1

Slave Empire

English Expansion in the Tropics

In the first decade of the seventeenth century, the East India Company (EIC) received a string of reports from its captains and agents to the East about the cornucopia of trade goods that could be acquired throughout the Indian Ocean. The island of Buton, just southwest of Sulawesi in the Indonesian archipelago (see Figure A.4), was full of "good merchandize," especially "Some good slaves," "China Dishes," and "India Cloth[es]."[1] Trafficked people were casually listed alongside other potentially profitable chattel goods. There were slave markets in southwestern Sulawesi long before European traders arrived. Portuguese visitors in 1515 observed that sea pirates kept that area well supplied with captives.[2] English traders were discerning in their valuations of human property in the Indonesian archipelago. The local Buton slaves, the English traders insisted, were "noe good," but the people "brought from Java" to the slave markets in Buton were worth buying.[3]

Across the seventeenth-century world, slavery was a legitimate institution; few societies questioned its moral foundations.[4] Human

[1] Court Minutes, 1600–1619, India Office Records (IOR): B/2, p. 30, British Library. See also "A Description of the Island *Selebes* or *Makasser*," in *The Register of Letters & C. of the Governour and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies, 1600–1619*, ed. George Birdwood assisted by William Foster (London: Bernard Quartitch, 1893), 77.

[2] Peter Boomgard, "Human Capital, Slavery and Low Rates of Economic and Population Growth in Indonesia, 1600–1910," in *Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. Gwyn Campbell (London: Routledge, 2003), 84.

[3] Court Minutes, 1600–1619, India Office Records (IOR): B/2, p. 30. See also "A Description of the Island *Selebes* or *Makasser*," 77.

[4] David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 150.

trafficking, enslaved labor, and other forms of bondage and dependency were well established as important components of commercial and territorial empire building in both the western and eastern hemisphere. European overseas expansion encouraged the globalization of forced labor markets, driving the demand for enslaved laborers even higher. Although slavery no longer existed in the British Isles, English imperial architects, merchants, sailors, and colonists were not at all hesitant to purchase slaves and other forced laborers. They were opportunists; they profited where they could from buying and selling people. The English were comfortable with the institution of slavery, but the supply of enslaved people was not always high enough to meet colonial demand, and the permanence that usually accompanied the condition of slavery was not always more profitable or viable than other more temporary forms of labor in the early tropics.[5] Life expectancies, the possibility of resistance, the degree of coercion that could be used to force labor, and the price and supply of captives were important factors in any calculation of the profits to be had from a form of bondage.

Vast amounts of backbreaking manual labor were required to carve out European colonial enterprises. In the first half of the seventeenth century, a mix of unfree laborers from Africa, Europe, and the Americas performed heavy agricultural field labor; built and maintained roads, forts, and sugar works; loaded and unloaded goods from ships; and acted as porters and domestics at English colonies and plantations in the Americas, particularly in the Caribbean.[6] At the same time, the English tapped into existing African and Indian Ocean systems of slavery, bondage, and dependency to maintain their factories in West Africa, India, and Indonesia. Unfree laborers serving for the English in Africa and in the Indian Ocean were driven to perform most of the same chores as slaves in the Americas, although they spent much less time overall in field labor. Until the 1660s, the English continued to use a wide variety of unfree labor systems across most of the empire, but enslaved non-Europeans soon outnumbered the English at almost all sites in the tropics. Slave majorities became the norm in the tropics. English colonists and

[5] For more on the English familiarity with slavery, see Michael Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen: Human Bondage in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 123–154.

[6] Simon P. Newman, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 54–55, 60–61.

investors started to assume that racial slavery was essential to the growth of the empire in the tropics.

This chapter will offer a comprehensive overview of the creation of a slave empire in the English tropics. This was an empire in which slaves became the predominant labor force and in which English settlers comprised a small minority of the population in their colonies, factories, and other settlements. This chapter will argue that the English had no qualms with purchasing the people offered to them for sale at any point in the first half of the seventeenth century.[7] They relied, pragmatically, on a mix of different kinds of unfree laborers to meet the enormous labor demands of building and maintaining a territorial and commercial empire, but they preferred slaves because they could be most fully controlled and exploited. In the 1640s, English traders began to establish better access to tropical slave markets. English planters, merchants, colonists, and investors based in the British Isles – spurred on by profits made in the Barbadian plantation complex in the sugar islands and by Dutch slaveholding in the spice islands – turned more readily to racial slavery wherever they could. They also tried, unsuccessfully, to expand their reliance on slavery in the tropics by bringing the Caribbean plantation complex to the East, where enslaved captives were cheaper, and by bringing Indonesian spices to the Western plantations to avoid Dutch power and establish more control over the spice trade. Over the last half of the seventeenth century, the English tried to create a common tropical empire built almost entirely on the backs of non-European slaves.

ORIGINS OF THE SLAVE EMPIRE

Slaves had been central to Iberian overseas expansion for more than a century and a half when the English first began establishing colonies and factories in the tropics. These Iberian powers created a colonial model for the English to imitate. Portuguese explorers and traders were at the forefront of European transoceanic navigational and shipbuilding technology in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. They began sailing south along the west coast of Africa and established their first trading factory on the island of Arguin in 1445 off the coast of North Africa. They found a route past the dangerous winds and currents along the coast

[7] L. H. Roper, "Reorienting the 'Origins Debate': Anglo-American Trafficking in Enslaved People, c. 1615–1660," *Atlantic Studies* (2022): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/14788810.2022.2034570 (accessed August 2023).

of Cape Bojador, and they reached the Gulf of Guinea in the 1460s, building their first trading factories soon afterward along the coast to trade for gold, ivory, pepper, palm oil, and, increasingly, slaves. As they expanded southward, the Portuguese took the earliest iterations of the slave-based plantation complex from the Mediterranean to the island of Madeira in 1455, almost four decades before Columbus arrived in the Americas.[8] Sugar exhausts the soils and brings massive deforestation to feed the sugar mills.[9] It also kills enslaved laborers in droves. Portuguese sugar planters enslaved and exported indigenous Guanches from the Canary Islands to Madeira to grow sugar, killing vast numbers of them before turning more fully to African slaves.[10] The plantation complex spread south along the African Coast with Portuguese expansion to São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea. It seemed poised to make the leap east to the African coast, where the rainfall needed for sugar harvests was more abundant than in the Atlantic islands. Yet, by the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese had moved the plantation complex to the South American mainland in Brazil, likely because of the political and military power and potential interference of coastal Africans.[11] In the century before the English first settled in the Americas, the Portuguese were responsible for the forced migration of 195,000 Africans to the Americas; these captives fed the demand for labor on plantations in Brazil.[12] In the seventeenth century, the volume of Portuguese slaving between Africa and the Americas continued to dwarf all other European powers. The Portuguese shipped 996,000 bound Africans across the seventeenth-century Atlantic Ocean, nearly two and a half times as many captives as the English traders.[13]

[8] Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 18–22, 24.

[9] J. W. Moore, "Sugar and the Expansion of the Early Modern-World Economy: Commodity Frontiers, Ecological Transformation, and Industrialization," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 23, no. 3 (2000): 413–427.

[10] The Guanches, who had descended from people in North Africa, lacked immunities to European diseases. See Curtin, *Plantation Complex*, 22; Raj Patel and Jason W. Moore, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 29.

[11] For more on Portuguese ventures along the coast of Africa and the early rise and spread of the plantation complex, see Curtin, *Plantation Complex*, 3–28. See also A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire: A World on the Move, 1415–1808* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1–57; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 139–149.

[12] *Slave Voyages: Transatlantic Slave-Trade Database*, estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/kcTiL2ji (accessed September 2020).

[13] *Slave Voyages*, estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/BlO568tf (accessed September 2020).

The Spanish, who laid claim to the rest of the Americas under the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), also began tropical plantation agriculture on a much smaller scale than the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. There were sugar mills in Hispaniola and Jamaica, for example, that relied on both African and Indigenous slave labor.[14] The Spanish, however, would remain focused more on mining and other domestic economies in Latin America than on large-scale plantation agriculture until the rise of the nineteenth-century Cuban sugar economy. They forced the Indigenous people they encountered into slavery and other closely related systems of labor subjugation, but violence and disease quickly killed the vast majority of the pre-Columbian population of the Americas.[15] When they turned to enslaved Africans, the Spanish usually outsourced their demand for these captives to other European nations, relying heavily on the Portuguese between 1580 and 1640, when the two kingdoms were united under one crown, then on the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, and then on the French until Britain gained the *Asiento* contract – allowing them the exclusive right to transport 4,800 enslaved captives each year to the Spanish Americas – in 1713.[16]

To establish trade with the East, the Portuguese rounded the southern tip of Africa at the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, proving that the Indian Ocean was not land locked. They built their first factory in Southeast Asia in Malacca in 1511, beginning a sea trade with Asia for silks, fabrics, and spices, forging the new ocean road that the English would use nearly a

[14] Genaro Rodríguez Morel, "The Sugar Economy of Española in the Sixteenth Century," in *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 85–114; see also Robyn P. Woodward, "Feudalism or Agrarian Capitalism? The Archaeology of the Early Sixteenth-Century Sugar Industry," in *Out of Many, One People: The Historical Archaeology of Colonial Jamaica*, eds., James A. Delle, Mark W. Hauser, and Douglas V. Armstrong (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 23–40.

[15] Massimo Livi-Bacci, "The Depopulation of Hispanic America after Conquest," *Population and Development Review* 32, no. 2 (2006): 199–232; Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (New York: Mariner, 2017).

[16] Nevertheless, Spanish slave traders still transported more African slaves to the Americas than English slave traders every year between 1500 and 1642. *Slave Voyages*, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/pQWYqPRX (accessed September 2020). For trade to the Spanish Americas from 1641 to 1713, see *Slave Voyages*: www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/vyhypl5f (accessed September 2020). On the terms of the *Asiento*, see Adrian Finucane, *The Temptations of Trade: Britain, Spain, and the Struggle for Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 15–16; Gerald Pollio, *The Rise and Fall of Britain's North American Empire: The Political Economy of North America* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 28–29.

century later. The Spanish crossed the Pacific to the Philippines in 1521 and established a regular galleon trade between Manilla and Acapulco in 1565. These Iberian powers became both slave traders and slaveholders in Southeast Asia. The Spanish developed a trans-Pacific supply of slaves as part of the Manilla galleon trade, bringing Asian slaves to labor in the Americas from the 1560s until the beginning of the 1700s.[17] As the English sailed into the East, they entered a world in which Iberian traders had been involved in human trafficking and had been compelling labor from enslaved captives for more than a century. Beginning in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese began exporting approximately 200 slaves a year from Mozambique to their factories in Southeast Asia, and the trade appears to have risen in volume by the end of the sixteenth century before falling in the seventeenth century.[18] As the English began enslaving in the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese continued. Overall, the Portuguese commitment to the slave trade and slaveholding in the Indian Ocean remained much larger than anything the English ever attempted.[19] Seventeenth-century Portuguese settlers in Southeast Africa known as *prazeiros* had established themselves in the Zambesi Valley to trade for slaves and ivory, and they bought vast numbers of slaves to labor for them. They also armed them to protect their settlements.[20] The EIC employee Nicholas Buckeridge sailed twice past Mozambique and Madagascar, areas still dominated by Portuguese influence, on his ventures into the Indian Ocean in the 1650s and 1660s (see Figure A.1). While sailing to India in 1651 for the EIC, Buckeridge marveled that "some Portugalls" living in Mozambique "kepe upwards of A thousand slaves" and most had at least "hundreds which they imploy in transportation of their goods."[21]

As the English expanded overseas in the seventeenth century through the same routes as the Spanish in the Americas and the Portuguese in Asia, they did so alongside their Northwest European neighbors, the Dutch and the French. With the gradual decline of Iberian power in the early to mid-

[17] Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 73–108.
[18] Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500–1850* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 8–9.
[19] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 19.
[20] Sean Stillwell, *Slavery and Slaving in African History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 118–120.
[21] *Journal and Letter Book of Nicholas Buckeridge, 1651–1654*, ed. John Jensen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), 31.

seventeenth century, the French began to compete with the English in the Eastern Caribbean but, from a global perspective, it was the Dutch who would become England's primary rival until at least the 1670s. In 1635, the English had signed a peace agreement with the Portuguese "against the common enemyes in Asia," particularly the Dutch.[22] In the West, Portuguese economic interests were in the South Atlantic, far from English settlements. The English and Dutch, in contrast, would engage in Atlantic trade wars three times between 1652 and 1688 when the Glorious Revolution led to an Anglo-Dutch alliance. Dutch expansion overseas was part of their struggle for independence from Spain, which they would not officially achieve until 1648. The Dutch also waged colonial war against the Portuguese when the Spanish and Portuguese crowns were united from 1580 to 1640.

The Dutch became England's key rivals in both the seventeenth-century Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades. The Dutch East India Company or VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) took over the Portuguese role as the primary European slavers in the seventeenth-century Indian Ocean, and European participation in human trafficking in the region grew to new heights. Between 12,500 and 25,000 slaves had been trafficked by Europeans in the sixteenth-century Indian Ocean, but that number rose to as high as 92,000 in the seventeenth century with the Dutch responsible for over half and perhaps as many as two-thirds of that seventeenth-century total.[23] In the Atlantic, the Dutch drove the Portuguese from their slave-trading forts in West Africa and Angola in 1641 and occupied northeastern Brazil with its sugar plantations from 1630 until 1645 (and in some places until 1654); they may have helped transfer the plantation complex from Brazil to Barbados in the 1640s.[24] The Dutch began a regular annual transatlantic trade in African captives in 1637 and accelerated that trade in the 1640s, but, in contrast to Dutch slaving in the Indian Ocean, the Dutch were responsible for just 17 percent of all African captives brought in the middle passage from Africa to the Americas from 1637 through 1699. The Portuguese remained the dominant European slave traders in the seventeenth-century Atlantic, taking African captives to supply their sugar plantations in Brazil. The volume of the European slave trade in the Atlantic was more than ten times larger than the Indian Ocean trade in the seventeenth century. The Dutch share

[22] As quoted in Edmond J. Smith, "'Canaanising Madagascar': Africa in English Imperial Imagination, 1635–1650," *Itinerario* 39, no. 2 (2015): 281.
[23] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 19. [24] Curtin, *Plantation Complex*, 90–91.

of the Atlantic slave trade may have been small but, because the seventeenth-century Atlantic trade was so much larger than the Indian Ocean trade, the Dutch trafficked three times more human captives across the Atlantic than in the Indian Ocean.[25]

The VOC turned to slavery to garner immense profits and ensure a near monopoly over the spice trade in the seventeenth-century Indian Ocean. They quickly and aggressively penetrated the spice market in the early seventeenth century, particularly in the Banda Islands, which held the world's richest supply of nutmeg. The VOC profited not just from human trafficking but from using slave labor to reduce costs, build and maintain forts, and secure their monopoly interests from the attacks of the local indigenous powers and other European rivals.[26] Under the leadership of Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the Company's governor-general, the VOC brutally subjugated the people of the Banda islands in 1621 to secure their monopoly against EIC efforts to trade there.[27] Dutch brutalities reduced the inhabitants to less than a tenth of their original number. The VOC enslaved and transported more than half the people of the islands to Batavia.[28] In 1623, Coen outlined his plan to completely replace the indigenous population of the Banda Islands with imported slaves in order to control the means of production and secure a monopoly.[29] He wrote a letter to his successor, Pieter de Carpentier. Coen was concerned that the VOC's returns in Asia had fallen over the last eighteen years. His main solution to the problem was simple: more slavery. The VOC "should pursue it every where so far as possible," because there was no more "service and profit [than] can be done than in the buying and gathering of a very great multitude of He, and She Slaves, especially Young People." Coen suggested that "this buying of slaves" should "proceed to many

[25] *Slave Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Dayabase*, estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/15B8XLnZ (accessed December 2022). See also Rik Van Welie, "Slave Trading and Slavery in the Dutch Colonial Empire: A Global Comparison," *New West Indian Guide* 82 no.1/2 (2008): 47–96.

[26] Martine Julia van Ittersum, "Debating Natural Law in the Banda Islands: A Case Study in Anglo–Dutch Imperial Competition in the East Indies, 1609–1621," *History of European Ideas* 42, no. 4 (2016): 460–461.

[27] Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20–21.

[28] Van Ittersum, "Debating Natural Law in the Banda Islands," 463–464; Alison Games, *Inventing the English Massacre: Amboyna in History and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 24.

[29] Van Ittersum, "Debating Natural Law," 461, 463–464.

Thousands, yea to an infinite number." He imagined that these slaves could tend cattle, grow provisions, fish, perform all the labor of the settlements, and build forts, lowering labor costs and making the VOC self-sustaining in Asia.[30] The VOC remained committed to Coen's vision of a slave empire in the East. In the 1670s, for example, the VOC relied on 4,000 enslaved Africans to build a fort in Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka), and by 1687–1688 there were 66,350 enslaved captives laboring at VOC outposts in the Indian Ocean.[31] By the 1680s, the EIC was actively trying to emulate the Dutch reliance on slavery in Southeast Asia, but they were never able to fully replicate it. Seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English slaveholdings in the Indonesian archipelago were insignificant in comparison to the Dutch. In contrast, by the turn of the eighteenth century, the number of enslaved people held by the Dutch in the Americas was much smaller than in the English American colonies.

Not only were English colonial agents conscious that slavery was central to the expansion of empires around the world, but they were also aware that they could become slaves themselves. Vulnerable people from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds across the world could fall into various kinds of indefinite and dehumanizing bondage. Christians from the British Isles, for example, were held in slavery alongside sub-Saharan West Africans in seventeenth-century Islamic Morocco.[32] The English state, far from a formidable power, was unable to prevent the enslavement of the English through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[33] As England expanded its overseas empire, the enslavement of people from the British Isles became more common, especially in the Mediterranean and along the coast of North Africa.[34] In the sixteenth century, there were Englishmen held captive and forced to labor on Spanish galleys for indefinite terms.[35] Thousands of people from the British Isles were taken by the Turks in the seventeenth century, sold at

[30] "An Advice of the Worshipful General Cohen Left at His Departure towards His Country with the Worshipful Peter de Carpentier Governour General and Council of the Indies," [1623]," IOR: G/40/8, pp. 682–685.

[31] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 9.

[32] The terms of enslavement for the English and the Africans in North Africa were different. The English had more opportunities for freedom than their West African counterparts. Adam R. Beach, "African Slaves, English Slave Narratives, and Early Modern Morocco," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 3 (2013): 334–339.

[33] Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 123–154; Nabil Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1563–1760* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 71–141.

[34] Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen,* 124, 142; Matar, *British Captives*, 85–86, 88–89, 92.

[35] Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen,* 150.

market, and forced to labor, often as galley slaves in the Mediterranean. Some were ransomed, but very few managed to escape that condition and return home.[36] Many were taken at sea by North African Corsairs during the great wave of Puritan migration to the Americas.[37] As historian Michael Guasco argues, English enslavement, "especially in the Mediterranean," had a critical impact on how the English "thought about slavery" as the empire expanded.[38]

Slaves were cheap and readily available through much of the tropics when the English entered the fray of European overseas expansion and colonization. Longstanding oceanic trade networks and the ability to easily sail through much of the tropics facilitated the transport of human captives through the tropics over long distances. In the 1630s, when Puritan investors tried to settle islands in the Western Caribbean, nearly 150 years after the Spanish first arrived, they found that "Negroes" could be "procured at cheap rates," and, unlike Europeans, they could be made "perpetually servants."[39] In the 1650s, the English planter and soon to be colonial governor Thomas Modyford grew excited about "an infinite number of naked Indians" in the Guianas who could be used as laborers in English settlements there.[40] One of the early promotors of English settlement along the northeast coast of South America observed that the Indigenous people sold "Women and Children" as slaves "for Trifles to the *English*."[41] Buckeridge, who sailed with the EIC past Mozambique and Madagascar in the 1650s and 1660s, reported enthusiastically to London in 1663 that "Slaves are cheap & plentifullie to be had at all places on these Coasts."[42]

Without a strong trading presence in Africa, the English acquired most of their slaves through Iberian channels until the 1640s, either directly or via the Dutch. English merchants had started trading on the Gold Coast of West Africa in 1618, and they had erected a factory at Kormentine in modern-day Ghana by 1624 at the latest, but they struggled to maintain a

[36] Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen,* 124; Matar, *British Captives*, 71–141.
[37] Matar, *British Captives*, 88–89. [38] Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 125.
[39] As quoted in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 172.
[40] "A Paper of Col. Muddiford concerning the West Indies," December 1654, in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe,* vol. 3, ed. Thomas Birch (Burlington: Tanner Ritchie Publishing, 2006), 63.
[41] George Warren, *An Impartial Description of Surinam: Upon the Continent of Guiana in America* (London: Printed by Willaim Godbid for Nathaniel Brooke at the Angel in Gresham Colledge, 1667), 26; emphasis in the original text.
[42] *Journal and Letter Book of Nicholas Buckeridge*, 46.

consistent presence there until the second half of the century.[43] Instead, they captured Portuguese and Spanish ships with slaves aboard or they purchased enslaved captives from the Dutch, who had in turn raided Iberian ships. The first "20. and odd Negroes" forced to migrate to the North American colony of Jamestown in 1619 were Angolans sold to the colonists by Dutch privateers who had raided a Portuguese slave ship bound for Vera Cruz in Mexico.[44] At the same time, the EIC was capturing enslaved people from Portuguese ships in the Indian Ocean. In the early 1620s, the Company's captains reported taking "many slaves" during raids on Portuguese ships, often sailing out of Mozambique. Company agents generally transported these enslaved people to pepper-trading factories in Indonesia.[45] In 1625, the EIC factory in Batavia reported to London that an EIC captain was carrying "divers Slaves and Chinamen" to "our plantation at Lagundy," a brief-lived English outpost on an island between Java and Sumatra (see Figure A.4).[46] Shortly afterward, in 1627, the first English settlers in Barbados arrived with enslaved Africans that they had seized from either Portuguese or Spanish vessels while sailing to the island.[47] English settlers in the Caribbean continued to get slaves through Iberian channels in the 1630s. The EIC likely continued to rely heavily on the Iberians as well in these early decades of expansion. In the 1640s, for example, EIC factors – the Company's local agents – on the Coromandel Coast noted that they bought an African slave from a local trader (see Figure A.1). The slave had run away from the Portuguese before being taken captive once again.[48]

[43] George Frederick Zook, "Early Dutch and English Trade to West Africa," *The Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 2 (1919): 141; Vincent Brown, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), 92.

[44] Engel Sluiter, "New Light on the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia, August 1619," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (1997): 395–398; John Thornton, "The African Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1619," *William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (1998): 421–434; Alden T. Vaughan, *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 132; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 113–114; Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen*, 201–203.

[45] "A Court of Committees held on the 7th of October, 1626," IOR: B/247, p. 153. Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 31–32.

[46] "The English Company at Batavia to the Court, 1625 October 13," IOR: G/10/1, p. 37.

[47] Edward B. Rugemer, *Slave Law and the Politics of Resistance in the Early Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 16.

[48] "Messers. Cogan Greenhill, and Brown at Fort St. George to the President and Council at Bantam," January 4, 1643, *The English Factories in India, 1642–1645*, William Foster, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 81.

Before the 1640s, the English forced slaves to work at every colonial site in the English empire from Amboyna to New England, but these slaves were almost always in the minority.[49] The English began to venture more fully into a direct slave trade with West and East Africa in the 1640s to supply a surging demand for colonial labor. One historian has gone so far as to call the rapid escalation in the English slave trade after 1640 a "slave rush."[50] The 1640s became a hinge point in the development of slave trading throughout the empire. In 1640, the EIC sent its first slave ship directly from Surat to Mozambique and Madagascar to acquire captives.[51] The next year, an English slave ship arrived in Barbados from the Gold Coast, the beginning of a steady transatlantic trade to the English Caribbean.[52] The slave empire began to form.

HEART OF THE EMPIRE: SLAVERY IN THE CARIBBEAN

The failed Puritan colonies established in Providence Island and Association Island (modern-day Tortuga) in 1630 were not densely settled, but they were the first colonies in the English empire to have populations in which the enslaved were in the majority.[53] The settlers hoped to raise tobacco and cotton, but the soil proved unsuitable.[54] Providence Island and Association Island were deep in the Western Caribbean, amid Spanish territorial concerns. The settlers started to acquire many enslaved people by trade or by force and directly or indirectly through Spanish or Dutch channels. Some of the first slaves in Providence Island appear to have run away from the Spanish before being captured by the Indigenous Miskito

[49] See for example Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen,* 197–199, 201–205; Games, *Inventing the English Massacre,* 36; Jerome S. Handler, "Custom and Law: The Status of Enslaved Africans in Seventeenth-Century Barbados," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 2 (2016), 232, 234; Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016), 3, 5, 11, 26; Roper, "Reorienting the 'Origins Debate'," 1–19. Even the English Muscovy factory in sixteenth-century Russia was using slaves. See Matar, *British Captives*, 71–72.

[50] Roper, "Reorienting the 'Origins Debate,'" 8–9.

[51] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 31–32.

[52] *Slave Voyages*, estimates www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/lIh6aV4y (accessed March 2022).

[53] Alison Games, "'The Sanctuarye of Our Rebell Negroes:' The Atlantic Context of Local Resistance on Providence Island, 1630–1641," *Slavery & Abolition* 19, no. 3 (1998): 3, 5.

[54] Games, "'Sanctuarye of our Rebell Negroes,'" 4; Jon Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire, 1607–1697* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 81–84.

people of Central America (see Figure A.3). They resold them to the English. New Englanders also captured and sent a few Pequots to these new English colonies after massacring the Indigenous Pequot in New England in 1636–1637.[55] In the 1630s, in the Western Caribbean, enslaved Africans could be bought from Dutch traders for half the price of what an imported English servant would have cost: 150 pounds of tobacco for a slave compared to 300–500 pounds of tobacco for a servant.[56] A few members of the Providence Island Company tried to discourage slavery in favor of more Puritan principles, and the Company decided to ban the enslavement of the Indigenous altogether, following Iberian precedent. Governor Philip Bell set a different example, bringing his own slaves from Bermuda when he moved to the new Providence Island colony.[57] It is not clear how large the slave population at Association Island was at its height, but it grew to a "great number of Negroes."[58] When the Spanish destroyed Association Island in 1635, they seized thirty enslaved people.[59] Six years later, when Spanish forces captured the English settlement at Providence Island, they seized 381 slaves and they found only 350 English colonists there at that point.[60] The presence of an enslaved majority at Providence Island – and quite likely at Association Island – helps to underscore that when slaves were readily available and cheap, the English committed without reservation to racial slavery to supply their settlements with labor. When the English settled in the Caribbean, they did not need to work out or develop ideas about racial slavery or overcome any significant moral or

[55] Games, "Sanctuarye of our Rebell Negroes," 5, 7; Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 169.

[56] Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 171. The servants that were sold in the colony were also particularly expensive because they were required to serve only two to three years, a much shorter term than the contracts that emerged later in the English Americas. See Games, "'Sanctuarye of Our Rebell Negroes,'"9. The average indentured servant in the English Americas served 53 months before being released. See Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 73.

[57] Bell was the governor of Bermuda before coming to Providence Island. Bermudian colonists started trying to acquire enslaved people – particularly those who were trained as pearl divers – from the Spanish West Indies as early as 1616. Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 165–166; Virginia Bernhard, "Bermuda and Virginia in the Seventeenth Century: A Comparative View," *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 1 (1985): 63.

[58] As quoted in Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 169.

[59] Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean,* 84.

[60] Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 172. It is unclear how many slaves were from the Americas and how many were from Africa. The settlers sometimes used the term "negros" interchangeably for these slaves. See Games, "Sanctuarye of Our Rebell Negroes," 7. This fluidity in the term "negro" was common practice on seventeenth-century plantations. Indigenous slaves were often identified with Africans as "negros." See Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 145.

religious aversions to the institution. They adopted the most profitable economic customs of the region, one of which was enslaving.

The English Puritan colonies in the Western Caribbean were the first to have enslaved majorities, but it was the English colonists in Barbados, settled in 1627, who adopted and refined the Iberian plantation model and then committed to racial slavery on a large scale. The Barbadian plantations would become the economic heart of the seventeenth-century English overseas empire, and the Barbadian variant of enslavement and plantation agriculture would be exported throughout the empire. Although the first Barbadian settlers brought African and Indigenous slaves, Barbadian planters relied to a large extent on indentured servants, convicts, and prisoners of war from the British Isles as laborers for the first three decades of settlement because servants and prisoners from the war-torn British Isles were more readily available than slaves.[61] Bell, the former governor of Providence Island, became the governor of Barbados from 1641 to 1650 during the initial transition to sugar. His experience with slavery in Bermuda and then with slave majorities on Providence Island made him a conduit of knowledge for acquiring and managing enslaved people during the early transition to slavery in Barbados.[62]

For nearly the first two decades, Barbadian planters tried to grow tobacco and cotton, like their English counterparts in the Western Caribbean, but in 1645 the English brought the sugar plantation complex from Brazil to Barbados, forever changing the archetype of the most profitable tropical venture. Most likely, it was introduced to Barbados via Brazil during the Dutch occupation of Pernambuco.[63] Enslaved sugar boilers from Penambuco were probably the conduits of agricultural knowledge, teaching the English and their slaves and servants how to grow sugar.[64] Over the last half of the seventeenth century, sugar

[61] Newman, *New World of Labor*, 60–64, 68, 89–107.

[62] Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London: Moseley, 1657), 32.

[63] "An Account of the English Sugar Plantations" [1668], Colonial Office Papers (CO) 1/22, no. 20, National Archives, United Kingdom; Ligon, *True and Exact History*, 86. For more on the transition of the plantation complex out of Brazil and into the English Caribbean, see Eric Otremba, "Inventing Ingenios: Experimental Philosophy and the Secret Sugar-Makers of the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic," *History and Technology* 28, no. 2 (2012): 119–147; Newman, *New World of Labor*, 58; Stuart B. Schwartz, "Looking for a New Brazil: Crisis and Rebirth in the Atlantic World after the Fall of Pernambuco," in *The Legacy of Dutch Brazil*, ed. Michiel Van Groesen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47–50.

[64] Otremba, "Inventing Ingenios," 120–121, 125–136.

transformed Barbados into a monocropping plantation society and created vast wealth for the English. The new crop accelerated deforestation and soil erosion and brought labor exploitation and concentrated capital into the hands of a new elite class of slaveholding sugar planters, the new Barbadian gentry.[65] Wealth production per capita in seventeenth-century Barbados after the transition to sugar – judging by exports – was higher than in any English colony in the seventeenth-century Americas. David Eltis has gone so far as to call it "the global economic giant" of the period, producing more per capita than "any other polity of its time."[66] By 1666, Francis Willoughby had told Charles II that Barbados had become the "faire Jewell of your Majesty's Crown."[67] The Barbadian system of sugar planting began to produce more for export than the much larger Recôncavo of Bahia – the most significant region for sugar cultivation in Brazil – suggesting that Barbadians were refining the Brazilian plantation model, making it more productive per acre.[68]

Innovations in labor organization and plantation management and land consolidation led to the remarkable sugar profits in Barbados in the 1640s and 1650s. English settlers in Barbados, supported by the growing financial power of Amsterdam and London, developed a new kind of sugar plantation model that allowed for better coordination in production and consequently higher yields and profits.[69] Whereas sugar fields in Brazil were owned by cane farmers who processed their canes at a central mill that was owned by someone else, Barbadians combined cultivation and processing into one plantation, using such vertical integration to create more profitable and efficient economies of scale, and they began introducing a more rigorous and brutal system of field labor organization – gang labor – to drive productivity to new levels. The new Barbadian plantation model relied on extreme violence and discipline, and it became increasingly dependent on a form of slavery that was racialized, inflexible, permanent, and inheritable.[70] These innovations yielded higher profits, allowing planters to buy more African slaves.

[65] For a full study of this process, see Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

[66] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 196–1200, 196 (quotation), 198 (quotation).

[67] Francis Willoughby to Charles II, May 12, 1666, CO 1/20, no. 92 [2].

[68] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 198.

[69] Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 95; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 34.

[70] Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, 13–28, 83; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 196–204, 220–223; Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660–1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 216; Newman, *New World of Labor*, 59–60, 64–65; Trevor Burnard, *Planters, Merchants,*

Whereas there was an active trade in slaves through Iberian channels in the Western Caribbean and along the Spanish Mainland in the 1630s, Barbadian planters, in the Eastern Caribbean, did not have access to sufficient slaves at first to be able to meet their labor demands (see Figure A.3). Providence Island planters were able to buy slaves from Dutch traders for less than half the price of a servant, but in the 1630s Barbadian planters, at roughly the same point in time, were paying almost six times more for a slave than a servant: £40 compared to £7.[71] To meet their labor demands, the Barbadians relied on convicts, indentured servants and prisoners of war driven out of the British Isles by the political and social turmoil there. It is striking, given the significant difference in labor cost for servants and slaves, that the enslaved population in Barbados still rose to as high as 6,000 in the mid-1640s, 25 percent of the island's overall population.[72] Clearly English settlers in Barbados preferred slaves over servants even with a substantial difference in price. In the mid-1650s, the price of servants rose to twice what it had been in the 1630s.[73] The population began to fall in England at mid-century, stemming the tide of both forced and free European migration to the colonies.[74] At the same time, the price of slaves was steadily falling as slave traders began to supply the Eastern Caribbean generally and Barbados specifically.[75] By 1645, the sudden growth of an English slave trade ensured that slaves were being sold for £20, half of what they had sold for in the 1630s.[76] The island transitioned to a majority African labor force as the supply of African slaves to Barbados grew, their costs fell, and the purchasing power of the new Barbadian elite grew.[77] A Barbadian yellow fever epidemic, as Chapter 4 will show, helped to accelerate this process.

and Slaves: Plantation Societies in British America, 1650–1820 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 1–6, 22–52, 55–61; Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 34–35, 95; Walsh, *Motives of Honor*, 227.

[71] For Barbados labor costs, see Newman, *New World of Labor*, 97. For labor costs in the Western Caribbean, see Kupperman, *Providence Island*, 171.

[72] Handler, "Custom and Law," 2.

[73] Newman, *New World of Labor*, 97.

[74] Abigail L. Swingen, "Labor, Empire, and the State: The English Imperial Experience in the Seventeenth Century," in *The World of Colonial America: An Atlantic Handbook*, ed. Ignacio Gallup-Diaz (New York: Routledge, 2017), 87.

[75] *Slave Voyages* estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/GcM8Mks7 (accessed September 2020).

[76] Newman, *New World of Labor*, 97.

[77] John McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 153.

The transition to an enslaved African majority in Barbados came between the late 1650s and early 1660s, within fifteen to twenty years after the transition to sugar planting. This shift created a new set of concerns about social control.[78] Barbados developed the first comprehensive slave code in the English empire in 1661 to control the rapidly growing slave population. It is important, however, to note that the Barbadians were not necessarily inventing slavery by creating a comprehensive slave code. They passed a comprehensive servant code at the same time because servants were still a significant labor force in Barbados. The two sets of laws were triggered more by the return of Charles II to the throne than by a desire to invent an English form of slavery. A permanent, inflexible, and inheritable form of racial slavery had been forged in the English Caribbean before it was codified.[79]

The sugar plantation complex spread out of Barbados and through the Leeward Islands of Nevis, St. Kitts, Montserrat, and Antigua, but the conditions in these islands were less than ideal for the rapid growth of sugar. The terrain in the interior of some of these islands was more rugged and mountainous than in Barbados, making it difficult to cultivate sugar. Warfare with the Indigenous Kalinago and with other European powers was also more endemic in these closely grouped islands than in Barbados.[80] The slow growth of sugar in the Leeward Islands led to

[78] McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 154. Hilary McD. Beckles argues that this transition to a majority African labor force occurred in the mid-1650s. See Beckles, "The Concept of 'White Slavery' in the English Caribbean during the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, eds. John Brewer and Susan Staves (New York: Routledge, 1995), 572.

[79] Handler, "Custom and Law"; Act 21, "An Act for the Good Governing of Servants, and Ordering the Rights between Masters and Servants," in *Acts of Assembly, Passed in the Island of Barbadoes, from 1648 to 1718* (London: Printed by John Baskett, 1721), 22–29. There are two extant versions of the 1661 Barbadian slave code, both purporting to have been passed on September 27, 1661. Slight differences between the two suggest that one is an earlier draft, but it is unclear which one. The manuscripts are also written in different hands. See "An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes," BL 369, Box 1, Blathwayt Papers, Huntington Library, and "An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes," CO 30/2, pp. 16–26. For discussion of pre-1661 laws addressing servants and slaves and the reasons for passing new codes in 1661, see *Acts and Statutes of the Island of Barbados: Made and Enacted since the Reducement of the Same, unto the Authority of the Common-Wealth of England* … (London: Will Bentley, 1654); Barbados Governor and Council Meeting, August 1, 1660; Barbados Assembly, March 13, 1661; Barbados Assembly, May 10, 1661; Barbados Assembly July 24 and 25, 1661; Barbados Assembly, August 5, 1661, CO 31/1, pp. 23, 44, 47–48, 62–64.

[80] Philip D. Morgan, "The Caribbean Environment, to 1850" in Philip D. Morgan, Matthew Mulcahy, John R. McNeill, and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sea and Land:*

slower growth in the slave population compared to Barbados. Planters in the Leeward Islands had to rely on European indentured servants much longer than their Barbadian counterparts because slave traders were more willing to deliver their African captives to the wealthier Barbadian planters.[81] In the 1660s, there were a few sugar plantations in the Leeward Islands, and in the 1670s the number of slaves began to increase more rapidly, particularly in Nevis.[82] By 1690, enslaved Africans outnumbered whites in the Leeward Islands as a whole, indicating that the slave-based plantation complex had begun to take hold.[83] Yet, by 1700 the total value of exports from the plantations throughout the Leeward Islands, collectively, was still only slightly more than half of the exports from Barbados.[84]

The spread of the plantation complex out of Barbados shaped the development of North American temperate and subtropical mainland colonies but to a lesser degree than it did in the Caribbean. Elite planters in the Chesapeake, modeling their Barbadian counterparts, began the slow transition around Chesapeake Bay to a predominantly enslaved African labor force in the 1650s. That process was not complete until the 1720s.[85] As land and forests became scarce, Barbadians became interested in the Carolinas as a resource satellite in the 1660s. They helped establish the first permanent colony there in 1670.[86] They sent settlers, slaves, and investment capital to the region and exported the Barbadian plantation and slaveholding model. The new colony was committed to plantation slavery, and as many as a third of the first inhabitants were

An Environmental History of the Caribbean (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 25–26.

[81] Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, [1972] 2012), 117, 121–123.

[82] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 121, 125, 127; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 205.

[83] Hilary McD. Beckles, "'A Riotous and Unruly Lot:' Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644–1713," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 505.

[84] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 197–198, 204–205.

[85] John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2011): 332–360; Demitri D. Debe and Russell R. Menard, "The Transition to African Slavery in Maryland: A Note on the Barbados Connection," *Slavery and Abolition* 32.1 (2011): 129–141.

[86] Justin Roberts and Ian Beamish, "Venturing Out: The Barbadian Diaspora and the Carolina Colony, 1650–1685," in *Creating and Contesting Carolina: Proprietary Era Histories*, eds. Brad Wood and Michelle LeMaster (Charleston: University of South Carolina Press, 2013), 49–72.

enslaved Africans. Yet, the planters struggled to find the right staple crops for their new plantation complex before slowly turning to rice in the 1690s.[87]

The sugar industry in the Western Caribbean developed very slowly compared to Barbados. Smuggling, privateering, and piracy played more significant roles in Jamaica's early economy sugar because it lay so close to the Spanish mainland colonies.[88] Tensions between European planters and maroon communities of ex-slaves also slowed the pace of development in the sugar industries in the Western Caribbean.[89] In the 1660s, after the Restoration, the English state began trying to redirect the plantation complex toward the new royal colony in Jamaica, conquered from Spain in 1655. Charles II was hopeful that his appointment of Thomas Modyford, a sugar planter and former Barbadian governor, as the new governor of Jamaica in 1664 would encourage planters to journey west to the Jamaican frontier, but the island remained a backwater military garrison and a haven for pirates, privateers, and smugglers. In the Treaty of Breda (1667), at the end of the Second Anglo–Dutch war, the English Crown sped up the transition to a sugar economy in Jamaica by ceding a flourishing new sugar colony in Surinam (see Figure A.3) and English claims to the Indonesian island of Run to the Dutch in exchange for the island of Manhattan.[90] After a few years of living under Dutch rule and without an adequate supply of enslaved labor, English planters from Surinam began to migrate to Jamaica in 1671 and again in 1675 with their slaves, with capital to invest and with the knowledge and expertise necessary to grow sugar and manage large populations of slaves.[91] Settlers from the Leeward Islands began to migrate to Jamaica in the 1670s as well, bringing with them more experience with England's sugar and slaves complex.[92] By 1673, there were more slaves in Jamaica

[87] Matthew Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire: The Southeastern Lowcountry and British Caribbean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 84–104.

[88] Richard B. Sheridan, *The Development of the Plantations to 1750* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1970), 40; Nuala Zahedieh, "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655–1692," *William and Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1986): 570–593; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640–1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 79–80; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 157–158.

[89] Sheridan, *Development of the Plantations*, 39–40.

[90] Justin Roberts, "Surrendering Surinam: The Barbadian Diaspora and the Expansion of the English Sugar Frontier, 1650-1675," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 73, no. 2 (2016): 256.

[91] Roberts, "Surrendering Surinam," 225-256.

[92] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 157.

than in the Leeward Islands.[93] Shipping costs to and from the Caribbean began to fall after 1675, making sugar production more profitable in Jamaica in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.[94] In 1675, the Jamaican governor, John Vaughan, told the English Crown that everyone in the island was now "bent on planting."[95] When he made that claim, there were seventy sugar plantations in Jamaica, but a decade later there were 246.[96] As the Jamaican planter Cary Helyar had explained in 1671 when he envisioned plantations spreading through Jamaica, "as negroes will begett negroes, so one plantation will begett another."[97]

In the 1670s, Jamaican planters began a slow transition to sugar, and they began to reinvest their profits in slaves. With far more available land than Barbados, Jamaica would eventually prove a lucrative frontier. By itself, Jamaica has 1.7 times as many square miles as all of the islands of the Lesser Antilles combined.[98] By 1686, sugar comprised 74 percent of the total value of exports from Jamaica to London.[99] The shift from piracy to plantations was sealed with the deaths in 1687 and 1688 of the Jamaican governor Christopher Monck – who supported the privateers – and Henry Morgan, a former governor and renowned buccaneer. The destruction of Port Royal – a haven for pirates – by a catastrophic earthquake in 1692 also helped spur the plantation industry in Jamaica. The capital gained from piracy and privateering was reinvested in the plantation industry.[100] In the 1690s, the growth of the Jamaican sugar economy accelerated. The number of enslaved in Jamaica almost doubled between 1689 and 1713 and the island's white servant population almost vanished.[101] By 1713, there were more slaves in Jamaica than in Barbados, and Jamaica overtook Barbados as the leading sugar producer in the British empire in the early eighteenth century.[102]

[93] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 155. [94] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 206.
[95] "Governor Lord Vaughan to Sec. Sir Joseph Williamson," September 20, 1675, CO 1/35, no. 20 [2].
[96] There were seventy sugar mills in Jamaica in 1675, indicating that there were no more than seventy integrated sugar plantations. Nuala Zahedieh, "Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655–89," *Economic History Review*, 39, 2 (1986): 207. Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges*, 80.
[97] Cary Helyar to William Helyar, January 12, 1671, Helyar Manuscripts. DD WHh 1089/3, p. 28, Somerset Heritage Centre.
[98] Morgan, "Caribbean Environment," 25–26.
[99] Zahedieh, *Capital and the Colonies*, 200.
[100] Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire*, 74–75; Zahedieh, "Trade, Plunder and Economic Development"; Zahedieh, "Merchants of Port Royal."
[101] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 165; Burnard, *Planters, Merchants, and Slaves*," 68–71.
[102] Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 165.

MERCHANT COMPANY SLAVES: WEST AFRICA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

As slaveholding expanded in the Caribbean plantations, slave traders struggled to meet the enormous demand for enslaved labor. The European trade along the African Coast expanded – particularly on the Gold Coast – and it became increasingly focused on human trafficking.[103] The Royal African Company (RAC), a commercial arm of the English Crown set up by Charles II's brother James II, was chiefly responsible for escalating the English slave trade from the West African coast at the end of the seventeenth century, even though their initial 1660 charter had not even mentioned a trade in slaves. After going bankrupt, the Company was granted a monopoly over English trade with West Africa in 1672. They maintained their monopoly over the African trade until 1689, when the rapidly expanding English slave trade was opened to other traders. After losing their monopoly, the Company's market share began to steadily decline. By 1730, they were no longer significant players in the British Atlantic slave trade.[104] The slave trade from Africa expanded significantly after 1680. From 1645 to 1720, the English forced 711,330 African captives aboard their slave ships. Twice as many captives were taken in the last half of that three quarters of a century than in the first half.[105]

Under the terms of the charter, the RAC was tasked with managing a string of factories on the Gold Coast, in Sierra Leone and in Gambia, ensuring an English foothold in the region. These were the only permanent English forts and factories in West Africa in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They were far from being anything like the significant colonial settlements that the English were establishing in the Caribbean. Instead, the RAC forts and factories were intended almost exclusively for trade and for countering the geopolitical ambitions of

[103] G. Ugo Nowokejo, "Slavery in Non-Islamic West Africa, 1420–1820," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery,* vol. 3, eds. David Eltis and Stanley Engerman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 92.

[104] Ann M. Carlos and Jamie Brown Kruse, "The Decline of the Royal African Company: Fringe Firms and the Role of the Charter," *Economic History Review* 49, no. 2 (1996): 291–313; Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 141; William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Slave Trade, 1672–1752* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 1–44. For what remains the best single book-length study of the Royal African Company, see K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (New York: Athenum, 1970 [1957]).

[105] *Slave Voyages*, estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/tUs6PSGq (accessed December 2022).

other European powers in the region. The main fort at Cape Coast had between fifty and 100 Europeans working for the Company, but some of the smaller subsidiary sites, far removed from Cape Coast, had consistently fewer than six white RAC staff (see Figure A.2).[106] Staffing this string of RAC factories with tradesmen, laborers, and soldiers to maintain and defend the factories was a costly endeavor, fraught with recruiting difficulties.[107] More than half (480) of the 894 Europeans employed by the RAC between 1694 and 1713 were soldiers and nearly one-fifth (170) were tradesmen.[108] As the RAC's trading presence in West Africa grew, their factories, large and small, became dependent on not just a supply of slaves for trade but also on slaves and other African laborers to do the heavy work required to maintain the RAC sites. They worked as porters, and they built and rebuilt the RAC's structures, repairing crumbling walls, roofs, and dungeons. They also performed other domestic labor for the Company's employees. The enslaved people working at European factories along the coast were known as "castle slaves," and they normally outnumbered the RAC's European staff and soldiers (see Chapter 5). These castle slaves were sometimes transported to the Gold Coast from distant RAC factories in Gambia or Sierra Leone.[109]

The strength of indigenous polities – particularly the Mughal Empire of northern and central India – kept the English and other European powers from establishing slave-based plantation economies or other kinds of colonies on the Indian subcontinent in the last half of the seventeenth or the early eighteenth century. Through most of the seventeenth century, it was particularly difficult to gain footholds in the Bay of Bengal, the heart of Mughal power. The EIC established their principal factories in India in Surat in northwestern India in 1613 and in Madras in southeastern India in 1639 (see Figure A.1). Fort St. George in Madras would become the "most substantial" EIC settlement in Asia in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.[110] The EIC also established smaller factories in the Bay of Bengal at Balasore (1633), Hugli (1651), Dhaka

[106] Ann Carlos, "Bonding and the Agency Problem: Evidence from the Royal African Company, 1672–1691." *Explorations in Economic History* 31, no. 3 (1994): 319.
[107] Carlos and Kruse, "Decline of the Royal African Company," 292; Ann Carlos, "Bonding and the Agency Problem," 315–316.
[108] Carlos, "Bonding and Agency," 319.
[109] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery,* 59, 143, 148; Rebecca Shumway, "Castle Slaves of the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast (Ghana)," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, no. 1 (2014): 84–98.
[110] David Veevers, *The Origins of the British Empire in Asia, 1600–1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 58.

(1668), and Calcutta (1690). In 1661, the English Crown acquired the island of Bombay from Portugal. It was just south of Surat but still in the orbit of the Mughal empire. There were many other smaller factories subordinate to these main sites in India. Most were short-lived. EIC factories in Asia had little centralized control, and there were times at which the EIC seemed destined to fail. The Company's economic fortunes reached their nadir in the mid-1650s while Barbados flourished. A new charter in 1657 kept the Company afloat and started to turn their fortunes around.[111] The acquisition of Bombay gave the English an opportunity to attempt a more extensive colonial settlement in India. The EIC gained governing power over the island in 1667. The Company envisioned a full-fledged colony in Bombay, but the island was notoriously unhealthy, and the EIC struggled to maintain sufficient settlers there.[112]

There were so few European settlers at EIC settlements in India that the English became completely dependent on Indian political connections and support, on Asian settlers, and on local or slave labor to maintain their factories on the Indian subcontinent and develop the promising trade in textiles.[113] The English used slaves in India to do the heavy work of constructing and rebuilding factories and fortifications in India, and the EIC's employees kept their own slaves and servants as domestics. Occasionally, the English used slaves as soldiers.[114] Slaves also carried goods to and from ships and acted as sailors and laborers on the EIC's voyages.[115] The English remained opportunists in India, taking advantage of vulnerable people and forcing them to labor or settle, using whatever means of coercion they could. The laborers that the English used existed under a wide variety of conditions of bondage and dependency. To simply label those various forms of bondage as slavery before the late seventeenth century is to overlook the vast differences between the status of Indian bondsmen and the status of enslaved

[111] Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman, 1993), 39–40.
[112] Robert Markley, "A Putridness in the Air: Monsoons and Mortality in Seventeenth-Century Bombay," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (2010): 105–125; Stern, *Company-State*, 21–23, 37.
[113] Douglas M. Peers, *India under Colonial Rule, 1700–1885* (New York: Longman, 2006), 6; Anna Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 169.
[114] Margaret R. Hunt and Philip J. Stern, eds. *The English East India Company at the Height of Mughal Expansion: A Soldier's Diary of the 1689 Siege of Bombay with Related Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2015), 76; Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge*, 183; Simon Newman, *Freedom Seekers: Escaping from Slavery in Restoration London* (London: University of London Press, 2022), 81.
[115] Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge, 185*.

Africans in Barbados. Indian bondsmen often existed in forms of enslavement or unfree labor that were temporary or which had very porous boundaries between unfreedom and freedom.[116] Until the 1680s, EIC agents may have been modeling Iberian or Muslim forms of enslavement in India, both of which allowed more opportunities for manumission.[117] Many of the forced laborers serving the EIC were in debt bondage; some were war captives; others voluntarily sold themselves or their families into slavery to avoid starvation.[118] In Bombay, one scholar has suggested that the EIC tried to assert more control over local Indian textile workers by giving them cash advances to keep them tied through contractual obligations to the EIC's factory.[119] Slaves and other unfree laborers were also sometimes used to forcefully populate an EIC settlement. For example, the EIC planned to transform unfree bondsmen in India into more permanent settlers in 1677 by choosing to emancipate the "black servts." they had purchased after only three years if those servants had converted to Christianity. They could become "free men" at the English settlement.[120]

The EIC also became actively involved in human trafficking along the coast of India, ultimately contributing, alongside other European powers, to a transformation in the nature and scale of slavery in the Indian Ocean.[121] As early as 1622, the EIC sent twenty-two enslaved people from India to their spice-trading factories in the Indonesian archipelago, but the EIC's involvement in slavery and slave trading in India and Indonesia continued to be miniscule compared to the Dutch.[122] The

[116] Allesandro Stanziani, "Slavery in India," in *Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol 4.: *1804–2016*, eds. David Eltis, Stanley L. Engerman, Seymour Drescher, and David Richardson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 247–253, 257–258; Anthony Reid, "Slavery and Forced Labor in Asia: *Status Quaestionis*," in *Slavery and Bonded Labor in Asia, 1250-1900*, ed. Richard B. Allen (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 42–43.

[117] Michael D. Bennett. "Slaves, Weavers, and the Peopling of the East India Company Colonies," in *Slavery and Bonded Labor in Asia*, 239–240.

[118] Stanziani, "Slavery in India," 248.

[119] Roper argues that this payment in advance and then the use of contracts as labor enforcement was essentially a form of indentured servitude similar to what the English established in the Americas, but Bennett maintains that these well-paid and skilled Indian textile workers had far more negotiating power than indentured servants. See Bennett, "Slaves, Weavers, and the Peopling," 242–243; L. H. Roper, *Advancing Empire: English Interests and Overseas Expansion, 1613–1688* (New York: Cambridge University Pres, 2007), 170.

[120] London to Surat, March 7, 1677, IOR: E/3/88, f. 207v. See also Bennett, "Slaves, Weavers, and the Peopling," 235.

[121] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 10, 33; Stanziani, "Slavery in India," 248.

[122] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 10, 19.

English investment in human trafficking numbers in India had grown substantially by the 1680s. In 1686, the English shipped at least 200 slaves from Madras.[123] Overall, they may have transported as many as 665 enslaved people to sell in Aceh in Sumatra that year.[124] The Company operated in a variety of ways to obtain slaves in India. English traders bought the people offered for sale in India, and they also resorted at times to outright kidnapping. Sometimes Indian laborers working temporarily for the Company found themselves enslaved.[125]

Throughout much of the seventeenth century, the EIC considered Indonesian spices to be as important as Indian textiles in the Indian Ocean trade. The English had started trading in Bantam as early as 1602, and they established a factory in the city in 1613.[126] They were pushed out of many of their spice island factories by the VOC in the 1620s, but they struggled to try to maintain a share of the trade.[127] It was a difficult task. Although the English kept footholds in the Indonesian archipelago, the bulk of the seventeenth-century European trade in the spice islands remained in the hands of the VOC.[128] In 1682, after the EIC lost their foothold in Bantam in the island of Java, the English were forced to focus on India and the textile trade, a consolation prize that proved more profitable in the long run than Indonesian spices.[129] The EIC turned more fully and intentionally to slavery in the 1680s and 1690s as they tried to reestablish an Indonesian trading presence in Sumatra and turn their Atlantic island way station in St. Helena into a Caribbean-style plantation economy.[130]

[123] Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge*, 165.
[124] Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge*, 165.
[125] Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge*, 166, 184–185; Stanziani, "Slavery in India," 250, 253, 257–258.
[126] Veevers, *British Empire in Asia*, 36.
[127] Veevers, *British Empire in Asia*, 39–40.
[128] Lawson, *East India Company,* 32, 47.
[129] Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 19, 24; Bill Nasson, *Britannia's Empire: Making a British World* (London: Tempus, 2004), 74.
[130] Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 33; Richard B. Allen, "Slavery in a Remote but Global Place: The British East India Company and Bencoolen, 1685–1825," *Social and Education History* 7, no. 2 (2018), 154; Bennett, "Slaves, Weavers, and the Peopling," 240–241; Michael D. Bennett, "Caribbean Plantation Economies as Colonial Models: The Case of the English East India Company and St. Helena in the Late Seventeenth Century," *Atlantic Studies* (2022): 2, 4, 10. doi: 10.1080/14788810.2022.2034569.

THE FUSION OF COLONIAL MODELS: ONE SLAVE EMPIRE

The Barbadian slave-based plantation model transformed the western tropics, but it also spread across the Atlantic and into the Indian Ocean.[131] In 1650, the unprecedented success of the Barbadian sugar plantations inspired a bold effort to colonize an island in the Indian Ocean on a Barbadian model. Unlike earlier English efforts to settle a colony on Madagascar itself, the colony they hoped to build in 1650 was to be settled on a small island off the coast of Madagascar called Nosy Be or, to the English, Assada (see Figure A.1).[132] The Assada venture demonstrates the extent to which some English investors dreamed of a global slave empire filled with plantations producing tropical crops. Just as Bell, a governor of the failed Providence Island colony, had become governor of Barbados, Robert Hunt, another former governor of Providence Island, would be named governor of Assada, bringing his expertise in the Caribbean to the Indian Ocean.[133] Hunt outlined his vision in his promotional pamphlet, *The Island of Assada*. The island would be fruitful, he thought, because it was about the same "bignesse and goodnesse" as Barbados, and the islands shared the same latitude in the tropics.[134] Assada, in Hunt's mind, would combine East and West, commercial and territorial expansion. He maintained that the island could be filled with plantations that would grow a mix of "Sugar, Indico, ginger, cotton woll, Tobacco, Rice, and Pepper," combining all the crops that seemed to grow best in the torrid zone.[135] Assada could conceivably merge Caribbean sugar islands with spice island pepper plantations and give the English more control over the means of production in spices. Hunt focused on Barbados as the chief model of success, but he also noted that the island was so well situated in the Indian Ocean for commercial trade that it might become a valuable trade entrepot "as *Batavia* is to the *Dutch*, and *Goa* to the Portigalls."[136] The English – as latecomers to the game of imperial expansion – focused on recreating both Dutch and Iberian successes in the tropics.

[131] Bennett, "Caribbean Plantation Economies as Colonial Models."
[132] For more on the Assada plantation scheme and its failure, see Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 208–217.
[133] Smith, "Canaanising Madagascar," 292.
[134] Robert Hunt, *The Island of Assada* ... (London: Nocholas Bourne, 1650), 3.
[135] Hunt, *Island of Assada*, 5; emphasis in the original text.
[136] Hunt, *Island of Assada,* 5.

According to Hunt, the key to Assada's potential was that slaves in East Africa would be substantially cheaper and more easily found than in Barbados. Earlier efforts to establish an English colony in Madagascar during the surge in English slave trading in the 1640s were also focused on the idea that slaves were so readily available in that region that a Madagascar colony could become a hub for exporting slaves through the Indian and Atlantic oceans.[137] Plantations in Assada, Hunt proclaimed, could be supplied with "Negroes" for just 20 shillings each, whereas the same "Negroes servants" would cost £25 to £30 each in Barbados. In other words, twenty-five to thirty slaves could be had in Assada for the price of just one in Barbados.[138] As further incentive, Hunt suggested that English servants could be enticed to permanently settle by promising them "as much Land to Plant" as they could manage and an additional "three Negro" servants of their own at the end of a four-year indentured servant contract.[139] Essentially, the supporters of the Assada venture wanted to move the Barbadian plantation system closer to a cheap source of slave labor. Yet, while Hunt was certain that there would be ample slaves in Assada, he was not always clear about who exactly these slaves would be. Presumably, by "negroes" he meant blacks from Madagascar and Mozambique or perhaps Mauritius, but he seems to have used the term loosely as an umbrella category for non-Europeans. He left open the possibility that a variety of ethnic groups from across the Indian Ocean would serve in this role. He suggested that in the densely populated Indian Ocean the new plantation colony of Assada could draw "men from Arabia, Africa and India to Plant," and "some" would "be free men, others servants."[140] Assada – this blend of East and West in the tropics – proved to be nothing more than a pipe dream. Hunt was killed with other settlers in the early settlement by indigenous inhabitants who may have become hostile to English encroachments or who may have been encouraged by the Portuguese to attack.[141] By 1650, the failure of successive colonization attempts on or near Madagascar and the weak financial state of the EIC meant that Englishmen would – temporarily – table the

[137] Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge, 171*.

[138] Hunt never actually used the word "slaves." He used the term "Negroes" instead. The two terms were synonymous in his mind. Hunt, *Island of Assada*, 3–4; Buckeridge also noted that slaves were plentiful and cheap in East Africa at midcentury. See *Journal and Letter Book of Nicholas Buckeridge*, 46.

[139] Hunt, *Island of Assada*, 6.

[140] Hunt, *Island of Assada*, 4.

[141] Games, *Web of Empire*, 214.

dream of establishing plantation colonies in the eastern half of the Indian Ocean world.[142]

The Barbadian plantation complex was something the Assada merchants had hoped to spread beyond Madagascar, deep into the spice islands. After Assada was established, the Assada merchants planned to build a large settler colony with "plantations and fortifications" on the tiny and isolated island of Run in the Banda Islands (see Figure A.4), where the English could get "nutmeg and mace of their own growings."[143] These plantations would allow the English to exercise control over the means of production in spices and counter Dutch control of the trade. Although the Assada merchants made no mention of a labor source for these plantations in the Banda Islands, they would presumably have relied on slaves, following the Dutch model. The only hitch was that the Assada merchants recognized they would need to "settle any differences" with the Netherlands in order to build plantations and forts in Run.[144] It was, of course, a big roadblock. The Dutch had ousted the English from Run in 1620 and, in 1623, to maintain monopoly control over nutmeg, the VOC had killed English, Japanese, and Portuguese factors at an English trading outpost in Amboyna, 200 kilometers north of Run.[145] The VOC and EIC continued to vie for control of Run. The English gained the island again in 1654, and the Company imagined that they would "plant, fortify and people it," but the plans were never realized.[146] The dream of creating plantation-based settlements in Run was abandoned altogether in 1667 at the end of the Second Anglo–Dutch War when the English surrendered the tiny island to the Dutch.

Imperial agents fantasized about moving people and plants around the growing global empire to find the most profitable combination and locale for plantations, and the tropics remained an interconnected region in their minds. Just as men such as Hunt had hoped to transplant Caribbean sugar and tobacco plantations into Madagascar, others wanted to bring the exotic plants of the East Indies to the Atlantic Ocean, where the

[142] For East India Company financial troubles, see Lawson, *East India Company*, 37–40.
[143] Ethel Bruce Sainsbury and William Foster, eds., *Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company, 1644–1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 369–370.
[144] Sainsbury and Foster, eds., *Calendar of the Court Minutes of the East India Company,* 370.
[145] Stern, *Company-State*, 20. For more on the Amboyna conflict and its long-term impact, see Games, *Inventing the English Massacre*.
[146] As quoted in Stern, *Company-State*, 21.

English had more control and could escape their VOC rivals.[147] After the Restoration, Charles II and his advisors were particularly keen to take advantage of Cromwell's conquest of Jamaica, now a royal island rather than an island under proprietary control. Sugar cultivation was one possibility, but tropical spices from the East Indies were another. In 1661, one advisor, in a "Proposal for removing spices and other plants from the East to the West Indies," suggested that the King send gardeners to the East Indies to gather plants to grow in Jamaica. Some evidence suggests that the paper may have been drafted by Richard Ford, a member of the EIC. The plan was to gather "pepper plantes" from the Indonesian archipelago and any "plants as may be proper" from St. Helena and then sail "directly for Jamaica" to "arrive in a proper tyme for theire plantings there."[148] A few years later, in 1669, the Barbadian sugar planter and London merchant Nicholas Blake wrote to Charles II to suggest that he was certain "that the spices of the East India (such as pepper cloves nutmegs & Synamon) would grow here, if wee had them here to plant." Blake had "heard' that a "Certayne publique spirited Commander of a Ship (some years past before I knew this place) did Undertake that designe," but "death ... prevented him." Blake urged Charles II to make another trial of these plants in the Caribbean.[149] Just a year letter, the Jamaican sugar planter Cary Helyar wrote to his brother in England in 1670 to tell him that there was a "design of bringing the plants of all sorts of spices from the East Indies" to Jamaica.[150] Colonial architects planned to bring both plants and people from East to West. More than 8,200 slaves were also from brought from the Indian Ocean to be sold in Jamaica from 1669 through 1671 as the RAC struggled to meet Caribbean demand.[151] On the other side of the Atlantic, the EIC tried to

[147] Kate Mulry, "The Aroma of Flora's Wide Domains: Cultivating Gardens, Aromas, and Political Subjects in the Late Seventeenth-Century English Atlantic," in *Empire of the Senses: Sensory Practices of Colonialism in Early America*, eds. Daniela Hacke and Paul Musselwhite (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 266–270.

[148] Sir Richard Ford, "A Proposall for Removing Spices and Other Plants from the East to the West Indies," Egerton MS 2395, ff. 337, 379, British Library. See also Mulry, "Aroma of Flora's Wide Domains," 266–270.

[149] Nicholas Blake to Charles II, February 28, 1669, CO 1/67, no. 95, [9].

[150] Copy of Cary Helyar to William Helyar, December 15, 1670, DD/WHh/1090/4, Helyar Manuscripts.

[151] Roberts, "Surrendering Surinam," 250–252. *Slave Voyages*, estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/N1sr6iez (accessed May 2023). No West African captives were brought to Jamaica from 1668 through 1673. See *Slave Voyages*, estimates, www.slavevoyages.org/estimates/CQzbCcgm (accessed May 2023).

bring some of the profitable spices from Java to grow in St. Helena, where they would have more exclusive control over the laborers and less interference from the Dutch. In 1678, the agent and Council at Bantam reported to the EIC directors that they "Continue[d] to send Plants to St. Helena."[152]

The EIC directors eventually decided that they wanted to pepper St. Helena – a small EIC way station off the coast of Africa – with Caribbean-style plantations.[153] The EIC had expanded to St. Helena in 1659, creating another permanent English settler colony in the tropics but closer to the West African coast. James Drax, a prominent Barbadian sugar planter and a governing member of the EIC, seems to have urged the Company to colonize St. Helena.[154] Unlike so many seventeenth-century colonial settlement schemes, the EIC's settlement at St. Helena survived, and it served as a crucial resupply station for EIC ships sailing to and from their commercial interests in Asia. The EIC, however, wanted even more profits from the colony.[155] In 1683, the EIC lifted a ban on buying slaves in St. Helena that had been placed to protect this essential EIC way station from slave rebellion. To imitate the Caribbean model, they needed not only more slaves but "Commodities of a richer Nature than Cattle or Potatoes, Yams, Planta[i]ns & c."[156] They hoped that the St. Helena planters would "live and grow rich" with slave and export-based plantation agriculture; the specific crop was less important to them.[157] Like South Carolinian planters in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, St. Helena was committing to a Caribbean-style slave labor force before they had a staple crop, but unlike the South Carolinian planters and their turn to rice cultivation, the planters in St. Helena never found a suitable staple crop.[158] The Company recommended the planters try a variety of crops,

[152] The previous passage in this letter refers to the quality of "Pepper" in different areas and much of the rest of the letter discusses pepper, so these "plants" were almost certainly peppers for planting. See Bantam to London, November 6, 1678, IOR: E/3/89, ff.24v–29v, f. 26v (quotation). For more on the efforts to bring "Plants of India" to St. Helena, see London to St. Helena, August 1, 1683, IOR: E/3/90, f. 95v.

[153] For a much fuller examination of East India Company efforts to recreate elements of the Caribbean plantation, see Bennett, "Caribbean Plantation Economies."

[154] Roper, *Advancing Empire*, 169.

[155] For recent work on St. Helena and its role as a way station between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, see John McAleer, "Looking East: St. Helena, the South Atlantic and Britain's Indian Ocean World," *Atlantic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2016): 78–98.

[156] London to St. Helena, August 1, 1683, IOR: E/3/90, f.91.

[157] London to St. Helena, August 1, 1683, IOR: E/3/90, f. 91

[158] Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire*, 85–104.

including sugar, indigo, tobacco, cotton, and even wheat.[159] In 1684, a planter in St. Helena warned the Company's directors that "no West India Commodityes will grow well at St. Helena," but they believed he and the other planters just needed more perseverance.[160] Ultimately, regardless of how many slaves they had, the EIC directors were frustrated by their efforts to grow the most lucrative tropical crops in St. Helena.[161] The South Atlantic colony remained, as one observer called it in 1683, nothing "but an Inn, for the Ships" and a place for the production of "Butchers Meat."[162]

The EIC tried to replicate not only the Barbadian plantation complex but also the Barbadian approach to governing and managing slaves. By the 1680s, the Company may have even hoped to implement something akin to the new Barbadian gang labor system in St. Helena. In 1684, London said that they would try to send St. Helena "a System of ye Lawes and Customes of Barbadoes with Relation to ye Government, working, diet, times of Labor, and ease of their Negroes."[163] The directors wanted

[159] London to St. Helena, August 1, 1683, IOR: E/3/90, f. 95v.

[160] London to St. Helena, April 5, 1684, IOR: E/3/90, f. 179v.

[161] Stephen Royle, *The Company's Island: St. Helena, Company Colonies and the Colonial Endeavor* (New York: L. B. Tauris & Co, 2007), 26–29.

[162] George White, *Letter to Mr Nathaniel Tenche in Answver to a Paper Publish'd by Him, Entitul'd, Animadversions upon Mr. George White's Reflection on the Answer of the East-India-Company, to Mr. Samuel White's Two Papers* ... (London: [s.n.], 1689), 10.

[163] London to St. Helena, April 5, 1684, IOR: E/3/90, f. 178v. The comprehensive slave laws of Barbados contain no such detailed daily management advice (such as diet and hours of labor), so it is difficult to determine what exactly the EIC had sent to St. Helena. The Company may have sent the 1661 Barbados slave code. See "An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes," September 27, 1661, BL 369, Box 1, mssBL 1-423, William Blathwayt Papers, Huntington Library. See also "An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes," September 27, 1661, CO 30/2, pp. 16–26. A significantly revised comprehensive Barbados slave code was not passed until 1688, four years after this letter was written. See Act 329, "An Act for the Governing of Negroes," in William Rawlin, ed. *The Laws of Barbados Collected in One Volume* ... (London, William Rawlin, 1699), 156–164. In addition to a slave code, the EIC likely included copies of a document that seems to have been circulating in seventeenth-century Barbados: a letter of detailed instructions that the prominent Barbadian sugar planter Henry Drax sent to his plantation manager in 1679. See Peter Thompson, "Henry Drax's Instructions on the Management of a Seventeenth-Century Barbadian Sugar Plantation," *William and Mary Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (July 2009): 565–604. Henry Drax was the son of the former EIC investor and Barbadian plantation manager James Drax. This letter seems to have been shared among Barbadian planters, and copies may have been kept in Barbados for nearly a century. The letter was reprinted in slightly different forms as an appendix to two different Barbadian plantation manuals, one in 1750 and one in 1783. It became a kind of ur-text for Barbadian plantation manuals. For eighteenth-century reprintings of this letter, see William Belgrove,

them to follow the Barbadian regimen "as near as possible" and also recommended "Overseers" for the enslaved, who would "compell each of them to do a full days work."[164] The Company relied heavily on the expertise and knowledge of Nathaniel Cox to help them implement sugar and a Barbadian plantation model in St. Helena. Cox had worked as the "overseer of Col. Codringtons Plantaton in Barbados" and was "well Skill'd" at "raising a Sugar Plantaton."[165] The EIC directors also tried to replicate aspects of Barbadian slave management in the Indian Ocean. The EIC agents at Fort St. David in Cuddalore were told, for example, to start a Caribbean-style slave provisioning system and grant the "Companyes Slaves ... little Platts of Ground" to plant and grow their own food "as is done in Barbados."[166]

After they lost their foothold in Java, the scattered outposts that the EIC rebuilt in the late 1680s in Sumatra and Borneo became a new canvas onto which the EIC could paint their dreams of both profiting from the spice trade and extending the lucrative plantation model across the tropics (see Figure A.4). The proliferation of stateless societies and the decentralization of power in western Indonesia in the late seventeenth century seemed at first to offer the English more opportunity for trade and for building plantation colonies.[167] Rather than just establishing another factory, the English imagined that their new settlement in Bencoolen

A Treatise upon Husbandry of Planting (Boston: D. Fowle, 1755), 50–86; and Edwin Lascelles et al., *Management of a Plantation in Barbadoes. And for the Treatment of Negroes, etc., etc., etc.* (London: [s.n.]. 1786), 53–64. See also Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment, 1750–1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 42–43. The EIC had also tried to govern the inhabitants of the St. Helena colony using a "System ... for the most part drawn from that Moddell of Laws Wee established upon our the island of Bombay." See London to St. Helena, August 1, 1693, IOR: E/3/90, f. 89v.

[164] London to St. Helena, August 1, 1683, IOR: E/3/90, f.95; London to St. Helena, April 5, 1684, IOR: E/3/90, f. 178v.

[165] London to St. Helena, November 26, 1684, IOR: E/3/90, f. 251.

[166] Cuddalore to London, March 6, 1695, IOR: E/3/92, f. 201. See also Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 42

[167] Markus Vink, "'The World's Oldest Trade: Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of World History* 14, no. 2 (2003), 143; Richard Eaton, "Introduction," in *Slavery and South Asian History,* eds. Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M. Eaton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). 12–13; Veevers, *British Empire in Asia*, 178–179; David Veevers, "'The Company as Their Lords and the Deputy as a Great Rajah:' Imperial Expansion and the English East India Company on the West Coast of Sumatra, 1685–1730," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 5 (2013): 687–709.

would grow into a "great & famous colony."[168] In 1687, the EIC wrote to the chief and council at York Fort in Bencoolen to let them know that they had discharged Cox, the former Barbadian overseer, from their service in St. Helena, and they had offered him passage to Bencoolen along with a good salary of £70 and a ranking of third in the governance of the factory.[169] They were excited because he was so "skillfull in Sugger plantations for wch by experience we finde St. Hellena improper."[170] In Sumatra, Cox could "employ his tallent and his Stock in making sugar for himself" because, as the EIC directors noted, Bencoolen was "a proper Country for Sugar canes."[171] The initial efforts at bringing sugar plantations to Sumatra in the 1680s failed, but the dream lingered into the early eighteenth century. By 1710, the EIC council at York Fort, where there was always a very high turnover in European staff, seems to have had no idea that there had already been some effort to start sugar planting in Sumatra. "It Seems a wonder to us," the council reported to London, "that Sugar plantations have not been encouraged at this place."[172]

At the turn of the eighteenth century, while the EIC was still trying to introduce sugar plantations to Sumatra, the RAC considered developing Caribbean-style plantations in the areas around their West African factories to collapse the distance between the labor supply and the plantation system. They hoped to use castle slaves imported from other regions of Africa to work the plantations.[173] In 1692, the Company informed a factor in Sherbro River in Sierra Leone that they wanted to try cultivating indigo on a place they called York Island. They could "traine up some people in that art" on the island and presumably control their labor more easily. The island setting would also, they hoped, protect the plantations "from violence" from locals.[174] Alarmed Jamaican planters protested the

[168] For the English colonization of Sumatra, see London to Madras, October 3, 1690, IOR: E/3/92, f. 58v.

[169] London to Bencoolen, August 31, 1687, IOR: G/35/2, unpaginated. For more on Nathaniel Cox, see Robbie Shillam, *The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 173; "Directors Letter 3rd August 1687," in *Extracts from the St. Helena Records* (St. Helena: B. Grant, 1885), 37; London to St. Helena, August 3, 1687, IOR: G/35/2, unpaginated.

[170] London to Bencoolen, August 31, 1687, IOR: G/35/2, unpaginated.

[171] London to St. Helena, August 3, 1687, IOR: E/3/91, f. 179v.

[172] Bencoolen to London, July 4, 1710, IOR: G/35/6, unpaginated. See also York Fort General, July 4, 1710, IOR: G/35/7, p. 77.

[173] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 148, 226.

[174] As quoted in Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 142.

RAC efforts at establishing plantations. They were concerned that the RAC's efforts in the West African tropics could create unfair competition, proving "Much to the Discouragement" of the Jamaican "Planting Trade." The Jamaican assembly went so far as to instruct their agents to try to "Oppose the Contrivance of the Royall Companys Planting of Indigo at Gambia."[175] The RAC continued to explore opportunities for cultivating plantation agriculture in West Africa, extending the English foothold there. In 1706, an RAC employee from Scarcies noted that that "the land about Seraleon ... as also elsewhere is very good & seemingly will bear any thing especially in ye sugars or Rice plantations."[176]

Dalby Thomas, one of the RAC factors involved in trying to extend the plantation complex to the West African littoral in the early eighteenth century had detailed knowledge of the Caribbean plantation systems. Thomas was a merchant who had traded slaves to the Caribbean and had petitioned on behalf of Caribbean planters to Parliament to better support the plantations.[177] In 1690, Thomas had published *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West-India Colonies* in which he described the process of growing sugar, cotton, indigo, ginger, and cocoa and argued that the plantations, particularly sugar plantations, had made enormous contributions toward "Increasing the Wealth, Power and Glory of the Nation."[178] He stressed though that the cost of enslaved Africans – "the main prop of a Plantation" – continued to be much too high, chiefly because Caribbean planters had to buy "Ten Blacks" per year for every fifty they owned to replace the dead.[179] Like most planters, he took these catastrophic mortality rates of plantation agriculture for granted. The goal was to reduce the cost of resupply rather than the mortality of the laborers.

Thomas became an RAC factor on the African coast in 1703, and he started using castle slaves at Cape Coast Castle to cultivate a variety of crops. He made plans, although it is not clear how far they were carried out, to create sugar, indigo, cotton, and ginger plantations.[180] He noted

[175] Henry Barham, "The Civil History of Jamaica to the Year 1722," Add MS 12422, p. 190, British Library
[176] John Fletcher to RAC, April 11, 1706, T70/5, p.26.
[177] Otremba, "Inventing Ingenios," 126–127.
[178] Dalby Thomas, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West-India Colonies* (London: Printed for Jo. Hindmarsh, 1690), 30.
[179] Thomas, *Rise and Growth of the West-India Colonies*, 14, 19, 28, 40.
[180] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 143–144.

that "Everything that thrives in ye West Indias will thrive here."[181] He already had someone skilled in growing Indigo at Cape Coast Castle, and he believed that he could "bring Indigo to as great perfection as in ye West Indias."[182] As with most of the other attempts to expand staple crop plantations into tropical zones outside the Americas, Thomas' African plantation scheme withered on the vine. Undeterred by the many failures at erecting plantations beyond the Americas, Thomas Bowrey, in 1712, imagined the profits that could be made if the English developed plantations in East Africa on which slaves would grow medicinal crops for export.[183] On the African coasts, European efforts to establish plantations failed – if they were attempted at all – because the local populations stole the produce, and it was much more difficult than in the Caribbean islands to control a large and enslaved agricultural labor force.[184] Europeans lacked sufficient political or military power to impose the control needed for a slave-based agricultural export colony in Africa.

While the success of the Barbadian planation model served as inspiration in the spread of slavery through the English tropics, English factors in the Indian Ocean also continued to try to emulate the slaveholding and trading practices of the VOC, their chief European rivals in the East Indies. This was particularly true after the English were driven out of Bantam in 1682. The EIC worried about reestablishing a presence in Indonesia "to prevent ye avaritious design of the Dutch to engross the whole Pepper trade of India" through which they could become "Masters of the European as well as of the Indian Seas."[185] Large numbers of slaves, following the Dutch example in Indonesia, seemed to be the key to the survival of this new wave of English ventures in the spice islands. In 1685, the EIC promised to send "Madagascar Blacks" to a new settlement called Priaman in Sumatra, and they wanted them to "be bred up Ship Carpenters, Smiths & other Handicraft trades as ye Dutch doe to their great advantage at Batavia."[186] In 1686, agents on the ground in the new English settlement at Bencoolen in Sumatra explained to the EIC directors that they would need more slaves to compete with the Dutch. They noted that the Dutch "make use" of "Madagascar Blacks" in the Indonesian archipelago, and so those same slaves "would be of great use"

[181] Dalby Thomas to RAC, May 10, 1706, T70/5, p. 26.
[182] Dalby Thomas to RAC, May 10, 1706, T70/5, p. 25.
[183] Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge*, 173. [184] Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, 148.
[185] London to Bencoolen, August 3, 1687, IOR: E/3/91, f. 175v.
[186] London to Priaman, October 21, 1685, IOR: G/35/2, f. 49v.

in Sumatra.[187] The EIC, attentive to these Dutch examples, sent enslaved people from Madagascar to the new Sumatran settlement in Bencoolen, but they cautioned their factors on the ground to look as well to the Dutch example of how to "provide for your Blacks," suggesting that they should follow the slaveholding practices of the "Dutch [as they] do at Battavia if you think to keep them serviceable and in health."[188] The EIC outposts in Sumatra struggled to attract European settlers and soldiers, and they remained committed to slaves and other unfree Indian Ocean laborers to try to compete with the Dutch.

CONCLUSION

Racial slavery spread rapidly through the English empire in the second half of the seventeenth century. It was inspired in part by the success of two contemporary and lucrative models of tropical European slaveholding: the Barbadian sugar plantation complex in the Caribbean and VOC slaveholding and human trafficking in the interests of merchant capitalism in Indonesia. In the 1640s, a hinge point, the English began to develop a constant slave trade with Africa. They were more successful in West Africa than in East Africa. By the 1660s, racial slavery had become, unquestionably, the key to empire building in the tropics. The English continued to use a variety of unfree laborers, but in 1663 Renatus Enys, writing from Surinam, decided that all the colony needed to thrive was "Negroes[,] the strength and sinews of this Western world."[189] The preamble to the Jamaican slave code of 1664 justified the act by the increasing "Numbers of Negroes," arguing that "it is utterly impossible to make and continue Plantations without such Slaves."[190] By the 1660s at the latest, English planters in the tiny land-scare islands of the Eastern Caribbean were arguing that slaves were even more important than land in the spread of the plantation complex. Blake, writing to Charles II in 1669 from Barbados, explained that "without stock, ether of Negros [and] cattle"

[187] York Fort General, October 8, 1686, IOR: G/21/7, f.101.

[188] London to Bencoolen, August 31, 1687, IOR: E/3/91, f. 192. For a full discussion of the nature and conditions of slavery in Bencoolen, see Allen, "Slavery in a Remote but Global Place," 151–176.

[189] "Renatus Enys to Henry Bennet," November 1, 1663, CO 1/17, no. 88 [2–3].

[190] As quoted in Barry David Gaspar, "'Rigid and Inclement:' Origins of the Jamaica Slave Laws of the Seventeenth Century," in *The Many Legalities of Early America*, eds. Bruce H. Mann and Christopher Tomlins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 82.

the "bare Lands" of a sugar plantation were worth "nothing."[191] This attitude spread across the global tropics. The EIC, which had always relied on forced laborers when the opportunity arose, began to more intentionally embrace slavery at its factories in the 1680s and 1690s. English trading outposts and settlements in the Atlantic islands, in tropical West Africa and in much of tropical Asia – particularly in the Indonesian spice Islands – became as dependent on slave labor as English Caribbean planters.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, one can estimate that roughly 85 percent of all enslaved people in England's overseas empire lived in the tropics.[192] Approximately 115,000 slaves toiled in the Caribbean plantation colonies.[193] On the other side of the Atlantic, approximately 600 slaves lived as permanent workers at English forts and factories in West Africa along the Gold Coast and in Gambia and Sierra Leone, while

[191] Nicholas Blake to Charles II, February 28, 1669, CO 1/67, no. 95 [13].

[192] This calculation is based on an estimated 21,200 slaves in the British American colonies outside of the tropical zone in 1700. See estimates in McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 103, 136, 172, 203. This estimate counts all blacks in the colonies as enslaved. A small proportion of them would have been free. However, the numbers of free blacks were higher in the North American mainland colonies than in the Caribbean, so the proportion of slaves in the tropics was likely even higher than 85 percent. Freed slaves were very rare in the seventeenth-century British Caribbean. See Jerome S. Handler and John T. Pohlman, "Slave Manumission and Freedmen in Seventeenth-Century Barbados," *William and Mary Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1984): 390–408. This estimate also fails to account with precision for the small number of Indigenous slaves in the Americas. Many of the Indigenous in the Americas were increasingly undifferentiated in plantation accounts from the enslaved Africans they worked alongside, making it difficult to estimate population sizes for Indigenous slaves. See Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 145. Relative to enslaved Africans, their actual numbers were likely very small and would not have a significant impact on this overall estimate. For example, there were approximately 1,500 Indigenous slaves in Carolina at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the site in the Americas with the most significant Indigenous slave trade and likely the site with the largest number of Indigenous slaves outside of the tropics. They may have formed approximately one-quarter of the overall slave population there. See Mulcahy, *Hubs of Empire*, 94. For the slave trade from the Carolinas, see Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). A significant number – perhaps the majority – of Indigenous slaves in the British American colonies were likely sent to the Caribbean sugar colonies to help meet their nearly insatiable labor demands. For the shipment of Indigenous slaves from North and South America to the Caribbean sugar colonies, see Linford D. Fisher, "'Dangerous Designes': The 1676 Barbados Act to Prohibit New England Slave Importation," *William and Mary Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2014): 99–124; Carolyn Arena, "Indian Slaves from Guiana in Seventeenth-Century Barbados," *Ethnohistory* 64, no. 1 (2017): 65–90. This suggests, once again, that the proportion of slaves at English sites the tropics may have been even higher than 85 percent.

[193] McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 154.

there were another 1,300 enslaved laborers at EIC outposts in St. Helena, in India, and in the Indonesian archipelago.[194] To put this in perspective,

[194] Shumway estimates that there were "roughly 500" slaves working at English factories on the Gold Coast "at any given point" in the eighteenth century. See Shumway, "Castle Slaves," 85. One might estimate – given a consistent ratio of slaves to RAC employees at English sites in Gambia and Sierra Leone – that there were no more than 600 castle slaves in in total in English factories in Africa in 1700. For statistics on European RAC employees, see Davies, *Royal African Company*, 247–248. The two main centers of slaveholding for the EIC around 1700 appear to have been in Bencoolen and St. Helena; see Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 36. At Bencoolen, there were 222 enslaved people owned by the East India Company in 1708. See Bencoolen Slave Inventory, December 11, 1708, IOR: G/35/6, unpaginated. The Company also had or planned to have significant numbers of slaves at other nearby and often short-lived factories in Sumatra and in Borneo at the turn of the century. See, for example, London to Priaman, October 21, 1685, IOR: G/35/2, f. 49v; London to Priaman, January 20, 1686, IOR: G/35/2, ff.72-72v; List of Servants Required for the Garrison at Banjar, [1707], IOR: G/35/6, unpaginated. Although high mortality meant that the size of the slave population changed considerably year to year, one could conservatively estimate that there were approximately 220 slaves at the main factory in Bencoolen and another one hundred slaves throughout the other Indonesian island factories at any given point in time at the turn of the century for a total of 320 owned by the Company and perhaps another fifty owned by Company employees. This would total 370 slaves owned by Englishmen in Indonesia. Slaves were imported into St. Helena throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The EIC's efforts to bring more slaves to the island began in the 1680s, but the first detailed list of slaves in 1723 shows 224 slaves owned by the East India Company and another 426 privately owned slaves for a total of 647. One could conservatively estimate a smaller number, perhaps 400, in the island around 1700. See Allen, *European Slave Trading*, 226; Royle, *The Company's Island*, 84–102, 176–177. The EIC held slaves in places other than the Indonesian archipelago and St. Helena. In fact, Winterbottom argues that slaves likely formed "considerable percentages of all the EIC settlements." See Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge*, 164. The EIC appears to have had large numbers of slaves at its factories in Madras and Cuddalore on the Coromandel coast of India, but it is difficult to determine the size of the slave population, particularly those privately owned by Company employees. For examples of slaves at these sites, see Chapters 2 and 3. There were also slaves living at or being acquired and shipped from English settlements in Bengal, Surat, and Bombay. See Margaret R. Hunt, "The 1689 Mughal Siege of East India Company Bombay: Crisis and Historical Erasure," *History Workshop Journal* 84, no. 1 (September 2017): 151; London to Bombay, January 31, 1690, IOR: E/3/92, f. 40; London to Bencoolen, May 9, 1690, IOR: E/3/92, f. 47; London to Bencoolen, February 6, 1688, IOR: G/35/2, f. 146v; "Commission and Instructions Given by Us the Presidt. And Councill of India, Persia, Arabia, etc. unto Our Very Loving Friend Capt. John Bowers, Commander of Shipp Persia Merchant," March 12, 1677, IOR: G/36/4, f. 18v; "Surat Council to Caotain John Daniel," October 2, 1679, IOR: G/36/4, f. 114. Based on population statistics from 1675 to 1700, there were at least 400 English settlers in Madras and Bombay alone in 1700. See Stern, *Company-State*, 37. There were likely at least 500 settlers across the English factories in India around 1700. One could conservatively estimate – assuming a minimum 1:1 ratio of slaves to EIC employees (see Chapter 5 for more on slave/free ratios in English tropical sites) – that that there were at least 500 slaves combined who

the 1,300 enslaved people spread across the EIC's "system of settlements" in 1700 were close in number to the population of slaves in the more densely settled English sites across New England and Atlantic Canada at that point in time.[195] There were 1,700 people of African descent across these northeastern North American English colonies in 1700. Not all of those who were enslaved were Black; there were also slaves of Indigenous North American descent in northeastern North America. One could estimate that the English had between 1,500 and 2,000 slaves in that region. The key difference between English sites in northeastern North America and English sites in the Indian Ocean was that whites vastly outnumbered slaves – by a ratio of more than fifty to one – in northeastern North America at the turn of the eighteenth century.[196] In sharp contrast, non-European slaves outnumbered Europeans at most English sites in the tropics.[197] Slave majorities became the foundation of a distinctly tropical model of empire.

It is important not to assume that any division of the early English empire into commercial expansion in the East and territorial expansion in the West was inevitable.[198] English settlements in the Caribbean and Indonesian islands and along the West African coast became the sites in the English tropics at which the English would turn to slave majorities in the late seventeenth century. The vast majority of slaves in the English tropics lived in the Caribbean, where the English successfully established a plantation complex with labor-intensive export crops. Yet, seventeenth-century English colonial architects imagined other possibilities, and those possibilities were not necessarily far-fetched. While the English failed in their efforts to establish the plantation complex in the Indian Ocean,

were owned by the East India Company and its Company employees spread throughout Madras, Bombay, Surat, Bengal, and the other subsidiary EIC factories in India. By these rough estimates, the total of all slaves at EIC possessions in the Indian Ocean was at least 1,270.

[195] Stern, *Company-State*, 29.

[196] McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 103. For pathbreaking work on slavery in New England, see Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016); and Jared Hardesty, *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds: A History of Slavery in New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2019).

[197] The precise proportion of slaves at various English sites in the tropics will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

[198] Scholars have begun to challenge this traditional but overly simplistic division of the empire into a territorial West and a commercial East. See for example Philip J. Stern, "British Asia and British Atlantic: Comparisons and Connections," *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2006): 694–697.

other European colonizers were more successful. The Dutch controlled the slave-based clove and nutmeg plantations in the Moluccas in the Indonesian islands, while the French would successfully extend sugar and the plantation complex in the eighteenth century to the Mascarene Islands – just east of Madagascar – where they would rely on Indian Ocean slaves.[199] If the English had managed to extend the plantation complex into West Africa or the Indian Ocean in the seventeenth century, then the British empire may have had even more substantial slave populations beyond the Americas and an even higher proportion of its slaves in the tropics. The early English empire, however, lacked enough political power and settlers to be able to extend sufficient control to those regions to build and maintain the infrastructure for a plantation complex. The tropical disease environments in Africa and Indonesia remained a significant barrier to English expansion as well.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the empire was loosely divided into a territorial empire in the West and a commercial empire in the East. The vast majority of English slaves spent their days in backbreaking labor in Caribbean sugar fields, but the English profited from human trafficking and relied on slave labor across the tropical zone. West Africa became the key supplier of captives for the Caribbean plantation complex, but slaves also helped maintain English forts and factories on that coast. At sites in the Atlantic islands and in the Indian Ocean, the English consistently relied on enslaved people for constructing and maintaining settlements, for growing provisions, and for loading and unloading ships at their forts and factories.[200] They also profited from and relied on established human trafficking routes in the Indian Ocean.[201] By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the English were tapping into slave markets in the Americas, in West and East Africa, in Madagascar, on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts of India, in the Bay of Bengal, and in the Indonesian islands – particularly Nias off the coast of Sumatra. The English had established a global slave empire.

[199] Jane Hooper and David Eltis, "The Indian Ocean in Transatlantic Slavery," *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no. 3 (2013): 358; Eaton, "Introduction," 13.

[200] For examples, see York Fort General, February 1, 1705, IOR: G/35/7, p. 10; List of Servants Required for the Garrison at Banjar, [1707], IOR: G/35/6, unpaginated; London to Bencoolen, May 9, 1690, IOR/E/3/92, f. 48.

[201] For archival examples of the lesser-known Indian Ocean trade, see "An Account of ye Present Comodityes Yt Are Imported & Exported at Madagascar & ye Manner of Dealing with ye Natives," Ms. Rawl. A. 334, ff. 61–62v, Bodleian Library; Bencoolen to London, January 2, 1708, IOR: G/35/6, unpaginated; Bencoolen to London. January 2, 1709, IOR: G/35/7, p. 57; Bencoolen to London, February 1, 1705, IOR: G/35/7, p. 10; London to Bencoolen, May 9, 1690, IOR: E/3/92, ff. 47-48.