

# Apprenticeship and the Negotiation of Freedom. The Liberated Africans of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission in Luanda (1844-1870)\*

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## 1. Introduction

On the 4th of April 1851, the city of Luanda celebrated the anniversary of the Portuguese Queen Maria II. Twenty liberated Africans, consigned to Luanda's Department of Public Works, also benefited from the festivities: they received double rations and wine.<sup>1</sup> The next morning, however, Guilherme Cypriano Demony, Knight in the Order of Christ and Curator of the liberated Africans, was notified of the death of one of the liberated Africans in his custody. According to witnesses, Jorge Moongo had been killed during the night by the porter of the Public Works department, who had hit him on the head with a heavy stick. An autopsy was carried out the same day and confirmed this cause of death.<sup>2</sup> The accused porter, Domingos de Almeida, had already been convicted for murder in Portugal and had for that reason been banished for life to Angola, where, like many other convicts, he served in the military. In July, the Court of Military Inquiry condemned him to four years of heavy labour in one of the presidencies in the interior of Angola for having caused the death of Jorge Moongo.<sup>3</sup> A month later, however, another court in Luanda, the Junta de Justiça, established to deal quickly and without appeal with

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1 Jackson to Palmerston, 7 April 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 130-1. For referring to documents from the British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons (PP), I follow the standard in (Cockton, 1988, vol. 5: viii and Holt, 1992: 414, note 1). In the reference above, 1852-1853 is the session year, (o.2) the session number and CIII Pt. I the volume number.

2 Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 5 April 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 131-2.

3 Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 16 July 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, p. 143; Demony, *Report on sentence on Prisoner accused of having caused the death of Jorge Moongo*, 25 Aug. 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, p. 146.

crimes in the colonies, revoked this sentence and acquitted Almeida for want of proof.<sup>4</sup> The new sentence stated that the cause of death could not be ascertained beyond doubt and that no intention of killing could be proved, the porter being allowed to hit disobedient *libertos*. More important still, the court dismissed the testimonies of the witnesses, all of them also liberated Africans. Their testimonies were not only considered contradictory and untrustworthy because of their “state of intoxication”; the credibility of the liberated Africans as such was called into question. For “all the witnesses were negroes, and although liberated, little better than uncivilized”. Curator Demony protested against this acquittal, but in vain.<sup>5</sup>

Jorge Moongo was only one of 137 African slaves liberated by the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission in Luanda between its first session in 1844 and its last in 1870.<sup>6</sup> The establishment of Mixed Commissions on both sides of the Atlantic was one of the key issues in the 1842 Anti-Slave Trade Treaty between Great Britain and Portugal.<sup>7</sup> The Commissions had to assure that the ships which were detained by the British or Portuguese Navy on the suspicion of engagement in the slave trade were judged and, when the suspicion proved to be true, effectively condemned, in which case the slaves on the ship were freed. After the ratification of the treaty, Mixed Commissions were installed in Spanish Town (Jamaica), Boa Vista (Cape Verde Islands), Cape Town and Luanda, but, for a variety of reasons, only the one in Luanda effectively liberated slaves: four in 1845, twenty in 1848 and over a hundred at the beginning of the 1860s.<sup>8</sup>

For the slaves, liberation did not mean that they immediately gained all rights and privileges of a free person. Annex C of the Treaty prescribed a transitional phase of several years during which the liberated Africans had to be educated and civilized, before they would gain complete freedom. In this period, which was seven years for adults and up to the age of twenty for children, they were placed under the custody of a so-called Board of Superintendence and its Curator and subjected to a set of rules, detailed in the same Annex.<sup>9</sup> However, as the opening story indicates, not everyone in the colonial society of Luanda was convinced of the benefits of such a civilizing mission.

The present article will focus on this small but meaningful group of liberated Africans. While the existence of similar groups of slaves liberated from the slave trade by Mixed Commissions or other, strictly national, courts in Sierra Leone, Cuba, Brazil, South Africa, the British West Indies and Surinam has received much scholarly attention (e.g. Peterson, 1969; Martínez-Fernández, 1995; Conrad, 1973; Mamigonian, 2002; Bertin,

4 *Sentence of the Junta de Justiça*, 16 Aug. 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, p. 148. On the history and function of the Juntas de Justiça in the Portuguese empire, see Silva, 2009: 171–3.

5 Demony, *Report on sentence on Prisoner accused of having caused the death of Jorge Moongo*, 25.o8.1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, p. 146; Jackson to Palmerston, 18 Sept. 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 151–2.

6 The Mixed Commission was suspended in July 1870 and officially abolished a year later, both by mutual consent. See Comissão Mista de Luanda, *Acta da sessão de 4 de Julho de 1870*, AMNE, Caixa (hereafter: Cx.) 1153, n.º 135b and *Convention between Her Majesty and the King of Portugal, additional to Treaty of Lisbon, July 1842, for Suspension of Traffic in Slaves, Signed at London*, 18 July 1871, PP 1872 [C. 470] LXX, pp. 651–9.

7 *Treaty between Her Majesty and the Queen of Portugal for the Suppression of the Traffick in Slaves, Signed at Lisbon*, 3 March 1842, PP 1843 [414] XLV, pp. 143–83.

8 The Mixed Commissions in Spanish Town (Jamaica) and Boa Vista (Cape Verde Islands) were closed down by mutual consent in 1851, after having judged upon zero and one case respectively. Just as the Mixed Commission in Luanda, the Mixed Commission in Cape Town was only abolished in 1871, but by then had adjudicated only eight ships, three of which were condemned, however without slaves on board. In spite of several inaccuracies concerning the Portuguese case, Bethell's article of 1966 is still a useful overview of the Mixed Commissions used in the struggle against the slave trade (Bethell, 1966). On the Mixed Commission in Cape Town, see van Niekerk, 2004.

9 *Regulations in respect to the treatment of liberated Negroes, Annex C to the Treaty between Her Majesty and the Queen of Portugal for the Suppression of the Traffick in Slaves, Signed at Lisbon*, 3 March 1842, PP 1843 [414] XLV, pp. 169–83 (hereafter: Annex C).

2006; Saunders, 1985 e 1994; Johnson, 1988; Thompson, 1990; Adderley, 2006; Emmer, 1974 e 1981), their Angolan counterparts have passed virtually unnoticed. Only very recently has João Pedro Marques drawn attention to the existence and the role of the category of liberated Africans in the process of the abolition of slavery in the Portuguese Empire (Marques, 2006: 221–2 e 2008: passim). In addition, Cristina Nogueira da Silva has elaborated upon the legal position of freed slaves (*libertos*) in general (Silva, 2009: 335–81). The aim of my article is to broaden the scope of the analysis by adding to these political and legal perspectives also issues of diplomatic and social history and by integrating the case of Luanda into a larger Atlantic History of liberated Africans.<sup>10</sup> In a first chapter, I will sketch how the legal framework conditioning the fate of the Liberated Africans emerged as an important but contested part of the 1842 treaty and how the application of this treaty in the changing context of the (fight against the) Atlantic slave trade led to the emancipation of only a small number of slaves. Then, I will move the focus to the treatment and agency of the liberated Africans ‘on the ground’. A second chapter will thus analyse the concept of apprenticeship, by connecting it not only to a broader discourse of civilizing mission, but by looking also at the local interpretation, which was given to it. In a third chapter, I will examine the resistances in Luanda against the presence of the liberated Africans as well as the different solutions for ending the apprenticeship experiment envisioned by Mixed Commission members, colonial officials and the liberated Africans themselves.

## 2. The abolition of the Portuguese slave trade and the birth of the liberated Africans

### The birth of a treaty

When the representatives of Portugal and Great Britain signed the ‘Treaty for the Suppression of the Traffick in Slaves’ in 1842, it was but the last achievement in a long series of bi- and multilateral anti-slave trade treaties, realized under pressure from Great Britain. Portugal had already signed treaties with a more limited scope in 1815 and 1817, as had the Netherlands (1815 and 1818), Spain (1817 and 1835) and even France (1831 and 1833) (Marques, 1999: 101–13; Emmer, 1974; Murray, 1980; Daget, 1981). By the 1840s, however, the international context had changed. The 1833 *Act for the Abolition of Slavery* and the ensuing Grand Experiment had not only resulted in the emancipation of all slaves in most British colonies - with the notable exception of India -, they had also been milestones in Britain’s second abolitionist ‘war against barbarism’ (Davis), in which Viscount Palmerston played a leading role. While the diplomatic and naval efforts against the ‘odious commerce’ continued, the declared aim was now to eradicate slavery itself and to turn slaves into citizens on a global scale (Davis, 1984: 231–78, quote 231 e Drescher, 2002: 151–57).

<sup>10</sup> To stress the Atlantic dimension of the phenomenon, I will not use the terms ‘libertos’/‘liberated Negroes’ used in the sources of the Mixed Commission in Luanda, but ‘liberated Africans’, as slaves ‘rescued’ by the force of anti-slave trade treaties or laws are now commonly designated (see e.g. Mamigonian, 1997). This term also allows to distinguish them from other groups of freed slaves (*libertos*) in the Portuguese empire.

The Africans liberated from the illegal slave trade throughout the Atlantic world seemed a perfect object for this new civilizing mission. Their transformation into new subjects through civilizing measures would not only be a moral victory which would benefit to the former slaves themselves, but the presence of these liberated Africans on the territory of other nations would also enable the British to show in a forceful way how a civilized nation should deal with emancipated slaves - as a foretaste of the complete abolition of slavery and thus emancipation of all slaves in these countries. In other words, this civilizing mission had a double dimension, as it aimed to cure the backwardness of both slaves and slave nations (Osterhammel, 2005: 401–8).

Against this new background, it can be understood why the 1842 treaty contained, in the 34 articles of its annex C, many new rules for the treatment of the liberated Africans which cannot be found in earlier treaties of Great Britain with Portugal or with other slave trading nations (with the exception of Uruguay).<sup>11</sup> The main innovation consisted in the creation of a so-called Board of Superintendence (*Junta de Superintendência*). While the regular Mixed Commission, composed of two commissioners and two arbitrators equally distributed between Great Britain and Portugal, was responsible for the execution of the treaty as a whole, the Board of Superintendence would deal exclusively with the liberated Africans. The Board would be composed of two members - in the case of Angola, the Portuguese Governor and the British Commissioner - and should, in addition, appoint a Curator “of known probity”, who would follow up the ‘progress’ of the liberated slaves more closely and report to the Board on a trimestrial basis (Annex C, art. III, IV and XXIII). Through these institutions, the British government had assured shared control over the Africans to be liberated by the Mixed Commissions in Luanda and Boa Vista. This situation differed from all previous treaties, which had left the former slaves under the sole control of the Government on whose territory the Commission was established. As I will show, this innovation would have huge consequences for the outcome of the experiment. Ironically, the British had asked for and obtained permission from Portugal to apply their own laws and regulations to the future liberated Africans freed by the Mixed Commissions on British soil, with the argument that these were already “better adapted for the purpose of guaranteeing the liberty” of the liberated Africans than annex C.<sup>12</sup>

The inclusion of the referred annex C had been the object of diplomatic dispute during the long negotiations for the Treaty.<sup>13</sup> Based upon British initiative, the annex was included in the first draft by Viscount Palmerston in 1834, left out in a first compromise two years later but reinserted when the negotiations were resumed in 1838.<sup>14</sup> Viscount Sá da Bandeira, twice Portuguese prime minister between 1836 and 1839, had protested

11 The annex C in the treaty between Great Britain and Uruguay of 1839 was almost identical, but was never put into effect since Uruguay renounced to establish Mixed Commissions on its own soil. See *Treaty between Her Majesty and the Oriental Republic of the Uruguay for the Abolition of the Traffick in Slaves*, 13 July 1839, PP1842 [391] XLV, pp. 297–334. See also King, 1944: 395–400 and Bethell, 1966: 83.

12 Earl of Aberdeen to Lord Howard de Walden, 1 Oct. 1842, PP1843 [483] LVIII, p. 220; *Additional Article to the Treaty concluded at Lisbon, July 3, 1842, between Her Majesty and the Queen of Portugal, for the Suppression of the Traffick in Slaves*, 22 Oct. 1842, PP1843 [425] LXI, pp. 321–4 (here also quote).

13 For a general discussion of these negotiations, see the excellent Marques, 1999: 195–200. Due to a different focus, however, Marques does not discuss the negotiations on Annex C.

14 *Annex C of the Treaty draft*, enclosed in Palmerston to Howard de Walden, 8 Sept. 1834, National Archives in London, Foreign Office - Slave Trade Series (= hereafter: FO 84)/155, pp. 260–321; *Tractado negociado entre o Sr. Duque de Palmella e Lord Howard de Walden em 1836*, in: Câmara dos Senadores, 1839: 1–13; Palmerston, *Draft of a Treaty with Portugal on Slave Trade*, [5 May 1838], PP1839 [181] XLVIII, pp. 221–99.

vigorously against the treaty as a whole but also against its enlarged annex C. He had pointed out that placing liberated Africans on Portuguese soil under the authority of a *mixed* Board of Superintendence and determining their treatment in such a detailed way infringed Portuguese sovereignty.<sup>15</sup> Portugal was in a weak bargaining position, however, and the situation worsened even further when Palmerston's Act was passed in 1839, which unilaterally allowed the British Navy to conduct Portuguese vessels to British Vice-Admiralty Courts on the suspicion of slave trading (Bethell, 1965). Consequently, Sá da Bandeira's demands for alterations were not met.

Palmerston's insistence on such an elaborate annex C was driven by mistrust of the Portuguese government, as his comment on the Portuguese counterproposal of 1838 indicates:

"It appears that the Portuguese Government wants to strike out the greater part of Annex C, but we must insist upon its being re-established. It is impossible to acquiesce in the deliberate purpose, which this alteration seems to have in view, of making Slaves of the Emancipated Negroes. All the articles struck out by the Portuguese Government must be reinserted."<sup>16</sup>

Besides having doubts about the Portuguese government's true intentions, he was also sceptical about its ability, even with the best will in the world, to guarantee the freedom of the former slaves against the resistance of local elites in the colonies. To place the liberated Africans under Portuguese control "would authorise the Government to sell them by auction, a thing quite incompatible with letter or spirit of the treaty."<sup>17</sup>

Palmerston's fears of re-enslavement were not groundless, but rooted in previous experiences with liberated Africans in other parts of the Atlantic world. When, in the 1830s or even before, the British Officials had tried to ensure the freedom of the slaves emancipated by the other Mixed Commissions on foreign soil, in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro), Cuba (Havana) or Surinam (Paramaribo), and to protect them against recurrent abuses, even the gathering of information about their fate had turned out to be difficult (Conrad, 1973: 56–60; Martínez-Fernández, 1995: 212–21; Emmer, 1974: 119–20). For these countries, the corresponding treaties did not include shared superintendence over the liberated Africans, and hence the British officials had no legal leverage for their interference. Their attempts were generally frustrated by recalcitrant local administrators and mostly rewarded with even more animosity from the local population than that already generated by the presence of a Mixed Commission.<sup>18</sup>

The 'improved' annex C was clearly conceived to avoid similar scenarios with the Portuguese. Already in 1833 the Foreign Office had asked Henry Hayne, a former British judge of the Mixed Commission in Rio de Janeiro and well acquainted with these problems, to draw up new regulations that could be included in future treaties in order to ensure both

15 Sá da Bandeira to Jerningham, 06.10.1838, in: Câmara dos Senadores, 1839: 133–44.

16 Palmerston, *Draft of a Treaty with Portugal on Slave Trade*, [5 May 1838], PP 1839 [181] XLVIII, pp. 221–99, here p. 277.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 271.

18 Menaces, judicial procedures and even physical violence against British commissioners were not an exception. See e.g. Bethell, 1970: 149; Emmer, 1974: 121–6 and Martínez-Fernández, 1995: 220). The same can be concluded for Luanda: Anne Stam has suggested that the death of the first British commissioner was not a suicide, as the official declaration said (Stamm, 1972: 594). Furthermore, conflicts between the British commissioners and the local government were frequent in the 1860s (see e.g. the correspondence in PP 1863 [3159] LXXI and Ribeiro to Lytton, 30 July 1866, PP 1867 [3816–1] LXXIII, pp. 90–1).

the proper treatment of the freed slaves and their eventual freedom.<sup>19</sup> Many of Hayne's recommendations found their way to the 1834 draft and hence to the final version of the 1842 Treaty. This transfer underlines the Atlantic dimension of the liberated Africans in Luanda: Their treatment was modelled upon previous experiences with their counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic and, as I will show in the next chapter, with apprentices in the British colonies. The influence of former Portuguese experiences on the stipulations of Annex C, by contrast, was small. The Portuguese ban on the Atlantic slave trade of 10th December 1836 did not include detailed guidelines on how to deal with the slaves freed by its force. Colonial governors could more or less freely dispose of these *libertos* and, as the contracts themselves show, they were distributed in small groups to individuals, who only had to make some vague promises to treat them well.<sup>20</sup> There was no controlling organ, at least until the *Junta Protectora dos Escravos e Libertos* was established in the wake of the abolitionist decree of 1854 in order to guide and protect all *libertos*.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the referred contracts were not limited in time.

### Liberating Africans

Between 1844 and 1870, the Mixed Commission in Luanda proceeded against 33 ships on the suspicion of slave trading.<sup>22</sup> Of the ships condemned as 'good prize', six transported slaves, 137 in total, who were thereupon freed by the Mixed Commission. In chronological order: a nameless ship in 1845 (4 slaves), the *Fortuna* in 1848 (20 slaves), the *Tigre* and the *Paquete de Moanda* in 1860 (70 and 5 slaves), the *Maria Isabel* in 1861 (33 slaves) and the *E* in 1862 (5 slaves).<sup>23</sup> In comparison with the total slave export from West Central Africa in this period, which averaged about 20,000 slaves a year between 1844 and 1866, 137 is a very small number.<sup>24</sup> The record of the other Mixed Commissions in the Atlantic World corroborates this: about 3,500 slaves were liberated by the Mixed Commission in Rio de Janeiro (1819-1845), more than 10,000 in Havana (1820-1870) and some 65,000 by the several Mixed Commission Courts in Sierra Leone (1819-1871). With 54 liberated Africans in 27 years of activity, only the Mixed Commission in Surinam (1819-1845) was less 'productive' (Mamigonian, 2002: 279-82; Martínez-Fernández, 1995: 209; Asiegbu, 1969: 127 e Emmer, 1981: 184). Luanda's low number cannot be imputed to a possible lack of patrols: the British, but also the Portuguese Navy stationed an important part of their

19 Hayne, *Regulations for the care and protection of negroes emancipated under sentence of the Mixed Commissions*, enclosed in Hayne to Bart, 28 Nov. 1833, FO 84/138, pp. 171-6.

20 See Sá da Bandeira, *Decreto*, 10 Dec. 1836, Boletim do Conselho Ultramarino (hereafter: BCU), Vol. I (1834-1851), pp. 21-8, art. XI and the terms of contract for the years 1840 and 1842 found in the AHA, Cx. 1359.

21 *Decreto*, 14 Dec. 1854, BCU, Vol. II (1852-1856), pp. 484-90, art. XVI. The *Junta Protectora* started to function in September 1855, see *Junta Protectora dos Escravos e Libertos, 1st Session*, 3 Sept. 1855, Livro das Sessões (1855-1856), AHU, SEMU-DGU, Angola, n° 622, Correspondência dos Governadores, Pt. 22A.

22 This number is based on a thorough analysis of the correspondence between the commissioners in Luanda and their superiors in the Foreign Office in London and Lisbon respectively. For the British side, the documentation can be found in the National Archives in London in the FO 84 series and has to a very large extent been printed in the yearly volumes of the British Parliamentary Papers. In Portugal, the relevant correspondence can be found in the ANTT, Cx. 223 and the AMNE, Cx. 1153.

23 Falcão and Domingues, *Sentence*, 29 March 1845, PP 1846 [723] L, pp. 693-4; Falcão and Jackson, *Sentence in the case of the "Fortuna"*, 27 March 1848, PP 1849 [1127] LV, p. 110; Huntley and Franco, *Judgement given in the case of the Portuguese Launch "Tigre"*, 30 Oct. 1860, PP 1862 [2958] LXI, p. 49; Huntley and Franco, *Judgement given in the case of the Portuguese palhabote "Paquete de Moanda"*, 30 Oct. 1860, PP 1862 [2958] LXI, p. 52; Gabriel and Huntley, *Report of the case of the launch "Maria Isabel"*, 31 Oct. 1861, PP 1863 [3159] LXXI, p. 46; Rodrigues and Gabriel, *Judgement in the case of the Portuguese launch "E"*, 29 Nov. 1862, PP 1864 [3339] LXVI, pp. 63-5.

24 After the peak of the late 1840s, numbers gradually fell until the end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1866 (source: www.slavevoyages.org). As Marques has pointed out, 'West Central Africa' did also comprise important slave export areas which were not under Portugal's control, such as the Congo-estuary (Marques, 2000: 186-9).

fleets along the Atlantic coast of Africa in order to suppress illegal trafficking (Eltis, 1987: 81–101; Marques, 1999: 312–23 e 2000). The explanation is threefold.

First, both the British and the Portuguese government tried to circumvent the very Mixed Commissions they had just agreed upon by using their own national tribunals also established to fight the slave trade. This was possible without a violation of the treaty, since the Vice-Admiralty Courts in Sierra Leone, St. Helena or Cape Town as well as the *Tribunal das Presas* (engl. Prize Court) in Luanda, founded in 1844 in order to adjudicate the vessels liable by the abolition law of 1836, could be charged in almost all cases where the slave ship was neither proven British nor Portuguese. After the Aberdeen Act of 1845, the jurisdiction of the Vice-Admiralty Courts also included Brazilian ships (van Niekerk, 2004: 211–2). These courts freed far more slaves than the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commissions, as for both the British and the Portuguese, the rationale was to avoid foreign interference in the procedure and judgement of the ships their Navy had detained as well as in the future employment of the liberated Africans (Bethell, 1966: 91 e Asiegbu, 1969: 127–9).<sup>25</sup>

Second, in the wake of the 1842 Treaty, many slave ships exchanged their Portuguese flag against the flag of Brazil or the United States, countries not or only inaccurately bound by anti-slave trade treaties with Great Britain. Some even preferred to sail with no flag at all or to throw it away before capture. When detained, these ships would be judged by a Vice-Admiralty Court or the *Tribunal das Presas*, who only rarely - or not at all - punished the crew (Asiegbu, 1969: 128–9 e Marques, 1999: 320, 325–30).<sup>26</sup>

Third, the low average of ca. 23 slaves per condemned slave ship - according to Eltis, the number of slaves on detained ships in the Atlantic between 1811 and 1867 averaged 265 (Eltis, 1987: 99) - was the result of a specific division of labour. While the British Navy patrolled mostly on the high sea, where it captured large transatlantic slave ships generally sailing under neither the Portuguese nor the British flag and consequently sent to the Vice-Admiralty Courts in St. Helena and Sierra Leone, the Portuguese Navy controlled almost exclusively in territorial waters near the coast line (Eltis, 1987: 95 e Marques, 1999: 316–8, 485–7). Five of the six slave transporting vessels condemned by the Mixed Commission were seized by the Portuguese Navy and, as some of the sentences state explicitly, they were caught bringing small groups of slaves to the larger America bound slave ships waiting offshore, a common practice after the illegalization of the slave trade.<sup>27</sup>

From these points, it can be concluded that when the Mixed Commission in Luanda started to function, its very form was already almost obsolete. The revival of this Mixed Commission in the 1860s with 14 cases and more than a hundred liberated slaves is therefore difficult to explain, also in the larger Atlantic context, as all other Mixed Com-

25 Between 1841 and 1867, at least some 20,000 slaves were freed by the vice-admiralty court on St. Helena, as during that period more than 16,000 of them were sent from there to the Americas, over 1,400 to South Africa and still many others stayed or died (Asiegbu, 1969: 189–90 and Watson, 2000: 140 and on the high mortality Schuler, 2002: 323–4). The *Tribunal das Presas*, and between 1836 and 1844 local judges, freed at least 1,400 slaves (see Marques, 1999: 489 and AHU, SEMU-DGU, Angola, Cx. 874).

26 This flag rotation was part of a larger pattern: it accompanied the British campaign against the 'odious commerce' in the Atlantic and forced Great Britain to constantly conclude new treaties, even with countries so unimportant for the slave trade as most of the Latin American republics (Bethell, 1970: 188–95; 214 and King, 1944: 400–1).

27 See e.g. Falcão and Domingues, *Sentence*, 29 March 1845, PP 1846 [723] L, pp. 693–4; Gabriel and Huntley, *Report of the Case of the Portuguese launch "Tigre"*, 15 Sept. 1861, PP 1862 [2958] LXI, pp. 47–8 and Gabriel and Huntley, *Report of the case of the launch "Maria Isabel"*, 31 Oct. 1861, PP 1863 [3159] LXXI, p. 46.

missions together only judged four ships in the 1860s.<sup>28</sup> A partial explanation is that seven of the ships had been detained by one and the same Portuguese schooner in the space of a few months, and hence seem to have been the result of a single action.

### 3. Apprenticeship and Labour

Upon their emancipation by the Mixed Commission, the liberated Africans did not immediately gain 'complete' freedom. During the seven-year transition period, the liberated Africans of the MC were hired by contract to individuals in Luanda, but they remained under the custody of the Board of Superintendence and its representative, the Curator. Although considered free, their status can be best characterized as one of legal minority (Silva, 2009: 351-5).

Such a transitory phase had been a common practice by all previously installed Mixed Commissions and can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century. When British colonies were confronted with the first liberated Africans after the British ban on the slave trade in 1808, the British government decided to enfranchise them, but also to employ them as apprentices for some years (Thompson, 1990). Liberated Africans could avoid apprenticeship by enlisting in the British Army or Navy, an option which was also available in Luanda (Annex C, art. XX). The concept of apprenticeship for freed slaves was popularized when it was used to designate the transitory phase between slavery and freedom during the Grand Experiment (1834-1838). To be sure, apprenticeship had a somewhat different meaning here, as, practically, 'apprentices' continued to do the same job they had done as slaves before - the transitory phase had mainly been a concession to the plantation owners. 'Apprenticeship' was a metaphor for the idea, which had now taken root, that liberated slaves needed to learn how to live in freedom. It was deeply connected with normative ideas of civilization and progress in British Victorian society. Freedom was no longer considered a natural state of being, but now implied the previous interiorization of certain canonized values. At the ideological centre of the apprenticeship system stood the project to create new 'bourgeois' subjects with a free labour attitude, who would sell their labour force to the plantation owners of their own free will in order to satisfy their material needs. By doing this, the advocates of free labour prophesied, they would keep the plantation system running and even increase production. As slaves had never learnt to overcome their natural laziness, however, the best way for them to acquire the habits of self-disciplined free labourers was considered to be through the behaviouristic device of forced labour for a limited amount of time (Holt, 1992: 56-7; Osterhammel, 2005: 386-90 e Cooper *et alia*, 2000: 21-2). This vision of freedom differed from earlier practices of manumission in the Atlantic world. Although it is true that sometimes, after manumission, slaves were required to continue working for their masters for years, this waiting time had a mere economic function, not a civilizing one.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See Gabriel and Huntley, *Return of Vessels captured on suspicion of being engaged in the Slave Trade, and adjudicated by the British and Portuguese Mixed Commission Court at Loanda, between the 1st July and 31st December 1860*, 20 Sept. 1861, PP 1862 [2958] LXI, p. 58; Gabriel and Huntley, *Return of Vessels captured on suspicion of being engaged in the Slave Trade, and adjudicated by the British and Portuguese Mixed Commission Court at Loanda, between the 1st of January and 30th June 1861*, 5 Oct. 1861, PP 1862 [2958] LXI, p. 61. Accordingly, this revival has been overlooked by Bethell, 1966: 91, note 42 and Marques, 1999: 321.

<sup>29</sup> See e.g. Florentino *et alia.*, 2005: 372-3. On the concept of manumission as a revocable present, see Patterson, 1982: 240-6.



In the case of the Luanda Mixed Commission, the term ‘apprenticeship’ did not have a metaphorical meaning only. At least in the 1840s and 1850s, commissioners and curators alike insisted that the liberated Africans should indeed be “taught some useful business, or be instructed in some trade or mechanical art”, as Annex C prescribed (Annex C, art. XIII). The quarterly reports of the curator meticulously listed all liberated Africans and the trade or mechanical art they were learning.<sup>30</sup> When, during one of his controls, curator Demony discovered that some of them were unloading coal instead of doing qualified work in the tobacco industry, as stipulated in the contract between the Board of Superintendence and the hirers, the latter were reprimanded.<sup>31</sup> Though the Board had great difficulties in finding hirers, it preferred not to hire the liberated Africans if all they were offered were unqualifying jobs.<sup>32</sup> As a result, the liberated Africans of the *Fortuna*, who were returned to the Board after only two years, all stayed in the Department of Public Works until their complete emancipation. There, they lived at the expense of the colonial government, but could continue to learn a trade.

The idea behind this policy was that skilled labourers would be able to gain their own living more easily and, as a result, would be less vulnerable to re-enslavement. The insistence on such a ‘genuine’ apprenticeship, closer to European historical examples as the merely metaphorical apprenticeship of the Grand Experiment, was not void of Portuguese interests: it coincided with a great demand for skilled labourers in Angola as the local economy was to be converted from one still largely dependent on slave selling into a licit commodity producing economy.<sup>33</sup> In the same vein, the Portuguese decree of 10th December 1836 prohibiting the export of slaves had also foreseen such an apprenticeship. It stated that the liberated slaves should be “auctioned to masters in mechanical arts, who committed themselves to teach them the same arts”.<sup>34</sup> The contracts between the representative of the governor in Luanda and the hirers, however, did not contain such a stipulation and in the absence of an organ that would have controlled the fate of these freed slaves, at least until the creation of the *Junta Protectora dos Escravos e Libertos* in 1855, it is very unlikely that apprenticeship here gained a genuine meaning.<sup>35</sup>

Learning a trade also had advantages for the liberated Africans themselves: those who were considered to have made sufficient progress in learning a trade or profession could gain full and complete freedom before the end of the 7 years, as up to three years could be remitted (Annex C, art. VII). This rule was applied frequently and, moreover, staged as a strong moment of education: the letters of full emancipation were conferred in the presence of all liberated Africans and, during the ceremony, the beneficiaries were praised as the example to follow.<sup>36</sup> To the great frustration of the British and Portuguese commis-

30 See e.g. Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Negroes*, 1 Jan. 1849, PP 1849 [1127] LV, p. 148.

31 *Ibid.*; Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 1 April 1849, PP 1850 [1290] LV, pp. 112–3; *Form of Indenture*, [April 1848], PP 1849 [1127] LV, pp. 118–9.

32 See e.g. Jackson to Palmerston, 20 Febr. 1851, PP 1852-1853 (0.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 122–3.

33 For that reason, the Portuguese government tried, without much success however, to stimulate craftsmen to emigrate to the African possessions (Stamm, 1972: 582–3 and Alexandre, 2000: 76–7). Accordingly, one of the recommendations of Lopes de Lima, who had visited Angola and other Portuguese Overseas Provinces in the 1840s by order of the Portuguese Crown, was to establish a crafts school in Luanda (Lima, 1846: 163). In the second half of the 1840s, the number of craft workshops exploded, but the demand remained high (Curto, 1999: 397–9).

34 Sá da Bandeira, *Decreto*, 10 Dec. 1836, BCU, Vol. I (1834-1851), pp. 21–8, art. XI82.

35 See the terms of contract found for the years 1840 and 1842 in the AHA, Cx. 1359.

36 See e.g. for the emancipation of João de Calando: Board of Superintendence, *Minute of Session*, 20 July 1852, PP 1852-1853 (0.4) CIII Pt.III, p. 53 and of João de Ambaca: Board of Superintendence, *Minutes of Session*, 27 June 1853, PP 1854 (0.6) LXXIII, p. 130.

sioners, the incentive of precipitated freedom did not produce the desired effect on all of them. Especially some of the older liberated Africans continued to prefer unqualified manual labour to the learning of a profession, and, as a result, were denounced as “incapable of instruction” and “altogether uncivilized”.<sup>37</sup> Labour was clearly a core issue of the civilizing program of the Mixed Commission.

#### 4. The Problem of Freedom in a Slave Society

Many people in Luanda did not share the the Mixed Commission’s enthusiasm for this civilizing project. While the first four Africans liberated in 1845 joined the Navy of their free will in order to continue being sailors<sup>38</sup>, the Board of Superintendence had great difficulties in finding appropriate employers for the twenty liberated Africans of the *Fortuna* in 1848. In the late 1840s, slave labour was cheap and abundant in Luanda, precisely because of the ban on the export of slaves (Ferreira, 1998/1999: 10–1, 17–8), and consequently there were few advantages in hiring liberated Africans under the limiting conditions and stiff supervision of the Mixed Commission. Moreover, the liberated Africans were inevitably linked with the illegalization of the slave trade, in which a large part of Luanda’s elites had been involved. As Jackson wrote to Palmerston in 1848, their “very existence as such is odious to almost every inhabitant of the place, as running counter to his prejudices and supposed interests”.<sup>39</sup> He repeated this complaint a few years later, when he stated that in Luanda “the very name of ‘liberto’ is obnoxious” and that he had heard even “in high quarters” how the death of Jorge Moongo was considered “a mere casualty” and the victim “of no more value than a wild animal”.<sup>40</sup> Given these circumstances, the acquittal of Domingos Almeida was not surprising. It was also not surprising that the twenty Africans of the *Fortuna* had to be apprenticed without any fee and that, when they were returned to the government in 1850 after only two years of true apprenticeship, no other appropriate hirers were found.

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the British members of the Mixed Commission repeatedly used the difficulties of apprenticing the liberated Africans in the exact way prescribed by the treaty to call for another solution. In their correspondence with the Foreign Office, they expressed the opinion that it would be more convenient to send all liberated Africans, including those emancipated by the *Tribunal das Presas*, directly to the British West Indies.<sup>41</sup> The British Foreign Office agreed with these recurrent proposals and tried several times to convince Lisbon, arguing that the freedom of former slaves could only be guaranteed in countries where slavery had been abolished<sup>42</sup>, but for the Portuguese Overseas Ministry, this seems to have been a question of honour. Thus,

37 Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Negroes*, 27 Febr. 1852, PP 1852-1853 (0.4) CIII Pt.III, p. 41 (here also quote); Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 22 Febr. 1854, PP 1854-1855 (0.3) LVI, pp. 116-7; Jackson to Earl of Clarendon, 24 March 1854, PP 1854-1855 (0.3) LVI, pp. 117-8.

38 Gabriel to Earl of Aberdeen, 9 June 1845, PP 1846 [723] L, p. 724.

39 Jackson to Palmerston, 15 April 1848, PP 1849 [1127] LV, pp. 116-8.

40 Jackson to Palmerston, 7 April 1851, PP 1852-1853 (0.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 130-1; Jackson to Palmerston, 5 May 1851, PP 1852-1853 (0.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 132-4.

41 Jackson and Gabriel to Palmerston, 17 April 1848, PP 1849 [1127] LV, p. 116; Jackson to Palmerston, 15 April 1848, PP 1849 [1127] LV, pp. 116-8; Jackson to Palmerston, 7 April 1851, PP 1852-1853 (0.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 130-1.

42 Palmerston to Seymour, 14 Sept. 1848, PP 1849 [1128] LV, pp. 220-1 (with a Proposed Additional Article to Treaty with Portugal, p. 221-2); Seymour to Gomes de Castro, 7 Oct. 1848, PP 1849 [1128] LV, p. 229; Pakenham to Viscount d’Athoquia, 12 July 1853, PP 1854 (0.7) LXXIII, pp. 475-6; Earl of Clarendon to Jackson, 28 Nov. 1853, PP 1854 (0.6) LXXIII, p. 131.

the Duke of Saldanha pointed out in 1849 that he knew of no case in which a *liberto* had been re-enslaved.<sup>43</sup> The Portuguese government continued to refuse and in 1858 also the Portuguese Overseas Council (*Conselho Ultramarino*) judged that there was no ground for their removal or for distrust in general, since the liberated Africans were treated as Annex C prescribed.<sup>44</sup>

The requested removal of the liberated Africans to the British West Indies fitted in with what has been called the 'African labour emigration scheme' (Asiegbu 1969 e Schuler 1980). In the middle decades of the 19th century, it provided for the emigration of tens of thousands of liberated Africans from Saint Helena and Sierra Leone to the British West Indies. Liberated Africans were not only sent from British soil, but at a much lesser, still not less interesting scale also from Cuba and Brazil (Murray, 1980: 273–81 e Mamigonian 2009). One of the main reasons for this was that, when slaves started to be freed by Mixed Commissions or national courts, many local governments were afraid of the social consequences. They feared that the 'greater freedom' enjoyed by the liberated Africans would have a bad influence on the slaves, that their presence would stimulate rebellions and, in a general way, undermine the legitimacy of slavery. For this reason, Spanish, Brazilian and French (colonial) governments had also conceived plans and even passed laws to send them off to Haiti or 'back' to Africa (Murray, 1980: 273–6; Salmoral, 2002; Mamigonian, 2009 e Daget, 1997: 296–302). These fears slowly dissipated, as local governments learnt how to deal with and profit from this new category: in Brazil, Cuba or Surinam, where the Mixed Commissions had no power over the liberated Africans, many were re-enslaved or kept in continuously renewed contracts (Conrad, 1973: 56–60; Martínez-Fernández, 1995: 212–21 e Emmer 1974: 119–20).

In Luanda, similar fears about the bad example of the liberated Africans existed in the first years and at least two governors, Pedro Alexandrino da Cunha and Visconde de Pinheiro, seem to have been ready to give in to the British requests.<sup>45</sup> The Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, had other plans. Not without irony, the Duke of Saldanha pointed out in a letter to the British Foreign Office in 1849 that all present and future liberated Africans

"should be conveyed to St. Thomé and Príncipe, in the same manner as Her Britannic Majesty's Government causes them to leave Sierra Leone for Jamaica or other ports of the West Indies; as the Portuguese government not only guarantees their liberty, but even intends that they should become landholders, by forming with them an agricultural colony."<sup>46</sup>

As free farmers they would be even better off than the indentured labourers in Britain's colonies, he added. Indeed, the government in Angola had already sent Africans freed by the *Tribunal das Presas* to São Tomé and Príncipe and to the newly established colony in Moçâmedes in the years before (Nascimento *et alia*, 1989: 49–51) - and, in spite of British accusations of slave trade, would continue to do so with other groups of eman-

43 Duque de Saldanha to Seymour, 4 May 1849, PP 1850 [1291] LV, p. 211.

44 Visconde d'Arthoguia to Pakenham, 4 Nov. 1853, AHU, SEMU-DGU, Angola, Cx. 769; Concelho Ultramarino, *Consulta*, 24 Aug. 1858, AHU, Processos das Consultas do Conselho Ultramarino, Cx. 20, n.º 707.

45 See the indirect evidence for da Cunha in Jackson and Gabriel to Palmerston, 17 April 1848, PP 1849 [1127] LV, p. 116; Visconde do Pinheiro, *Ofício ao Secretario d'Estado dos Negocios da Marinha e Ultramarinos*, 2 March 1854, AHU, SEMU-DGU, Angola, Cx. 769.

46 Duque de Saldanha to Seymour, 4 May 1849, PP 1850 [1291] LV, p. 211.

ipated slaves in the following decades (Duffy 1967). For the liberated Africans of the Mixed Commission, however, the Portuguese government needed the approval of the British side. After initially consenting, Palmerston then refused, stating that, beyond the reach of the Board of Superintendence, the freedom of the liberated Africans could not be guaranteed as long as slavery existed in these Portuguese dominions.<sup>47</sup>

Neither from the British nor from the Portuguese side do such demands seem to have been made when larger groups were freed in the 1860s.<sup>48</sup> Obviously, the situation had changed, as slave labour had become much less available in the wake of the abolitionist decrees of the 1850s and as the population of Luanda had become used to the new social category of *libertos* created by the same decrees.<sup>49</sup> New masters were indeed found with greater ease now: several institutions and more than 25 private persons are recorded to have contracted liberated Africans.<sup>50</sup> Yet these figures should not be overinterpreted. The Board of Superintendence was still facing the same problems, as a disillusioned annual report of the Commissioners Vredenburg and Cardoso for 1864 suggests, but it had loosened its hiring standards to cope with the situation.<sup>51</sup> While the Board of Superintendence had refused to dissolve the contract with Pereira and Soeiro when they had first petitioned for it in February 1849 and was forced to approve the end of the contract only when Pereira moved away from Luanda<sup>52</sup>, it had now become a condoned practice that many employers kept the liberated Africans for only a couple of months and then returned them to the Public Works. Moreover, it seems that hirers were no longer required to offer a genuine apprenticeship to the liberated Africans. Most of them were now employed in domestic service and agriculture, and hence, as the commissioners complained in their report, did not make any progress in their mechanical education. The commissioners also showed great disillusion with regard to other aspects of the civilizing mission, for example the religious education of the former slaves, which they considered failed:

“Although they were baptized when they received their letters of freedom, there can be little doubt that they are still practically heathens. The curator states that some employers desire them on Sundays to go to mass, but it may be considered as certain that they never do so.”

Whereas, around 1850, British and Portuguese officials alike wanted to resolve the inconvenient presence of liberated Africans in Luanda through forced migration, the commissioners now opted for a different solution to end the experiment. A few months after

47 Palmerston to Seymour, 26 May 1849, PP 1850 [1291] LV, p. 213; Seymour to Visconde de Castro, 4 June 1849, PP 1850 [1291] LV, pp. 228–9; Palmerston to Ribeiro, 14 Dec. 1850, PP 1851 [1424] LVI Pt. II, p. 622.

48 Letters and reports on the liberated Africans are generally scarcer for the 1860s. Rather than being a positivistic source problem, I will argue that the paucity of sources reflects a growing disinterest in the liberated Africans' fate.

49 According to Roquinaldo Ferreira, the total number of *libertos* which had been supervised by the Junta Protectora since its founding in 1854 amounted to more than 6000 in 1863 (Ferreira, 1998/1999: 20).

50 See especially Board of Superintendence, *Minute of Session*, 3 May 1861, PP 1862 [2958] LXI, p. 44; Board of Superintendence, *Minutes of a Session*, 2 May 1863, PP 1864 [3339] LXVI, p. 68 and Francina, *List of Libertos in charge of the Board of Superintendence on the 30th of September 1863*, 1 Oct. 1863, PP 1865 [3503] LVI, p. 94.

51 For the following, see Andrade and Vredenburg, *Report of the Mixed Commission for the year 1864*, 21 Febr. 1865, PP 1866 [3635] LXXV, p. 25.

52 The liberated Africans had to remain within a distance of 20 miles from the seat of the Mixed Commission (Annex C, art. X). Pereira and Soeiro, *Petition*, 8 Febr. 1849, PP 1851 [1424] LVI Pt. I, p. 106; Jackson to Palmerston, 14 Nov. 1850, PP 1851 [1424] LVI Pt. I, pp. 105–6; Board of Superintendence, *Minute of Session*, 3 Jan. 1851, PP 1852–1853 (0.2) CIII Pt. I, p. 121; Jackson to Palmerston, 4 Jan. 1851, PP 1852–1853 (0.2) CIII Pt. I, pp. 120–1.

the cited report, the Board started to bestow complete freedom upon large groups of the liberated Africans, following the recommendations made by the Curator.<sup>53</sup> In the 1860s, not a single liberated African served the full seven years, some served only three, and in 1867, the last ones were fully emancipated.

The liberated Africans did not entirely depend on the Curator's initiative for achieving freedom. Most seem to have waited for his recommendations to the Board, but some attempted to speed up the procedure by writing a petition directly to the Board or to one of its members. Only a few petitions are referred to in the extant documentation, but the liberated Africans' use of this legal instrument is significant, as it shows how they appropriated elements of European juridical culture and used them for their own purposes. The petitions also support the already expressed idea that the liberated Africans were, in general, well informed about their legal rights. When João de Calando and João de Ambaca addressed a petition for emancipation to the Board in 1852<sup>54</sup>, Jackson highlighted the timing of their request in his correspondence with London:

“Your Lordship will doubtless notice how immediately this application followed upon the expiration of the term (four years) marked in Article VII as the earliest period for the remission of any part of the seven years for which apprentices [...] are to be bound.”<sup>55</sup>

João de Calando's request was granted, whereas João de Ambaca had to petition a second time in order to achieve full emancipation. To his second petition, almost a year later, he had already annexed a favourable certificate of his master stating that he had now made sufficient progress in the learning of his mason trade to earn his own living.<sup>56</sup>

To be sure, in an Atlantic comparison, the petitions of the liberated Africans in Luanda might have been among the least complicated, since they did not have to challenge reluctant civil courts or government officials, but depended solely on a well-informed and generally benevolent Board of Superintendence. Yet the use of the legal means of the petition followed a common pattern: Throughout the Atlantic World, liberated Africans as well as slaves wrote petitions and challenged courts in order to claim their legal freedom (Mamigonian, 2002: 203–10 e Scott *et alia*, 2004). These 'actions of freedom' were not limited to the 19th century and the enforcement of emancipation laws. Slaves also used legal means to claim their right of manumission or, as José Curto has illustrated for early 19th century Angola, to fight illegal enslavement (Grinberg, 2001; Curto, 2003 e 2005b).

Other liberated Africans did not wait for full emancipation and ran away.<sup>57</sup> In the last few decades, studies have shown that running away was a common form of resistance against slavery in Africa and the wider Atlantic world, and that the absence of reported big slave revolts in Africa does not mean that slaves acquiesced in their fate (Curto, 2005a: 71–4). In the mid-nineteenth century, the phenomenon of runaway slaves had gained

53 Board of Superintendence, *Minutes of Session*, 7 July 1865, PP 1866 [3635] LXXV, p. 35; Vredenburg to Earl Russell, 12 July 1865, PP 1866 [3635] LXXV, p. 35; Francina, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 31 March 1866, PP 1867 [3816] LXXIII, p. 65; Francina, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 30 Sept. 1866, PP 1867 [3816] LXXIII, p. 66 and Board of Superintendence, *Minute of Session*, 2 April 1867, PP 1867-1868 [4000] LXIV, p. 23.

54 Board of Superintendence, *Minute of Session (Extracts)*, 28 June 1852, PP 1852-1853 (o.4) CIII Pt.III, p. 52.

55 Jackson to Earl of Malmesbury, 4 Aug. 1852, PP 1852-1853 (o.4) CIII Pt.III, p. 51–2.

56 Board of Superintendence, *Minutes of Session*, 22 June 1853, PP 1854 (o.6) LXXIII, pp. 129–30.

57 See e.g. Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Africans*, 11 Sept. 1851, PP 1852-1853 (o.2) CIII Pt.I, pp. 153–4.

such epidemic proportions in Portuguese Angola that the odds of achieving perpetual - although not legal - freedom by running away were high. Slaves from Luanda could hide in the quickly growing suburbs or join one of the *quilombos*, autonomous communities of runaway slaves, in the immediate hinterland of Luanda, which then threatened public security and the very fundamentals of the existing slave society. Another option consisted in seeking asylum in territories under local *sobas* (chiefs) outside the direct reach of the Portuguese administration (Freudenthal 1997; Ferreira 1998/1999). Neither for contemporaries nor for today's historians was and is the interpretation of a prolonged absence an easy task. Some of the liberated Africans were caught by the so-called *empacaceiros*, a local militia composed of free Africans in colonial service (Lima, 1846: 137-9; Ferreira, 1998/1999: 30, 33), and brought back to their masters, but others returned of their own accord. Asked about their motives, they gave 'immediate' reasons of mistreatment or fear of punishment rather than expressing visions of freedom.<sup>58</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

The 'problem of freedom' was not solved with the final emancipation of the liberated Africans. To address this question in a more encompassing way, one would also have to ask what it meant for the liberated Africans, in social and political terms, to eventually gain "all rights and privileges of a free person", as the Board used to declare. How would they reinstate social bonds after the experience of 'social death' (Patterson, 1982)? And, as Cooper, Holt and Scott have put it incisively nearly a decade ago: "Would those liberated from slavery also become citizens?" (Cooper *et alia*, 2000: 17).

Although these questions cannot be answered here,<sup>59</sup> they are intimately linked with the way the liberated Africans were freed and with the kind of society in which they were freed. In Angola as in most parts of the Atlantic world - with the notable exception of Sierra Leone and, after 1834, the British territories in general - their liberation was the result of a political decision (treaties and laws), but was not directly accompanied by the abolition of slavery itself. The liberation thus figured between the ideal types of manumission and emancipation, as thoughtfully described by Marc Kleijwegt.<sup>60</sup> The continuation of slavery in Angola and its gradual legal abolition between 1854 and 1875 are fundamental to understand the history of the liberated Africans in Luanda. First, the existence of slavery was the common thread running through many problems faced by the Mixed Commission and its organs, some of which have been analysed in this article: the continuous availability of slave labour around 1850 was probably the main reason why there was so little interest in apprenticing the liberated Africans. Moreover, the fact that Luanda was at that time still a fully-blown slave society explains why the British commissioners and some local governors alike wanted to end the in-between status of

<sup>58</sup> For such testimonies, see Demony, *Minute of Declaration made by Pedro de Loanda and Eusebio Catraio*, 30 Oct. 1851, PP 1852-1853 (0.2) CIII Pt.I, p. 160; Demony, *Report of Curator of Liberated Africans*, 13 Sept. 1852, PP 1852-1853 (0.4) CIII Pt.III, p. 55 and Demony, *Report of the Curator of Liberated Negroes*, 30 June 1854, PP 1854-1855 (0.3) LVI, p. 123-4.

<sup>59</sup> These questions are addressed extensively in Coghe, 2008: 133-46.

<sup>60</sup> For Kleijwegt, the difference between emancipation (the "en masse freeing of slaves as a result of the political decision to abolish slavery altogether") and manumission (the "freeing of an individual slave or a small group of slaves while slavery continued") lies first and foremost in the kind of society in which the liberation took place. While manumission took place in a slave society, and even contributed to the social reproduction of slavery, emancipation altered the character of slave societies in a fundamental way (Kleijwegt, 2006: 14-15, quotes 14).

the liberated Africans by sending them to the West Indies, the former in order to guarantee their freedom, the latter to end the pernicious influence of their greater freedom upon slaves and other freedpeople, hence upon the very structures of the slave society. Second, the legal abolition of slavery would reconfigure Angolan society under Portuguese rule and thus reframe the question of the social and political integration of the liberated Africans.

Besides these local circumstances, the larger Atlantic context continued to play an important role. The fate of the liberated Africans in Luanda remained closely connected with the changing attitudes towards slavery and abolition in the Atlantic world and, consequently, with political and ideological changes in the metropolitan societies of Great Britain and Portugal. Parallel to the disenchantment with the Grand Experiment in Great Britain and the abolitionist 'low tide' (Marques, 2008: 87) in Portugal from the late 1850s on, the metropolitan interest in the liberated Africans in Luanda seems to have waned. Simultaneously, such a growing disinterest, also noticeable through the paucity of letters and reports on the liberated Africans in the 1860s, can be attributed to the appearance of new groups of *libertos* in Angola as a result of the gradual abolition of slavery from 1854 on. As the regime of these *libertos* was modelled after Annex C (Coghe, 2008: 80–1), the liberated Africans of the Mixed Commission lost their experimental status. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the experiment in itself did not completely fail. From an Atlantic perspective, the Mixed Commission in Luanda was the only one on non-British soil which was able to supervise the destiny of the liberated Africans and to effectively proceed to the final emancipation of its protégés within the terms of the treaty. Even the second dimension of the British civilizing mission, directed towards the Portuguese, seemed to lead to success for a long time, as the architect of the legal abolition of slavery in the Portuguese Empire, Sá da Bandeira, mirrored many of the regulations of annex C in his laws and decrees. Even at the end of his life, Sá da Bandeira still called for an emancipation of slaves modelled upon the example of the liberated Africans of the Mixed Commission (Marquez de Sá da Bandeira, 1874: 7). He largely stood alone, however. The experiment might not in itself have failed, but was no longer deemed of any relevance. From the mid-1870s onwards, abolitionism would follow another path and the legal emancipation of all slaves would not lead to a society of free labourers with citizenship rights, but to one of generalized forced labour.

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