

American Counterpoint: New Approaches to Slavery and Abolition in Brazil
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Building the Nation, Selecting Memories: Vitor Meireles, the Christie Affair and Brazilian Slavery in the 1860s.

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There is a little-known painting, by Brazilian academic artist Victor Meireles that depicts Emperor Pedro II in a street scene, surrounded by a crowd who cheers him. It is given in the catalogue of the National Museum of Arts in Rio de Janeiro as “Study for the Christie Affair” (“Estudo para Questão Christie),” circa 1864. It shows the square in front of the Paço Imperial filled with people of both sexes and all classes, ages and colors. The eye is guided to observe the acclamation of the Emperor by just about everyone: those raising their swords and their hats from afar, and those standing close to him such as the well-dressed black man with a goatee who hails the Emperor with his hat. For the second scan, Meireles calls attention to a secondary scene: mounted police tramps over a person in the crowd who seems to be black, before the startled eyes of two young men, one white, one black. On the opposite side, in the shadow, a group of black men identified by their baskets as carriers and probably “ganhadores” sit still and observe, without taking part in the action depicted.¹ According to the brief passages in the specialized literature, the Marquis of Abrantes, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time of the breakup of diplomatic relations with Great Britain would have commissioned the work, and the study would have been completed sometime between 1863 and 1864, that is right when the popular sentiment fuelled by the diplomatic crisis with Great Britain was heightened, Emperor Pedro II enjoyed high popularity, and the two countries awaited the resumption of diplomatic relations, mediated by the King of Portugal

after the king of Belgium Leopold II decided in favor of Brazil on the matter under arbitration.

At age 31 at the time, Victor Meireles was a consecrated artist. His young talent was identified very early. He left his hometown of Desterro, capital of the southern province of Santa Catarina for Rio de Janeiro at age 15 to study at the Imperial Academy of Arts (Academia Imperial de Belas Artes), where he specialized in historical scenes. He spent the years between 1853 and 1861 in Europe, first in Italy and then in Paris, with a scholarship from the Imperial Academy to study under masters of the Accademia di San Luca and the École des Beaux Arts. It was in Paris, between 1859 and 1860 that he worked on the large scale historical scene that earned him recognition, “A Primeira Missa no Brasil,” a pictorial representation of the second mass described by Pero Vaz de Caminha in his letter to the king of Portugal, the document considered the “birth certificate” of Brazil. The painting was selected for and shown at the Salon des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1861. Upon his return to Brazil, Meireles was awarded the title of Knight of the Imperial Order of Christ and the Imperial Order of the Rose. He became a professor of historical painting at the Imperial Academy of Arts and worked on several projects in the following decades, such as “Moema” (1866), the dying Indian woman who gave birth to the mixed-race man who symbolized the nation; “A Batalha de Guararapes” (1879), on the expulsion of the Dutch in the seventeenth century; and “O Combate Naval do Riachuelo” (1882-3) and “A Passagem de Humaitá” (1886), two episodes from the Paraguayan War. Along with others, particularly Pedro Américo, famous for his depiction of another battle of the Paraguayan War, “Batalha do Avaí” (1877) and the scene of the proclamation of Independence, “O Grito do Ipiranga” (1888), Meireles created a visual representation of the history that was being formulated for the new nation.

After the ascension of Pedro II to the throne, in 1840, the movement to identify national symbols, to write the history of the young nation, to construct a “genuinely national culture” was incorporated into official policy. The emperor himself attended and presided over the meetings of the Historical and Geographic Institute (IHGB), where researchers of the Brazilian past formulated an accepted narrative for the country's history. The Imperial government subsidized institutions such as IHGB and the Imperial Academy of Arts and also gave the proper tone to their production. In times of rising nationalism in the Western world, and in the quest to appear as a civilized nation in the tropics, Brazilian nationality was to be associated with its uniqueness. Romanticism gave central stage to native Indians in this constructed Brazilian nationality, but not to any Indian: only the allies of the Portuguese, seen as docile, adaptable and willing to die for the country. Their heroic feats and memorable moments were situated in the past. At the same time, a Brazilian form of the Portuguese language and national literature became part of this intellectual project that had internal dissensions and significant omissions. The construction of a national identity involved collaboration in literature, painting and sculpture, music, archaeology, historical research and linguistics, but also guidance as to what to value and what to gloss over.²

The commission of a painting on the so-called “Christie Affair” can therefore be inscribed in this collective project. Nothing more important than to immortalize the moment in the history of this young nation when the Emperor and his government received demonstrations of popular support and promised to defend national honor attacked by British unreasonable demands and the seizure of Brazilian ships within national territorial waters. Unlike in “The First Mass in Brazil” it required Meireles to reflect on very current and sensitive issues, to touch fresh wounds. Interestingly, after the study was ready, Meireles did not proceed to prepare the large-scale, monumental painting implied by the Marquis of Abrantes’ commission. According to the few authors who discuss this painting, the Marquis

of Olinda, president of the council of ministers in the cabinet that took office in May 1865 would have asked Meireles to give up the project for political reasons: once diplomatic relations were restored, it would have seemed a provocation to the British if the painting had been completed.³

What I want to propose is an alternative reading of the reasons why the theme was given up by the Empire's most recognized painter, when it would have been inscribed in the historical narrative his work recreated. For this new interpretation, I will revisit the history of British abolitionism in Brazil, with a particular focus on the conflict over the status of the Africans who were entitled to freedom following the prohibition of the slave trade. This was perhaps the most serious issue brought before the Brazilian government by William Christie during his term as British minister in Brazil, despite the memory constructed about the crisis. My argument is that Christie's defense of the liberated Africans and especially his insistence on the freedom of the Africans imported after 1830–1831 who were held as slaves spilled out of the diplomatic channels onto the public scene, which included free people of color, freedpersons and slaves, and that this publicity became a threat to the social order and the maintenance of slavery. In this sense, the "Christie Affair," much like the Eusébio de Queirós law in 1850, was another fundamental moment for the consolidation of the Brazilian imperial state. Faced with external pressure the government had to demonstrate not only diplomatic ability to solve the crisis, but also considerable institutional and political cohesion to avoid disruption of the social order, and to renegotiate terms with slave owners with the view of keeping slavery in the short run.

The abolition of the slave trade and the status of the Africans

The treaties and bilateral agreements signed by Portugal and Great Britain to limit and to abolish the slave trade to Brazil were highly unpopular among planters and the population at

large. Already in 1810, the Treaty of Alliance and Friendship in which the prince regent of Portugal accepted to collaborate with the king of England in the gradual abolition of the slave trade was seen as an imposition on a court that had been weakened by the French invasion and the transfer to South America. In 1810, Portugal agreed to limit the trade to the territories it controlled in South America and Africa, including the Slave Coast, Molembo and Cabinda. In 1815, Portugal had to agree to keep its slave trade only below the Equator and between its possessions. In the treaty signed with Great Britain and the convention that regulated it (1817), the two nations agreed to suppress the illegal slave trade, conceded the mutual right of search, and established mixed commission courts on both sides of the Atlantic to judge captured ships and eventually emancipate the Africans found on board those that were condemned. Hipólito da Costa, the editor of the monthly newspaper *Correio Brasiliense* (published in London but aimed at the Brazilian public) expressed the “national” sentiment when he condemned the establishment of mixed commission courts that would be authorized to judge Portuguese ships. For him, it was “impolitic, derogatory of the King's sovereignty and national dignity.”⁴ Years before, he had harshly criticized the Count of Palmella for negotiating the compensation awarded to Portuguese merchants whose ships had been seized by the Royal Navy before 1815 in unfavorable terms. At the same time that abolition was integrated into national identity and was incorporated into state policy in Great Britain in the first decades of the nineteenth century, those who suffered the pressure also formulated discomfort and organized resistance in nationalist terms.

In the case of Brazil, resisting British pressure for the abolition of the slave trade was integrated into the construction of the independent state, but could not be easily claimed in the formulation of a nationalist discourse. Luiz Felipe de Alencastro has proposed that Brazil owes its unity to the articulation among central and provincial elites, slaveowners and statesmen to defend the slave trade and slavery from British pressure and attacks.⁵ According

to his interpretation, the Brazilian independent state, its internal centralized structures and its highly efficient and professional diplomacy, were constituted in response to the need to defend slavery, not only as an economic system, but as the basis of the social order, at a moment when all other independent states in the Americas with the exception of the United States were led to abolish the slave trade and slavery.

There were always dissenting voices and discomfort. At the time of independence, there were alternative views of what the country should become. José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, for example, defended the abolition of the slave trade, the gradual abolition of slavery and the incorporation of freed and free blacks as peasants, small land-owners.⁶ But he went against the current. Right at that time the coffee boom extended the plantation frontier and intensified the demand for new slaves in the Paraíba Valley. Elsewhere in Brazil too, the economic growth meant a strong stimulus to the Atlantic slave trade. The occasional dissenting voice was usually stifled by the discourse that justified slavery as the lifeblood of the country, even if morally unfair and deemed unsuitable for the constitution of citizenship.⁷

After the treaty between Brazil and Great Britain for the abolition of the slave trade came into force in March 1830 and the Brazilian law of November 11, 1831 was approved, matters complicated considerably. The signature of the treaty had been vehemently condemned in the Chamber of Deputies in 1827 as unconstitutional, premature and damaging to the economy. Moreover, the negotiators were criticized for giving to the British the power to judge Portuguese merchants and ships. However, the treaty had already been ratified and could not be cancelled. The Brazilian government had to enforce it even if it went against the will of the people expressed by their representatives. The abolition conundrum touched on the political constitution of the Empire itself: for agreeing to British-dictated terms Emperor Pedro I lost support and was forced to leave in 1831. It was also menacing to the prosperity of the economy and damaging to national sovereignty. The continuation of the trade after 1830–

1831 amplified and complicated these questions even further. The first article of the 1831 law stated that any slave who entered Brazilian territory should be considered free. The illegal trade, from 1830 to 1856 brought an estimated 760,000 Africans who were kept as slaves despite their right to freedom.⁸

To defend the nation and its citizens from foreign interference and attacks often took the shape of defending slave traders from legal or illegal seizures, negotiating compensation for their losses, and postponing the negotiation of new treaties, but more importantly, internally, it meant holding the power to draw the line separating who was entitled to freedom, and who was to be kept in illegal slavery. Over the course of decades, from the 1830s to the 1880s, the government and the slaveowners constantly debated and renegotiated the terms that kept Africans and their offspring as slaves, when they should have been considered liberated Africans, or simply freed. The legal framework of the new nation was tainted by this central problem in the definition of the status of great part of the population.

The years between 1845 and 1851 were very important because Brazilian statesmen were forced to respond to internal and external pressures and renegotiate the terms on which the defense of slavery rested. The pressures and constraints were of different sorts. First and foremost, the escalation of the British naval campaign, now backed by the Aberdeen Act of 1845, that authorized seizures and the adjudication of the ships suspected of slave trading by British Admiralty Courts, abandoning the system of mixed commission courts. This course of action was combined with the operation of a recruitment scheme that diverted Africans who should have disembarked (as slaves or recaptives) in Brazil but were taken to the West Indies instead to feed the need for plantation labor in the post-emancipation regime. In addition, in the years surrounding 1850, the recruitment from the Brazilian branch of the African emigration scheme acquired a radical tone. British chargé d'affaires in Rio James Hudson and Lord Palmerston insisted on extending British protection, and on considering as liberated

Africans all those who had been brought to the country after the prohibition of the trade in 1830–1831. This meant stirring up the liberated Africans whose 14-year terms of service had expired, call them before the British consul and ask them to state their names, addresses, labor arrangements and whether they received monetary compensation, and register their complaints on a list that probably prepared their transfer to the West Indies. It meant also proposing a new mixed commission court that would be charged with judging whether Africans who were kept as slaves were entitled to freedom on the basis of the prohibition of the trade, a plan that had been devised by David Turnbull for Cuba a decade before and had the potential to seriously disrupt the slave system. To make matters worse, after having caused great commotion by seizing Brazilian slavers within the bay of Paranaguá and being fired upon by the military fort in July 1850, one year later British cruisers had their mandates extended to include coastal ships carrying slaves in the internal slave trade. Prompted to recognize the illegality of the seizure of the *Piratinim*, the British refused to admit it and to return the slaves (Africans and creoles alike), considering they were entitled to freedom on the basis of the 1831 law.⁹

Brazilian policy, discussed at the State Council and during three secret sessions at the Chamber of Deputies in July 1850, was to renew legislation and empower Brazilian naval and civilian authorities, and Navy Auditors to seize and judge ships and newly-imported Africans. The challenge faced by the government is better expressed in the case of the apprehensions made inland, after the cargoes had been landed and taken to plantations. In a few cases, police invaded private properties to search for the new Africans, and had to sort them from among the existing slaves. Slave owners reacted with indignation and concern, accusing the government of going too far. The case of the police expedition to São João da Barra in November 1850 in search of new Africans is emblematic: as it arrived, it stirred up the slaves: rumors spread that the force was composed of British officials, or that British officials and

police forces had arrived to free the slaves. The free population was scared, and a number of slaves ran away from their owners. Some of them, considering themselves free, took up a boat and sailed away, saying they would return to Africa. The boat was then seized by British cruisers, containing 10 African men and one woman, and very few provisions.¹⁰ A newspaper published in Rio, *O Brasil*, voiced the concerns of slaveowners when it accused the government of inciting if not a major insurrection, a series of small ones. Critics feared the seizure had not been a coincidence: the slaves would have prior knowledge of their chances to fall under the protection of the British. *O Brasil* defended the return of the slaves to their owners but doubted it would happen, and called its readers to ponder the consequences of this episode: “if... under the protection of the British navy these runaway slaves attain freedom, can anyone calculate the moral effect of this example?”¹¹

The fear of slave unrest was always present and was often used for rhetorical purposes, but there is little doubt it influenced decision-making at crucial moments. The large slave plot uncovered in 1848 in the coffee-growing region of the Paraíba Valley was linked to the presence of “africanos livres” among slaves and to the influence of abolitionists in a report of the Provincial Assembly of Rio de Janeiro. It caused great commotion among the elite and the government for its extension and organization, based on West-Central African cults of affliction.¹² The delicate move accomplished by the conservative cabinet in 1850 was to show strength, both without and within, deny the acquisition of new African slaves by emancipating the newly-arrived, while at the same time guaranteeing slave property by maintaining the existing African slaves in illegal slavery. This was the fragile balance that William Christie challenged when he arrived in Brazil.

Lingering questions

Between the appointment of William Dougal Christie for the position of minister in Rio de Janeiro and his departure for Brazil, the Brazilian minister in London, Francisco Ignácio de Carvalho Moreira, the future Baron of Penedo, tried to inquire about the reasons for Christie's appointment and his intentions. Christie, however, departed from the expected protocol by shunning Moreira's invitation for dinner and stating openly that he had accepted the post in Brazil only to advance his career. According to Moreira's inquiries, Christie was greatly influenced by two Scotsmen, Alexander MacGregor and Alexander Reid, and had given signs of trying to follow alternative courses in his relation with the community of British merchants in Rio. Moreira had also ascertained that Christie intended to touch on commercial issues as well as on matters relating to inheritance of British subjects in Brazil. Moreira's November 1859, confidential letter to his superior at the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not optimistic about the chances of developing good personal relations with the new British minister, and consequently of advancing good relations between the two countries.¹³ While already in Brazil, Christie stated to Cansansão de Sinimbu that he was to devote himself to four main questions: strengthening ties with Brazil on the matters related to the River Plate; celebrating a commercial treaty between Great Britain and Brazil; advancing the regulation for the navigation of the Amazon river; and solving pending issues on the nationality of the children of foreign citizens born in Brazil and on the inheritance of foreign citizens residents of the country.¹⁴ Neither to Moreira nor to Sinimbu had Christie expressed his interest or concern with the lingering questions related to the abolition of the slave trade, such as the Brazilian demand to have the Aberdeen Act repealed or the difficulties at the mixed commission that met to resolve claims from both sides. In July 1860, hardly six months after Moreira's pessimistic letter, confidential correspondence from Rio informed him of Christie's demands on the issue of the liberated Africans from the Iron Foundry of Ipanema who were being transferred to the Military Colony of Itapura.¹⁵ And in June of the following year,

Moreira learned, still through confidential correspondence, that in response to the issue raised by minister Christie, the Brazilian minister of Justice would speed up the process of delivering final letters of emancipation to the liberated Africans who had already completed their 14-year terms of service to private hirers.¹⁶

It was precisely in 1861 that the lingering “liberated African question” gained the public through the press. Liberal deputy Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos, angered for being fired from a position at the Ministry of the Navy, published a series of notes in the leading liberal newspaper, the *Correio Mercantil* under the pseudonym of “Solitário” (“Solitary”) criticizing the government for its inefficiency, centralization, and failure to promote necessary reform. Three of the letters, published in November, touch on the failure of the Brazilian government to advance free labor and colonization in the country by suppressing the slave trade and guaranteeing the freedom of the liberated Africans. They surveyed the issue of the liberated Africans to the Brazilian public with unprecedented thoroughness, discussing the legal basis for their peculiar condition and discussing their handling by the Brazilian government: the liberal deputy for Alagoas strongly condemned the government for not sending the recaptives back to Africa in the 1830s, and for not emancipating them after the 14-year compulsory labor service. He demonstrated an insider’s knowledge of the administrative course followed by the liberated Africans’ petitions, and its most insidious traps, citing the removal of 30 Africans who had already completed their compulsory terms in Rio de Janeiro to be employed in the public works in Amazonas.¹⁷ When he collected all of the “Letters from the Solitary” into a book in 1863, Tavares Bastos indicated on a note that the emancipation of the liberated Africans was the subject of discussion in the Chamber after the publication of his original letters in 1861, and also reprinted liberal deputy’s Francisco Otaviano’s two notes on the same subject, published in the same *Correio Mercantil* in July 1862. Otaviano’s account of the liberated African question demonstrated he had access to the

correspondence passed between the British legation in Rio and the Foreign Office on the subject. He thus gave ample exposure to minister William Christie's efforts to press the Brazilian government for the full emancipation of the liberated Africans.¹⁸ The similarity between the arguments raised in Christie's diplomatic efforts and in the campaign in the press seem to indicate that the two liberal deputies and Christie were articulated. What happened later, however, determined that the Brazilians would not leave records of this probable connection.

Officially, the matters that ultimately justified the diplomatic crisis were the plunder of the *Prince of Wales*, wrecked off the coast of Rio Grande do Sul in June 1861, and the disappearance of her crew, and the brief imprisonment of the officers of the *Forte* for disobeying Brazilian authorities in June 1862. It all escalated because Christie insisted on demanding official excuses and reparations and issued an ultimatum in December 1862 that was answered by Abrantes in a very stately manner refusing to curb to Christie's demands. Reprisals followed on the first days of January 1863: British war ships placed at the entrance of Rio de Janeiro harbor apprehended Brazilian ships. The report from the Rio correspondent of *The Times*, dated January 9, painted a vivid scene:

This created an immense sensation in the town; many would not believe it and ran to satisfy their own eyes; but all doubts were put an end to on the 4th January by the arrival of the *Stromboli*, and it soon became known that she had detained five sailing vessels and a steamer, the *Paraíba*, all Brazilian, and of more value than the sum demanded....In the meantime the excitement became intense, the public squares were filled with angry people and some Dutch officers, being mistaken for British through the similarity of their uniforms, were very severely handled before the mistake was found out. In the evening a council was held, presided over by the Emperor in person and, after sitting many hours the demand for the money for compensation was agreed to; and the case of the officers is to be submitted to the arbitration of several foreign ministers in Rio....The mail packet has been detained 36 hours, but the decision of the arbitration is not yet known. The excitement among the people still continues.¹⁹

Behind closed doors, during the State Council meeting on January 5, 1863, councilors considered the full range of motives for the crisis. For Paulino Soares de Sousa, the viscount

of Uruguai, a man experienced in Brazilian foreign relations, the British had in view putting pressure on Brazil to sign conventions on consular affairs and on the new claims mixed commission. This meant that the diplomatic crisis over the repression of the slave trade lingered on.

By 1860, the mixed commission that was created in 1858 to examine the claims for reparations existing since Brazilian independence had reached a stalemate. The British commissioner was instructed to refuse accepting Brazilian claims pertaining to ships seized for illegal slave trading that had been judged by British tribunals. Soon after he arrived, Christie pressed the Brazilian government to respond to the problem by giving up pursuing those claims.²⁰ Since then, Brazilian statesmen had been formulating an answer to the British government. In July 1861 the councilors of state responsible for foreign affairs considered the claims inseparable from the other lingering questions with Great Britain and refused to accept their exclusion: "They do not constitute simply reparation and monetary compensation, they are inseparably related to grave questions of independence and national sovereignty."²¹ On October 20, 1862, the full State Council through different voices sustained the nationalist tone: Brazilians had to see their government defending their interests, their rights and national dignity even if they were to suffer financial losses imposed by Great Britain. What made the Viscount of Uruguay uncomfortable was the association between the issue of reparations and the crisis over the slave trade that, as he put it, "caused so much sorrow and made [the country] appear in such an uncomfortable position in the eyes of the world."²²

In 1863, the crisis over the reprisals reminded Paulino Soares de Sousa of what had happened in 1850: when British minister Hudson demanded Brazilian explanation for the attacks suffered by British cruisers within Brazilian national waters, Brazil defended its rights and refused to punish those responsible, accusing the British themselves of aggression. Paulino defended Brazil should adopt the same position again and evaluated the

circumstances favored the country before the public opinion. The Viscount of Jequitinhonha, a well-respected councilor, disagreed the matter could be associated to the slave trade. His position was in the end, the one adopted: “the Brazilian nation’s dignity and honor [did] not allow for negotiations with the British minister”; the ships seized had to be released and the orders for new seizures suspended, otherwise diplomatic relations should be severed. The law of nations was on Brazilian side, according to Jequitinhonha.²³

In the following weeks and months, Brazil moved to request reparations for the losses incurred during the reprisals, and diplomatic relations were broken by the Brazilian government, considering that national honor had been attacked by British aggressions in time of peace.²⁴ The concerns over the association with the crisis of 1850 expressed in by the councilors of state and the acknowledgement that Christie was in fact touching on uncomfortable questions related to the illegal slave trade never reached the public because the State Council’s sessions were confidential. The Brazilian government’s position was expressed in the report prepared by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 1863 to be presented before the Chamber of Deputies. The Marquis of Abrantes treated the matter with gravity and firmness. He chose to be transparent and publish all the correspondence exchanged with the British minister, as well as with Brazilian authorities on the *Forte* and the *Prince of Wales* matters.²⁵ The report included a short selection of the correspondence on the closure of the claims mixed commission, including an agreement that Brazil would keep its archives.²⁶ This calculated move demonstrated, both within and without, control of the situation. Interestingly, however, nowhere in the published correspondence, in the reports of the minister of Foreign Affairs or the minister of Justice were Christie's demands about the liberated Africans and his criticism of the illegal enslavement of the Africans imported since 1830–1831 ever mentioned. Even though the public might have associated the “English question” with the slave trade, and eventually, thanks to the second edition of Tavares Bastos’

Cartas do Solitário issued in December 1863, to the current discussion of the fate of the liberated Africans, for the Brazilian government those relations were never publicly acknowledged.

Disruptive potential

A case from the southernmost province of Rio Grande do Sul gives an example of the disruptive potential of the publicity over the “English question”. In March 1863, in the city of Pelotas, not far from where the *Prince of Wales* had wrecked, the police commissioner arrested a free man of color, Sebastião Maria, and accused him of plotting an insurrection. In the inquiry that followed, we learned that Sebastião was a 63 year old free man, born in Rio de Janeiro, a mason by trade, and who lived in Pelotas for a long time. Jacinto Pimenta Grajor, the Portuguese merchant based in Pelotas who denounced Sebastião told the police

he had heard many times the free black (*preto livre*) Sebastião Maria, in gatherings of many other blacks (*pretos*), raise arguments against the Brazilian government, insult His Majesty the Emperor of Brazil, and disseminate ideas of insurrection, inviting and enticing blacks (*pretos*), both free and enslaved to take the side of the English in case of a war between Brazil and England, on the grounds it was that nation they should help, because they are the protectors of the class of the black folk (*classe da gente preta*). He also convinced his equals that the province of Santa Catarina was already occupied and taken by English forces, and that shortly this province [Rio Grande do Sul] would be attacked too and on that occasion there would be a large number of blacks (*pretos*) ready to collaborate with them.²⁷

Grajor acted out of terror, saying he had already warned Sebastião that he should stop acting that way and he noted that “the inconvenient ideas of the black man Sebastião Maria spread as rumors, and that in small groups blacks (*pretos*) nurtured and demonstrated similar unfavorable sentiments.” He believed Sebastião was capable of acting by himself, and not influenced by others, for he was “naturally persuasive, and had an active spirit capable of conducting by himself the plan he conceived.” Grajor probably feared the alliance among free blacks and slaves, potentially very disruptive considering that slaves in Pelotas at that time

represented 37% of the total population, and in the nearby ranches associated to the dynamic jerked beef industry the proportion may have been higher.²⁸

The timing was a difficult one to defend slavery. In January 1863, Abraham Lincoln had decreed slave emancipation in the Southern states. Diplomatic correspondence between the Brazilian legation in Washington and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows how the Brazilian government followed the developments of the Civil War and tried to anticipate unwanted consequences. However, some could hardly be avoided. The arrival of confederate warship *Sumter* chased by Union frigate *Powhatan* in São Luis, Maranhão in September 1861 inspired slaves of nearby Anajatuba. It was reported by police that slaves had joined in “clubs” and declared they were freed and no longer had to obey their masters. Agostinho, a slave of Cristóvão Vieira “confirmed he had said to his peers they were all free, because he had heard so from many blacks in the capital. They were only waiting for the warships to bring the troops.” Police authorities confirmed that the idea came from the arrival of the *Sumter* and the *Powhatan* to the northern province.²⁹ In northern Minas Gerais, in September 1864, a massive slave plot was uncovered involving slaves of the city of Serro, of surrounding mining units, and runaway slaves. It meant to burn the houses of certain people in the city, incite slaves, freedmen and runaways to rebel and kill the whites. It took two months to subdue them. Isadora Mota demonstrates how the particularly harsh conditions in the mining activity gave slaves plenty of reasons to rebel, but also how the ongoing political debate about the need to impose reforms to the slave system and the discussion of the implications of slave emancipation in the United States were interpreted by plotters as favorable conditions for their demands. Adão, one of the leaders of the Serro insurrection knew “there was a war about the freedom of the slaves, but not those of this country.”³⁰

Again, in July 1865, the slave rebellion in the plantation *Pernambuco* belonging to the Order of the Carmelites in the northern province of Pará made the President of the Province of

Pará admit to the Minister of Justice that the slave population in that province was agitated, “because the war in the United States has infused them with the idea they would all be freed.”³¹

The historiography on Atlantic slavery has shown that slaves, African or creole, had their own reasons to resist captivity, and their own codes and means to confront it, and more recent works have demonstrated that they viewed disruption among slaveowners, between slaveowners and the government, or wars against foreign enemies as particularly favorable moments to challenge their enslavement. The US Civil War, and the prospects of slave emancipation worried Brazilian statesmen and slaveowners because they realized it weakened the overall legitimacy of the slave system. The “English question,” much like the crisis after the incident of Paranaguá in 1850, was another moment in Brazilian history when the country was challenged from the outside by the greatest power of the time, whose abolitionist aims were well known. British actions were seen by statesmen and by slaveowners as a challenge to their authority, and they often were. On the other hand, regardless of British intentions, the same actions were identified by slaves, freedpersons and free persons of color as precisely a crack on the slave system and an opportunity to guarantee freedom.

Atlantic currents

In England, the crisis generated by the reprisals received telling headers from *The Times*: “The Difficulty in Brazil” in early February, “The Dispute with Brazil” one month later, and “Great Britain and Brazil” by the month of June.³² The Cabinet headed by Lord Palmerston had to defend Christie’s course of action before a mixed audience composed by interest groups such as traders, industrialists, investors, abolitionists, and also by the general public whose images of Brazil were formed by periodicals such as the *Quarterly Review*, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, press articles, and travel accounts. What followed was a series of public

rounds of praise and condemnation of British policy in Brazil, and a battle over public opinion, played both in Parliament and in the press.

William Christie, who left Rio de Janeiro on board the steamer *Paraná* on March 11, 1863, had nearly a month to formulate his version of the affair before landing in Southampton on April 7.³³ The crisis between the two countries was brought up several times in the House of Commons in 1863. The discussions had on February 23 and March 6 following the publication of the correspondence on the cases of the *Prince of Wales* and the officers of the *Forte* already exposed how controversial Christie's actions on the two cases were to the members of the House of Commons who had commercial and financial interests in Brazil. A number of members of Parliament concurred to disqualify Christie as an ill-tempered man who put British trade, British property in Brazil and British lives in danger with his precipitation, and to reinforce his image as unfit to be a representative of Great Britain.³⁴ On May 7, the discussion centered on Mr. Christie's conduct, with the two sides further apart, and Lord Palmerston defending Christie as honorable and respectable and his actions as justified because he obeyed superior orders.³⁵ Christie soon anonymously published a book of more than 360 pages that reproduced the correspondence printed by Parliament on the two cases, and set them against the background of the difficult relations between the two countries due to the questions that lingered on from the suppression of the slave trade.³⁶ In the lengthy introduction, Christie reminded his readers that it was Lord Palmerston who had put an end to the Brazilian slave trade by force, and that the Brazilian government had successively failed to guarantee the freedom of the liberated Africans and to answer requests of information about them. By April or May of 1863, it became clear that Christie's (and possibly also Palmerston's) strategy to defend and justify his course of action in Brazil before the British public would be to disqualify the Brazilian government's good faith, particularly on the slave trade issue. This meant that the circumstances of the Aberdeen Act of 1845 were brought

back, the circumstances of Palmerston and Hudson's decision to authorize British cruisers to seize ships within Brazilian waters in 1850–1851 were brought back, and the long history of the defense of the liberated Africans' freedom was brought back. In fact, for the first time in 1863, the British Parliament ordered the correspondence on liberated Africans in Brazil to be printed separately, giving a wider audience to the exchanges had by Christie about the Africans who were in the Military Colony of Itapura, in the far interior of Brazil.³⁷

The king of Belgium had already decided in favor of Brazil in the case under arbitration (that of the officers of the *Forte*), and Great Britain accepted the offer of the king of Portugal to mediate the return to normal diplomatic relations. But the opposition to Palmerston's government took every chance to criticize the harsh treatment given to Brazil, and to remind the public of the possible consequences: according to MP Bramley-Moore, the foreign trade with Brazil was the third in extent and importance to Great Britain, British subjects owned 20 million pounds sterling in property in Brazil, and it would be a huge calamity for the manufacturing districts in England if Brazil imposed differential taxes to the products imported from Britain.³⁸ The opposition also picked up the subject of the repeal of the Aberdeen Act as a way to criticize the unfairness and even illegality of some of the measures adopted by Great Britain in the campaign against the Atlantic slave trade. In this, they were supported by those who had been advocating the dismantling of the costly naval and administrative structure set up to repress the slave trade. A letter from Louis Chamerovzow to the editor of *The Globe and Traveller* printed just below the news from the Rio de Janeiro correspondent supported the repeal of the Aberdeen Act, arguing that the slave trade had ended and it would be "a graceful act on the part of the British government" that would encourage Brazilians to advance towards slave emancipation. His letter was answered on the next day by an anonymous writer who identified Chamerovzow as the secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and publicly reprovved his argument by saying the

society should work on inducing the Brazilian government to condemn the separation of slave families, prohibit the internal slave trade, and emancipate the liberated Africans instead of defend the repeal of the Aberdeen Act.³⁹

Thus the “Difficulty with Brazil” had evolved, in 1864, to a broader discussion about the relations with Brazil, and more importantly, to an assessment of British policy towards the slave trade and slavery in Brazil. Echoing a decade-old controversy, the opposition reminded the public that the Aberdeen Act of 1845 was followed by a significant increase in slave imports, and that it was only after the Brazilian law of September, 1850, and after the Brazilian government’s engagement in suppression that the trade ended.⁴⁰ The high point was probably reached on July 12, 1864, when Lord Palmerston gave a speech in the House of Lords on the subject of the liberated Africans in Brazil. Seeking the high moral ground, Palmerston gave a historical background to the existence of the group and their status, and accused the Brazilian government of unilaterally imposing a 14-year term of service before their final emancipation. He then presented before the Lords information that correctly detailed the twenty steps that the liberated Africans’ petitions had to follow through different authorities’ offices in Rio. The inventory was meant to show how the Brazilian administration made the emancipation of the liberated Africans difficult, if not impossible, reminding the Lords that many of the Africans were effectively enslaved. Palmerston also reminded his peers of the difficulty faced by the British government to obtain lists of the Africans entitled to their protection.⁴¹ The exposition of the current state of affairs on the liberated Africans had an aim: to reject the attempts to repeal the Aberdeen Act. Palmerston left no doubt that the diplomatic crisis triggered by Christie was associated to the abolition of the slave trade:

I attach so much importance to carrying out the determination of the English people to put an end to the slave trade that, much as I value the goodwill and friendship of Brazil, yet if that were put in one scale and the suppression of the slave trade in the other, I should prefer the latter.⁴²

Palmerston's intervention in the House of Lords had a reasonable repercussion in the press. In response to an article on this speech published in the *Daily News*, William Christie started the publication of a series of letters in the same newspaper that kept the theme alive until September. Signed simply "C.", the letters addressed to the editor of the *Daily News* dealt extensively with the theme of the liberated Africans, but also with the claims mixed commission, the repeal of the Aberdeen Act and British commercial relations with Brazil. Christie entertained a long controversy with the correspondent of the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Jornal do Comércio* in London, who published articles under the pen name "Friend of both countries" defending the Brazilian position. Christie's letters were later published in a book, *Notes on Brazilian Questions*, which displays perfectly well how the diplomatic crisis over two minor incidents had brought back the crisis over the abolition of the slave trade and gave profuse publicity to the question of the liberated Africans in Brazil. In the book, Christie dealt all too briefly with the reprisals of 1863 that prompted Brazilian extreme reaction. In explaining the crisis, Christie put great emphasis on the disagreement between the two governments over the treatment of the liberated Africans, and also over the status of the Africans entitled to freedom on the basis of the prohibition of the slave trade. He accused the Brazilian government of not responding to his queries about the liberated Africans, of extending their apprenticeship term indefinitely, of not paying wages, and of transferring those entitled to final emancipation to frontier areas such as Mato Grosso and Amazonas.⁴³ In emphasizing British moral superiority, he certainly counted on the sympathies of at least a portion of the abolitionist public. Utilitarian writer John Stuart Mill, who received from Christie a copy of *The Brazil Correspondence in the Case of the 'Prince of Wales' and the Officers of the 'Forte'*, wrote a note back praising Christie for his position and defense of the strong abolitionist policy "against those who are again trying to induce England to renounce the attempt to check the African slave trade."⁴⁴

On the other side of the Atlantic, Brazilians followed the news from England closely. The correspondent of *The Globe and Traveller* in Brazil reported in August that “the chief subject of excitement at present here is Lord Palmerston’s speech about the *emancipados*, which was too true not to give great offence, and great deal has been said about it in the press and the Chambers.”⁴⁵ The developments in Brazil were given as reactions to the ongoing crisis:

I omitted to tell you in my last that the official list of the names and numbers of the slaves emancipated by the Brazilian government was only one of a series which has appeared in the *Diário do Governo*, within the last few months, and that the number of Africans liberated will not fall short of one thousand. In answer to a question asked in the Chamber the other day, the government replied that the few remaining would in a very short time be placed in possession of their *cartas de liberdade*. Therefore one cause of contention between Brazil and Lord Palmerston is disposed of.⁴⁶

In his next report, sent from Rio de Janeiro early in September 1864, the question of the liberated Africans seemed to have definitely gained the order of the day on both sides of the Atlantic:

Viscount Palmerston’s late speech has done wonders here. It is now said, and I believe it is true, that the Emperor has signed a decree liberating all the Emancipados. The *Correio Mercantil* of tomorrow is issued tonight with an article on the Emancipado question, which is evidently intended to go to England by this mail, and it says that Zacarias, the Minister of Justice, who has just gone out, issued 848 letters of emancipation since the 15th of January, when he became Minister; and then he says, forgetting that this proves the former neglect of duties, that this is as many as were issued *in the ten previous years*. You will laugh at what follows – it is quite Brazilian. Octaviano, who is the writer, a deputy and a tool of any Government, says: –“This will prove to the English people not only our sentiments of justice and humanity, and also that the British Legation, with all their pride and all their inconvenient language, did not obtain in many long years as much as has now been done in some months without the language of any of those uncourteous agents.” He also says that Zacarias, before he left the Government, had submitted to the Emperor a proposal of emancipating all who had been apprentices for 14 years.⁴⁷

While the correspondent from *The Globe and Traveller* attributed the recent developments in the emancipation of the liberated Africans to Lord Palmerston’s speech, the Brazilian press rushed to praise the Brazilian government for taking the lead, and more importantly, to make

this known to the British public by timing the publication to the departure of the mail packet. The correspondent of *The Globe* pointed to the irony that the writer who now praised the Brazilian government was liberal deputy Francisco Otaviano. *The Globe's* readers might remember that it was Otaviano who in 1862 had reported to Brazilian readers all about the British defense of the liberated Africans, and at that time probably collaborated with Christie.

There is no doubt that the publicity over the fate of the liberated Africans speeded up the concession of their letters of emancipation by the Brazilian Ministry of Justice. Even before Lord Palmerston's speech at the House of Lords, the liberal government headed by Zacarias de Góis e Vasconcelos demonstrated a firm commitment to tackle the lingering question: the chronological analysis of the letters issued between 1859 and 1864 demonstrated that three times as many letters were issued during the first semester of 1864 than in the three previous years combined.⁴⁸ After Vasconcelos' ministry fell, the new government issued a fresh decree in September 1864 ordering the immediate emancipation of all remaining liberated Africans, and would, in the following years, seek to close "the liberated African question" by providing all of them with letters of emancipation and preparing a register of liberated Africans. However, the Ministry of Justice centralized the concession of these letters and this way held the power to adjudicate who had the right to be considered as a liberated African, showing that caution presided over the whole operation, and for a good reason.

The British legation never gave up on the subject of the liberated Africans, and never refrained from using extra-legal means for that, if necessary. Lennon Hunt, who was in charge of the legation before diplomatic relations were restored, paid 112 pounds sterling (1:000\$000 réis) to a man named "Dr. Reginaldo" in March 1865 to obtain a report on the liberated Africans and a full nominal listing of those distributed to private individuals and public institutions. Dr. Reginaldo, who presented himself to Hunt as someone who had access to the liberated Africans' records, did as requested, received his pay, but asked not to be identified.⁴⁹

Lord Russell, who had previously approved the expense, authorized payment and also asked Hunt not to mention it on the reports on the legation's expenses.⁵⁰ The same man, now identified by his full name, Reginaldo Muniz Freire, called the attention of the Judge of the first district, Dr. Sales, when he requested the suspension of a slave auction in September of the same year. He presented himself as "the person in charge of the register of the liberated Africans" and requested the auction to be suspended, and three African men (Samuel Mina, Martinho Angola and Agostinho) to be put in deposit "in order to prove their freedom on the basis of their importation after the laws of November 7, 1836 [sic] and September 4, 1850." Dr. Sales quickly reported to the Ministry of Justice, for he ignored "whether the function of which he is in charge gives him the faculty and power to require such measures", and also because it seemed to Sales that "the matter was worthy of consideration, in view of the exceptional condition of this kind of property."⁵¹ At the section of the Ministry of Justice where liberated African matters were handled, the information given was that orders had been issued to all ministries to give full access to the records of liberated Africans in their archives, but there was no record of Freire's commission. Minister Nabuco's solution was to suggest Freire's credentials should be checked.⁵² Although it may seem a minor question, it should not be dismissed: someone presented himself as a public official and tried to defend the freedom of three Africans by arguing they had been imported after the 1831 law, thus undermining the property rights by the alleged owner over the three African men. Everyone knew these auctions were very common and that Africans were advertised for sale in the newspapers every day. It is not clear whether Freire was again under commission from the British legation, but the matter shows he was up to date in the strategies of abolitionism. A bill forbidding the sale of slaves at auction and the separation of families had been presented to the Senate by lone-abolitionist senator Silveira da Motta in 1862, and in May 1865 had just been diverted from approval to a new round of evaluations by the Justice commission in the

Senate.⁵³ This goes to show that by 1862, Brazilians had picked up the cause of condemning slave auctions. What is significant, however, is that Freire went further: by claiming the three African men put to auction had the right to be considered free on the basis of the 1831 law, he applied the “radical” interpretation of the law, defended by Palmerston and Hudson in 1850–51, and by Christie in his diplomatic correspondence since 1860, but publicized by the crisis in 1863–64, and put in print, although tangentially, in his *Notes on Brazilian Questions* in 1865.⁵⁴

Images that bring undesirable memories

The scene depicted in Victor Meireles’ “Study for the Christie Affair” was probably a rendering of one of the occasions when the Emperor himself addressed the people of the city of Rio, reassuring the anxious crowds that his government would defend national honor. Public commotion over the imminence and then over the aggressions had taken the city of Rio by assault in late December and early January 1863 and reverberated across the Empire, disseminated by virulent articles in the press and by the publication of a series of pamphlets, all infused with a strong nationalist tone.⁵⁵

Being Victor Meireles a specialist in historical paintings, the composition of his rendition of the “Christie affair” was highly calculated. We have no records of his notes about this painting, but only the thoughts he expressed years later, on the subject of “The Battle of Guararapes.” Meireles exposed his care with composition and stated his respect for the actors depicted on a given historical scene. In responding to the critics who accused his scene to appear immobile, he stated that

In the representation of the Battle of Guararapes I did not take into account the facts of the battle in its bloody and fierce aspects. For me the battle was not so; it was a fortunate encounter that brought together the heroes of the time. The painting of Guararapes is a debt of honor what we had to pay in recognition and in memory of the value and patriotism of those illustrious men. My end was completely noble and the most elevated; it was necessary to treat that subject like

a true historical picture with the importance that history really devotes to that handful of patriots.... Movement in the art of composing a picture... results from the contrast among the characters and among the groups... as well as in the calculated effects of the masses of shadow and brightness, and in the perfect intelligence of the perspective that, by staging the plans in different degrees, also gives us also the proper proportion between the characters placed at different distances.⁵⁶

If we pay attention to Meireles' choices in his composition of the "Study for the Christie Affair," he chose to represent the full hierarchy of Brazilian society present in the capital of the Empire: from the Emperor himself down to the African slaves. Not everyone participates in the action on the same terms. The main focus is on the Emperor and the crowd cheering him, from close and far. But Meireles places great emphasis on a secondary scene, to the left, in which mounted guards tramp over someone who seems to be black, in trying to keep the order or control the crowd. His emphasis on the theme of the social order is very significant. In this interpretation, the Emperor is acclaimed for defending national honor against an external enemy and his government demonstrates the ability to keep the internal matters under control. Moreover, in Meireles' rendition, it was not the enslaved and freed Africans who carried the city over their shoulders and heads who presented a threat to the order. The Africans simply watched, separated from the agitated crowd, lying on the shadow on the right hand corner of the painting. The threat laid on a handful of agitators, faceless and undefined who took part in the popular manifestations, but who were repressed and silenced.⁵⁷ This representation of the state was probably what Abrantes had in mind when he commissioned the painting: the state had the situation under control and was supported by its citizens during a moment of crisis.

The Marquis of Olinda, in turn, cancelled the commission. Diplomatic relations with Great Britain were restored in 1865. Unofficially, it was agreed that British officials would not touch on slavery matters. By canceling the commission, Olinda avoided publicizing the

“Christie Affair” even further and implicitly admitted he was uncomfortable with the continuing repercussions the matter could have in the short run.

To represent Native Indians such as in “The First Mass in Brazil”, or the dying “Moema” was far from pacific. Even residents of the Empire’s capital Rio knew native Indians were not in the remote past and were fighting battles against the frontier of expansion not too far from there. In the 1850s and 1860s there still was a raging debate about their “place” in the narrative of Brazilian history, and Meireles’ paintings probably contributed to confining Indians to the colonial past, as heroic collaborators in the colonizing process instead of citizens of the Empire.⁵⁸ However, there did not seem to be an imminent danger involved in the conflicting interpretations of the representation of Native Indians.

On the other hand, not only did the “Christie Affair” evoke multiple meanings, but it also exposed social divisions that were better left untouched. During the height of the crisis in 1863, Brazilians associated the whole incident to the imminence of a military conflict, to demonstrations of patriotism and to a firm defense of Brazilian sovereignty. As time went on and Christie’s own agenda gained a wider public, the memories of the Aberdeen Act and the crisis of 1850 and also the British defense of the liberated Africans and the “class of the black folk” in general inevitably brought mixed feelings. As much as Brazilian statesmen might have been engaged in the construction of a memory that praised the monarchy and the centralized government and valued the demonstrations of patriotism and national sovereignty brought up by the affair, Christie’s insistence on the fate of the liberated Africans drew too much attention to a highly sensitive issue. Already, many Africans imported after 1831 claimed the right to be considered “liberated Africans” and it was precisely for this reason that the Ministry of Justice centralized the task of issuing their final letters of emancipation. By trying to contain the use of “africano livre” in the enlarged sense that included those who were entitled to freedom by the 1831 law, the Brazilian government sought to contain the

radicalization of the slavery debate fuelled by Christie and to defend slave owners' property from legal questioning and devaluation. The extension of freedom rights to the hundreds of thousands of illegally-imported Africans, and to their offspring loomed closer on the horizon as long as the Christie affair was alive.

In 1865, the Marquis of Olinda seemed embarrassed to claim the “Christie Affair” in the construction of a nationalist discourse. One could never control the interpretation the large scale painting would have in the following months and years. For Olinda, a staunch conservative who avoided even a gradualist approach to slave emancipation, silence was better. But the contradictions lingered on, and the illegality of slave property imported after the prohibition of the trade remained in the political agenda in the following years. Even if the country entered the Paraguayan War, gradual proposals for slave emancipation were discussed at the State Council, and later brought to Parliament in 1871, resulting in gradual emancipation measures, but also on a slave registry that legalized illegal slave property.⁵⁹ Constructing the nation and representing its history implied selecting memories, and in the case of the cancellation of Victor Meireles' commission, it was done to defend slavery.

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¹ The painting is Victor Meireles, *Estudo para Questão Christie*, c. 1864. (47,2 x 69,3 cm), Collection of the Brazilian National Museum of Fine Arts (Museu Nacional de Belas Artes), Rio de Janeiro. It has been reproduced in *Vitor Meireles: Um Artista do Império*, eds. Jorge Coli and Monica Xexéo (Rio de Janeiro, 2004), 90.

² Manoel Luís Salgado Guimarães, “Nação e Civilização nos Trópicos: O Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro e o Projeto de uma História Nacional,” *Revista Estudos Históricos* (Rio de Janeiro), 1 (1988), 5–27; Lília M. Schwarcz, “‘Um monarca nos trópicos’: O Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, a Academia Imperial de Belas Artes e o Colégio Pedro II,” in *As Barbas do*

Imperador: D. Pedro II, um monarca nos trópicos (São Paulo, 1998), 125–57; Ivana Stolze Lima, *Cores, marcas, falas: os sentidos da mestiçagem no Império do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 2003).

³ Argeu Guimarães, *Auréola de Vitor Meireles* (Rio de Janeiro, 1977), 79–80; Carlos Rubens, *Vitor Meireles: sua vida e sua obra* (Rio de Janeiro, 1945), 161; Donato Mello Jr. “Temas Históricos” in *Victor Meireles de Lima (1832–1903)* eds. Angelo de Proença Rosa et al. (Rio de Janeiro, 1982), 68.

⁴ *Correio Braziliense*, February 1818, fac-simile edition, vol. XX, 93.

⁵ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “La traite négrière et l’unité nationale brésilienne,” *Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer* 66: 244–45 (1979), 395–417.

⁶ José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva. *Projetos para o Brasil*, ed. Miriam Dolhnikoff (São Paulo, 2000).

⁷ On the abolition of the Brazilian slave trade see: Leslie Bethell, *The Abolition of the Brazilian Slave Trade: Britain, Brazil and the Slave Trade Question, 1807–1869* (Cambridge, 1970), Robert E. Conrad, *World of Sorrow: The African Slave Trade to Brazil* (Baton Rouge, 1986); Jaime Rodrigues, *O Infame Comércio: Propostas e experiências no final do tráfico de africanos para o Brasil (1800–1850)* (Campinas, 2000).

⁸ Estimates come from David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford, 1987), Appendix A, 243–4.

⁹ For a detailed discussion of these facts, see Beatriz G. Mamigonian, “In the Name of Freedom: Slave Trade Abolition, the Law and the Brazilian Branch of the African Emigration Scheme (Brazil–British West Indies, 1830s–1850s),” *Slavery and Abolition* 30:1 (March 2009), 41–66 and Beatriz G. Mamigonian, “A Grã-Bretanha, o Brasil e a liberdade dos africanos na crise da abolição do tráfico atlântico de escravos (1848–1851)” in *Intelectuais e Modernidades*, eds. Daniel Aarão Reis and Denis Rolland (Rio de Janeiro, 2010), 13–29.

¹⁰ The the treatment given by the British to the slaves found on board the *Americana* is discussed briefly in Mamigonian, *In the name of freedom*, 54–55.

¹¹ *O Brasil*, 28 Nov. 1850, 2.

¹² Robert W. Slenes, “*Malungu, Ngoma Vem!*: África Coberta e Descoberta do Brasil,” *Revista da USP* 12 (1991/1992), 48–67; Sidney Chalhoub, *Visões da Liberdade: Uma História das Últimas Décadas da Escravidão na Corte* (São Paulo, 1990), 194–198; Rodrigues, *O Infame Comércio*, 60–62; Dale T. Graden, ‘An Act ‘Even of Public Security’: Slave Resistance, Social Tensions, and the End of the International Slave Trade to Brazil, 1835–1856,’ *Hispanic American Historical Review* 76:2 (1996), 249–282; Mamigonian, *To be a liberated African in Brazil*, 182–189; and more recently, Robert W. Slenes, “L’Arbre nsanda replanté: cultes d’affliction kongo et identité des esclaves de plantation dans le Brésil du Sud-Est entre 1810 et 1888,” *Cahiers du Brésil Contemporain* 67/68 (2007): 217–313.

¹³ Penedo to Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations, 5 Nov. 1859. Lata 916, vol. 5. Estrangeiros Confidenciais, Barão de Penedo Collection (Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty, Rio de Janeiro).

¹⁴ Penedo to Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations, 1 June 1860. Lata 916, vol. 5. Barão de Penedo Collection.

¹⁵ Penedo to Minister of Foreign Relations, 8 Sept. 1860. Lata 916, vol. 5. In response to confidential letter sent 21 July 1860. Barão de Penedo Collection.

¹⁶ Penedo to Minister of Foreign Relations, 2 Aug. 1861. Lata 916, vol. 5. In response to confidential letter sent 7 June 1861. Barão de Penedo Collection.

¹⁷ Aureliano Cândido Tavares Bastos, *Cartas do Solitário*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro, 1863), 99.

¹⁸ F. Otaviano’s July 1862 notes are republished in a footnote in the second edition of Tavares Bastos’ book. Tavares Bastos, *Cartas do Solitário*, 100–106.

¹⁹ *The Times* (London), February 02, 1863.

²⁰ For one of the few accounts of the claims mixed commission, see Alan K. Manchester, *British Preëminence in Brazil: Its rise and decline* (Chapel Hill, 1933), chapter 10.

²¹ Brazil. *O Conselho de Estado e a Política Externa do Império. Consultas da Seção dos Negócios Estrangeiros, 1858–1862* (Rio de Janeiro, 2005), 320–326, Session of July 31, 1861. In November, the Brazilian Minister in London presented this position to the Foreign Office. He defended that the reparations for the illegal seizures that followed the Aberdeen Act “would contribute to bury in oblivion the feelings excited by these wrongs”. Memorandum of November 20, 1861, Lata 557 Maço 03 - Impressos. Barão de Penedo Collection.

²² Brazil. *Atas do Conselho de Estado, vol. V: 1857-1864*, ed. José Honório Rodrigues (Brasília, 1973), 319–331, session of October 20, 1862.

²³ Brazil. *Atas do Conselho de Estado*, session of October 20, 1862.

²⁴ Richard Graham, “Os Fundamentos da Ruptura de Relações Diplomáticas entre o Brasil e a Grã-Bretanha em 1863. A ‘Questão Christie,’” *Revista de História* 24: 49 (Jan–March 1962), 117–137; 379–400.

²⁵ The dissolution of the Chamber prevented the minister from reading the report before the deputies, but the printed version reached the public. Brazil. “Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros que tinha de ser apresentado à Assembléia Geral Legislativa pelo Respectivo Ministro e Secretário de Estado Marquês de Abrantes” (Rio de Janeiro, 1863), Anexo 1, 1–189; Brazil. “Additamento ao Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros de 11 de maio de 1863” (Rio de Janeiro, 1864), 9–19.

²⁶ Brazil. “Relatório da Repartição dos Negócios Estrangeiros” (Rio de Janeiro, 1863), Anexo 1, 190–192.

²⁷ Processo (Case) 5307, Maço 121, Estante 31, Ano 1863, Pelotas, Arquivo Público do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul. I am thankful to Maria Angélica Zubarán for sending me a transcription of this case.

²⁸ Roger Costa da Silva, “Histórias de crimes envolvendo escravos e libertos em Pelotas (1845–1888)” paper presented at IV Encontro Escravidão e Liberdade no Brasil Meridional (Curitiba, May 2009), available at www.labhstc.ufsc.br/ivencontro.

²⁹ Isadora Moura Mota, “O ‘vulcão’ negro da Chapada: rebelião escrava nos sertões diamantinos (Minas Gerais, 1864)” (Master’s Thesis in History, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2005).

³⁰ Mota, “O ‘vulcão’ negro da Chapada,” 177.

³¹ Mota, “O ‘vulcão’ negro da Chapada,” 192–193.

³² *The Times* (London), February 02, 1863; *The Times* (London), March 04, 1863; *The Times* (London), June 18, 1863.

³³ *The Times* (London), The Brazil and River Plate Mails, April 7, 1863.

³⁴ Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, vol. CLXIX, Feb. 23, 1863; March 6, 1863.

³⁵ Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, vol. CLXX, May 7, 1863.

³⁶ *The Brazil Correspondence in the Cases of the ‘Prince of Wales’ and Officers of the ‘Forte’, with and Introduction Telling some Truth about Brazil* (London, 1863). There is no direct indication of his authorship except for the tone in the introduction and the controversy with Mr. Bramley Moore, one of his harshest critics in the House of Commons, and against whom he published separate pamphlets in the same year. Alan Manchester also attributes the book to Christie in Manchester, *British Preëminence in Brazil*, chapter 10.

³⁷ United Kingdom, “Correspondence respecting liberated slaves in Brazil,” Parliamentary Papers LXXIII (1863).

³⁸ Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, vol. CLXIX, March 6, 1863, 1136; vol. CLXXII, July 16, 1863, 928.

³⁹ *The Globe and Traveller*, July 6, 1863 and July 7, 1863.

⁴⁰ Back in Brazil, conservatives had been struggling to impose the memory of abolition that gave credit for abolition to Eusébio de Queirós and his cabinet. See the speeches given by Paulino Soares de Souza and Eusébio de Queirós at the Chamber of Deputies on May 29, 1852 and July 16, 1852, reprinted in *Visconde do Uruguay*, ed. José Murilo de Carvalho (São Paulo, 2002), 573–598; and Agostinho Marques Perdigão Malheiro, *A Escravidão no Brasil: Ensaio Histórico, Jurídico e Social* (2 vols., 1866–1867; Petrópolis, 1976), II, 201–222.

⁴¹ Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, vol. CLXXVI, July 12, 1864, 1377–1388. For a discussion of the petition process, see Beatriz G. Mamigonian, "Conflicts over the Meanings of Freedom: The Liberated Africans' Struggle for Emancipation in Brazil (1840s–1860s)," in *Paths to Freedom: Manumission in the Atlantic World*, eds. Rosemary Brana-Shute and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia, SC, 2009), 235–264.

⁴² Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, vol. CLXXVI, July 12, 1864, 1385.

⁴³ W. D. Christie, *Notes on Brazilian Questions* (London, 1865).

⁴⁴ John Stuart Mill to William Dougal Christie, Aug. 11, 1864, in *Additional Letters of John Stuart Mill*, eds. Marion Filipiuk, Michael Laine and John M. Robson (London, 1991), 150.

⁴⁵ *The Globe and Traveller*, September 20, 1864.

⁴⁶ *The Globe and Traveller*, September 20, 1864.

⁴⁷ *The Globe and Traveller*, October 3, 1864.

⁴⁸ IJ6 15 Tráfico de Africanos – Registro de avisos a diversas autoridades, 4a. seção, 1859–1862 and IJ6 16 Africanos livres – Registro de avisos a diversas autoridades, 1863–1865 (Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro – ANRJ). See Mamigonian, "Conflicts over the Meanings of Freedom,"

⁴⁹ Hunt to Russell, March 22, 1865, Foreign Office (FO) 84/1244 (National Archives of Great Britain)

⁵⁰ Russell to Hunt, April 27, 1865, FO 84/1244.

⁵¹ Sales to Nabuco de Araújo, September 14, 1865, GIF1 5B–280, ANRJ.

⁵² Nabuco de Araújo to Sales, September 15, 1865, GIF1 5B–280.

⁵³ Perdigão Malheiro, *A Escravidão no Brasil*, I, 72 (note 310).

⁵⁴ Picking up from diplomatic correspondence, Christie shows Hudson defended the application of the 1831 law in 1848, that Howard pointed the public sale of illegally-enslaved Africans to the Brazilian minister as troublesome in 1854, and Vereker mentioned it in a dispatch to Clarendon in 1857. Christie, *Notes on Brazilian Questions*, 83–84, 186–88, 219–220.

⁵⁵ Graham, "Os Fundamentos da Ruptura de Relações Diplomáticas entre o Brasil e a Grã-Bretanha", 399.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Coli and Xexéo, eds., *Vitor Meireles*, 51–53.

⁵⁷ Historian Daryle Williams is conducting research on the Imperial Academy of Arts and investigating whether Victor Meireles was sensible to the plea of the liberated Africans who worked there in the early 1860s.

⁵⁸ Kaori Kodama, *Os Índios no Império do Brasil: A Etnografia do IHGB entre as décadas de 1840 e 1860* (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, 2009); Vânia M. Losada Moreira, "Caboclisto, vadiagem e recrutamento militar entre as populações indígenas do Espírito Santo (1822-1875)," *Dialogos Latinoamericanos* (Denmark), 11 (2005), 94–120.

⁵⁹ For the argument that the Christie Affair was linked to the “gradualist” solution, see Richard Graham, *Britain and the Onset of Modernization in Brazil, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1968), 160–86; Robert Edgar Conrad, *The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery, 1850–1888* (Berkeley, 1972), 70–80; Eduardo Spiller Pena, *Pajens da casa imperial: juriconsultos, escravidão e a lei de 1871* (Campinas, 2001), 273–295, and Beatriz Mamigonian, “O Estado nacional e a instabilidade da propriedade escrava: a lei de 1831 e a matrícula dos escravos de 1872,” unpublished paper, 2010.