilian historians have identified another fascinating phenomenon within this diaspora: the circulation between the two continents of slaves and ex-slaves, who financed their Atlantic mobility with their own labor in the former case and by commerce—often the slave trade—as well as, intriguingly, religion, in the latter.¹⁴⁰

Slave-sailors became well known for the ambiguity of their status on ships once the trade became illegal and English cruisers began hunting down smuggling vessels. Beatriz Mamigonian, a specialist on “free Africans” (the illegally enslaved captives “liberated” into an altogether ambiguous status by the British), encountered these slave-sailors in the archives thanks to the confrontations recorded between their owners and the English Admiralty.¹⁴¹ Equally in-

139. Milton Guran, *Agudás: os ‘brasileiros’ do Benim* (São Paulo: Nova Fronteira, 1999); Milton Guran, “Da bricolagem da memória à construção da própria imagem entre os Agudás do Benim,” *Afro-Ásia*, 28 (2002): 45–76; João José Reis and Milton Guran, “Urbain-Karim Elisio da Silva, um Agudá descendente de negro malê,” *Afro-Ásia*, 28 (2002): 77–96; Alberto da Costa e Silva, *Francisco Félix de Souza, mercador de escravos* (São Paulo: Editora Nova Fronteira, 2004). This topic has been explored since the 1980s, starting with the anthropologist Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, working on returns to Nigeria in *Negros, estrangeiros: os escravos libertos e sua volta à África* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985).

140. Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, “O Traficante de Escravos, a Mulher do Vizinho e o Chicote Inglês,” *Revista do Instituto Arqueológico, Histórico e Geográfico Pernambucano*, 61, 1 (2005): 241–263.

141. Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian “José Majojo et Francisco Moçambique, marins sur l’Atlantique.”

teresting is the case of Abuncare, also known as Rufino José Maria, whose story is told in a recent book by João J. Reis, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, and Marcus Carvalho.¹⁴²

Born in the kingdom of Oyó in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Rufino José Maria was enslaved, taken to Salvador, and then sold in Porto Alegre, where he was subsequently able to purchase his freedom. Having become *liberto*, he signed on as cook on board the *Ermelinda*, an armed slave-smuggling vessel. He sailed back and forth between Brazil and Africa, particularly Angola, and most likely had a hand in the traffic of slaves himself. The *Ermelinda* was eventually seized by the English and brought back to Sierra Leone, where its crew was judged under the bilateral British-Brazilian treaties. At this moment, his destiny changed. He left the sea to attend a Koranic school, learned Arabic and the Koran, and discovered his Yoruba Muslim roots. But his goal was not to lead a new pious existence in Africa. Once his training was completed he returned to the Americas, specifically to Recife, to perform the sacerdotal functions of an *alufá* (marabout). He would be arrested and sent before a judge for being found in possession of texts written in Arabic, which had been considered especially pernicious ever since the Malê Revolt. It was thanks to this trial that the authors were able to piece together his existence.

In their book, whose first chapter is titled *A África de Rufino*, the continent changes roles. It is no longer simply a land whose human resources have been pillaged, nor is it just a refuge. It becomes a place one leaves as a slave, returns to in order to reinforce certain aspects of one's African-ness, but then leaves again, armed with this new force, to return to Brazil (putting one's own liberty in peril), to spread the faith, knowledge, and ways of life that the journey has reinvigorated. This use of imperial and post-imperial space is in a way reminiscent of the great administrators of the Portuguese empire: A position in the Indies prepared one for a post in the Americas, which in turn set up a return to the court in Lisbon or vice-versa.

Rufino was without a doubt exceptional, but he was not the only one. Marcelina da Silva, the founder of the *candomblé-ketu*, took the same route from Bahia.¹⁴³ Tradition in the sanctuaries (*terreiros*) of the *candomblé* symbolically dates the founding of the cult to the period when its founder returned to Africa. In this case, the trans-Atlantic voyage served to re-suffuse the Brazilian cult with African authenticity. Historical research has been able to track down Marcelina's passport and travel documents from the 1837 voyage, two years after the Malê Revolt. It was Marcelina's owner, Francisca da Silva, and the owner's companion, José Pedro, who organized the voyage, after two of Francisca's sons were condemned for participating in the revolt. Before they left, the couple

142. João José Reis, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, *O alufá Rufino*.

143. Lisa Erl Castillo and Luis Nicolau Parés, "Marcelina da Silva e seu mundo: novos dados para uma historiografia do candomblé *ketu*," *Afro-Ásia*, 36 (2007): 111–151.

sold their goods and manumitted their slaves, and then the entire household departed for, we presume, Lagos. Only Marcelina would return, several years later, with enough means to purchase about twenty slaves and with the religious training necessary to establish the cult of a *terreiro* on rua da Laranjeira. From this point on, Marcelina's extended family, her children and *agregados*, would continually travel back and forth between Salvador and Lagos. Castillo and Parés write: "The free African elite of Salvador, and especially those who took part in the society of *candomblé*, fed this trans-Atlantic back-and-forth, permitting a perpetual exchange of news, products, ideas, and people. While the white elite sent their children to study in Paris, the new elites among the free people of color looked towards Africa."¹⁴⁴

Certain among these elites, whose African-ness is often an overemphasized characteristic of their social status, lived on the border between the worlds of white people and people of color. This was the case for the *feiticeiros*, the healers, spell-casters, conjure-men, or witches—depending on who was talking about them—whose beneficent or harmful skills were sought out at every level of a society that Catholicism had never been able to dissuade from magical beliefs. Once again, it is the police archives, and, before that, the archives of the Inquisition, that allow historians to trace the lives of these *feiticeiros* when their activities crossed the boundaries of tolerance. Frequently, their trajectories would encompass Africa, the Americas, and even Portugal.¹⁴⁵ Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio's work on the famous *feiticeiro* Juca Rosa¹⁴⁶ is essential here, not least because it proceeds in dialogue with the work of James Sweet in the United States who, in his search for the essence of the Brazilian African-ness, found the confirmation of his hypotheses in a similar individual, Domingos Álvares.¹⁴⁷ While Juca Rosa does not seem to have left Brazil, he often traveled from Rio de Janeiro where he practiced his art to Salvador in order to "cleanse"

144. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

145. Daniela Buono Calainho, "Jambacousses e Gangazambes: feiticeiros negros em Portugal," *Afro-Ásia*, 25–26 (2001): 141–176; João José Reis, "Domingos Sodré: um sacerdote africano na Bahia oitocentista," *Afro-Ásia*, 34 (2006): 237–313; Luiz Alberto Couceiro, "Acusações de feitiçaria e insurreições escravas no sudeste do Império do Brasil," *Afro-Ásia*, 38 (2008): 211–244 (where we encounter, *pai* Gavião, one of the characters evoked in Robert W. Slenes's "A Árvore de *Nsanda* transplantada."

146. Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio, *Nas trincheiras da cura: as diferentes medicinas no Rio de Janeiro Imperial* (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2002); *Juca Rosa: um pai-de-santo no Rio de Janeiro Imperial* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 2009); and *Artes e Ofícios de Curar no Brasil: capítulos de história social*, ed. Sidney Chalhoub, Vera Regina Beltrão Marques, Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio, and Carlos Roberto Galvão Sobrinho (Campinas, SP: Editora da Unicamp, 2003). In French, see G. dos Reis Sampaio, "Juca Rosa, un père-des-saints à la cour impériale brésilienne," *Brésil(s). Sciences humaines et sociales*, 1 (mai 2012): 55–78.

147. James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) and *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

himself in the African capital of the Nordeste. Domingos Álvares traveled not only to Africa but also to Portugal. As a slave and then as a freedman, he was continually weaving complex ties between Africa, where his art was founded, and the two continents where he practiced it. The same is true in Reis' book *Domingos Sodré*, where he shows how the influence of an Ifá priest from Salvador consisted not only in his power to direct the people who came to consult him to the diverse sanctuaries in the city, but also in his capacity to reintroduce to Brazil certain techniques of credit and savings (*tontines*) directly imported from West Africa, which he used to aid in the manumission of slaves in his entourage.

In just a few decades, the role of Africa in the story of Brazilian slavery has been completely reconfigured. Africa had long been considered the place that preserved the cultures that then traveled more or less intact across the Atlantic, on the same boats as the slaves. It subsequently came to be seen as part of a dynamic that produced tension in slaveholding society, between African inheritance and the realities of existence in Brazil, realities that were continually resisted but also accommodated. Africa now emerges also as one of the cardinal points in a network of circulating goods, people, representations, and ideas that spread out across the Portuguese colonial empire and the countries born from it. This network was material, certainly, but it was also symbolic and intellectual.

From Agency to the Lives of Slaves: A Biographical Turn?

The priority given to police and judicial archives and the new recognition of Africa's role in the tension inherent to Atlantic slaveholding society were two of the principal "turns" in research on slavery in Brazil over the past twenty-five years. This has led to an unexpected result that has emerged forcefully in the last decade: The rise of biography as a mode of historical analysis. There is a seeming contradiction here: How can someone who, by legal statute, was only an object to be bought and sold, become the main character in a story that sees his existence as a succession of conscious choices and the judgments, thoughts, sensations, and feelings that influenced those choices or accompanied them, and for which traces remain?

Unlike the situation in the United States, the Brazilian abolitionist movement did not seek out and record the testimony of slaves and then ex-slaves. The rare first-person narratives that have survived were precisely those written by individuals who passed through the North American sphere, as was the case with Mahommah G. Baquaqua, who was reintroduced to Brazilian historiography by Silvia H. Lara in 1988.¹⁴⁸ While it is true that in the 1980s a survivor

148. *Revista Brasileira de História*, 8, 16 (1988).

was found who was willing to tell his story, the individual was so old that his reliability is doubtful.¹⁴⁹ It was necessary instead to draw on the few written documents, often scattered and isolated, such as letters or photographs.¹⁵⁰ Recently, researchers have begun gathering and collecting family memories from the descendants of people freed in 1888.¹⁵¹ We have an increasing number of these materials thanks to initiatives like those of the Laboratório de História Oral e Imagem (LABHOI) of the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF), and they can be added to those drawn from popular memory: songs, dances, festivals, stories, everything that constitutes the legacy of the era of *cativeiro* (servitude).¹⁵²

Nonetheless, it is a big step from the protection of this memory, and even the critical elaboration of it that could make it useful to historians, to the far bolder decision to put on the cover of a book the name of an enslaved man or woman. Biography, a genre long reserved for “great men,” which is to say those who were considered to have taken part through their individual decisions in what we call History, has recently been undertaken for the black or mixed-race heroes of abolition. Several fine books came out around the turn of the twenty-first century on public figures like Luiz Gama and Antonio Pereira Rebouças. Luiz Mott had begun to innovate a few years earlier by exploring the popular Catholic hagiographic memory and the controversial figure of Rosa Egipcíaca. She had long been considered a saint, even though she was said to have been possessed by a demon and had been forced to perform an *auto da fé* in front of the Inquisition in Lisbon, where she was summoned in the company of the ex-

149. Mário José Maestri Filho, “É como eu digo: de agora, depois da libertação ‘tamo na glória.’ Depoimento de Mariano Pereira dos Santos (ca. 1868–1982), ex-escravo, Hospital Erasto Goertner, Curitiba, Julho 1982,” *História: Questões e debates*, 4, 6 (1983): 81–98. The transcription of this dialogue should be compared with the interview of the same man by Márcia Elisa de Campos Graf (“Entrevista com Mariano Pereira dos Santos, um ex-escravo de 122 anos,” *Revista da Sociedade Brasileira de Pesquisa Histórica*, 3 (1986–87): 117–124).

150. Luiz R. B. Mott, “Uma escrava do Piauí escreve uma carta,” *Mensário do Arquivo Nacional*, 11, 5 (1980): 3–21; Sandra Lauderdale Graham, “Writing from the Margins: Brazilian Slaves and Written Culture,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 49 (2007): 611–636. On his usage of photography, see: Ana Maria Mauad Essus, “Resgate de memórias,” *Resgate. Uma janela para o oitocentos*, ed. Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro and Eduardo Schnoor (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1995), pp. 99–138.

151. Ana Maria Lugão Rios, “My Mother Was a Slave, Not Me. Black Peasantry and Local Politics in Southeast Brazil, c. 1870–c. 1940” (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2001). With Mattos, Rios published an overview of the LABHOI’s early work: Ana Maria Lugão Rios and Hebe Mattos, *Memórias do cativeiro: família, trabalho e cidadania no pós-abolição* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2005).

152. A remarkable example of the historicization of popular memory is Silvia H. Lara and Gustavo Pacheco’s critical edition of the recordings of the *jongo* made in the 1940s by the American historian Stanley Stein: Silvia Hunold Lara, Gustavo Pacheco, *Memória do jongo: as gravações históricas de Stanley J. Stein, Vassouras, 1949* (Campinas, SP: CECULT, 2007).

orcist who had contributed to the spread of her fame.¹⁵³ Mott read between the lines written by the clerks and inquisitors for what might have been manifestations of her African-ness (traces of religious rituals that he knew well) in the descriptions witnesses gave of her when she was possessed. But Mott did not stop there; he truly brought to life this woman who was a slave—and occasionally a prostitute—when she adopted a baroque religiosity, with all the features of the ostentatious early modern forms of popular as well as elite Catholic piety. Indeed, some of her contemporaries compared her to Theresa of Avila.

More recently, Júnia Furtado has done the same with Chica da Silva who, in a strange way, occupies a very similar place in the collective memory, because it is said that she died in an odor of sanctity.¹⁵⁴ But unlike in Rosa's case, here there was none of the narrative so characteristic of an Inquisition trial. So instead Furtado relied on the economic, administrative and judicial contexts to reconstruct this life that had, since the nineteenth century, been narrated from a sexualized viewpoint, the only one capable of accounting for the exceptional social rise of this slave woman.¹⁵⁵ Her portrait can be retraced in large part thanks to the archive created by the actions of João Fernandes de Oliveira, the *contratador* (the aristocrat who headed the royal company for diamond exploitation in Minas Gerais in the eighteenth century) who had made her his mistress, then his companion, and the mother of his many children. Contradicting the traditional stereotypes, which were magnified in 1976 by Carlos Diegues' famous *Xica da Silva*, one of the gems of Brazilian *cinema novo*, not to mention Walter Avancini's *telenovela* (1996–1997), Júnia Furtado showed how this exceptional woman broke into white society, which had no choice but to deal with her. Long after the *contratador* had returned to Portugal, she continued to be admitted into social circles where no ex-slave would normally have been allowed. Guiomar de Grammont's recent anti-biography of Aleijadinho, the mixed-race sculptor of the twelve prophets on the stairway to the cathedral at Congonhas, effectively applies the tools of literary criticism and art history to work of myth destruction.¹⁵⁶

Everything changed, however, once historians began mining the archives

153. Luiz Roberto de Barros Mott, *Rosa Egípcíaca: uma santa africana no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bertrand, 1993).

154. Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *Chica da Silva e o contratador dos diamantes: o outro lado do mito* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003). See the English translation, *Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave of the Eighteenth Century: New Approaches to the Americas* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

155. Joaquim Felício dos Santos, *Memórias do districto diamantino da comarca do Sêrro Frio, Província de Minas Geraes* (Rio de Janeiro: Typ. Americana, 1868), republished with the same title (Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia, 1976).

156. Guiomar de Grammont, *Aleijadinho e o aeroplano: o paraíso barroco e a construção do herói colonial* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2008).

for documents that could also give life back to largely forgotten individuals whose existences were relatively ordinary—outside the fact that some unexpected event caused them to be mentioned in the administrative, ecclesiastic, or judicial record. For the last couple of years, we have seen these lives being reconstructed in the Brazilian historiography. At first they were just names in a document that were included to lend more life, more truth to the phenomenon a particular historian was studying. This was the case for Domingos Fortunato and his wife, Guilhermina Rosa de Souza, who denounced the Malé Revolt in 1835 and played no small role in its failure. Their case gives João J. Reis the chance to ask whether their identity as non-Islamic Nâgos played a role in their behavior. Similarly, on a plantation in the São Paulo region, two slaves, Francisco and Jerônimo (the latter in charge of taking care of the animals), killed each other over whether it was acceptable that a mule be diverted for Francisco's gain. Their stories offer Robert Slenes the opportunity to ask whether the *senzala* is indeed a space of complicity and mutual support among slaves, or something more. João Pataca, the leader of a band of maroon slaves in Pernambuco, who assumed the role of a judge and whose contemporaries believed he was a forest god, provides Marcus Carvalho the chance to explore the uncertain boundaries of rebellion and religion. And there are many other instances of this. The practice of opening an article or a book with one of these portraits has become quite frequent in these last years, in Brazil as elsewhere.¹⁵⁷

Some individuals have been dignified with a full chapter and, in a few instances, this was enough to get them onto the book's cover. Such is the case with Liberata who, after numerous trials, was able to win conviction of the man who bought her, raped her, and refused her manumission; another case is Caetana, who fought against the conjugal life she was forced into with another slave in the *senzala*.¹⁵⁸ Certain historians have taken the plunge and decided to reverse the organization of their writing: The individuals who provided best examples became main characters in narratives where the always somewhat abstract surrounding political, economic, and social practices were relegated to background, to context. Once again we find Domingos Sodré, who João J. Reis made the subject of a lengthy work.¹⁵⁹ The author discovered him in a trial transcript that concerned the handling of objects stolen by slaves from their masters, which were offered to this seer (*babalawo*) of the Yoruba faith who could act as intermediary with the gods. His intercession might soften an owner, aid with manumission, or simply help one figure out how to orient one's existence. The documents assembled for this trial and a few others allowed the

157. Successively João J. Reis, *Rebelião escrava no Brasil* (2003); Robert W. Slenes, "A Árvore de *Nsanda* transplantada"; Marcus Carvalho, "João Pataca et sa 'tranquille' bande du *quilombo* de Catucá."

158. Keila Grinberg, *Liberata, a lei da ambigüidade*; Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *Caetana Says No: Women's stories from a Brazilian Slave Society* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

159. João José Reis, *Domingos Sodré um sacerdote africano*.

author to reconstruct a rather complex portrait of this individual. Reis traces his life from the place he was born and captured in Africa, to his life as a slave, then as a freedman, in Salvador. He describes Sodré's many religious activities, which made headlines from time to time, his at times flourishing business, and his actions in the *juntas de alforria* (manumission societies). With Domingos Sodré, Reis put together a life story that fits into the slaveholding society of Bahia like a piece into a puzzle. The seer knew all the angles, all the subtexts, all the rules. If he was concerned about the worry his religious activities could inspire, he also knew how to manipulate the machinery of social hierarchies to regain his position, perhaps even bettering it. He learned how to make use of the contradictions of symbolic spaces as well as economic and social ones. Domingos Sodré had been a slave and then a freedman, but he was also an actor in the world in which he lived, where being dominated and dominating were constantly interwoven.

As mentioned earlier, Reis, with the help of two colleagues, added alongside the magnificent Domingos a no less fascinating Rufino, and many historians of slavery are currently working on similar individuals.¹⁶⁰ In this way, several slave or freed figures have been raised to the rank, not of heroes, but of witnesses or even subjects caught in a history in the making. Neither representative nor exemplary, they retain all of their individuality, which becomes by its very specificity a subject for historical study. In their life stories we can see the way they operated within the flux of complex, conflicting, and sometimes contradictory circumstances that make up a society and convey a sense of its dynamics, its rhythms.¹⁶¹

By the end of the 1980s, like their North American counterparts, Brazilian scholars had demonstrated that one can use these personalities and fragments of existence in ways that affirm how Brazil's slaveholding society, no matter how powerful and violent, was never fully able to constrain millions of enslaved persons. Through biography, scholars are now in the process of identifying the specific modes of choice and action that underlay individual lives. Pierre Bourdieu famously dismissed such narratives as an illusion,¹⁶² denouncing the rationality and mastery of free will that life histories suppose. But in fact, precisely because they are strongly improbable, these distinctive stories of ordinary slaves' lives have succeeded in upending Bourdieu's critique.

160. See, for example, "Vies d'esclaves," ed. Mariza de Carvalho Soares and Jean Hébrard, in *Brésil(s). Sciences humaines et sociales*, 1 (mai 2012): 7–124.

161. This evolution should be seen in the context of the biographical turn that marked the study of the Atlantic world in U.S. historiography in the same time frame. See *The Black Atlantic and the Biographical Turn*, ed. Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

162. Pierre Bourdieu, « L'illusion biographique », *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 62–63 (1986): 69–72 (English Translation: « The biographical illusion », *Working Papers and Proceedings of the Centre for Psychosocial Studies*, Univ. of Chicago, 14 (1987): 1–7).