

Introduction

In 1684, Lourenço da Silva de Mendonça from the kingdom of Kongo in the Indies¹ ‘arrived in Rome to take up an important role for Black peoples’.² That role was to bring an ethical and criminal *kufunda*³ (case) before the Vatican court, which accused the nations involved in Atlantic slavery, including the Vatican, Italy,⁴ Spain and Portugal, of committing

¹ See Archivio della Propaganda Fide (Archives of Propaganda Fide, hereafter APF), Scrittura Originale Riferite Nelle Congregazioni Generali, Vatican, Rome, Italy (hereafter SOCG), SOCG, vol. 495a, folio (fl.) 393, ‘Lourenzo deSilva de Mendonza delReyno diCongo nell’Inde venuto à Roma’. What was known as the kingdom of Kongo then was situated in West Central Africa in what is today part of northern Angola. The territory also makes up the western part of the modern Democratic Republic of Kongo as well as the southern part of Gabon. For detailed studies of the kingdom of Kongo, see John Thornton, ‘The Origins and Early History of the Kingdom of Kongo, c. 1350–1550,’ *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 34(1), 2001, pp. 89–120. See Marina de Melo e Souza, ‘Congo in the Americas and Brazil’, Oxford Encyclopedia, 2020: <https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-430>. The spelling of ‘Congo’ with ‘C’ is kept when there is a direct quote in both Portuguese and Italian sources of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries to maintain the sense of originality of these sources.

² See APF, SOCG, vol. 495a, fl. 392.

³ *Kufunda*, *maka* or *maca* are Kimbundu words (Mbundu is one of the ethnic groups in the Angolan population), meaning a case to be heard in court or a case taken to court, a court case or talk; see António de Oliveira Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas 1680*, vol. I, Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colónias, 1972, p. 614 and p. 616. Kimbundu was Mendonça’s mother tongue. He may also have spoken Portuguese, Spanish and Italian, considering his education, travels to and stay in Portugal, Spain and Italy. The Portuguese language would have been natural to him, because of his family connections to Portugal.

⁴ Italy here refers to northern Italy, that is, Mantua, which was ruled by the duchess of Mantua and Montferrat of the Gonzagas family. Mantua was a protectorate of Spain in the seventeenth century. The Gonzagas family intermarried with Spanish nobility. Mantua’s

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crimes against humanity. It detailed the ‘tyrannical sale of human beings . . . the diabolic abuse of this kind of slavery . . . which they committed against any Divine or Human law’.⁵ Mendonça was a member of the Ndongo royal family, rulers of Pedras (Stones)⁶ of Pungo-Andongo, situated in what is now modern Angola.⁷ He carried with him the hopes of enslaved Africans and other oppressed groups in what was a remarkable moment that, I would argue, challenges the established interpretation of the history of abolition.⁸

Legal, moral, ethical and political debate on the abolition of slavery has traditionally been understood to have been initiated by Europeans in the eighteenth century – figures such as Thomas Buxton, Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, David Livingstone and William Wilberforce.⁹ To the

links with Spain in the seventeenth century connected to the Atlantic world. Mantua joined the kingdom of Italy in 1866. There is also, of course, plenty of literature on the involvement of Italian merchants from for example Florence and Genoa in the Atlantic slave trade. See Luís L. de Cadamosto, *Navegações de Luís de Cadamosto, Texto Italiano, e Tradução Portuguesa*, Lisbon: Instituto para a Alta Cultura (1507), 1944; Trevor P. Hall, *Before Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513–26*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015; and Sergio Tognetti, ‘Trade in Black African Slaves in Fifteenth-Century Florence’, in Tom F. Earle and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 213–224.

⁵ See APF, SOCG, vol. 490, fl. 140r, ‘che da tal tirannica vendita d’ humano . . . dall’ abuso diabolico di tal schiavitù . . . usano contro ogni legge Divina, et Humana’.

⁶ See Cadornega, *História Geral*, vol. III, p. 156 and p. 167, where a note by José Matias Delgado states that Pungo-Andongo, prior to becoming the seat of King Philippe Hari I, was called Matadi Maupungo or Matadi ma Unpungu (Pedras Altas ou Pedras de Altura) [High Stones].

⁷ Angola is in fact the Portuguese version of the precolonial name Ngola, which was the name of a king who reigned over that kingdom. See Cadornega, *História Geral*, vol. I, p. 167. The kings of Ndongo were subordinated to the kingdom of Kongo, and so Ndongo was technically one of its provinces. I will use the term Angola to refer to both people groups that inhabited the region, the Mbundu and the Ovimbundu. All the Portuguese governors sent to the region were called governors of Angola in the seventeenth century, even though the country obviously did not exist as the modern nation state we know today. See ‘Carta de Doação a Paulo Dias de Novais’ [Letter of Grant to Paulo Dias de Novais] Arquivo da Torre do Tombo (here after ATT), Chancelaria de D. Sebastião (Doações), livro [liv.] 26, fls. 295–299, 19 September 1571, pp. 36–51.

⁸ I will not attempt to modernise spelling, punctuation or capitalisation in all quotations from primary sources from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries in order to maintain a sense of the originality of the work I have used.

⁹ Thomas F. Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy*, London: J. Murray, 1839; Thomas Clarkson, ‘A Summary View of the Slave Trade and of the Probable Consequences of its Abolition’, London: J. Philips, 1787; Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species: Particularly the African, Translated from a Latin Dissertation, Which Was Honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for*

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extent that Africans are recognised as having played any role in ending slavery, especially in the seventeenth century, their efforts are typically confined to sporadic and impulsive cases of resistance, involving ‘ship-board revolts’, ‘maroon communities’, ‘individual fugitive slaves’ and ‘household revolts’.¹⁰ Studies of these cases have never gone beyond the obvious economic disruptions caused by enslaved people resorting to poisoning, murder and attacks on plantations and their masters’ household properties. Even those former enslaved Africans who gained their

the Year 1785, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1808; Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-trade by the British Parliament* (1808), New York: John S. Taylor, 1836; Prince Hoare, *Memoirs of Granville Sharp*, London: Henry Colbourn, 1828; Granville Sharp, *A Short Sketch of Temporary Regulations, (until Better Shall Be Proposed) for the Intended Settlement on the Grain Coast of Africa, Near Sierra Leona*, London: H. Baldwin Publication, 1786; Granville Sharp, *The Law of Retribution: Or, a Serious Warning to Great Britain and Her Colonies, Founded On Unquestionable Examples of God’s Temporal Vengeance Against Tyrants, Slave-holders and Oppressors*, London, 1776. For discussion of Livingstone, see Tim Jeal, *Livingstone*, London: Heinemann, 1973; David Livingstone and James I. Macnair (ed.), *Livingstone’s Travels*, London: J. M. Dent, 1954; George Seaver, *David Livingstone: His Life and Letters*, New York: Lutterworth Press, 1957. For a detailed discussion of Wilberforce, see Wayne Ackerson, *The African Institution (1807–1827) and the Antislavery Movement in Great Britain*, Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2005; Peter Bayne, *Men Worthy to Lead; Being Lives of John Howard, William Wilberforce, Thomas Chalmers, Thomas Arnold, Samuel Budgett, John Foster*, London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd, Reprinted by Bibliolife, 1890; and Kevin Belmonte, *Hero for Humanity: A Biography of William Wilberforce*, Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress Publishing Group, 2002. On other abolitionists see Leslie Bethell and Murilo de Carvalho (eds.), *Joaquim Nabuco, British Abolitionists, and the End of Slavery in Brazil: Correspondence, 1880–1905*, London: University of London Press, 2009; and Carolina Nabuco, *The Life of Joaquim Nabuco*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950; Padre Antônio Vieira, *Obras Escolhidas*, Lisbon: Sá da Costa, 1951–1954; Padre Antônio Vieira, *Sermões* (15 vols., Lisbon, 1679–1748), 2nd ed., Lisbon: Editorial Comunicação, 1982.

¹⁰ See David Richardson, ‘Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 58(1), 2001, pp. 69–92; for discussion of maroon, see Flávio dos Santos Gomes, *Histórias de Quilombolas: Mocambos e Comunidades de Senzalas no Rio de Janeiro, Século XIX*, Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995; see also slaves’ revolt in São Tomé, Gerhard Seibert, ‘São Tomé’s Great Slave Revolt of 1595: Background, Consequences and Misperceptions of One of the Largest Slave Uprisings in Atlantic History’, *Portuguese Studies Review*, 201, 18(2), pp. 29–50; on fugitive slaves, see Ivana Lima Stolze and Laura Carmo (eds.), *História Social da Língua Nacional, Diápora Africana*, Rio de Janeiro: FAPERU, 2014, and for household revolts, Harold Livermore, ‘Padre Oliveira’s Outburst’, *Portuguese Studies*, 17, 2001, pp. 22–41; and Antonio Andreoni (ou André João Antonil), *Cultura e Opulência do Brazil por suas Drogas, e Minas, com Varias Noticias Curiosas do modo de fazer o Assucar; Plantar, & Beneficiar o Tabaco; Tirar Ouro das Minas & Descubrir as da Prata; e dos grandes Emolumentos, que esta Conquista da America Meridional dá ao Reyno de Portugal com estes, et Outros Generos, et Contratos Reaes*, Lisbon: Conselho Nacional de Geografia, [1717] 1963.

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freedom through sheer endeavour and subsequently argued in the strongest terms for the abolition of slavery in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoano, were seen as limited in scope, without international impact and reliant on their European counterparts.¹¹ Curiously, to date, no historians of slavery of West Central Africa, Africanists or Atlanticists have researched the Black Atlantic abolition movement in the seventeenth century; and those who have attempted to engage with the debate often conclude that any action driven by Africans was a localised endeavour.¹² No historian has yet provided an in-depth study of the highly organised, international-scale, legal court case for liberation and

¹¹ Gunn recently argues that Cugoano's biblical rhetoric on abolition of the enslaved Africans is standard within the abolitionist tradition. See Jeffrey Gunn, 'Creating a Paradox: Quobna Ottobah Cugoano and the Slave Trade's Violation of the Principles of Christianity, Reason, and Property Ownership', *Journal of World History*, 21(4), 2010, pp. 629–656; see also Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, vol. I, London: Printed and folded for the Author, by T. Wilkine, 1789, online: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-%20life-of-olaudah-equiano>.

Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (1791), New York: Penguin, 1999. See also Randy J. Sparks, 'The Two Princes of Calabar: An Atlantic Odyssey from Slavery to Freedom', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 59(3), 2002, pp. 555–584.

¹² See Richard Gray, 'The Papacy and the Atlantic Slave Trade: Lourenço da Silva, the Capuchins and the Decisions of the Holy Office', *Past and Present*, 115, 1987, pp. 52–68. Gray provides an erudite examination of Mendonça in the Vatican but does not see it as a legal case. Ferreira's recent analysis of individuals working for the abolition of the slave trade focuses on challenges to the institution of slavery in the nineteenth century in West Central Africa and does not address the international abolition that Mendonça fought for in the seventeenth century: see Roquinaldo Ferreira, *The Costs of Freedom: Central Africa in the Age of Abolition, 1820 ca.–1880 ca.*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press (forthcoming). Research on cases of individuals challenging their own enslavement in the West Central Africa, see also José C. Curto, 'The Story of Nbená, 1817–20: Unlawful Enslavement and the Concept of "Original Freedom" in Angola', in Paul E. Lovejoy and David Trotman (eds.), *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora*, New York: Continuum, 2003, pp. 43–64; José C. Curto, 'Un Butin Illégitime: Razzias d'esclaves et relations luso-africaines dans la région des fleuves Kwanza et Kwango en 1805', in *Déraison, Esclavage et Droit: Les fondements idéologiques et juridiques de la traite négrière et de l'esclavage*, ed. Isabel de Castro Henriques and Louis Sala-Molins, Paris: Unesco, 2002, pp. 315–327; Vanessa Oliveira, 'Donas, Escravas e Pretas Livres em Luanda (séc. XIX)', *Estudos Ibero-Americanos*, 44(3), 2018, pp. 447–456; Mariana P. Candido, 'The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Vulnerability of Free Blacks in Benguela, Angola, 1780–1830', in Mark Meuwese and Jeffrey A. Fortin (eds.), *Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World*, Leiden: Brill, 2013, pp. 193–210, and Mariana P. Candido, 'O Limite Tênu entre a Liberdade e Escravidão em Benguela durante a Era do Comércio Transatlântico', *Afro-Ásia*, 47, 2013, pp. 239–268.



FIGURE 1 Mendonça's Second Legal Challenge 'Second Complaint' – [Seconda Reclamazione] APF, SOCG. vol. 495a, fl. 58. Photograph taken by the author.

abolition spearheaded by Lourenço da Silva Mendonça¹³ (see Figure 1), or as Mendonça called it the 'complaint (*reclamazione*)'¹⁴ ... complaining about Justice (*reclamando Giustitia*)'.¹⁵

The letter (Figure 1) clearly indicates that Mendonça's first legal challenge was a court case, and that he presented the case again, as the 'second complaint' demanding justice ('Requesting Justice') to the Office of

¹³ See the letter, SOCG, vol. 495a, fl. 54. ¹⁴ APF, SOCG. vol. 495a, fl. 58.

¹⁵ See the following documents: SOCG, vol. 495a; 'Indie Orientali, Sig. Card. Azzolino; Indie Orientali, Die 19 Januarij 1686, Signitures', 19 January 1686, folio 58, 'Seconda reclamazione à N'ro Sig.^{re}, et alla S.^{ma} Mad. Chiesa Reclamando Giustitia', 'Beatist.^{mo} Pd.^{re} Em.^{mie} Rev.^{mi} Sig.^{ris}' – [Second complaint to Our Lord, and Saint Mother Church claiming Justice], [Most Blessed Fathers, Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords]. Terms such as 'complaint' (*reclamazione* ... *Reclamando*), '*doghaãze*' and '*nicorhi*' (complaints and appeals) referred to a court case. Folios 54, 55, 56, 57, 58 60, 62 were kept in the file signed as C. 'Alla Sacra Congregato.^{ne} d. PropagandaFide Per la Gente Nere e Parde natè nel Brazile, Portugalle, e Spagna' ['to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide for the Black People and dual heritage born in Brazil, Portugal, and Spain'], was the name given to folio 59. However, folios 54, 55, 56 and 62 dealt with the method deployed for capturing Africans to enslave them, and folio 62 gave the solution to end the enslavement of the Africans. This was the solution adopted by the Vatican. Folio 62 was fundamental to ending slavery. The confraternities wrote folio 62 to express their frustrations with the Vatican, as they argued strongly for an end to slavery. Before this, the folio was kept in the file. Hence, it did not draw the attention of those dealing with the issues of slavery. I have given great attention to the documentation to highlight the importance of the folios as they are often misunderstood because they are inconsistently arranged in the file. It makes it easy for the reader to miss some of the folios. Folios 56r, 57, 58, 59, 60r and 60v are put in between 60 and 62. This might have prevented researchers such as Gray from piecing together their analyses. Thus, Gray missed out on the legal argument of the confraternities. Moreover, folio 56, which was a letter from Madrid detailing the conversation between Cardinal Milini, the Marquise of Astorga and the Prince of Gonzaga, dated 20 April 1684, was misplaced in the file. Likewise, folios 57r and 57v dated 1 May 1684, were another letter from the Vatican Nuncio in Lisbon, misplaced in the file. Folio 58 contains the appeal to the case, as seen in Figure 1.

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Propaganda Fide, or ‘General Congregation’, which was charged with dealing with any issues arising overseas.¹⁶ The document is undated, but it is clear that it was a continuation of his earlier legal challenge. It reads: ‘S:^{ma} Mad. Chiesa Reclamando Giustitia’ ‘Beatist:^{mo} Pd:^{re} Em.^{mi} e Rev.^{mi} Sig.^{ri}’ [Second appeal to Our Lord and to Saint Mother Church Requesting Justice], ‘Beatist:^{mo} Pd:^{re} Em.^{mic} Rev.^{mi} Sig.^{ri}’ [Most Blessed Fathers, Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords].

In this book, I examine in detail how Mendonça and the historical actors with whom he was involved – such as Black Christians from confraternities in Angola, Brazil, Caribbean, Portugal and Spain – argued for the complete abolition of the Atlantic slave trade well before Wilberforce and his generation of abolitionists.¹⁷ Providing an in-depth analysis of Mendonça’s abolition movement, this book offers new perspectives on the abolition history of the seventeenth century and the associated debates that re-emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁸ It reveals, for the first time, how legal debates were headed not by Europeans, but by Africans.

Drawing on new data uncovered in a variety of archives around the world and never before used by historians of the Lusophone Atlantic, this book links Mendonça’s activity to that of New Christians (Jews converted to Christianity, also known as the ‘Hebrew Nation’) and the Indigenous Americans (an Indigenous people who inhabited what is today known as Brazil before the Portuguese arrival).¹⁹

I argue that there is an important and previously overlooked connection between Africans seeking the abolition of slavery and the New Christians and Indigenous Americans in their common search for liberty and understanding of how the denial of religious freedom was connected

¹⁶ For further discussion of the topic, see Oskar Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia: Until the Establishment of the S. Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in 1622, Based on Source Material in the Kolsrud Collection*, vol. 1, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1963; see also Pius Malekandathil, ‘Cross, Sword and Conflicts: A Study of the Political Meanings of the Struggle between the Padroado Real and the Propaganda Fide’, *Studies in History*, 27(2), 2011, pp. 251–267.

¹⁷ See on the internationalisation of Confraternities’ pledge to abolish the Atlantic slavery, see APF, SOCG, Series America Meridionale, fl. 309, and see SOCG, vol. 495a, fl. 62.

¹⁸ See Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, and Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments*.

¹⁹ On the Hebrew Nation, see Florbela Veiga Frade and Sandra Neves Silva, ‘Medicina e Política em dois Físicos Judeus Portugueses de Hamburgo, Rodrigo de Castro e o Medicus Politicus (1614), e Manuel Bocarro Rosales e o Status Astrologicus (1644)’, *Sefarad*, 71(1), 2011, pp. 51–94; and also Sandra Neves Silva, ‘A “Obra ao Rubro” na Cultura Portuguesa de Seiscentos: o Cristão-Novo Manuel Bocarro Francês e seus Versos Alquímicos de 1624’, *Cadernos de Estudos Sefarditas*, (8), 2008, pp. 217–244.

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with the denial of enslaved Africans' humanity.²⁰ I also contend that by allying himself with these different constituencies in the Atlantic, Mendonça carried his abolitionist message of freedom far beyond Africa.²¹ His claim for liberty was universal: it went beyond the predicament of enslaved Africans to include other oppressed groups in Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, Portugal and Spain.²²

To fully comprehend Mendonça's work, it is crucial that we understand from the outset that the enslavement of Africans was part of the Portuguese conquest of West Central Africa, where Mendonça was born.²³ Slavery went hand in hand with conquest in Portugal's encounter with Central or West Africa, and the enslavement of Angolans was inseparable from Portuguese military aggression in the region.²⁴ From the

²⁰ See Freire de Oliveira, *Elementos para a História do Município de Lisboa*, Lisbon, 1885, and John Ford Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church: Teaching Concerning the Moral Legitimacy of the Institution of Slavery*, London: Rose [for] the Anti-Slavery Society for the Protection of Human Rights, 1975, and A. C. de C. M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal 1441–1555*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. See Gray, 'The Papacy', and the discussion of Brazil by Andreoni (Antonil), *Cultura e Opulência*.

²¹ See 'Carta de Giacinto Rogio Monzon' [Letter by Giacinto Rogio Monzon], APF, Scrittura Riferite nei Congressi, Series Africa, Angola, Congo, Senegal, Isole dell' Oceano Atlantico Dar, Vatican, Rome, Italy, 1645 al 1685, [S.C. Africa], vol. 1, fl. 487, Madrid, 23 September 1682. See also Stuart B. Schwartz, *Blacks and Indians: Common Cause and Confrontation in Colonial Brazil*, Yale University, no date.

²² On the Caribbean's involvement see SOCG, vol. 495a, fl. 62.

²³ See 'Carta de António da Costa de Sousa a Manuel Barreto de S. Paio' [A Letter of António da Costa to Manuel Barreto de S. Paio], Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino de Belém (hereafter AHU), AHU_CU_001, cx. 11, d. 1326, Lisboa, fl. 678v, 24 August 1673. See also Beatrix Heintze and Katja Rieck 'The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga Through the Centuries: Critical Approaches to Precolonial Angolan Historical Sources', *History in Africa*, 34, 2007, pp. 67–101 and Jan Vansina, 'Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade c. 1760–1845', *Journal of African History* 46(1), 2005, pp. 1–27.

²⁴ See Cadornega, *História Geral*, vols. I–III. My understanding of the conquest differs from a new wave of Brazilian-born scholars, who have been emphatic about using the term 'colonialism' and stressing territorial conquest, taxation and enslavement as part of the colonial expansion. See Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Flávia Maria de Carvalho, *Sobas e Homens do Rei. Relações de Poder e Escravidão em Angola (séculos XVII e XVIII)*, Maceió, Alagoas: Edufal, 2015; Crislayne Alfagali, *Ferreiros e fundidores da Ilamba: uma história social da fabricação do ferro e da Real Fábrica de Nova Oeiras* (Angola, segunda metade do século XVIII), Luanda: Fundação Agostinho Neto, 2018. I am using the term in the Anglo-Saxon and Luso-African way, as argued by Walter Rodney, that colonialism was a total domination and did not start before the end of the nineteenth century; see Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London; Brooklyn, New York: Verso, 2018; and *History of the Upper Guinea Coast: 1545–1800*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. See also Amílcar Cabral, *Return to the Source: Selected*

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beginning of Portuguese settlement there in the mid-sixteenth century, war was waged against the West Central African people.²⁵ This was the catalyst for the enslavement of ordinary civilians.²⁶

If we are to grasp the rationale behind the capture of enslaved people²⁷ in the region and understand how they were obtained, it is crucial to recognise the role played by the Municipal City Council of Luanda, which regulated the shipment of the enslaved Angolans sent to Brazil.²⁸ Indeed, it is impossible to understand the significance of Mendonça's court case without taking account of the involvement of the Municipal City Council of Luanda in the slave trade. Central to the argument of this book, then, is the story of the destruction of Pungo-Andongo and the death of its last king, João (John) Hari II, who was Mendonça's uncle.²⁹ Exiled as prisoners of war, Ndongo's

Speeches of Amílcar Cabral, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973; and *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amílcar Cabral*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979; and José Lingna Nafafé, *Colonial Encounters: Issues of Culture, Hybridity and Creolisation, Portuguese Mercantile Settlers in West Africa*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007.

²⁵ I am employing the term West Central Africa (WCA), which has been used by historians of the region or Africanists, but of course this was not a designation at the time. WCA is a subregion that includes the African Coast between Cape Lopes and the Southern part of the African continent, comprising the Angolan, Kongolese and Loanguese ports. For detailed information see A. M. Caldeira, 'Formação de uma cidade afro-atlântica: Luanda no século XVII', *Revista Tempo, Espaço, Linguagem*, 5(3), 2014, pp. 12–39. The region was called Libia Inferior or Ethiopia Menor. See 'D. António Nigrata, Embaixador do Rei do Congo', AV – Fando Borghhe, Série I, vol. 721. (DIARIORUM CAEREMONIALIVM / IOANNIS PAVLI MVCANTII ROMANI i. V. D. / APOSTOLICARVM CJEREMONIARVM / MAGISTRI, 2 January 1608, MMA, p. 393 'Aethiopia inferior' (pp. 393–403).

²⁶ See Mário Martins de Freitas, *Reino Negro de Palmares* [1954], Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército Editora, 2nd ed., 1988. See also Heintze and Rieck, 'The Extraordinary Journey of the Jaga'; Vansina, 'Ambaca Society'; and David Birmingham, *Trade and Conquest in Angola*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966. All these authors have analysed at length how Portuguese conquest in Angola provided enslaved people.

²⁷ I use the term 'enslaved people' instead of 'slave' to indicate the process of enslaving the Africans and support the argument that there were no pre-existing slaves in Africa before the arrival of the Europeans. The term 'enslaved people' is already being used in Brazil by the Black Movement, as well as in philosophy and history by various authors in the Anglo-Saxon context.

²⁸ There may have been some enslaved Angolans who ended up in Brazil as contraband or who were smuggled illegally from the Portuguese point of view of tax payment. However, the Municipal City Council of Luanda controlled and managed the trade.

²⁹ See *Relaçam/ Do FELICE SVCCESSO, QUE / confeguirão as armas do Sereniffimo Principe D. Pedro N. S. governadas por Francisco de Tauora, Governador, & Capitam General do Reyno de Angola contra a Rebelião de Dom Ioaõ Rey das Pedras, & Dongo, no mez de Dezembro de 1671*, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Reservado, 903, pp. 1–11; Cadornega, *História Geral*, vols. I and II; and Delgado's note in Cadornega, *História Geral*, vol. II, pp. 548–549.

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royals, including Mendonça, his brothers, uncles, aunts and cousins, were sent first to Salvador in Bahia, then to Rio de Janeiro and other captaincies in what is nowadays Brazil, and finally to Portugal.³⁰ Crucially, to fully understand the involvement of *sobas* (Angolan local rulers) in the slave trade in Angola and perhaps elsewhere in Africa, I contend that it is necessary to take into account the introduction in 1626 by Fernão de Sousa, the Portuguese governor in Angola, of *baculamento*, a tax payment of enslaved people, in place of *encombros*, a tax payment in produce.³¹ This is a piece of new data that has not been used by historians of West Central Africa, Africanists and Atlanticists. I argue that it had far-reaching consequences for the historiography of the region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unaware of this legislation, West Central African historiography on ‘taxation’, ‘wars’, ‘debt’ and ‘legal practices’ has unwittingly been prevented from truly understanding the reasons for and methods of enslavement.³² These historians of West Central Africa have remained ignorant of Sousa’s introduction of the *baculamento*. Subsequent governors and their captains in the *presidio* (Portuguese outpost) in Angola used the *baculamento* for centuries to naturalise the Atlantic slave trade. And the *baculamento* has remained obscure until now; most West Central African historians have taken it as accepted wisdom that slavery was an African practice,³³ and the idea that Africans colluded in Atlantic slavery has never been challenged.³⁴ Generations of scholars have studied systems of ‘taxation’, ‘wars’, ‘debt’ and ‘legal practices’ without interrogating the the Portuguese institution of *baculamento*, which overrode local practices; instead, blame has been placed on the Angolan institutions. All Angolan *soba* allies of the Portuguese conquest were obliged to make a payment of 100 enslaved people annually to Portugal. This Portuguese taxation, which was named after the local *baculamento*

³⁰ See Delgado’s note in Cadornega, *História Geral*, vol. II, pp. 546–547.

³¹ *Encombros* were tributes paid by *sobas* to the Portuguese; tribute included produce, such as cows, timbers, palm oil and chickens. See ‘Informação de Fernão de Sousa a El-Rei’ (Information by Fernão de Sousa to the King), BÅL, ms. 51–VIII-31, fls. 5–9 v, 7 December 1631. *Sobas* were noblemen responsible for the districts into which the kingdom of Ndongo was divided.

³² See Charles R. Boxer (ed.), *South China in the Sixteenth Century: Being the Narratives of Galeote Pereira, Fr. Gaspar da Cruz, O.P. [and] Fr. Martín de Rada, O.E.S.A. (1550–1575)*, London: Routledge, 2010, p. 152. For the original work of Gaspar da Cruz, see Gaspar da Cruz (O.P.), *Tractado em que se Co[m]tam Muito por Este[n]so as Cousas da China, co[n] suas Particularidades, [e] assi do Reyno Dormuz*, Madrid: Em Casa de Andre de Burgos, 1569.

³³ See Eugénio Ferreira, *Feiras e Presídios: Esboço de Interpretação Materialista da Colonização de Angola*, Lisbon: Edições 70, 1979.

³⁴ See Boxer (ed.), *South China in the Sixteenth Century*.

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practice³⁵ – a tribute system – profoundly disrupted the Angolan socio-political and legal system and resulted in social upheaval. Communities and their rulers were turned against each other, a new local judicial procedure was imposed that served the interests of the Atlantic slave trade, putting judicial officers in local courts in Angola to adjudicate local cases in their own interest – what Kimbwandende K. B. Fu-Kiau called a turning point in African governance and leadership in West Central Africa.³⁶

Following from this, I scrutinise the history of runaways to gain an understanding of how those who escaped enslavement in Angola, São Tomé and Brazil conceived their plight. Many enslaved peoples ran away in these regions because they rebelled against a system that dehumanised them, which Portugal had imposed upon them. While in Brazil, Mendonça may have had contact with communities there of such runaways, come to understand their suffering and connected his experience with theirs, especially those who joined *Quilombo dos Palmares*, one of the earliest, largest and most successful maroon communities in Brazil.³⁷

³⁵ *Baculamento* is a Kimbundu term that means ‘tribute’. For a detailed discussion of *baculamento* as a tribute, but not as a tax in human beings, see Aida Freudenthal and Selma Pantoja, *Livro dos Baculamentos que os Sobas Deste Reino de Angola Pagam a Sua Majestade 1630*, Luanda: Arquivo Nacional de Angola, D.L., 2013; Beatrix Heintze, ‘The Angolan Vassal Tributes of the 17th Century’, *Revista de Historia Economica e Social*, 6, 1980, pp. 57–78; Beatrix Heintze, ‘Luso-African Feudalism in Angola? The Vassal Treaties of the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century’, *Revista Portuguesa de História*, 18, 1980, pp. 111–131; Beatrix Heintze, *Angola nos Séculos XVI e XVII. Estudo Sobre Fontes, Métodos e História*, Luanda: Kilombelombe, 2007; and Beatrix Heintze, ‘Angola nas Garras do Tráfico de Escravos: As Guerras Angolanas do Ndongo (1611–1630)’, *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos*, 1, 1984, pp. 11–59; and Toby Green, ‘Baculamento or Encomienda?: Legal Pluralisms and the Contestation of Power in Pan-Atlantic World of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *Journal of Global Slavery*, 2, 2017, pp. 310–336; Mariana P. Candido, ‘Conquest, Occupation, Colonialism and Exclusion: Land Disputes in Angola’, in *Property Rights, Land and Territory in the European Overseas Empires*, ed. José Vicente Serrão et al., Lisbon: CEHC-IUL, 2014, pp. 223–233; Mariana P. Candido, ‘O Limite Tênuê entre a Liberdade e Escravidão em Benguela durante a Era do Comércio Transatlântico’, *Afro-Ásia*, 47 (2013), pp. 239–268.

³⁶ See Overseas Council edit of 1698. For a detailed discussion of the evil of slavery brought by the Portuguese in Angola, see Vansina, ‘Ambaca Society’. Even though the author’s analysis is that of the eighteenth century, it is worth noting that the process of slavery in the region has been of *longue durée* (the process of history is a long-lasting one). A crucial author to understand the changes in the conceptions of law and crime is Kimbwandende K. B. Fu-Kiau, *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo – Principles of Live and Living*. Poland Sp. 20.0.; Wrocław: African Tree Press, 2001.

³⁷ For literature on Palmares, see Edison Carneiro, *O Quilombo dos Palmares* [1947] 2nd ed., São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1958; de Freitas, *Reino Negro de Palmares*. See also Glenn Alan Cheney, *Quilombo dos Palmares: Brazil’s Lost Nation of Fugitive Slaves*, Hanover, CT: New London Librarium, 2014.