

Banished and Bound: *Degredados* and the Making of Nineteenth-Century Angola

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Introduction

For much of its colonial history, Angola served as a penal colony. From the mid-eighteenth century until 1932, Portuguese courts banished between 45,000 and 50,000 individuals known as *degredados* (exiled convicts) to Portugal's overseas territories, including Angola.¹ *Degredo* (exile) was not just a punishment but also a means of addressing labour shortages overseas, particularly in the military. Depending on the severity of the offence and the status of the offender, sentences ranged from just a few years to perpetual banishment. Although convicts could be sent from and to any part of the Portuguese empire, Angola became the main destination for *degredados* in the nineteenth century. In 1864, the colony had 818 *degredados*, distributed across five main districts: Ambriz, Luanda, Moçâmedes, Benguela, and Golungo. Of this total, 433 lived in Luanda, the colonial capital of Angola, where they represented nearly one-third of the white population.²

Initially, conditions in the colony were difficult. Angola had a reputation as a “white man’s grave,” and *degredados* were often victims of malaria and other endemic diseases. They also faced harsh military discipline and were used as a source of forced labour. Yet, *degredo* could also create economic and social opportunities. With so few white settlers in the colony, *degredados* rose

¹ Timothy J. Coates, *Convict Labor in the Portuguese Empire 1740-1932: Redefining the Empire with Forced Labor and New Imperialism* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 132.

² Coates, *Convict Labor*, 14, 132; Coates, *Convicts and Orphans*, 183; Clare Anderson, ed., *A Global History of Convicts and Penal Colonies* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 1; Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), Conselho Ultramarino (CU), Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx-35, “Nota do numero de degradados que ha na provincia d’Angola, com designação de sexos, lugares de residencia o misteres em que se empregão,” 24 January 1865.

through the military ranks, were appointed to positions in the colonial administration, and acquired land and enslaved people. A few even became wealthy through the slave trade, the colony's main economic activity. Between 1501 and 1867, an estimated 12.5 million enslaved Africans were forcibly shipped across the Atlantic to the Americas and Europe. Of these, approximately 2.8 million embarked from Luanda, the largest slave port in the Atlantic slave trade. Most were taken to the Brazilian ports of Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and Salvador.³

Since the 1970s, *degredados* have attracted significant scholarly attention.⁴ In his 1978 study, Gerald Bender described *degredados* as “murderers, arsonists, and perverts” who posed a major threat to both Africans and Europeans.⁵ For Bender, the continued use of convict labour epitomized the failures of Portuguese colonialism and further contributed to Angola's poor

³ David Eltis et al., “Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database,” Online, 2008, www.slavevoyages.org/; David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 90.

⁴ Scholarship on *degredados* has been exhaustive. For the Angolan context see: Selma Pantoja, “A Diáspora Feminina: Degredadas para Angola no século XIX (1865-1898),” *Análise Social* 151/152 (1999): 555-572; Anabela Cunha, “Degredo para Angola na segunda metade do século XIX” (M.A. Thesis, Universidade de Lisboa, 2004); Selma Pantoja, “Inquisição, degredo e mestiçagem em Angola no século XVIII,” *Revista Lusófona de Ciência das Religiões* 5/6 (2004): 117-136; Anabela Cunha, “O quotidiano dos degredados enviados para Angola (1880-1932)” (paper presented at the XI Congresso-Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais, Salvador, Bahia, August, 2011); Anabela Cunha, “Degredo para Angola: Sentença de morte lenta,” *Locus: Revista de História* 18, n. 2 (2013): 87-104; Clarisse Moreira Aló, “Angola: Lugar de castigo ou joia do império. O degredo na historiografia e Fontes (Séc. XIX)” (M.A Thesis, Universidade de Brasília, 2006); Timothy J. Coates, “Preliminary Considerations on European Forced Labor in Angola, 1880-1930: Individual Redemption, and the “Effective Occupation” of the Colony,” *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 15/16 (2010): 79-105; Timothy J. Coates, “The Depósito de Degredados in Luanda, Angola: Binding and Building the Portuguese Empire with Convict Labour, 1880s to 1932,” *International Review of Social History* 63, S26 (2018): 151-167; Juliana Diogo Abrahão, “A conjuração dos degredados em Angola, 1763,” *Crítica História* ano XII, n. 24 (2021): 69-110; Tracy Lopes, “Degredados in Mid-Nineteenth Century Angola: The Case of José Lourenço Marques, Chief of Luanda's Police,” in *New Perspectives on Angola: From Slaving Colony to Nation State*, ed. José C. Curto (with the assistance of Maryann Buri) (Peterborough: Éditions Baywolf Press, 2021), 165-186; Juliana Diogo Abrahão, “De filhos de mar em fora a filhos da terra. A inserção social de degredados no Reino de Angola (Século XVIII),” PhD diss., Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, 2024. For *degredo* in other contexts, see, for example: Geraldo Pieroni, “Os excluídos do reino: A inquisição portuguesa e o degredo para o Brasil-Colônia,” *Textos de História* 5, n. 2 (1997): 23-40; Geraldo Pieroni, *Vadios e ciganos, heréticos e bruxas: Os degredados no Brasil-Colônia* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand, 2000); Maristela Toma, “Imagens do degredo: História, legislação e imaginário (A pena do degredo nas ordenações Filipinas)” (M.A. Thesis, UniCamp, 2002); Maristela Toma, “A pena de degredo e a construção do império colonial Português,” *Métis: História & Cultura* 5, n. 10 (2006): 61-76; Janaína Amado, “Mulheres que partem: As condenadas em Portugal ao degredo,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 15, no. 1-2 (2007): 281-305.

⁵ Gerald J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 73.

reputation. Recent scholarship has taken a more nuanced approach. Geraldo Pieroni argues that *degradados* should not be treated as a uniform group, noting that many were banished for violating religious and social conventions rather than for serious offences.⁶ Selma Pantoja has shown that many of the women banished to Angola in the late nineteenth century came from the lower ranks of Portuguese society, with several convicted of infanticide.⁷ Timothy J. Coates, meanwhile, argues that *degrado* was not simply a form of punishment. Rather, the Portuguese Crown used convicts as soldiers, settlers, labourers, and colonial agents, making them an important instrument of imperial expansion.⁸ This paper builds on this scholarship by focusing on the lived experiences of *degradados* and their role within the broader transformations of Angola's economy.

It also complicates existing scholarship on nineteenth-century Angola. To date, much of the scholarly work on *degradados* in the nineteenth century has focused on the slave trader and *degradado* Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo, who has been the subject of biographical studies by Carlos Pacheco, Jacobo Corrado, and João Pedro Marques.⁹ However, by focusing on figures such as Carpo, scholars have tended to simplify the convict experience, often portraying it simply as a pathway to wealth. While *degradados* were often mobile and could become successful traders in the colony, this paper demonstrates that their experiences were varied and shaped by nineteenth-century economic transformations. It also shows that *degrado* was not static. In the 1870s, the Portuguese colonial administration introduced measures to regulate and control the convict population as part of Portugal's attempt to establish "effective" occupation. It therefore offers a

⁶ Pieroni, *Vadios e Ciganos*.

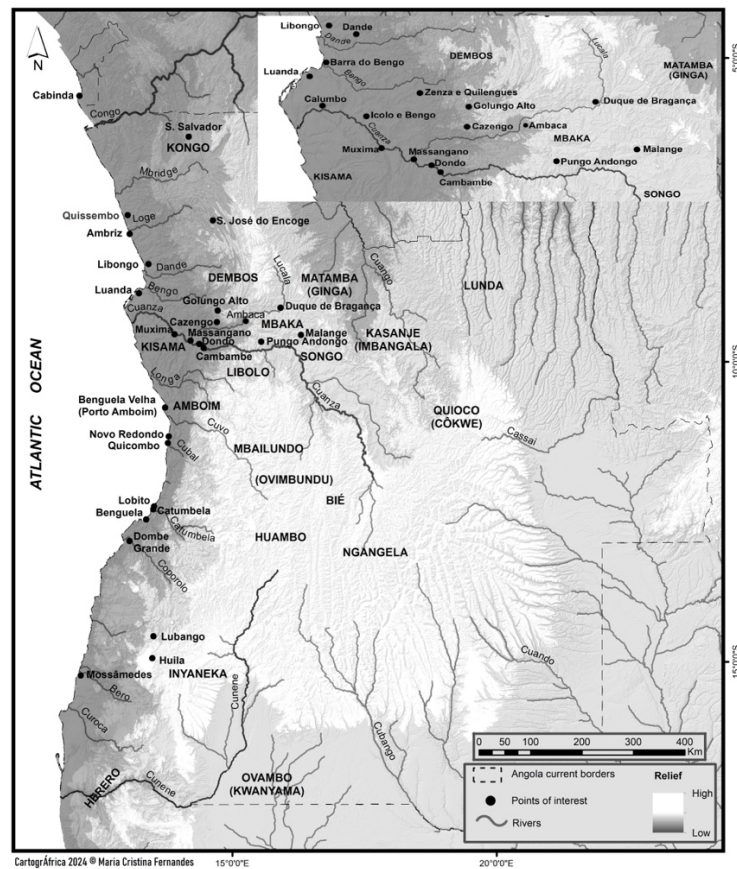
⁷ Pantoja, "A Diáspora Feminina," 555-572.

⁸ Coates, *Convict Labor*.

⁹ Carlos Pacheco, "Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo: Uma vida de luta contra as prepotências do poder colonial em Angola," *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos* 16/17 (1994-1995): 49-102; João Pedro Marques, "Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu do Carpo: Um percurso negreiro no século XIX," *Análise Social* 36 (2001): 609-638; Jacobo Corrado, "The Rise of a New Consciousness: Early Euro-African Voices of Dissent in Colonial Angola," *e-Journal of Portuguese History* 5, no. 2 (2007): 1-15.

more complete account of *degrado* that moves beyond exceptional cases to examine the reality on the ground.

Angola in the Mid-Nineteenth Century



Exile, Labour, and Mobility in Colonial Angola

Since the seventeenth century, *degrado* was firmly entrenched under Portuguese law. According to the *Ordenações Filipinas*, the law in Portugal and its overseas territories from 1603 to 1852, minor offences, including insulting an official, could be punished with internal exile to Castro Marim in the Algarve, while serious crimes like murder could result in banishment to parts of Africa and Brazil. Depending on the severity of the crime and the status of the offender, sentences ranged from a few years to perpetual exile, with the possibility of appeal before the *Casa*

da Suplicação (Higher Court of Appeals) in Lisbon. Later, High Courts were also established in Porto, Goa, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro. Through these courts, as well as Inquisition tribunals, approximately 50,000 convicts and “sinners” were exiled “multidirectionally” across the empire and between colonies from 1550 to 1755. From the 1750s until 1932, Portuguese courts alone banished another 45,000 to 50,000 people.¹⁰

Because of its notoriously unhealthy environment, Angola was typically reserved for those who had committed serious crimes like murder and any of the four “unpardonable” offences: heresy, sodomy, treason, and counterfeit. The Crown viewed unpardonable offences as threats to the religious, political, social, and financial foundations of the kingdom. However, *degredo* was also contingent upon imperial needs. Labour shortages, a lack of white settlers, and a desire to rid the kingdom of “undesirable” people led to the banishment of thieves, vagrants, political prisoners, and religious and ethnic minorities.¹¹ Although women were also exiled to the colony, most *degredados* banished to Angola were men. During the early modern and modern period, white women were generally considered ill-suited for the tropics and were rarely sent to Angola unless they were accompanying their husbands or fathers.¹² However, those banished to the colony were often exiled for serious offences, some of which reflected gendered expectations. Infanticide, for instance, was considered a particularly serious crime because it violated prevailing notions about a woman’s maternal role.¹³

Due to the near absence of foreign women, male convicts often engaged in casual and long-term relationships with local women, who acted as translators and helped convicts build crucial

¹⁰ Coates, *Convict Labor*, 14, 132; Coates, *Convicts and Orphans*, 183; Clare Anderson, ed., *A Global History of Convicts and Penal Colonies* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 1.

¹¹ Coates, *Convicts and Orphans*, 101; Cunha, “Degredo para Angola,” 87-104.

¹² Pantoja, “A Diáspora Feminina,” 555-572.

¹³ It is important to note that infanticide was considered a pardonable offence. See: Darlene Abreu-Ferreira, *Women, Crime, and Forgiveness in Early Modern Portugal* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

networks. Through these relationships, some African and Luso-African women acquired wealth, which they invested in captives, ships, land, and luxury items. The most successful among them were known as *donas* (ladies) and were classified as “white” in colonial censuses, regardless of their skin colour.¹⁴ The *degradado* Germano Francisco da Câmara, for instance, married a woman from Benguela named Dona Luísa da Fonseca Negrão in 1847. By the 1850s, he was working as a merchant in the colony.¹⁵

Before the late nineteenth century, *degradados* were often enlisted in the colonial army and sent to *presídios* (outposts) in the hinterland to build fortifications and perform manual labour. In a letter addressed to Lisbon’s Overseas Council from October 1798, Governor Miguel António de Melo wrote that almost all the soldiers in the colony were *degradados* from Portugal or Brazil who had committed serious or “atrocious” crimes.¹⁶ However, these *degradados* were rarely confined unless they posed a threat to security. On 25 June 1824, Governor Cristovão Avelino Dias informed the *capitão-mor* (captain-major) of Muxima Francisco Luiz Moreira that he was sending him the soldiers and *degradados* António José de Sousa and António José Rodrigues. Both were to be chained as “customary” for instigating a rebellion.¹⁷ *Degradadas* (female convicts) were also sent to *presídios* to perform domestic labour and support the garrison. On 13 November 1856, the 29-year-old Portuguese *degradada* Maria Joaquina died at the *presídio* of São José de Encoge, after being banished to the colony for matricide.¹⁸

¹⁴ Oliveira, “The *Donas* of Luanda, c. 1773-1866, 13, 43, 74; Oliveira, *Slave Trade and Abolition*, 81. For more on the fluid nature of colour within this context, see: Miller, *Way of Death*, 292; José C. Curto and Raymond R. Gervais, “The Population History of Luanda During the Late Atlantic Slave Trade, 1781-1844,” *African Economic History* 29 (2001): 23.

¹⁵ Boletim Oficial do Governo da Província de Angola (BOGGPA), n. 653, 3 April 1858, p. 10; Vanessa S. Oliveira, “Spouses and Commercial Partners: Immigrant Men and Locally Born Women in Luanda, 1831–1859,” in *African Women in the Atlantic World: Property, Vulnerability and Mobility, 1660–1880*, ed. Mariana P. Candido and Adam Jones (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 227.

¹⁶ Arquivo Nacional de Angola (ANA), Códice 7, “Carta para o Conselho do Ultramar,” 30 October 1798, fl. 47.

¹⁷ ANA, Códice 95, “Carta para o capitão-mor do presídio de Muxima,” 25 June 1824, fls. 102-102v.

¹⁸ BOGGPA, n. 584, 6 December 1856, p. 5.

Others lived and worked in Luanda. Male convicts performed a variety of jobs, including owning taverns where people from different backgrounds and social statuses gathered to socialize, gamble, and drink. These establishments were frequently targeted by the police, who viewed them as sites of disorder, drunkenness, and crime. On 8 October 1858, police arrested an enslaved man belonging to Veríssimo Lopes de Moura after he was caught attempting to steal from a tavern owned by the *degredado* Feliciano Carlos Fernandes do Couto.¹⁹ *Degredados* also worked in skilled trades. João Domingues de Oliveira Camarinha, who was originally from Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal, arrived in the colony in 1859. When he died on 5 January 1865, he was about 38 years old. Before his death, he was working as a carpenter and owned a workshop in Luanda.²⁰

Female convicts, by contrast, had fewer economic opportunities and were largely confined to domestic work that was poorly paid. For instance, the Portuguese *degredada* Francisca Rosa was working as a seamstress. In May 1869, Francisca was arrested in Luanda for stealing clothing from someone named José dos Santos Paiva.²¹ Because economic opportunities for women were so limited, some *degredadas* entered relationships with male convicts for companionship and to secure greater economic stability. However, these relationships could also be marked by violence. In October 1877, police arrested the *degredados* António de Andrade and Maria de Jesus for murdering a Spanish resident, Maria da Conceição Navarra, whose body was later found buried in Andrade's backyard alongside a large quantity of clothing. The reasons for the crime, and the outcome of the case, remain unknown. At the time, Andrade and Maria de Jesus were in a relationship.²²

¹⁹ BOGGPA, n. 680, 9 October 1858, p. 11.

²⁰ BOGGPA, n. 3, 16 January 1864, p. 20.

²¹ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 40-1, "Comarca de Loanda: Mappa do movimento da cadeia no mez de fevereiro de 1869," 30 May 1869.

²² BOGGPA, n. 42, 20 October 1877, p. 669.

Nonetheless, conditions in the colony were difficult. *Degredados* contracted malaria and dysentery, or suffered from fevers, gastrointestinal issues, bronchitis, and other ailments. In March 1821, 300 convicts from Naples arrived in the colony as part of an agreement between the Kingdoms of Portugal and Sicily.²³ By 2 August 1821, three were “gravely” ill in Golungo Alto.²⁴ In June 1865, the colony’s Director of Health, José Maria de Bulhões Maldonado, reported that 414 people had been admitted to Luanda’s military and civil hospital, 283 of whom were European military personnel. Of the 31 people who died, most were *degredados* not yet “accustomed” to the climate.²⁵ Convicts serving in the army could also be subjected to beatings, a common punishment for desertion, insubordination, and other offences. In early March 1880, the *degredado* Francisco Ramos attacked the president of the municipal council and a military surgeon with a knife. On 6 March, he was sentenced under military law to *varadas* (lashes). After the punishment, Ramos was confined in a police cell for nearly two days without medical care. When he was examined on 8 March by Inácio Caetano Xavier, the military physician on duty, his condition had deteriorated, and he later died in hospital.²⁶

Because of these difficult conditions, *degredados* often fled to areas outside Portuguese control, where they lived independently or escaped to Brazil. In August 1826, Governor Nicolau de Abreu Castelo Branco warned the commander of the Brazilian warship Cândido Francisco Brito da Victoria to be on the lookout for two escaped convicts, Manuel da Costa Lagos and António Joaquim. Both had boarded a small boat bound for Cabinda, a port near the mouth of the Congo River under the authority of the African Kingdom of Ngoyo. From there, they likely escaped on a

²³ Carlos Pacheco, “A origem Napolitana de algumas famílias Angolanas,” *Anais da Universidade de Évora* 5 (1995): 181-201.

²⁴ ANA, Códice 94, “Carta ao capitão-mor do Golungo,” 2 August 1821, fl. 72v.

²⁵ BOGGPA, n. 31, 29 July, 1865, p. 281.

²⁶ Vasco Guedes de Carvalho e Menezes, *Apontamentos para a historia d’Angola* (Funchal: Typographia Funchalense, 1882), p. 1-21; BOGGPA, n. 11, 12 March 1881, p. 142; BOGGPA, n. 14, 2 April 1881, p. 195.

slave ship to Brazil.²⁷ On 24 September 1827, Governor Castelo Branco again complained that *degredados* were fleeing to ports north of Luanda, and that at least four had fled a day prior.²⁸

Degredados also attempted to leave the colony through formal legal channels. In June 1855, the *degredado* José Fructuoso Martins e Silva petitioned for a pardon, citing good behaviour. He had been banished to the colony for fifteen years for murder and had arrived in March of that year.²⁹ In October 1866, Maria da Estrella, who had been sentenced to fifteen years of *degredo* in Angola and had served four years of her sentence, petitioned for permission to complete her term on the island of São Tomé, where she had family.³⁰ Even convicts who had achieved economic success in the colony petitioned for pardons. Anselmo Marracho was banished from Portugal to the colony in 1859. In 1869, he petitioned for a pardon, offering a substantial donation to the orphanage in exchange.³¹ The request appears to have been denied. By 1874, he petitioned for his brother António Joaquim Marracho, then serving *degredo* in São Tomé and Príncipe, to be transferred to Angola so that he could work in a store Marracho owned.³²

However, the case of José Lourenço Marques demonstrates that *degredados* could also achieve success in the colony and be appointed to important positions in the colonial administration. Marques was born in Portugal around 1793. By around 1815, he was serving in the Royal Naval Brigade in Rio de Janeiro, when the *Conselho de Guerra* (War Council) found him guilty of conspiring to commit bodily harm and sentenced him to ten years of *degredo* in Angola.

²⁷ ANA, Códice 96, “Carta ao commandante navio de guerra Brasileiro, sitio no porto de Cabinda,” 30 August 1826, fl. 63.

²⁸ ANA, Códice 96, “Carta ao commandante do navio de guerra Brasileiro, sitio no porto de Ambriz,” 24 September 1827, fl. 128v.

²⁹ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 21, “Carta de José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral,” 30 June 1855.

³⁰ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 37-1, “Rogo de Maria da Estrella,” 15 October 1866.

³¹ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 40-1, “Carta de José Rodrigues Coelho do Amaral,” 28 April 1869.

³² BOGGPA, n. 37, 12 September 1874, p. 439-440.

Upon arriving in Luanda in 1815, he was assigned to military service. Despite receiving 25 *varadas* for insubordination in August 1816, he was promoted to ensign in 1821 and to lieutenant in 1836.³³ By 1847, Marques was Luanda's chief of police, a position he held until his retirement in October 1866.³⁴ Like many foreign men in the colony, he married a local woman, Dona Filippa da Silva Mourão, who came from a prominent family.³⁵ Together, they owned slaves and *arimos* (large farms).

A few *degredados* even became wealthy slave traders. The Italian medic Carlos Ubertali was banished to Angola around 1822 for political crimes. By the 1830s, he owned captives, land, and gunpowder and was involved in the slave trade to Cuba and Pernambuco.³⁶ António José Cabral de Melo Pinto was convicted of murdering his wife, Dona Maria dos Prazeres de Abreu Soares de Melo Magalhães, in Lisbon in 1822. In 1826, he was banished to Angola. Within a few years of arriving in the colony, he was serving as crown judge of Luanda's *comarca* (judicial district). In 1831, he married Dona Teresa Luísa, the daughter of Dona Ana Joaquina dos Santos Silva, one of the colonies wealthiest slave traders. Before his death in 1833, he owned slave ships and held wealth in Rio de Janeiro and Bahia.³⁷

Degredados and the Illegal Slave Trade

³³ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 1, "Carta do coronel commandante do regimento d'infantaria de linha de Angola Joaquim Jozé Cardoso da Silva," 25 November 1834; AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 15, "Relação de antiguidades dos officiaes pertencentes aos corpos de 1.^a linha de Loanda," 1 June 1849; BOGGPA, n. 7, 14 February 1880, p. 79.

³⁴ *Almanak statistico da provincia d'Angola e suas dependências para o anno de 1852* (Luanda: Imprensa do Governo, 1851), 5;

³⁵ BOGGPA, n. 786, 27 October 1860, p. 8.

³⁶ Vanessa S. Oliveira, *Slave Trade and Abolition: Gender, Commerce, and Economic Transition in Luanda* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2021), 36.

³⁷ *Astro da Lusitania*, n. 16, 25 February 1822, p. 2; *Correio do Porto*, n. 59, 9 March 1822, p. 3; ANTT, Ministério dos Negócios Eclesiásticos e da Justiça, 2^a inc., mc. 17, n. 33, cx-52, "Requerimento de António José Cabral de Melo Pinto, preso e condenado a degredo perpétuo para Angola pelo assassinio de sua mulher, solicitando que lhe fosse perdoada a pena ou comutado o degredo temporariamente para Castro Marim ou para qualquer das ilhas adjacentes," 16 February 1825; Carlos Pacheco, "Leituras e bibliotecas em Angola na primeira metade do século XIX," *Locus: Revista de História* 6, no. 2 (2000): 31.

After years of pressure from Britain, the Portuguese premier Marquis Sá da Bandeira banned the Portuguese slave trade on 10 December 1836. Subsequently, vessels seized by the Portuguese navy on suspicion of participating in the illegal slave trade were to be tried before the local *Juiz de Direito* (Judge of Law). If declared “a good prize,” the enslaved people on board were to become *libertos* (freed), an intermediate status between slavery and freedom. Before gaining the rights and responsibilities of full emancipation, *libertos* were required to complete a period of apprenticeship.³⁸ In 1842, Portugal then agreed to an anti-slave trade treaty with Britain that allowed the British navy to search and seize Portuguese vessels suspected of participating in the slave trade and established a joint Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission Court in Luanda to try suspected slave ships.³⁹ By the mid-nineteenth century, Britain, Brazil, France, Portugal, and the United States were actively suppressing the slave trade along the Angolan coast. Consequently, the number of enslaved people shipped from Luanda declined from about 137,906 in 1836-1840 to 29,947 in 1841-1845. Although slave embarkations increased slightly in the 1846-1850 period, Brazil’s 1850 ban on the slave trade effectively brought the trade from Luanda to an end.⁴⁰

Without its main outlet for captives, Luanda’s economy gradually transitioned from one dominated by the export of enslaved people to the “legitimate” commerce of raw materials and tropical commodities, including ivory, coffee, beeswax, cotton, gum copal, palm products, and

³⁸ José C. Curto, “Producing ‘Liberated’ Africans in Mid-Nineteenth Century Angola,” in *Liberated Africans and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807–1896*, ed. Richard Anderson and Henry B. Lovejoy (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 238-256; Samuël Coeghe, “The Problem of Freedom in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Society: The Liberated Africans of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission in Luanda (1844-1870),” *Slavery & Abolition* 33, n. 3 (2012): 479-500.

³⁹ Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807-1869* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

⁴⁰ Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, “The Atlantic Slave Trade from Angola: A Port-by-Port Estimate of Slaves Embarked,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 46, no. 1 (2013): 122.

groundnut oil.⁴¹ However, this transition relied on the forced labour of slaves, *libertos*, and *degredados*. In 1844, 100 *libertos* recently “rescued” from slave ships were sent to work on the *arimo* Camongoa in Cambambe, which was then owned by the Public Treasury.⁴² By 1849, the Secretary General Francisco Joaquim da Costa e Silva requested one or two *degredados* who were “acclimatized” and capable of working the plow on the *arimo* Camongoa.⁴³ When Sebastião Lopes de Calheiros e Menezes became governor in February 1861, he sent “large numbers” of *degredados* and *libertos* to the hinterland of Moçâmedes to work in coffee and sugarcane production.⁴⁴

On these properties, *degredados* often occupied ambiguous positions, sometimes working alongside enslaved people and *libertos*, and at other times managing them. In May 1868, an enslaved carpenter named Francisco fled from the *fazenda* (plantation) *Santa Emília do Colume* in the Dembos after being persuaded by the *degredado* Custódio Rodrigues, who also worked there as a carpenter.⁴⁵ However, *degredados* could also act as overseers. On 24 March 1851, a 54-year-old *degredado* from Braga, Portugal named Manuel José Rodrigues died of typhoid fever in the District of Icolo e Bengo. At the time of his death, he was the overseer of an *arimo*.⁴⁶

Legitimate commerce not only depended on forced labour but was also compatible with the slave trade. To evade naval authorities, slave traders relocated to ports in the south, mainly

⁴¹ “Legitimate” trade refers to commerce in goods other than enslaved people. However, the term is problematic. First, the slave trade remained “legitimate” within many African societies. Second, it obscures the fact that commodities other than enslaved people had already been exported from Africa before the nineteenth century. Because of these problems, the term will appear in quotation marks throughout. See, See Robin Law, “Introduction,” in *From Slave Trade to ‘Legitimate’ Commerce: The Commercial Transition in Nineteenth-Century West Africa*, ed. Robin Law (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 26.

⁴² AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, cx-8B, “Carta de Francisco de Salles Ferreira,” 19 December 1844.

⁴³ ANA, Códice 172, “Carta ao commandante de sapadores,” 6 November 1849.

⁴⁴ Sebastião Lopes de Calheiros e Menezes, *Relatório do governador geral da província de Angola* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1867), 42.

⁴⁵ BOGGPA, n. 22, 30 May 1868, p. 258.

⁴⁶ BOGGPA, no. 290, 19 April 1851, 3.

Novo Redondo, Quicombo, Lobito, Egito, Catumbela, Bahia Farta, Benguela Velha and Moçâmedes, and ports in the north, including Ambriz, Mayumba, and the African-controlled ports of Cabinda, Molembo, and Loango.⁴⁷ Since the United States had not signed an anti-slave trade treaty with Britain, they also used American flags to conceal their operations.⁴⁸ Slave traders also began sending captives to remote locations near the Congo River, where they awaited embarkation in barracoons.⁴⁹

Degredados were among those involved in this illegal slave trade. The most well-known example was Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo. He was born in 1792 in Funchal, Madeira, most likely in the *freguesia* of São Pedro, to Dona Joana Rosa and André João dos Santos.⁵⁰ His wife was Dona Domingas Rosa de Vasconcelhos, with whom he had at least two daughters, Augusta and Maria, and a son Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo Junior.⁵¹ Accused of criticizing the government and making sarcastic remarks about the Church, Carpo was sentenced in 1823 to five years in a *presídio* in Angola.⁵² When Carpo arrived in the colony in 1824, he was enlisted in the army. By 1826, he owned a store and a tavern in Luanda.⁵³ Around this time, Carpo became

⁴⁷ Vanessa S. Oliveira, *Slave Trade*, 60; Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, "The Suppression of the Slave Trade and Slave Departures from Angola, 1830s-1860s," *História Unisinos* 15, no. 1 (2001): 313-334.

⁴⁸ Mary C. Karasch, "The Brazilian Slavers and the Illegal Slave Trade, 1836-1851" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1967), 4; Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade*, 190-191; Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, "Measuring Short- and Long-Term Impacts of Abolitionism in the South Atlantic, 1807-1860s," in *Networks and Trans-Cultural Exchange: Slave Trading in the South Atlantic, 1590-1867*, ed. David Richardson and Filipa Ribeiro da Silva (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 227.

⁴⁹ Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, *The Atlantic Slave Trade from West Central Africa, 1780-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 63; Curto, "Producing 'Liberated' Africans," 242.

⁵⁰ Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate his baptismal record. However, most of his family was baptized in this parish.

⁵¹ His son should not be confused with the mixed-race journalist who was also named Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo Junior. For more on these children, see: Arquivo Regional e Biblioteca Pública da Madeira (ABM), Paróquia de São Pedro, liv. 113, fl. 9, "Registo de Batismo: Maria. Pai: Arcenio Vicente; Mãe: Domingas Rosa," 3 March 1823; Correio Mercantil, no. 195, 19 July 1849, p. 2; Arsénio Pompílio Pompeu de Carpo, *Dedo de Pygmeu* (Lisbon: Imprensa de J. J. A. Silva, 1853), 61; BOGGPA, no. 433, 14 January 1854, p. 4; BOGGPA, no. 22, 29 May 1869, p. 272; BOGGPA, no. 20, 15 May 1869, p. 251; BOGGPA, no. 22, 29 May 1869, p. 272; João Dabney de Avelar Brotero, "Descrição da Ilha de S. Miguel," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo* 41 (1942), 336.

⁵² Eduardo de Castro e Almeida, *Arquivo de Marinha e Ultramar: Madeira e Porto Santo II, 1820-1833* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1909), 102-103.

⁵³ Biblioteca Municipal de Luanda (BML), Códice 38, Registo de Condenações," 1811-1833, fl. 156.

acquainted with the slave trader Ângelo Francisco Carneiro, who had arrived in Luanda from Pernambuco in 1824.⁵⁴ After serving his sentence, Carpo later moved to Pernambuco with his family, where historians suspect he continued working for Carneiro.

Shortly after Sá da Bandeira's 1836 ban on the Portuguese slave trade came into effect, Carpo returned to the colony in the hope of profiting from the illegal slave trade, leaving his wife, Dona Domingas Rosa, and their children in Brazil. When he arrived in Luanda in 1837, he first served as a consignee for the slave trader Francisco Teixeira de Miranda, a representative of a commercial house in Rio de Janeiro.⁵⁵ Through Miranda, Carpo also met the slave trader Francisco António Flores, who had arrived from Brazil in the early 1840s, and Dona Ana Joaquina, one of Luanda's wealthiest slave traders.⁵⁶ By at least 1843, the four had become business partners and attempted to establish a steamboat company for the export of legitimate products. However, the project collapsed amid accusations that they planned to use the steamboat for the slave trade to Brazil.⁵⁷ Carpo also had a relationship and family with a Luso-African woman named Dona Antónia Josefa da Silva, who became his *amásia* (concubine) in the late 1830s. They lived together until 1849, when Dona Domingas and their children joined Carpo in Angola.⁵⁸

Because of the risk of capture, Carpo adopted strategies to evade naval authorities. When the German doctor Gustav Tams arrived in Luanda on a commercial expedition led by the Portuguese consul-general of Altona, José Ribeiro dos Santos, in 1841, he learned that Carpo

⁵⁴ Corrado, "The Rise of a New Consciousness," 615.

⁵⁵ Corrado, "The Rise of a New Consciousness," 6.

⁵⁶ Karasch, "The Brazilian Slavers and the Illegal Slave Trade," 18.

⁵⁷ Roquinaldo A. Ferreira, "The Conquest of Ambriz: Colonial Expansion and Imperial Competition in Central Africa," *Mulemba: Revista Angolana de Ciências Sociais* 5, n. 9 (2015): 3.

⁵⁸ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Primeira Secção, Cx. 796, "Guia," 26 July, 1892; José de Almeida Santos, *Vinte anos decisivos na vida de uma cidade (1845/1864)* (Luanda: Edição da Câmara Municipal, 1970), 188.

embarked captives at night to conceal his illegal activities.⁵⁹ Carpo also shifted his operations to other Angolan ports, including Ambriz. In 1841, Commander E. H. Butterfield of the *Waterwitch* captured his vessel *Euro* in Ambriz with 314 captives on board.⁶⁰ To ensure the secrecy of his operations, Carpo even relied on family members, including his nephew and son-in-law, Luís de Oliveira Machado. By the early 1840s, Machado was involved in the illegal slave trade and worked as Carpo's clerk in Ambriz until his death in 1864.⁶¹

These measures, combined with the effects of Brazil's 1850 ban on slave imports, eventually took their toll. Cut off from Brazilian markets, Carpo fell deeply into debt.⁶² Following an investigation by the *Junta de Justiça* (Board of Justice), Carpo was convicted of fraud in 1852 and sentenced to ten years of *degredo* in São Tomé.⁶³ However, a year later his sentence was revoked in Lisbon, and Carpo returned to Angola, where he was elected to Luanda's municipal council and appointed governor of the interior administrative outpost of Ambaca.⁶⁴ By the 1860s, Carpo had become involved in the rubber and wax trade at Kasanje, where he died in 1869.⁶⁵

Although Carpo is arguably Angola's most well-known convict, other *degradados* participated in the illegal slave trade, including Manuel José Constantino. Little is known about his early life or his crimes, except that he was banished from Portugal to the colony for life and

⁵⁹ G. Tams, *Visit to the Portuguese Possessions in South-Western Africa*, vol. 1 (London: T. C. Newby, 1845), 251-252.

⁶⁰ Eltis et. al., "Voyages," Voyage Id. 3150.

⁶¹ United Kingdom, House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, Slave trade (UK/HC/PP/ST), Correspondence with British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, Havana, Cape of Good Hope, Jamaica, Loanda, and Cape Verd Islands; Reports from British Vice-Admiralty Courts and Naval Officers on Slave Trade, 1850-51 (Class A), 1851 [1424], 366.

⁶² BOGGPA, n. 326, 27 December 1851, p. 4.

⁶³ BOGGPA, n. 353, 3 July 1852, p. 2-10; AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx-18, "Synopsis da correspondência, que nesta data se remette ao ministério da marinha e ultramar a bordo do brigue naval Lealdade," 11 August 1852; Corrado, "The Rise of a New Consciousness," 1-15.

⁶⁴ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx-22A, "Carta de Arcenio Pompílio Pompêo do Carpo," 16 February 1856.

⁶⁵ BOGGPA, n. 16, 16 April 1864, p. 130-131; BOGGPA, n. 6, 4 February 1865, p. 29; A Civilização da Africa Portuguesa, n. 53, 12 February 1868, p. 210.

was already involved in the illegal slave trade to Brazil by the 1830s.⁶⁶ In 1837, Constantino was in Brazil travelling with an enslaved person.⁶⁷ By the 1840s, he owned a house near the *quitanda* (outdoor market) close to the Church of *Nossa Senhora dos Remédios* in Luanda and was working as an agent for the slave trader Gabriel António.⁶⁸ During this period, Constantino also owned slave ships, including the *Maria Luiza*, *Carlota*, *Bom Sucesso*, and *Fortuna*, and engaged in legitimate commerce, owning coastal vessels such as the *Rio Dande*, which transported goods along the coast.⁶⁹

By the late 1840s, Constantino's activities came under increasing scrutiny, prompting him to flee to Rio de Janeiro aboard the vessel *Igual*. For slave traders, Brazil could offer both refuge from prosecution and potential allies. In September 1848, Angola's governor, Adriano Acácio da Silveira Pinto, instructed João Baptista Moreira, the Portuguese consul-general in Rio de Janeiro, to apprehend Constantino and return him to Luanda for punishment.⁷⁰ On 9 January 1849, Moreira reported to the governor that there was no trace of Constantino and that the *Igual* had never docked in Rio de Janeiro. This account is difficult to verify, but Moreira had a long history of supporting the illegal slave trade and accepting bribes from slave traders.⁷¹

The *Serviçal* Trade

⁶⁶ João José Reis, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, and Marcus J. M. de Carvalho, *The Story of Rufino: Slavery, Freedom, and Islam in the Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 95.

⁶⁷ *Jornal do Commercio*, no. 147, 7 July 1837, p. 4.

⁶⁸ AHU, Sala 12, Angola, mç. 874, "Carta de João do Roboredo," 21 August 1847.

⁶⁹ AHU, Sala 12, Angola, mç. 874, "Relação das prezas feitas em Angola pelas autoridades," 9 February 1844; ANA, Códice 104, "Carta ao commandante da polícia," 22 January 1846, fl. 140; ANA, código 105, "Carta ao thesoureiro geral da junta da fazenda," 15 September 1846, fls. 119v-120; UK/HC/PP/ST, Select Committee on Slave Trade: First Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, 1849 [308], p. 133.

⁷⁰ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, cx-15, "Carta de Adriano Acácio da Silveira Pinto," 5 March 1849.

⁷¹ UK/HC/PP/ST, Correspondence with British Coms. At Sierra Leone, Havana, Cape of Good Hope, Jamaica, Loanda, and Cape Verd Islands; Reports from British Vice Admiralty Courts and Naval Officers on Slave Trade, 1843 (Class A) 1844 [573], 218.

Alongside measures to abolish the slave trade, Sá da Bandeira passed laws gradually abolishing slavery throughout Portugal's overseas territories. On 14 December 1854, a decree required slave owners in the Portuguese colonies to register their slaves within 30 days, with all unregistered captives classified as *libertos*. In 1858, the government legislated that slavery would be abolished within twenty years, setting 29 April 1878 as the final date for full emancipation. On 25 February 1869, the Portuguese government decreed that all slaves in the overseas colonies would become *libertos*, though they were still required to serve their former owners until emancipation in 1878. In 1875, the status of *liberto* was abolished and replaced by that of the *serviçal* (indentured labourer).⁷²

Nonetheless, these laws had little effect beyond the coast, which remained under African control. In the mid to late nineteenth century, slavery increased in the interior of Angola, and the internal slave trade expanded alongside the export of ivory, wax, and rubber. This trade was dominated by the Ovimbundu people, who inhabited the central plateau.⁷³ As Linda Heywood has pointed out, a collective "Ovimbundu" identity did not exist until the late nineteenth century.⁷⁴ During this period, the "Ovimbundu" were divided into several independent and competing states, including Mbailundu (Bailundo), Viye (Bihé), Wambu (Huambo), Ciyaka (Quiaca), among others. For weeks and even months at a time, Ovimbundu caravans transported ivory, beeswax, and rubber from the interior to trading houses in Benguela, Catumbela, and Novo Redondo. These caravans

⁷² *Boletim do Conselho Ultramarino: Legislação Novíssima (1852 a 1856)*. Vol. 2 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1869), 484-490; João de Andrade Corvo, "Decreto de 29 de abril de 1875," in *Collecção official da legislação Portuguesa, anno de 1875* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1876), 125-127; Curto, "Producing 'Liberated' Africans," 238-256.

⁷³ Jeremy Ball, "'Alma Negra' (Black Soul): The Campaign for Free Labor in Angola and São Tomé, 1909-1916," *Portuguese Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (2010): 51-72.

⁷⁴ Linda M. Heywood, "Slavery and Forced Labor in the Changing Political Economy of Central Angola, 1850-1949," in *The End of Slavery in Africa*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Richard L. Roberts (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 415-436; Linda M. Heywood, *Contested Power in Angola: 1840s to the Present* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

also supplied captives who were then shipped to coffee and cocoa plantations in São Tomé and Príncipe or retained locally on plantations as *serviçais*.⁷⁵

Taking advantage of these economic opportunities, *degradados* settled in the Ovimbundu heartland, where they became involved in the slave trade and came into conflict with African rulers. In November 1879, a *soba* (African ruler) named Mafinja accused the ex-*degradado* José Maria Agostinho, who lived in the district of Huíla, of attempting to depose him and of engaging in slavery. A few months later, another *soba*, Cancande, filed a similar complaint with the *chefe* (chief) of Huíla, Francisco António de Mesquita. He accused Agostinho of mobilising *serviçais* in support of a rival claimant named Sebolla.⁷⁶

João Victor da Silva Brandão, one of Portugal's most notorious convicts, offers another example of a convict who became involved in the slave trade. Brandão had led a murderous gang composed of close friends and family members and was exiled to Angola in 1870 for killing a priest.⁷⁷ After arriving in Luanda, he made his way to Benguela and then to Catumbela, where by 1880 he was managing the plantation Cassequel, then owned by the Portuguese landowner Desiré Lourenço Eduardo Braga.⁷⁸ In April 1880, two *serviçais* from the *fazenda*, Ignácio and Urica, accused Braga and Brandão of attempting to enslave them. According to their testimony, Brandão

⁷⁵ Merran McCulloch, *The Ovimbundu of Angola* (London: International African Institute, 1952); Adrian C. Edwards, *The Ovimbundu under Two Sovereignities: A Study of Social Control and Social Change among a People of Angola* (London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1962); Gladwyn M. Childs, *Kinship and Character of the Ovimbundu* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Fola Soremekun, "Trade and Dependency in Central Angola: The Ovimbundu in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, ed. Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 82-89.

⁷⁶ José Bento Ferreira d'Almeida, *Mossamedes: Apreciações sobre as colónias portuguesas em geral e sua organização política—O districto de Mossamedes em special: colonos, serviçais e indígenas; administração durante o período de 15 de janeiro a 16 de setembro de 1880* (Lisbon: Casa da Sociedade de Geographia, 1880), p. 58-64.

⁷⁷ Marianne L. Wiesebron, "Bandidos ou guerrilheiros em Portugal: a Violência de 1807 até 1870," *Iberoamericana* 4, no. 13 (2004): 7-22; Graça Maria Miranda Lérias Pacheco, "Criminosos Popularizados na Narrativa de Divulgação (De 1838 aos Alvores da República)" (PhD diss., Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2015).

⁷⁸ AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx. 3, "Carta de João Nepomuceno de Piedade," 29 March 1879; AHU, SEMU, DGU, Angola, Correspondência dos Governadores, Segunda Secção, Cx.4, "Carta de J. Florencio Ferreira Annapaz," 23 May 1880.

forced them, along with several other *serviçais* to leave the *fazenda* under the supervision of a white employee named Diamantino. Suspecting that they were being enslaved, Ignácio and Urica fled to Benguela. According to the colonial official, Francisco António Pinto, Brandão and an associate named Mendonça had previously attempted to illegally ship two *serviçais* to Moçâmedes. One escaped before boarding the vessel, while the other was sold to a planter but managed to flee after several days. To avoid prosecution, Brandão fled to Benguela.⁷⁹

The Scramble for Africa and Controlling the Convict Population

The expansion of the internal slave trade in Angola coincided with the “Scramble for Africa,” a period of intense European competition for African resources and strategic ports. During this period, Portugal sought to exploit the resources of its African colonies while reinforcing its claims to the continent. The *Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa* (Geographical Society of Lisbon) played a key role in mobilising support for Portugal’s colonial ambitions. Established in 1875 by industrialists, scholars, and colonial and military officials, the SGL was central to organising expeditions to Angola in the 1870s and 1880s. These missions aimed to expand knowledge of Angola’s interior, open it to commerce, define the colony’s northern and southern boundaries, and promote support for the “Rose-Coloured Map,” an ambitious proposal for a continuous Portuguese empire linking Angola and Mozambique.⁸⁰

Efforts to assert “effective” control over the colony also included attempts to encourage white settlement. However, Angola did not attract significant numbers of white settlers until the twentieth century. Consequently, the Portuguese crown relied on *degredados* to establish a colonial

⁷⁹ *Diário Illustrado*, n. 2:650, 1 October 1880, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Cristiana Bastos, “Das viagens científicas aos manuais de colonos: a Sociedade de Geografia e o conhecimento de África,” in *O Colonialismo Português—Novos Rumos na Historiografia dos PALOP*, ed. Centro de Estudos Africanos da Universidade do Porto and Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical (Porto: Húmus), 321-46.

presence. According to the Portuguese explorer Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, 2,083 convicts arrived in Angola between 1863 and 1873.⁸¹ By 1875, roughly 40 *degradados* were leaving Portugal each month, with around 20 to 30 arriving in Angola, while the remainder disembarked in São Vicente, Santiago, and São Tomé and Príncipe.⁸² However, their presence further reinforced Angola's poor reputation. When the British mining engineer Joachim John Monteiro visited Angola in the 1850s and 1870s, he observed that *degradados* "rob and cheat and in a few years become rich and independent and influential personages."⁸³ In September 1876, Governor Caetano Alexandre e Almeida e Albuquerque complained that *degradados*, especially those living in cities, succumbed to vice, becoming "industrious and cunning wrongdoers, no less, and perhaps even more, dangerous."⁸⁴

Relying on convicts but concerned about their behaviour, colonial authorities sought to regulate and control them. On 22 July 1877, the Luanda administration ordered the closure of all taverns owned by convicts.⁸⁵ In August 1880, Governor António Eleutério Dantas barred *degradados* from serving in Luanda's police, arguing that a "civilized" force should be composed of men of good character.⁸⁶ Authorities also increasingly redirected convict labour into public works projects, which experienced in expansion. On 19 May 1875, Claudino Augusto Carneiro de Sousa e Faro, Director of Public Works in Luanda, ordered all *degradados* with a trade to report to the Public Works Department, while those without a trade were assigned as general labourers.

⁸¹ Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho, *Meteorologia, climatologia e colonização: Estudos sobre a região percorrida pela expedição comparados com os dos benemeritos exploradores Capello e Ivens e de outros observadores nacionaes e estrangeiros: Modo pratico de fazer colonisar com vantagem as terras de Angola* (Lisboa: Typographia do Jornal, 1892), 72.

⁸² A. E. Lux, *Von Loanda Nach Kimbundu: Ergebnisse der Forschungsreise im Aequatorialen West-Afrika (1875-1876)* (Wien: Von Eduard Verlag Hölzel, 1880), 19.

⁸³ Joachim John Monteiro, *Angola and the River Congo*, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1875), 45.

⁸⁴ BOGGPA, n. 38, 16 September 1876, p. 521.

⁸⁵ BOGGPA, n. 30, 28 July 1877, p. 475.

⁸⁶ BOGGPA, n. 32, 7 August 1880, p. 409.

Once state projects no longer required their services, skilled convicts could enter private employment under guarantees provided by employers, who assumed responsibility for their conduct.⁸⁷

One of the major public works projects that used convict labour was the Maria Pia Hospital. Hospitals were not only seen as essential for addressing Africa's reputation as a "white man's grave," a major obstacle to attracting settlers, but also for projecting an image of European scientific and technological superiority. The project began in 1875 with support from João de Andrade Corvo, the Portuguese Minister of the Colonies, and was directed by Faro, Angola's Director of Public Works. Faro designed a six-storey building to meet "the highest standards of colonial hygiene."⁸⁸ By 19 July 1882, the explorer Henry Morton Stanley observed that "some hundreds of convicts from the mother country" were grading, excavating, and levelling the entrances of Hospital Maria Pia.⁸⁹ When the hospital was completed in 1890, Henrique Augusto Dias de Carvalho praised its furnishings, modern equipment, laundry facilities, kitchens, gardens, clinical services, and food, calling it a "model hospital, honouring the work of the Portuguese in Africa and admired by foreign visitors."⁹⁰

Convicts also contributed skilled labour. In the late nineteenth century, Luanda had become a centre for long-distance trade. Between 1870 and 1872, rubber exports through Luanda and Benguela increased from just 759 kilograms to over 360 tons.⁹¹ Much of the trade passed through Dondo, a key commercial outpost on the Kwanza River and the furthest inland point accessible by

⁸⁷ BOGGPA, n. 41, 9 October 1875, p. 570-572.

⁸⁸ Carvalho, *Meteorologia, climalogia e colonização*, 128.

⁸⁹ Henry M. Stanley, *The Congo and the Founding of its Free State: A Story of Work and Exploration*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1885), 453

⁹⁰ Carvalho, *Meteorologia, climalogia e colonização*, 139.

⁹¹ Jelmer Vos, "Of Stocks and Barter: John Holt and the Kongo Rubber Trade, 1906–1910," in *Global Histories, Imperial Commodities, Local Interactions*, ed. Jonathan Curry-Machado (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 80–81.

steamer. Porters carried goods from Pungo Andongo, Golungo Alto, and Malanje to Dondo, where they were then shipped to Luanda on steamers operated by the Quanza River Steam Navigation Company. To support the growing volume of trade, a telegraph line was installed linking Luanda to key points along the Kwanza River.⁹² *Degredados* were likely employed in its construction and operation. On 23 June 1877, the *degredado* Luiz Correa Mello was ordered to present himself to the Director of Public Works. At the time, he was a telegraph operator.⁹³

Alongside these labour policies, colonial authorities sought to control *degredados* by restricting their mobility and residence. On 6 July 1876, the colonial administration ruled that convicts had to declare their place of residence and report any change within 24 hours. They were also not allowed to travel more than four kilometres from where they resided.⁹⁴ A few months later, on 15 September 1876, Angola's Governor Caetano Alexandre de Almeida e Albuquerque established a prison to house convicts within Luanda's Fortress of São Miguel, called the *Depósito de Degredados*. The prison was organised into five companies: the first two comprised male prisoners from Portugal, the third held male prisoners from the Atlantic colonies, including Cape Verde, Portuguese Guinea, and São Tomé, the fourth consisted of women, and the fifth was made up of male vagrants.⁹⁵ Convicts held in this prison were either leased to private parties, the colonial state, or worked within the *Depósito* itself.⁹⁶ Women, in particular, worked in the hospital doing laundry, carrying for the sick, and sewing clothes.⁹⁷

Finally, to support agricultural development, encourage settlement, and reform convicts, the colonial administration experimented with penal colonies. However, these efforts were largely

⁹² Élisée Reclus, *The Earth and Its Inhabitants: Africa*, vol. 4 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), 42-57.

⁹³ BOGGPA, n. 26, 30 June 1877, p. 408.

⁹⁴ BOGGPA, n. 28, 8 July 1876, p. 369.

⁹⁵ Coates, "The Depósito de Degredados," 151-167. It took its first new prisoners in 1883, see: Coates, *Convict Labor*, 56.

⁹⁶ Coates, *Convict Labor*, 155; Coates, "The Depósito de Degredados," 151-167.

⁹⁷ BOGGPA, n. 6, 24 February 1883, p. 126.

unsuccessful. One such penal colony was *Esperança*, established on 15 September 1883 at Calanbo Quingungi in the Malanje district.⁹⁸ In 1886, it was dissolved due to high mortality rates. At least thirty-three convicts had died in *Esperança* and an additional 11 had died after returning to Luanda.⁹⁹ A second colony, *Rebelo da Silva*, was created by decree in November 1885 in Caconda, but it faced similar challenges.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has focused on *degradados* on the ground and how they both shaped and were shaped by nineteenth-century economic transformations. Although exile was difficult and many *degradados* died, the paper shows that for some convicts *degrede* created economic opportunities, particularly through the slave trade, and that convicts adapted to changing economic conditions. However, these opportunities were more limited for women. Moreover, *degrede* was not static. While convicts initially enjoyed a degree of mobility, by the 1870s increasing efforts were made to control their labour and movement, suggesting that *degrede* evolved in response to shifting colonial labour demands and imperial expansion.

⁹⁸ BOGGPA, n. 36, 17 September 1883, p. 624.

⁹⁹ Coates, *Convict Labor*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.