

A Portrait of Urban Slavery in Recife, Brazil (1827-1835).

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Abstract

In this paper, we present a quantitative profile of the enslaved of Recife (Pernambuco's capital city) between 1827 and 1835, from advertisements published mainly in the newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco*. From a sample of almost 2.500 slave-for-sale ads, we gathered information about their gender, age, occupation, origin and ethnicity. Among men, the most common occupation was canoe driver ("canoeiros"). Those canoes were used not only for fishing, but also as a means of transportation (for people and goods) and providing drinking water to Recife's inhabitants. Among women, domestic services was the most common occupation. Thus, the widespread idea that Brazil needed African enslaved because of its shortage of labor (or "*falta de braços*", as it was called) needs to be relativized. The average age of those captives was 20 years old, with the majority being between 13 and 30 years. We show that between 1827 and 1830, the average price of a slave was around 280.000 réis, this value was equal to the price of four horses. The average reward offered for the recapture of a runaway slave in this period was around 37.000 réis, which was 2 times greater than the average reward offered for missing horses. Those are important pieces of evidence attesting to the hypothesis that slaves were a cheap "asset" in Brazil during the first half of the 19th century. Finally, we collected information on the remuneration that originated from slave services. We show that for female street vendor returned 3.500 réis per month, while canoe drivers and coopers could make – for their master – 14.000 réis a month.

Keyword: Slavery, Slave Ads, Brazil, Pernambuco, Recife

Introduction

Gilberto Freyre (2015, 7) once stated: "more than in the History books or in novels, the history of 19th century Brazil is in the newspaper ads". In this article, we catalog all the slave-for-sale advertisements published in the newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco* (DP, hereafter) at two instants of time: (i) between February 1827 and December 1830 (sample with over 1.500 observations), and; (ii) throughout the year 1835 (more than 950 observations). Our aim is to present an objective and quantitative portrait of slavery in Recife, capital city of the province of Pernambuco.

Recife was by then the third largest port of landing of enslaved Africans in Brazil, while Rio de Janeiro and Salvador occupied the two first positions, respectively (see Costa e Silva 2011, 41). The city was also one of the largest and most powerful capitals of the Brazilian Empire. According to an 1828 census, Pernambuco's population was 289,601. Recife's population was 91,055, of which 23,582 were enslaved (Rego Barros 1839, 68). One must take these numbers with some reservations, since they seem not to be very reliable. The first national census in Brazil was done in 1872. In that census, with its economy in visible decay compared to the coffee producing regions, Pernambuco still was the third most populous of the Empire's provinces, after Minas Gerais and Bahia. That is, we are dealing here with a sample of great importance to understand the dynamics of the Brazilian economy in the early nineteenth century.

The period investigated is also important for two reasons. Firstly, it is the earliest period with such information for the province of Pernambuco. Founded in 1825, there only four issues available before January 1827. Thus, it is from 1827 that the newspaper is definitively established. Moreover, this period corresponds to the interval between the ratification and the beginning of the validity of the agreement of 1826 between Brazil and Great Britain, which determined the illegality of the landing of African slaves in Brazil from March 1830.

Between 1830 and 1835, there was a significant drop in the landing of enslaved Africans in Brazil. While in 1829 73 thousand enslaved Africans landed in Brazil's port, in 1831 this number plummeted to 6 thousands (Chalhoub 2012, 51). In traditional historiography (Chalhoub 2012, 50), two reasons are pointed out for the growth of illegal traffic between 1835 and 1850: the strong expansion of coffee in the present southeastern region of the country, and the great social penetration of slavery in Brazil. In fact, having slaves was not a privilege of the very rich. In this survey we have showed that a slave could cost little more than three or four horses, and that a slave could be rented for modest price to perform domestic services, for example.

I – A Portrait of Urban Slavery in Recife: who where and what jobs the enslaved performed?

Slavery was an ostensible institution in the city of Recife during the period analyzed. As a foreigner traveler pointed out in a report dated September 1821, during his visit to the capital of Pernambuco:

“I think no impression remains more deeply imprinted on my mind, than the melancholy sight of hundreds, indeed, I may say the thousands, of black slaves that I have seen in the town and the neighborhood. You cannot move in any direction, but slavery, with all its multiplied miseries, arrests your attention. If you walk in the streets, you meet them, every hour of the day, in hundreds, groaning and sweating beneath their burdens, and wearing out their miserable lives in the performance of those heavy labours that are done by horses in Scotland and England” (H.S.M.D. 1825[1821], 41-49)

The slaves, being they Africans or Brazilians, male or female, young or old, were not only in the mills and cotton plantations, but also selling all sorts of goods and begging throughout the streets of the city. One could find them squatting in front of some slave market, their bodies almost completely uncovered, their heads shaved; navigating the canoes that circulated by the rivers Capibaribe and Beberibe; performing household functions in the houses of people – many of whom were far from rich. As Eltis (1987, p. 41) states "in Brazil slaves were used in a wider range of occupations than anywhere else in the Americas".

These slaves were bought, sold, rented, pledged under contracts and even offered as prizes in raffles. It was a "commodity" of the most ordinary in the economic life of Brazil in the first decades of the nineteenth century, whose ads were probably the most common in the pages of the *Diário de Pernambuco*.

Between February 1827 and December 1830, we built a sample of 1,521 ads. Although there is some repetition, we are certain that the overwhelming majority - a minimum of 90% - is formed of unique ads. In the worst-case scenario, the profile of at least 1,000 individuals among men (734), women (728) and children without sex reported (58, treated as "offspring") would have been there. Of this total, 852 had their ages reported. As a rule, except for babies, the ages of the captives were presented in a range - *between 20 and 25 years old*, for example. Using the average age of these ranges, we reach the average age of captives sold.

The enslaved people of our first sample, both men and women, were about 20 years old on average. With the maximum age reported being 40. From the sample of advertisements that had explicit reference to the age of the captives, 420 of them – 49.3% of the total – reported they were between 20 and 30 years of age. Babies and children under 12 years old accounted for 113 individuals, or 13.2% of the total. Many of these children and babies - the latter ones in particular - were sold together with their mothers. Thus, one can easily find ads that made reference to slaves who were just "a few days" or a "few months" old.

The enslaved women whom had recently given birth, in fact, seemed to be a differentiated asset. Not only they could perform their ordinary tasks - notably the domestic ones -, but they could also work as wet nurses. The act of selling mother and son together, more than a gesture of

humanity¹ - something we must always put in the background when it comes to the relationship of master and slave - was imbued with economic rationality. It stimulated, to some extent, the reproduction of the slaves, as well as avoided revolts and depressions derived from the premature separation. Besides, what productive value could a child of a few months have? From a certain age, as it approached the 10 years of life, for example, the sale of the small slave happens to occur separately from its genitor.

There were, nonetheless, ads that make explicit reference to the possibility of a separation of mother and her children, if this were the buyer's desire. In an ad of 1830, it says: "In term or money ... a Negro from the Coast of the Mine, a good washerwoman, aged 24, with 2 children, one of 2 and the other of 7, is sold with children, or without them, and all without any vice" (DP, 11/24/1830, 3)²

On December 16, 1829, it was announced that a "one-year-old little negro, walking and weaning" (DP, 12/16/1829, 3)³. This is the youngest slave put on sale in our first sample. Who and for what reason they would buy it do not seem so obvious to us.

Table 1 – Slaves’ Profile (Age and Gender) – Sales Ads (1827-1830)

	Total	Average Age	Oldest	Youngest	Age Group	Obs
Women	728	21,4	40		Babies (from 0 to 1)	19
Men	734	20,4	40	2	Children (from 1 to 12)	94
GNR	58	1,27	8	2 months	Teenagers (from 13 to 19)	269
Total	1.521	20,5	40	1 months	Young adults (from 20 to 30)	420
				1 monts	Adults (above 30)	50

Source: *Diário de Pernambuco*. GNR = gender not reported

In the ads, slaves were classified as "crioulos" (that is, enslaved people born in Brazil), "from nation" or "from the coast" (generic term to treat those coming from Africa). It also specified their gentile (Angola, Luanda, Benguela, Mozambique, Mina, Rebolo, Congo, etc.). Costa e Silva (2011, 39) warns that these terms "only vaguely, not always, indicated the region of origin" of the captives and "do not define to which people they belonged". However, Koster (1816, 418-20) identifies some physical and behavioral characteristics in Africans of both origin. He says, for example, that the Angolans were "the best slaves" because they were "treatable" and showed a lot of "attachment". The Congo, on the other hand, would be more "particularly adapted to the routine of work in the field," for example. One can find these views on the differences in the quality of slaves depending on their origin even in official documents. The *Carta Régia* from February 27,

¹ In fact, between 1860 and 1862 some projects were presented in the Brazilian Senate aiming to prohibit the separation, in the case of sales, of the family nuclei (husband, wife, children). The proposal was rejected three times.

² In Portuguese: "A prazo ou a dinheiro... uma negra da Costa da Mina, boa lavadeira, idade 24 anos, com 2 filhos, um com 2 e outro com 7 anos, vende-se com filhos, ou sem eles, e todos sem vício algum"

³ In Portuguese: "um crioulinho de um ano de idade já completo, andando e desmamado"

1711, which fixed taxes for interprovincial slave trade towards Minas Gerais – the most important gold producer from the colony -, imposed a tax of 6,000 upon slaves from Angola and 3,000 réis upon those from Mina. The reason for this difference was that the latter were "inferior and less obedient than those of Angola." It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that the people from Pernambuco had a similar perception, that some features were more easily observed in one or another group. This seems to be a good explanation for the fact that gentile were so usually in sales and fugitive ads.

Africans were classified as "ladinos" (being "very" or "little"), meaning the degree of adaptation to the Portuguese language and to the habits of the country. They were also classified as "boçais" (accompanied by some adverb of intensity), what signaled their level of incomprehension of Portuguese. Enslaved from Africa that did not have a good or any command of Portuguese language were usually employed at the agricultural sector, notably in the sugar mills, or other purely physical labor. Baquaqua's account (2001 [1854], 45-6) is illustrative at this point. The author says that when he landed in Pernambuco, his first job was transporting stones, helping to build a house for his master. Later, when he gained some mastery of the local language, he was put to sell bread in the streets of Recife.

The "crioulos" could still be classified as blacks, "pardos", mulattoes and "cabras" (literally "goats", a regionalism that still persists today in the Brazilian northeast, which meant that the individual was a "mestiço", that is, mixed race).

Table 2 – Slaves' Ethnicities in the Ads.

Nation	Obs	Nation	Obs
Angola	236	Cabinda	13
"Crioulo"	180	Mina	13
"Mulato"	92	"Pardo"	12
"Da Costa"	78	Rebolo	12
Benguela	23	Congo	9
"Cabra"	22	Angicos	8
Caçanje	19	Calabar	5
Mozambique	18	Beni	5
		Σ	745

Source: *Diário de Pernambuco*, several editions.

From the ads with reference to the gentile (or "nation") of the captives, we have a sample of 745 individuals. The most common term used was Angola, with 236 observation, or 31.6% of the total. If we consider the "crioulos", "mulatos" and "cabras" as enslaved people born in Brazil, then 60.6% of the enslaved announced for sale were African, and 39.4% were Brazilians. The 1838 provincial census registered an enslaved population of 23.582 people in Recife, being 53.1% born in Brazil

and 46.9% Africans (Rêgo Barros 1838, 68). Our sample, which represents 3.1% of the population reported in the 1838 census, has a bias towards African individuals.

The ads also show a clear sexual division of labor. Women’s almost inescapable occupation was domestic services: cooking, washing and ironing clothes. Some of them were also specialized in producing and/or selling different types of candies (“doceiras”), street vendors (“quitandeiras”, “vendendeiras”, “boceteiras” e “tripeiras”); others were shellfish gatherers (“mariscadeiras”).

There was a more varied myriad of professions among men. Some worked in domestic service such as cooking or serving as pageboys, but most of them worked outside that sphere. They lived from the capture of seafood (fishes, shrimp and crabs catchers), but also as canoe drivers, sailors, coopers, tailors, shoemakers, barbers, bleeders, goldsmiths, butchers, carpenters, bricklayers and wall painters, bakers, sawmills, blacksmiths, etc.

The fugitive slaves ads published in the *Diário de Pernambuco* give an idea of the diversity of goods sold by slaves, men and women, through the streets of Recife. References to sales of all kinds of fabrics, hats, neckerchiefs, olive oil, castor oil, cakes, puddings, cornbread, sweet rice, sweets in trays are frequent, as was also the sale a wide variety of fruits (watermelons, oranges, bananas, lemons or "scents") and vegetables (such as cassava and onions). There was also the sale of honey, ground coffee, potable water, grass for horses, firewood, milk, breakfasts, passion fruit syrups, cups and bowls for water, crockery, shoes, chickens, fish, crabs, etc.

Table 3 – Slaves’ Occupations – Sales Ads (1827-1830)

Men	Obs	Men	Obs	Women	Obs
Canoe driver	87	Sailor	12	Domestic services	318
Farmworker	82	Shrimp catcher	11	Cooker	63
Shoemaker	71	Potter	8	Washerwoman	61
Cooker	70	Blacksmith	6	Seamstress	50
Bricklayer	29	Crab catcher	5	Domestic services (ironing clothes)	35
Ox cart driver	27	Tanoeiro	4	Street vendor	33
Butcher	22	Calafate	4	Farmworker	26
Baker	22	Anzoleiro	4	Street vendor (“quitandeira”)	24
Sawyer	19	Capineiro	3	“Rendeira” (clothes maker)	18
Page	16	Goldsmith	3	Wet-nurse	16
Taylor	16	“Tacheiro”*	3	Street vendor (“boceteira”)	15
Sugar mil worker	15			Candy maker (“doceira”)	15
Domestic worker	15			Street worker	12
Fisher	13			Seafood catcher	11
Carpenter	12			Street vendor (“tripeira”)	9
Painter	12			Buyer (“compradeira”)	6

Source: *Diário de Pernambuco*, several editions.

Of the population of the cataloged ads, 1,014 make explicit reference to the profession performed by the enslaved. There is information on 513 women and 501 men. Those who mastered a profession were said to be “officer” – for instance, bricklayer officer, or *oficial de pedreiro* in

Portuguese; while those with little experience were announced as having “principles of...” – “with principles of bricklayer”, or *com princípios de pedreiro* . It was also very common to report that the captive had more than one profession, as well as to say that the slave was "fit for all service." **Table 3** resumes this information.

Image 1. Enslaved “Canoeiros” in Recife



Source: Henderson (1821, 389)

According to Carvalho (1998, pp. 84-7), one of the functions of these canoe drivers (“*canoeiros*”) was to provide drinking water⁴ to the inhabitants of the three large districts of the city at that time (Recife, Boa Vista and Santo Antônio). Since the water found in the underground of those districts and its nearby rivers was brackish, Recife’s inhabitants depended on the work of canoe drivers to obtain water for human consumption, given the inexistence of a piped water system at that time. Those canoes also served as a transportation system for Recife’s population and merchandises.

Throughout 1835, we cataloged 967 individuals, 526 women and 436 men, and 5 without reported sex. Of this sample, 549 had their ages reported (excluding generic terms such as "girl", "middle-aged", "old", "elderly", etc.), being 286 women and 263 men.

The sale of the enslaved seemed to have an obvious economic motivation, but it also functioned as a sort of punishment. Common are the ads that condition the sale of the captive for "off the land" or for "outside the province". In our sample, 78 ads put deportation as a precondition for the sale. In one of these the punishment was more evident, for it was said that the captive had just fled to the quilombo of Catucá. In another it was said: "is sold for being a runaway" (“*vende-se por fujão*”). In this last announcement, perhaps trying to reassure the potential buyer, it was said

⁴ In a document from the 1840’s one found the explanation: “*bem que cercada de toda a parte d’água, carece esta cidade de fontes, e os moradores não podendo servir-se das águas do Capibaribe e Beberibe, por se acharem misturadas com as do mar, viam-se obrigados a irem busca a de que haviam mister a Olinda abaixo de uma cachoeira do Rio Beberibe, e a transportá-la para o Recife em barris*”. (Milliet de Saint-Adolphe 1845, p. 388)

that the captive had never fled "out of town." In the newspaper *O Cruzeiro*, we find an even more explicit reference. In a sale announcement it reads: "Whoever wants to buy a slave aged from 18 to 20 years, very healthy, but with the condition of embarking him out of the land for having come from a quilombo and being imprisoned; look in the "Queimado" street... that there you will find who to deal with" ("*Quem quiser comprar um escravo de idade de 18 a 20 anos, muito sadio, porém com a condição de o embarcar para fora da terra por ter vindo de quilombo e estar preso; procure na rua do queimado... que lá achará com quem tratar*") (*O Cruzeiro*, 09/30/1829, page 3).

Table 4. Slaves' Profiles – Sales Ads – 1835

	Total observations	Avarege Age	Oldest	Youngest	Age Group	Obs
Women	436	19.5	30	1.5 year	Baby (from 0 to 1 year)	6
Men	526	20	41	9 months	Child (from 1 to 12 years)	69
GNR	5	-	-	-	Adolescents (from 13 to 19 years)	226
Total	967	19.8	-	-	Young adults (from 20 to 30 anos)	231
					Adults (above 30 years)	43

Source: *Diário de Pernambuco*. GNR= Gender not reported

The testimony of Baquaqua (2001, 46-7) is also valuable here. The author argues that he tried at first to be obedient to his master, as a way of seeking a less cruel treatment. When this strategy fails, he surrenders himself to alcohol (alcoholism, by the way, was a constant problem among slaves). Further ahead, he tries to escape a few times, always being captured. In an act of desperation, he tries to kill himself, when he is rescued, taken back to his master, beaten with extreme violence, and put up for sale. He was then sent to Rio de Janeiro. Chalhoub (2012, 57), referring to slave testimonies, asserts that these were "unequivocal as to the experience of buying and selling as one of the most traumatic in the life of a slave," such that "sale to another master, the will of the captive, to distant places, even in other provinces, would be the worst experience, causing insurmountable sufferings or homicidal rebellions. "

2.1 How much did a slave cost in Recife?

Table 6 below shows all ads published between 1827 and 1830, which explicitly refer to the value of the sale of slaves. There are 27 observations, of which 15 are women and 12 men. The average price of slaves in our sample is 281,111 réis (rs). These prices varied from a measly 40,000 rs for a slave whose labor was that of a laundress, to 500,000 rs. If we exclude from our sample the slaves reported as prize in a raffle - whose prize value could be intentionally inflated - the average price drops to 237,647 rs.

The average price of women was 262,667 rs, while men's was 304,167 rs. That is, the price of enslaved women corresponded to 86.3% of men. If we exclude from our sample the elderly

woman sold at 40,000, a price far below normal, the average price of women rises to 278,571 rs, thus corresponding to 91.5% of the price of men. This difference in average price probably relates to the type of job performed by one and the other. While women were mostly domestic servants, men performed functions whose monetary return to the owner was potentially higher.

The average age of these slaves was quite low: 17,3 years old. Ages ranged from a ceiling of 30 years to 7,5 years. This child, named Roza (sic) was the daughter of slave named Joanna, both of them were offered as prizes in a raffle. This infamous raffle, made by Joaquim Avelino Tavares and his wife, Izabel Ignacio da Costa, had 10 slaves among other merchandise as its prizes. This gives us a first insight into the relative price of slaves in Recife.

Table 6. Desired Sale Price for Slaves (in réis) – 1827/1830

Date (dd/mm/yy)	Gender	Age	Occupation	Price
19/02/1827	F	-	Washerwoman	40.000
03/04/1827	F	-	-	140.000
29/05/1827	M	19	Ox driver	150.000
31/05/1827	M	18	Shoemaker	300.000
30/06/1827	F	15	Domestic services	300.000
	M	12	-	150.000
28/02/1829	F	17,5	Domestic services	300.000
	F	17,5	Domestic services	230.000
15/09/1829	F	16,5	Domestic services	330.000
	F	19	N.R. (with few time of land/ "com pouco tempo de terra")	180.000
05/01/1830	F	20	Proper for land and street services	180.000
	F	18	Domestic services	250.000
02/04/1830	M	-	Land services	100.000
05/07/1830	M	30	Woodworker	350.000
03/09/1830	F		Domestic services	290.000
30/09/1830	M	30	Butcher and canoe driver	300.000
01/10/1830	M	-	Canoe driver	450.000
	Joanna	-	Washerwoman	450.000
	Thomazina	11,5	Joanna's daughter	250.000
	Joanna	-	Cooker	400.000
	Estevão	11	Joanna's son	200.000
27/11/1830*	Roza	7,5	Joanna's daughter	100.000
	João	-	Canoe driver (with one cargo canoe)	500.000
	Catharina	-	Domestic services, with an offspring	500.000
	Joze	-	Bricklayer helper	450.000
	João	-	Bricklayer helper	350.000
	Benedito	15	Taylor apprentice	350.000
Average				281.111

Source: Diário de Pernambuco, several editions (1827-1840)

The reported price of slaves varied from 100,000 to 500,000 rs. While "a table and dessert set of gilded English porcelain and painted with flowers" was valued at 400,000 rs. "A silver tea set containing 6 pieces" and "beautiful french porcelain painted in golden" were valued at 350,000 rs. A "gold ring" in turn, was worth 70,000 rs. Furthermore, "goggles to see from afar with leather

box", was evaluated at 32,000 rs. This gives an idea of how cheap and affordable slave labor was even for "modest" citizens - that is, those above the condition of poor - of Recife in the period.

In the newspaper *O Cruzeiro* of November 1830, there is another raffle advertisement, this time organized by a citizen named Joze (sic) Barboza Diniz, in which slaves appeared as prizes. They were 3 slaves, the value of each was estimated at 250,000 rs, another worth 200,000 rs, and "a black girl" whose value was 100,000 rs. This last prize was the same as the one for a "horse". (*O Cruzeiro*, 8/11/1830, 4).

Another source of data on the price of slaves relates to public auction announcements of captives. This type of event happened, for example, in order to collect money to cover the debts of an individual with the government. This sample was obtained for a period posterior to the previously utilized one in this paper. The first observation is dated from January of 1831 and the last, November of 1839. Although the comparison of nominal prices between distant periods is something dangerous, we decided to use this data. Our a priori hypothesis is that the price of captives should have increased in the first half of the 1830s, since at that time the restriction on illegal trafficking appears to have been effective. Whereas the price probably would have fallen in the second half of the decade, when illegal entries of captives were growing strongly. The data show, however, that the average price of captives auctioned during the decade was 194,300, this figure being 162,000 for the period 1831-1834, and 275,000 for the subsequent period. This last figure is not unlike that reported in the previous table, where the average price of captives was around 281,000.

There is no reference to their gender for two slaves. For the others, there were 6 women and 13 men. Their average price in this sample is 130,000 rs. If we exclude the slave Margarida, a ninety-year-old woman, valued at the depreciating price of 20,000 rs, cheaper than the "a pair of glasses in a leather case" ("*óculos de ver de longe em caixa de couro*") raffled the previous year, their average price goes to 152,000 rs. The terror of slavery is such that, although humiliating, we can say that this old woman named Margarida was actually a "privileged". Just like animals that are no longer fit for service, old or disabled slaves were commonly abandoned by their masters.

In his testimony, a Scottish Traveler stated: "I have been seen many slaves sitting around the streets, begging for a single vintin (sic), for the love of God, to keep them from absolute starvation, after their life and they had been able to do so, but they had not been able to do so, but they were not able to do so. (HMSD 1825, 45). Koster (1816) also addresses this issue. It says: "... miserable objects are at time to be seen in Recife, asking alms in various quarters of the town, aged and diseased; some of these persons have been slaves, and when, from infirmity they have been rendered useless, their master have manumitted them; and thus being turned away to starve in their

old age ... "(Koster 1816, 424). Not coincidentally, in 1753, Manoel Ferreira da Costa created a kind of asylum / hospital on his estate to care for the sick and old slaves abandoned by their masters.

Among men, the average price is just over 223,000 rs. If we exclude boys under 12, the average price of men rises to almost 268.000 rs.

In 1829, the newspaper *O Cruzeiro*, when bringing information on the price of imported goods, among information on the maximum and minimum price of goods such as tea, lead and shotguns, it also included information about the price of new slaves. According to the table published in that newspaper, the price of a slave coming from Africa varied between a floor of 140,000 and a ceiling of 300,000 rs. (*O Cruzeiro*, May 23, 1829, 2). These figures remained unchanged until May 1830, when they jumped to 180,000 and 350,000 rs, respectively. These values are kept unchanged throughout the 1831. (*O Cruzeiro*, 05/22/1830, 2). That prices have jumped after the beginning of the treaty of 1826 does not come as a surprise. It is strange, however, that this "commodity" remains in the list of products imported until 1831, when the newspaper disappears.

Also in the newspaper *O Cruzeiro*, in its edition of June 29, 1829, there is a text that refers to the purchase of a slave in 1823 for 150,000 rs., while another two would have been bought in 1827 for 195,000 rs. Although the information is quite generic - there is no reference to the ages, origins and crafts of these slaves - the numbers are useful, in any case. (*The Cruise*, 6/29/1829, 2)

The *Diário de Pernambuco*, in July 1829, published a balance sheet of the Hospital N. S. da Conceição dos Lázaros, referring to the second quarter of that year. One of the items in the "revenue" column refers to the "cost of 1,048 blacks imported from Africa", which corresponds to a value of 251,520,000.00 rs. Dividing this number by the amount of slaves, one arrives at a value of 240,000 reis per captive. On October 23, the DP published another balance sheet of this same hospital, now referring to the third quarter of the year. The document registered the "costs of 1,168 blacks imported from Africa by 240", associated with a value of 280,320 rs. In this case, we understand that the captives were imported at 240 rs, which coincides with the value implicit in the first rendering of accounts cited. (DP, 28/07/1829, 3).

Resende, Versiani, Nogueroíl and Vergolino (2014, 8) used records from more than 5,000 inventories issued in Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Sul between 1800 and 1887, presenting a detailed picture of the evolution of captive prices in these two provinces. According to the authors, the average price of the slave in Pernambuco between the 1820s and 1830s, went from 143,972 to 248,480 rs. This price obviously varied according to the age, abilities, and health status of the slaves. Our sample, although small, does not seem to differ greatly from the results found by these authors.

In Koster's account (1816, 208) the price of an adult slave in the early 1810s was in the order of 100,000 rs. Eisenberg (1974, 153), using inventory data from the Ipojuca registry office, states that this average price would have reached 450,000 rs in 1852. Thus, the average nominal price of captives must have increased by more than 80% in the province of Pernambuco, between the prohibition of 1830 and that of 1850, despite the increase in the arrival of Africans in the country. Or four and a half times over an interval of 40 years.

Between 1827 and 1830, in the *Diário de Pernambuco*, we have found nine sale ads that made explicit reference to the desired price of horses. The value varied from 40,000 rs to 120,000, while the average price was 65,600 rs. Thus, it seems plausible that an enslaved male worker had the same value of two or four good horses. This is further evidence of how cheap the slave workforce was in Recife.

2.2. Rewards offered for recapturing runaway slaves

Slavery was based on the State's organized violence and on a series of institutions and social habits. Prison, physical punishments fixed by law or by the master's will, the use of chains and other vexatious apparatuses and those that made locomotion difficult - all hindered the resistance of the Africans. There was in Brazil of the nineteenth century a real fear that the country would go through the same events that had occurred in Haiti. This is one reason why the process of abolishing slavery was so slow and gradual, dragging from 1826 to 1888.

There were also the *quilombos*, the most famous at that time was the so-called "*Catucá*", located in the vicinity of Recife. The references in the newspapers to this runaway enslaved settlement show the increasing concern of society and the authorities, as well as the military operations aiming to disrupt their structures and arrest their leaders (Carvalho, 1991).

However, given the problems associated with a collective action in such environments, the most common manifestation of enslaved revolts were the escapes. Men, women, children, and even elderly often tried individually or in small groups to escape from the condition of slave. The ads on "runaway slaves" were routine in the *Diário de Pernambuco* and almost every Brazilian paper in that period. One can easily find notes reporting slave escapes that occurred many years before, some even dated from almost a decade previous, and yet the master did not intend to give up his "asset".

These ads of runaway - used, for instance by Gilberto Freyre (2015) to portray the physical appearance and health condition of enslaved people - have far more details than those that intended to sell or buy slaves. In the desire for his captive to be found, the advertiser gives details about his clothes, his personality, his mannerisms and his physical condition. However, although relatively more frequent, these announcements are not explicit either with respect to the monetary value of the

reward to those who capture the runaway. Generally mentioning some sort of "gratification" or "rewards", but rarely with explicit mention of values.

Although vagueness was a common feature on this subject, some ads made explicit reference to the monetary value to be paid in case of capture of enslaved. The value depended on many circumstances, such as the place where the capture occurred (the farther from the place where the master lived and/or the slave worked, including other provinces, the greater the reward). The place where the captured would be delivered also mattered, if at the city of residence of the owner or in Recife, for example. Also if the denouncer only gave information that would allow the slave to be found or if the person himself would arrest the slave, etc.

We believe that the reward was a direct function of the slave's price in the market, the future income expected by the owner for his services, the income and wealth of the owner. It is also important to take into account a set of subjective variables. There seems to be cases where the economic rationality give way to the simple desire for revenge, with the recapture reward being close or even bigger than the price of a new slave. Thus, if the price of slaves in the primary and / or secondary markets grows, rewards are also expected to increase over time.

Our sample (formed by ads of runaway slaves that explicitly refer to the value of the reward for the capture) is presented in Table 7. There are 56 observations in total, being 46 men and 10 women. The runaways had an average age of 23.6 years and the average reward offered was 36,957 rs. There are four observations in which the owner of the slaves offers a 200,000 rs. reward for their capture. This is an aberrant value, far from the average of the other rewards. It is even close to buying a new slave. It is true that the reward offered depended on the possessions of the advertiser, so it is reasonable to imagine that this advertiser was richer than the others. But this hypothesis is not so robust, since there are references, for example, to escaped slaves from the warehouse of Elias Cintra - the largest slave trader and certainly one of the richest men in Recife - whose reward was 50,000 rs. for the recapture of three slaves. This leads us to speculate that in this particular case we are faced with one of those cases in which the desire to recapture and punish the runaway slaves surpassed any strict economic rationality. Thus, if we exclude these 4 outliers, the average amount paid for the capture of the slaves goes to 23,711 rs.

Among women the average age of the runaways was 27.7 years, and the reward offered for their captures was 23,200 rs. Among men, the average age was 23.4 years, and the average value of the premium was 42,574 rs,. But, excluding the outliers this value goes to 24,586 rs, a little more than 5% higher than the women.

There is a noticeable increase in the average reward value for recaptures. In 1829 this figure was 26 \$ 520 rs. (in a universe of 15 ads), while in 1830 this figure rises to 50 \$ 530 (in a universe of 30 ads). It is tempting to think that this almost 100% increase would be related to the fear of

shortage of workforce (*falta de braços*) after the beginning of the ban on trafficking. However, if we eliminate the outliers, the average of 1830 goes back to 25 \$ 480 rs., virtually the same amount as in the previous year.

The information in **Table 7** serves to illustrate once again how cheap slave labor was in Recife when we compare the value of the reward offered by the recapture of slaves with the sale price and / or reward offered by the recapture of horses, over the period between 1827 and 1830.

Table 7 – Monetary Reward Offered for the Capture of Fugitive Slaves (1827-1830)

Date (dd/mm/yy)	Name (Gender)	Age (Average)	Occupation (Master's name)	Rewards (in réis)
	Domingos (M)	30	Sawyer, Ox-driver, "tacheiro"(George Brocklehurst)	40.000
30/03/1827	N.I. (M)	-	Shoemaker (Antônio da Rocha Rego)	10.000
	Manoel (M)	-	-	6.400
	Bomfim (M)	-	-	6.400
30/05/1827	Jezuína (F)	12	-	20.000
21/06/1827	Pedro (M)	20	Bricklayer (Joaquim Elias Xavier)	24.000
Average (1827)		20.6		17.800
25/08/1828	Domingos (M)	16	Shoemaker (Dr. Francisco Xavier Pereira de Brito)	12.800
21/03/1829	Antonio (M)	39.5	"bought from a cotton farmer"	30.000
	N.I. (M)	-	-	16.666
23/03/1829*	N.I. (M)	-	Three slaves stolen from Elias Coelho Cintra's warehouse	16.666
	N.I. (M)	-	-	16.666
22/06/1829	Antonia (F)	21	- (João Manoel Rodrigues Valença)	20.000
12/08/1829	Roza (F)	23	Wet nurse	20.000
21/08/1829	Luiz Maria (M)	19	Butcher (Antonio Rebello da Silva Pereira Junior)	25.000
27/08/1829	N.I. (M)	-	Taylor	20.000
02/09/1829	Manoel (M)	22	Taylor	20.000
25/09/1829	Manu (M)	27	"Speaks little Portuguese... escaped from Netherlands's Consul".	20.000
30/09/1829	N.I. (M)	40	- (Sargento Mor da Vila de Garanhuns)	20.000
	N.I. (M)	20	-	20.000
09/10/1829	Vicência (F)	25	- (João Antônio Vila-Seca)	20.000
27/10/1829	Jacinto (M)	-	-	50.000
02/11/1829	Vicência (F)	25	-	50.000
03/11/1829	Manoel (M)	21	(Sargento-Mor Antonio Machado Dias)	20.000
Average (1829)		24.9		23.400
19/01/1830*	João (M)	-	Sawyers (Fortunato Joze Cardozo)	15.000
	Antonio (M)	-	-	15.000
25/01/1830	Joaquim (F)	-	- (do Coronel Francisco Ignacio do Valle)	30.000
09/02/1830	Francisco (M)	-	-	6.000
23/02/1830*	João (M)	-	"João, de Nação Caçange,... [e] Francisco, de nação Benguela... é oficial de caboqueiro".	50.000
	Francisco (M)	-	-	50.000
25/02/1830	Joaquim (M)	-	Canoe driver and fisherman (Sebastião Lopes)	30.000

19/04/1830	Simião (M)	30	Shoemaker (Antonio Joze de Amorim)	20.000
04/05/1830	Thomaz (M)	-	Painter (n.i.)	20.000
05/05/1830	Luiz (M)	20	Butcher (Antonio Rabello da Silva Pereira)	25.000
13/05/1830	Caetano (M)	30	- (Antonio Luiz Bizerra da Silva)	20.000
	Cypriano (M)	22,5		200.000
27/05/1830*	Filipe (M)	22,5	Canteiros (Francisco Antonio de Paiva)	200.000
	Joze (M)	-		200.000
	Izidoro (M)	18	Canteiro	200.000
24/07/1830	Antonio (M)	15,5	-	30.000
02/08/1830	Elias (M)	15,5	- (Bernardino Antônio Domingos)	40.000
07/08/1830	N.I. (F)	29	- (Francisca Felizarda Leal de Barros)	20.000
20/08/1830	João	30	- (Antonio Joze Guimarães)	12.800
13/08/1830	Feliciano (M)	28	Taylor (Joaquim Joze da Silva Bairão)	12.000¥
16/08/1830	Joaquim (M)	25	Canoe driver and fisherman (João Pereira da Silveira)	20.000
30/08/1830	N.I. (M)	22,5	- (Joze André de Oliveira)	50.000
31/08/1830	N.I. (M)	17,5	- (Antonio Barboza Cabral)	20.000
20/09/1830	Joze (M)	17,5	Shoemaker (Antonio Barboza Cabral)	30.000
27/10/1830	Domingos (M)	-	Shoemaker	20.000
02/11/1830	Antonio (M)	21	-	20.000
12/11/1830	Vicência (F)	25	Steet vendor (Joze Antonio Vilasca)	50.000
14/12/1830	N.I. (F)	-	Street vendor	20.000
Average (1830)		23,2		51.474
Average		23,6		36.957

Source: *Diário de Pernambuco*, several editions between 1827 and 1830. (*) Ads that report the escaping of more than one captive. We opted to divide the total reward value reported by the number of runaways.

Between 1827 and 1830 we have found six ads reporting missing horses that brought an explicit monetary value as a reward for their recovery. Those values went from 8,000 to 30,000 rs, being the average value 17,166 rs. A little below the 24,500 rs offered on average for the slaves. Thus, in early 19th century Recife, the capture of a runaway slave was worth as much as the capture of two horses.

What was the value of the work of an enslaved?

Table 8 shows the value of the monetary remunerations offered for the work performed by enslaved individuals. These values refer to the price requested by the slave owner to rent them to third parties, the price offered by tenants wishing to hire a slave for a fixed period of time, as well as the price offered by government agencies for the work of the slaves. The most common were the ads that dealt with daily pay (*jornal*) to be paid for the work of the captives. In the words of Bethell (2008, p.3), these were the so-called "slaves of gain" - individual slaves who were hired out by their master and paid wages." As a way of turning this newspaper into a monthly salary, we assumed a month with 22 business days. An arbitrary value, but it certainly provides us with a conservative prediction of the captive's possible gains.

It can be observed that the remuneration paid for the labor of the slave should vary between a floor of 3.520 rs. for women street vendors, up to 12,000 and 14,000 rs a month for some canoe drivers and coopers. Assuming the slave price was 281,000 rs. - as obtained in **Table 6** - and a remuneration of 14,000 rs., it would take 20 months of work as a cooper slave, in order to gather the value of a captive. If the slave cost 194,000 rs, as reported in **Table 6**, it would take almost 14 months of work. For those who earned 4,400 rs. monthly, it would take 63 months of work to acquire a captive at 281,000 rs., or 43 months, for one that cost 191,000 rs.

Table 8 – Remuneration (Monthly and Daily) Offered by the Enslaved’s work (1827-1835)

Job – Year	Monthly	Daily
Wetnurse – 1827	9.000	
Canoe driver, Butcher and “socador de açúcar” – 1834	8.000	
Canoe drivers – 1834	7.000	
Domestic services (female) 1834	6.000	
Farmworker – 1834 – M	6.000	
Wetnurse – 1832 – F	6.000	
Cooker’s helper (1832)	6.000	
Domestic services (“Ama”) (1834)	2.000	
Cooper (“tanoeiro”) (1830)	14.080*	640
Canoe driver (“canoeiro”) – (1831)	12.760*	580
Blacksmith and locksmith (“oficial de ferreiro e serralheiro”) (1833)	10.560*	480
Carpenter (“oficial de carpinteiro”) (1830)	-	480
Blacksmith (1833)	-	480
Sawyer (“serrador”) (1833)	8.800*	400
Bricklayer (“servente de pedreiro”) (1835)	-	400
Blacksmith (“ferreiro”) (1831)	-	400
Washerwoman, cooker and water sailor (“lavadeira, cozinheira e vendedora d’água”) (1831)	7.040*	320
Bricklayer (“para o serviço da ponte do Recife”) (1832)	-	320
Street vendor (Male) (1833/1835)	-	320
Street vendor (“vendedor de pão”) (1835)	-	320
Domestic service (1835)	-	320
Potter helper (“servente de olaria”) (1835)	-	320
Bricklayer helper (“servente de pedreiro”) (1832)	6.160*	280
Domestic services and street vendor (“vendedora d’água” – female) (1831)	5.280*	240
Domestic services (female) (1832/1833/1835)	-	240
Helper in public works (“obras de estradas pública”) (1833)	-	240
Street vendor (1832/1834)	4.400*	200
Potter related work (“amassar barro para tijolos”) (1833)	-	200
Domestic services (1833)	-	200
Street vendor (6 hours a day) (1833)	3.520*	160

Source: Diário de Pernambuco, several editions. (*) Estimated values, supposing a 22 working days per month

Koster (1816, 423), for example, when speaking of slaves that worked as canoe drivers, shoemakers, carpenters, etc., says: "these men may acquire a sufficient sum of money to purchase their own freedom, if they have the requisite of prudence and steadiness to allow their earnings to accumulate. " It is obvious that as a captive, the net remuneration obtainable was significantly lower than these amounts; or the days of work for profit itself were reduced to Saturdays and some holy days (Koster, 1816, p.425-6). So the slave would need many more years of work and savings to purchase his freedom. But supposing that the free workers earned the same as the rent paid by these

slaves, the purchase of captives was entirely feasible for coopers, blacksmiths, locksmiths, carpenters, sawmills, masons, for example. It is important to remember that, like any other commodity, the slave was also object of credit sales, further increasing the accessibility to this "asset". In short, slave labor was not particularly expensive in Recife in the 1820s and 1830s. It was accessible even for free workers who performed the functions mentioned in the previous paragraph. Our speculations are in agreement with Costa e Silva (2011, 45), when the author affirms that "it was not only in the rich houses that there were slaves; in the *remediados* (i.e. those who were not poor) also". In such a way that "the first thing that a person usually did", when he improved his life conditions, "was to buy a slave or a slave." According to the author, "there was no address of doctor, lawyer, teacher, civil servant, small merchant, apothecary or army officer" that did not have "slaves for domestic tasks". And even "a carpenter, a blacksmith or a wall painter, if he did well in the profession, he would acquire one or more young men to learn the craft and help him in the task." The women whom produced candies also did the same, buying a "young lady" to help them. "And this was also true of former slaves and former slaves, for it was not uncommon for the freedmen to possess captives."

According to Gilberto Freyre (2006, 40), "in Brazil's" slavery society, the "barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, painter" were all "masters of slaves". They used those slaves to "carry their tools, to prepare the paint", for instance. Those masters "practically didn't get their fingers dirty", wearing "three-piece hats and a frock coat". Humboldt (1829, 209) stated that of the almost 2 million slaves in Brazil, "more than $\frac{3}{4}$ were not engaged in gold mining" or in the production of "colonial products", something that made the thesis that trafficking of slaves was a "necessary evil" - as it was said during the first half of the 19th century - a very frail one.

In the newspaper *Diário do Rio de Janeiro* and ad published in 1827 said: "We are selling a 16 year old little mulatto ("*mulatinho*")", without vices, since he was raised in a farm, and used to be the slave of a poor man, reason why he was not raised with idleness" (DRJ, January 2, 1827, 2). From what we have seen, the statement is certainly not a hyperbole: poor people definitively could own one or more slaves themselves.

Conclusion

In the article, we tried to present some quantitative information on slave labor in Recife, based on the information collected in the newspaper ads - notably the *Diário de Pernambuco* - in order to understand who they were, what they did, where they came from, at what price they were sold and what reward was offered for their recaptures.

We have seen that the advertised slaves, in their vast majority, both men and women, performed functions not directly related to the production and sale of sugar and cotton, the two

main export products of Pernambuco at that time. The most common occupation among men offered for sale was that of canoeiro, while among women the most common occupation was that related to domestic activities.

We have shown that the average price desired by the slaves between 1827 and 1830 was 280,000 reis, that the average value offered by the recapture was almost 37,000 reis. Horses, on the other hand, in our sample, had the desired average sale price of 65,000 rs, while the average reward for recapture was 17,000 rs. Consequently, a slave was worth something like 4 good horses, signaling how cheap slave labor was in that region. In fact, one of the hallmarks of slavery in Brazil in the period was that this institution was not a privilege of the very rich. Even individuals and families slightly above poverty could have one or two captives.

We also showed that the work of a slave could yield between 2,000 and 14,000 réis per month. This is another sign that free individuals, even in simple activities such as shoemakers, fishermen, etc., could accumulate enough resources to buy one or more captives to help them at work.

These results are in line with studies that analyze slavery in Brazilian society in the first half of the 19th century.

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