

Slavery in Early St Helena, Part One: The “Black Servant” System, 1659-1682

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Slavery is integral to the history of St Helena. Perhaps slavery’s most significant legacy in modern St Helena is its multi-ethnic population; a considerable proportion of the island’s African- and East Indian-descended inhabitants are related to individuals who arrived in St Helena as enslaved people between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. It is quite appropriate, therefore, that there is an important and growing literature on the history of slavery in St Helena. The work of Colin Fox and Andrew Pearson has provided us with a much richer understanding of both the history of slavery in St Helena during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the island’s role as a base for the Royal Navy’s West Africa Squadron, where over 25,000 “recaptive” Africans were housed in depots between 1840 and 1868.(1) Valuable work by Stephen Royle, Anna Winterbottom, and Richard Allen has also shed light on the early history of slavery in St Helena, revealing the importance of slavery to social and economic life on the island in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.(2)

Overall, though, little attention has been given to slavery in St Helena in the formative period of the seventeenth century. Indeed, a systematic and detailed analysis of the development of slavery in St Helena in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries has never been undertaken. A series of articles, to be published in *Wirebird* over the next three years, will fill this gap in the literature by exploring the early history of slavery in St Helena, from the founding of the English colony in 1659 until the 1730s. The subject of this first article - the “black servant” system that the English East India Company (EIC) sought to implement in St Helena during the 1660s and 1670s - has hitherto not been explored in any depth by historians. In the eyes of the EIC’s directors in London, “black servants” were labourers from Africa and Asia who after conversion to Christianity and a fixed term of service (usually seven years) could become free planters, with equal status to white colonists of English origin. Studying this labour regime highlights how important it is for scholars to contextualise the history of slavery in St Helena within the wider history of the EIC’s Asian operations and the global history of labour in the early modern world. The EIC’s decision to institute the “black servant” system in St Helena can only be understood within the wider context of their commercial aims in Africa and Asia. Moreover, to appreciate how the directors of the EIC conceived this labour regime it is important to refer to contemporaneous labour practices in early modern England, Iberia, and the Muslim world.

The “Black Servant” System in St Helena

Following the reconstitution of the EIC in 1657 with a new and expanded charter, a small party of colonists were dispatched by the company to settle St Helena, reaching the island in 1659. The decade in which St Helena was colonised – the 1650s – was a crucial one for the development of slave labour regimes in the English-speaking world. In the Caribbean, a boom in the production of sugarcane was underway in the English colony of Barbados, increasing demand for enslaved African labour. In the 1650s approximately 31,364 enslaved people were transported from West Africa to Barbados, far outstripping any other English colony.(3) Sugar and slavery made Barbados the most prosperous and important colony in the English empire, a position it would retain for the duration of the seventeenth century. The prospects for expanding the slave-sugar system beyond Barbados also looked promising in the 1650s. The large island of Jamaica was captured from the Spanish in 1655, and London merchants were interested in developing a

plantation economy on the island based around the labour of enslaved Africans along similar lines to Barbados.

What relevance does the history of English colonisation in the Caribbean have for the EIC, and specifically St Helena? A number of prominent London merchants who became directors of the EIC in the late 1650s maintained diverse business portfolios, and thus had first-hand experience of investing in the Caribbean plantation system. This experience influenced their plans for the EIC in the late 1650s, including the decision to settle St Helena. The reconstituted EIC was issued a new charter in 1657 by Oliver Cromwell which included new and expansive powers to plant and fortify overseas colonies.⁽⁴⁾ This attracted those with experience of colonial plantation in the Atlantic World to join the EIC's directorate, including Maurice Thomson, Martin Noell, Thomas Kendall, and even Sir James Drax, the pioneer of sugar production in Barbados. This injection of Caribbean expertise into the EIC in 1657 had an immediate impact on policy within the company. The EIC leased the monopoly patent over West Africa between 1657 and 1668, integrating the African gold trade with East Indian commerce, and for the first time the company pursued the settlement of permanent colonies in Pulo Run (one of the Banda Islands in Southeast Asia) and St Helena in the South Atlantic.⁽⁵⁾ The strategic value of St Helena as a watering and re-supply station for EIC vessels making the long return journey from Asia was why the company became interested in colonising the island,⁽⁶⁾ but the effort to settle St Helena was facilitated and encouraged by those merchants serving on the EIC's directorate who were already experienced with the process of colonial plantation in North America and the Caribbean. [insert Image 1. Map of Barbados, 1675].

Considering that several directors of the EIC in the late 1650s were directly involved with the transatlantic slave trade and were plantation owners in Barbados – a colony where enslaved Africans were described in a 1661 legal code as a “brutish and heathenish kinde of people” – we would expect to see similarly harsh labour policies implemented by these merchants at EIC settlements.⁽⁷⁾ It is surprising, therefore, to read the correspondence records of the EIC for the 1660s and 1670s, where the directors send instructions admonishing their employees working overseas to treat “black servants” from West Africa and India as “men and women, not as slaves”.⁽⁸⁾

The labour system conceived by the directors of the EIC for St Helena in the period from 1659-1683 was distinct from the rigorous patterns of African slavery that had come to dominate the English Caribbean by the late seventeenth century, principally because it involved more porous definitions of slavery and freedom.⁽⁹⁾ The small numbers of enslaved labourers transported to St Helena by the EIC from West Africa and South Asia were almost always referred to as “black” or “negro servants”. In seventeenth-century North America, and to a lesser extent the Caribbean, the term “black servant” or “negro servant” was often used by white planters to camouflage or somehow “soften” their slaveholding, which we must be careful not to replicate as historians. But the available evidence suggests that when the directors of the EIC were referring to “black servants” in the 1660s and 1670s they were conceiving a form of labour that was distinct from the closed system of racial slavery developing at the same time in North America and the Caribbean. Up until the early 1680s, “black servants” transported to St Helena by the EIC were supposed to be accorded official privileges and immunities for their protection during long-distance voyages on company shipping, and could technically be freed within a set period following their conversion to Protestantism.

The EIC's effort to implement a humane labour policy for black workers, with a clear pathway towards manumission, was highly unusual in the English-speaking world during the seventeenth century. This distinctive attitude to labour first emerged when the company

controlled the monopoly over English commerce in West Africa between 1657 and 1663.(10) The company's directors were keen to stress how the small numbers of enslaved people sent from Fort Cormantine (a castle near Abandze, Ghana) to St Helena, should voluntarily enter the service of the Company. For example, in June 1659 instructions were sent to Captain George Swanley, commander of the *Truro*, to "procure tenn negroes, men and women, such as are lusty and of the younger sort" from the "Coast of Guinny" and to transport them to St Helena. Only if Captain Swanley could find people who were "willing to leave their countries and saile along without compulsion or inforcement" would he have permission to transport Africans from the Gold Coast.(11)

Throughout the 1660s and 1670s, colonists in St Helena not only received "black servants" from West Africa but were also "supplied [with] some blacks" from South Asia, whom the EIC's directors ordered to be "brought from India by two in a ship".(12) This highlights how the EIC's view of race and who was considered "black" was fluid in this early period; the term was loosely applied and encompassed anyone who was not white European, including peoples from both Africa and Asia. The company's directors sought to implement regulations (first established in West Africa) regarding the humane usage of Asian labourers on company shipping. In 1668, for instance, the governor of the EIC William Thompson ordered that "4 young Gentues or Arracans and their wives" were to be "sent out as servants" from the Bay of Bengal to St Helena. Commanders of company vessels were instructed to provide a "fitting cabbon for their accommodation in the voyage", and it was expressly forbidden that violence "or any act to give discontent to the natives" was to be committed when procuring these labourers, so that they would "willingly embrace" the Company's service upon arrival.(13) Despite repeated instructions from the company's directors in London, it does seem highly unlikely that many Africans or Indians would have voluntarily entered into slavery and been willing to leave their homeland and kin of their own accord. Moreover, given that EIC employees in West Africa described in March 1660 how they had acquired 'five Lusty Men *slaves* and five women for St Hellena' [emphasis mine], it is highly likely that the treatment of black people on company shipping left a lot to be desired and did not always conform with the instructions of the company's directors in London.(14)

Upon arrival in St Helena, "black servants" from Africa and Asia were put to work on a variety of tasks. During the 1660s and 1670s black workers in St Helena were forced to perform the work of settler colonialism, in a similar manner to what the historian Wendy Warren has described occurring in seventeenth-century New England.(15) In the young colony trees needed to be felled, houses and other buildings constructed, fortifications built, livestock reared, and fishing vessels manned. The EIC also considered the transportation of workers to St Helena to be important for "peopling" the nascent colony. St Helena is an isolated island situated a long distance from military reinforcement, and was therefore vulnerable to attacks from the company's rivals. Any method of increasing the population of the young colony (including the delivery of enslaved people) was thus believed to strengthen the island's defences against external aggressors. In June 1671, for example, news of the arrival of black labourers from the Cape Verde islands to St Helena was met with relief by company officials, who acknowledged that the islanders were now in a "better posture to defend yourselves in case you should be attacked by an enemy".(16)

But from the EIC's perspective perhaps the most important function performed by "black servants" was their labour on experimental plantations. The company's directors in London hoped that, in time, the production of cash crops on commercial plantations would defray the expense they had incurred in colonising St Helena. In the early 1670s, the EIC began

experimenting with the cultivation of valuable commodities in the valleys of St Helena. For instance, company employees at Surat were instructed in 1671 to send indigo seeds to the island, along with “a person skilful in the sowing of it and bringing it to perfection”.⁽¹⁷⁾ By 1673, the company had diversified its efforts and was experimenting with a variety of tropical commodities, including sugarcane, nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, cocoa, ginger, and fruit trees known as “China oranges” (probably mandarins).⁽¹⁸⁾ Labourers were needed to cultivate these crops, and thus white colonists in St Helena were ordered to make sure that “due improvement be made of the Companies owne plantacon by imployment of the Company negroes and servants in planting”.⁽¹⁹⁾

The agricultural expertise and technical skills of “black servants” was key to the EIC’s vision for St Helena. For example, enslaved people purchased at Portuguese colonies such as Cape Verde were valued for their agricultural skills, and the EIC sent specific orders in 1663 to set aside £30 for “a negro or two that is skillfull and knowes how to plant” for dispatch to St Helena.⁽²⁰⁾ While in 1668 Governor William Thompson explained how the company was “very desirous to make tryall” of Indian labourers from Bengal, “supposing they may bee more usefull and ingenious than those people which come from Guinea”.⁽²¹⁾ The agricultural and technical abilities of enslaved people was valued across the English empire during the seventeenth century. For instance, historians argue that the knowledge of enslaved Africans from Brazil was a critical part of the process through which the sugar plantation complex was transferred from Brazil to Barbados in the 1640s.⁽²²⁾ But it is unusual to see the important contributions the knowledge and skills of enslaved people made to the process of colonial development so explicitly acknowledged like they are in the EIC’s correspondence records. It is possible that the EIC’s appreciation of the expertise “black servants” brought to St Helena was part of the reason why the company’s directors in London were committed to treating them well during their journey to the island.

Although many of the African and Indian labourers in St Helena worked in the plantation economy – an institution which has come to be associated with extreme violence and permanent and heritable forms of racial slavery – in its instructions to the governor and council of the colony during the 1660s and 1670s the EIC repeatedly emphasised how its “black servants” in St Helena were able to attain their freedom by demonstrating their knowledge of the Christian faith.⁽²³⁾ Following their baptism they would be required to serve the company for a fixed term of seven years. After the expiry of their term of service, they were to be considered of equal status with white planters, meaning they could enjoy the same social and economic privileges as English freeholders, such as the right to purchase land and cattle. This system was outlined by the EIC in a letter written in December 1670:

As for our negroes that shall be brought to you or that you have there already, wee desire that they may be carefully instructed in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and that you voice by your lives and conversations give them good examples, that they may be incouraged therein, and whom they shall give a good account unto you of the knowledge of their faith and live up thereunto accordingly, that then they be baptised and after that time to serve 7 years and noo longer and then be free planters.⁽²⁴⁾

The EIC reiterated these instructions in 1678, explaining how “all negroes that are bond or Free living upon our said Island that shall make profession of the Christian Faith, and are thought fitt by the Governor and Councel and Minister to be baptized, shall within 7 years after their such public imbraceing [of] the Christian Religion be free planters, and enjoy the privilege of other planters as to land and cattle”.⁽²⁵⁾

Gaps in the historical record and the lack of firm examples of the EIC's manumission practices mean that it is uncertain whether the inhabitants of St Helena ever actually obeyed these commands. There is, however, one tantalising example that suggests the policy to manumit forced labourers based upon their good conduct and to populate company colonies with free black planters was sometimes put into practice. Following the Dutch invasion of St Helena in 1673, Black Oliver and his family were granted their liberty after a display of loyalty to the English inhabitants of the island. Sir Richard Munden, the captain of the relief force, paid to redeem this "negro" from a "Portugall to whom he was sold". It was also ordered that, like English planters, he should receive land and two cows "as a reward of his service and the encouragement of faithfulness".⁽²⁶⁾ There is also evidence to suggest that efforts were made to instruct "black servants" in St Helena "in the principals and fundamentals of the Christian Religion". In 1678, John Baxter was appointed to teach at the public school in St Helena, where he catechized both the "black" and "English" children.⁽²⁷⁾ However, the fragmentary nature of the surviving source material means that there are a limited number of similar examples.

Although the directors of the EIC urged the inhabitants of St Helena to pursue these more humane labour policies, it seems likely that the treatment of "black servants" did not always reflect the paternalist rhetoric of the directors in London. From what we know of the labour systems at other English colonies in the seventeenth century, and given the lack of examples of the inhabitants of St Helena implementing the EIC's commands, it is probable there was a significant gap between theory and practice in the treatment of African and Asian labourers at St Helena during the 1660s and 1670s. On the remote island of St Helena white colonists were far from the oversight and effective control of the company, and so it is probable that many planters permanently enslaved black labourers in St Helena, in contravention of the EIC's vision for their black workers eventually becoming Christianised planters who would possess similar rights and liberties to white Englishmen. We can be fairly certain that the reality of labour practices on the ground in St Helena did not fully reflect the system the EIC's directors had reasoned in London.

Commerce and Labour in Africa and Asia

The distinctive "black servant" policy in St Helena between 1659 and 1682 was part of the EIC's wider strategy towards labour at this time. Thus, the key to understanding the "black servant" system can only be found by looking beyond St Helena, and considering the company's wider commercial aims in West Africa and Asia during the 1660s and 1670s. It is first worth highlighting that the "black servant" system was instituted not only in St Helena, but also at the company's settlements in Bombay (Mumbai, India) and Bantam (Banten, on the island of Java in Indonesia). For example, in January 1671 the company sent to Bantam almost identical instructions to those sent to St Helena in December 1670, stating that all "black servants" in the employ of the company needed to be made aware that "seaven yeares after their making confession of their Christian faith with knowledge and understanding, living answerable thereto in their lives and conversations to your satisfaction of the reallity thereof, that then they shall be made free".⁽²⁸⁾ At Bombay, forms of servitude were of even shorter duration. The one hundred "black servants" who were employed by the company at Bombay in the mid-1670s were officially freed after conversion to Christianity and only three years service, thereafter becoming permanent residents of the colony with an equal social status to Englishmen.⁽²⁹⁾

In the 1660s and 1670s the EIC was procuring labourers for St Helena, Bombay, and Bantam mainly from catchment areas in West Africa and Madras (Chennai, India). These were precisely the same regions where the EIC was simultaneously trying to develop positive relations with local merchants and rulers to facilitate a thriving trade in luxury commodities such as gold, ivory,

and fine textiles. The reality of power relations on the ground in Africa and Asia during the seventeenth century was that the small groups of English merchants working for the EIC were unable to dictate the terms of trade.⁽³⁰⁾ The EIC's main priority was its Asian commerce, not plantation production in colonies such as St Helena. Therefore, when procuring labourers the directors had to be very careful not to put their trade at risk by enslaving members of the local population, which would likely alienate indigenous rulers and merchants. Such concerns led the EIC to instruct its employees in West Africa to "totally forbear the buying and selling of negroes" in 1660.⁽³¹⁾ While in December 1676 the EIC ordered its factors in Madras to abstain from sending "any persons to St Helena against their wills" after it emerged that an Indian man had been forcefully brought to the island from Fort St George. Fears about the dire repercussions for the company's trade in India if his complaint "that wee send away the natives" should reach his King caused the directors to reiterate to factors at Fort St George the EIC's current labour policy; that it was against the company's "inclinations to buy any blacks and to transport them from their wives and children without their own consents".⁽³²⁾ Efforts to maintain good relations with African and Asian rulers – which was necessary for the preservation of the EIC's commerce – underpinned the "black servant" policy instituted in St Helena and elsewhere in the EIC's system during the 1660s and 1670s.

Conceiving the "Black Servant" System

One important question remains. What were the intellectual origins of the distinctive "black servant" system conceived by the EIC's directors in the 1660s and 1670s? The company's directors would certainly have been familiar with the traditional customs of apprenticeship in Britain and indentured labour in the Atlantic colonies. In a similar manner to the principles established by the EIC for their black labourers, the terms of service stipulated in the indenture contracts which brought swathes of labourers from the British Isles to the Americas over the course of the seventeenth century were also in the range of three to seven years, and most white servants voluntarily chose to enter into temporary bondage before later becoming free planters and owning land for themselves.⁽³³⁾ There are some isolated cases in the early history of the Virginia colony of enslaved Africans being listed like servants, one of whom eventually became free and owned "black servants" for himself. Although widespread prejudice that people of African descent were somehow inferior meant that it was very unusual for indenture contracts to be drawn up for black members of colonial society in the English Atlantic world. Moreover, agreements between masters and servants contained no provisions which linked religious conversion to manumission.⁽³⁴⁾ The more lenient labour system envisioned by the directors of the EIC in the 1660s and 1670s must, therefore, have been conceived with reference to other labour regimes that seventeenth-century Englishmen had read about or encountered.

Although there had been a general aversion to enslaving other Christians present in English culture since the Norman Conquest, the stipulation that enslaved people at overseas plantations should have their liberty once they were baptised had no precedent in English law.⁽³⁵⁾ One reason why the EIC might have seen religious conversion as a pretext for manumission is because the directors of the company were aware of the concepts developed by colonial theorists regarding the proposed Assada plantation in Madagascar, and were actively attempting to implement these principles. The theories detailed by Robert Hunt in his promotional pamphlet, *The Island of Assada* (1650), included the first written expressions of how a population of Asian and African free planters could be used to develop profitable English colonies in the Indian Ocean world. An integral feature of Robert Hunt's vision for Assada (now an island called Nosy Be) was his belief that the future prosperity of Assada would be guaranteed if English colonists

could fully provide “ourselves of men from Arabia, Madagascar, Africa, and India to Plant, some to be free men, others servants”. These planters and servants would be “bred up in the knowledge of God” because, supposedly, it took only “one English man [to] governe ten of those Nations”.(36) The endeavour to establish permanent settlements on Assada failed, primarily due to epidemic disease and violent interactions with indigenous communities.(37) Yet it is striking how reminiscent the company’s efforts to populate St Helena with “black servants” and Christianised free planters from Africa and Asia during the 1660s and 1670s was of Robert Hunt’s plans for the Assada plantation. Perhaps the promotional literature for colonial experiments on Madagascar during the period from 1635-1650 helped to establish ideas about colonisation in the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean World that would remain prominent in the minds of members of the EIC in subsequent decades.

As well as drawing upon an intellectual heritage stemming from the published material written to promote the Assada plantation, the passage of laws which explicitly link religious conversion with manumission is reminiscent of other systems of slavery and servitude encountered by the EIC during the seventeenth century. For example, the importance of religious confession in defining who was enslaved and who was free may have been assimilated through contact with the Portuguese empire. EIC employees would have encountered Portuguese slaveholding practices during their visits on company shipping to Lisbon, the Cape Verde Islands, West Africa, Mozambique, Goa, and Rio de Janeiro. Perhaps most importantly the EIC’s colony of Bombay was a Portuguese settlement for over a century before it came into English possession in 1661. Many of the EIC’s labourers were bought from Portuguese merchants at St. Jago (Santiago, the largest island in the Cape Verde archipelago). In the winter of 1670 Captain Thomas Harman of the *Unicorne* was given 1500 rials and told that on his outward bound voyage to India he was to “touch at St. Jago to take in 24 negroes, men and women, to be distributed amongst the inhabitants” of St Helena.(38) Given their familiarity with slaveholding at Portuguese colonies, is it possible the EIC modelled its labour practices on Iberian customs? According to the *Siete Partidas*, a statutory code compiled in thirteenth-century Spain, adopting Christianity was an important first step towards manumission, and pious slaves could be freed with the consent of their master.(39) In practice, conversion to Christianity did not guarantee future liberty, although forms of “conditional manumission” premised upon Roman law were a frequent occurrence in medieval Portugal, where informal agreements between Christian masters and enslaved *conversos* opened a path towards manumission in exchange for a contracted term of service, usually lasting for nine to twelve years.(40)

Is it also possible that systems of slavery within the Muslim world shaped the “black servant” system developed by the EIC? Although more detailed research is needed if bold claims are to be made about the influence of the Mughal Empire and Islamic law upon the EIC’s understanding of how to procure and manage enslaved workers, there is some evidence which indicates that the inclusive labour customs conjectured by the EIC may have reflected Muslim manumission practices. Islamic legal codes, many of which were laid out within the Qur’an and the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, were the foundation for forms of slavery used within the Ottoman and Mughal Empires.(41) While they make reference to a different religion than the Protestant denomination of Christianity espoused by the directors of the EIC, the content of these slave laws and Indo-Muslim manumission practices resonates with the techniques the EIC conceived for the management of “black servants” in St Helena, Bombay, and Bantam. Enslavement within the Islamic world was often a temporary state, and could in fact be a route to upward social mobility, because after five to seven years enslaved people who had converted to Islam were allowed to petition Muslim courts for their freedom.(42) Indeed, the historian Ehud R. Toledano

has argued that within the Islamic community “manumitting slaves after a number of years, usually seven to ten, was regarded as a meritorious act”.⁽⁴³⁾ Commercial contact and diplomatic relationships with Indo-Muslim societies in South Asia might have been how members of the EIC became familiar with how Muslim slave-owners used religious observance to determine when enslaved people deserved their personal freedom.

Conclusion

Between 1659 and 1682 the EIC conjectured a distinctive “black servant” labour policy for St Helena and other settlements under its jurisdiction, including Bombay and Bantam. EIC ship’s captains were instructed to treat “black servants” humanely during their voyage to St Helena, and upon reaching the colony “black servants” were to be encouraged to convert to Christianity, after which they would be expected to serve the company for no more than seven years before they would be freed and considered of equal social status to English freeholders. The EIC developed these policies as part of an effort to preserve its commerce in Africa and Asia, which was at significant risk if EIC employees alienated indigenous rulers and merchants by enslaving members of the local population. The ways the EIC’s directors thought about labour was very different to the rigorous forms of racial slavery emerging in North America and the Caribbean, and it is likely therefore that when they formed their ideas about this labour system the EIC’s directors drew upon English traditions of apprenticeship and servitude, Robert Hunt’s vision for the Assada plantation, Iberian forms of slaveholding, and Indo-Muslim practices. Whether the EIC’s “black servant” policy was ever implemented by white colonists in St Helena is unclear from the surviving evidence. On the balance of probabilities, it is likely there was a significant gap between theory and practice in how black workers from West Africa and India were treated at St Helena during the 1660s and 1670s, and that most were *de facto* enslaved, being exploited in a permanent and hereditary state of slavery.

The EIC’s attitude towards labour began to change in the early 1680s, when rumours of rebellion in St Helena and plans to develop sugar plantations on the island encouraged the EIC to adopt much harsher laws and labour policies, modelled explicitly on the Barbados slave codes. This will be the subject of my next article.

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- (1) Colin Fox, *A Bitter Draught: St Helena and the Abolition of Slavery* (Society of Friends of St Helena, 2017); Andrew F. Pearson, *Distant Freedom: St Helena and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1840-1872* (Liverpool, 2016), 3, 271.
- (2) Stephen Royle, *The Company’s Island: St. Helena, Company Colonies and the Colonial Endeavour* (London and New York, 2007); Anna Winterbottom, *Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World*, (Basingstoke, Eng., 2016); Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Ohio, 2015), chap. 2.
- (3) Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville, VA., 2006), p. 47.
- (4) On the EIC’s 1657 charter, see Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford, 2011), p. 21.

- (5) Michael D. Bennett, "The East India Company, Transnational Interactions, and the Formation of Forced Labour Regimes" (Masters thesis, University of Kent, 2016), pp. 32-39.
- (6) On the strategic importance of St Helena to the East India Company; see Philip J. Stern, 'Politics and Ideology in the Early East India Company-State: The Case of St. Helena, 1673–1709', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (March 2007), pp. 1-23; John McAleer, 'Looking East: St. Helena, the South Atlantic and Britain's Indian Ocean World', *Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (January 2016), pp. 78-98.
- (7) The 1661 Barbados slave code, entitled "An Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes", can be found in TNA, CO 30/2, 16-26.
- (8) E/3/87, f. 208, London to Bantam, 18 January 1670/71.
- (9) On slavery in the seventeenth-century Caribbean, see Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (1972; repr., Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000).
- (10) On the EIC's presence in West Africa, see Margaret Makepeace, 'English Traders on the Guinea Coast, 1657-1668: An Analysis of the East India Company Archive', *History in Africa*, Vol. 16 (1989), pp. 237-284.
- (11) London to Fort Cormantine, 23 June 1659, BL, IOR E/3/85, ff. 228-231.
- (12) London to St Helena, 9 March 1669, BL, IOR E/3/87, f. 175.
- (13) London to St Helena, 27 November 1668, BL, IOR E/3/87, f. 102.
- (14) For Cormantine to London, 1 March 1660, BL, IOR E/3/26, f. 144.
- (15) Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (Liveright/W.W. Norton, 2016)
- (16) London to St Helena, 23 June 1671, BL, IOR E/3/87, f. 228. For more information, see Michael D. Bennett, 'Slaves, Weavers, and the Peopling of East India Company Colonies, 1660-1730', in Richard B. Allen, ed., *Slavery and Bonded Labor in Asia, 1250-1900* (In Press, Studies in Global Slavery series, Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 229-255.
- (17) London to Surat, 16 February 1669/70, BL, E/3/87, f. 162.
- (18) Commission and Instructions to the Governor and Council of St Helena, 19 December 1673, BL, IOR E/3/88, f. 43; London to Bantam, 13 October 1674, BL, IOR E/3/88, f. 68.
- (19) London to St Helena, 18 December 1674, BL, IOR E/3/88, f. 70.
- (20) Instructions to Captain Samuel Higginson of the ship *American*, 25 September 1663, E/3/86, f. 154.
- (21) London to St Helena, 27 November 1668, BL, IOR E/3/87, f. 102.
- (22) Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, p. 17.
- (23) London to Bantam, 18 January 1670/71, BL, IOR E/3/87, f. 208.
- (24) London to St Helena, 9 December 1670, BL, IOR E/3/87, ff. 202-203.
- (25) London to St Helena, 15 March 1677/78, BL, IOR E/3/88, ff. 287-288.
- (26) Commission and Instructions to the Governor and Council of St Helena, 19 December 1673, BL, IOR E/3/88, f. 44. For Black Oliver's remarkable story, see Ian Bruce, "Black Oliver and the Dutch Invasion", *Wirebird: The Journal of the Friends of St Helena*, Vol. 49 (2020), pp. 11-28.
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- (28) London to Bantam, 18 January 1670/71, BL, IOR E/3/87, f. 208.
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