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# The demography of São Tomé and Príncipe (1758–1822): preliminary approaches to an insular slave society

Patrícia Gomes Lucas\*

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## Resumo

Este artigo debruça-se sobre a demografia das ilhas de São Tomé e Príncipe, no período entre 1758 e 1822. Partindo de mapas estatísticos e relações de população, procura-se analisar a evolução populacional e os principais indicadores demográficos, nomeadamente crescimento populacional médio, taxa de população urbana, estruturas etárias, rácio sexual, composição racial e população livre e escrava. Em simultâneo, estuda-se em que medida estes indicadores foram condicionados por factores exógenos, como as transformações económicas e sociais e os eventos políticos, no sentido de compreender como evoluiu a população do arquipélago, e qual a predominância de género, idades e categorias sociais.

**Palavras-chave:** demografia, estatística, população, São Tomé e Príncipe.

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## Abstract

This article focuses on the demographics of the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, from 1758 to 1822. Using statistical population tables and population lists, we analyse the population evolution and the main demographic indicators, namely average population growth, rate of urban population, age structure, sex ratio, racial composition, and free and slave population. Simultaneously, we study to what extent these indicators were conditioned by external factors, such as the economic and social changes and political events, in order to understand how the population of the archipelago evolved, and what the prevalence of gender, age and social categories was.

**Keywords:** demography, statistics, population, São Tomé and Príncipe.

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## **The demography of São Tomé and Príncipe (1758–1822): preliminary approaches to an insular slave society**

**Patrícia Gomes Lucas**

The following paper addresses the subject of São Tomé and Príncipe's demography from 1758 to 1822. Between mid-eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century the archipelago was a territory in search of its purpose. Its economy and society were stagnant and without prospects of change: the sugar cane production had mostly disappeared, and the slave trade was decreasing. Contrary to what has been done by most of the existing historiography, that studies the archipelago in moments of economic growth, this research analyses the islands in a time of decadence, studying its population evolution as well as its social structure, taking in special account its specific characteristics deeply influenced by slavery. It is our aim to produce demographic indicators such as average population growth, age structure, racial composition, sex ratio, free and slave population ratio and the rate of population living in the local small urban centres. With those we will try to understand the prevalence of some gender, age and social categories features, such as an unbalanced sex ratio (with the predominance of male), the undersized scale of the first age groups, a low birth rate and a high death rate, the meagre presence of European population and the prevalence of slaves, still numerous in this decayed former sugar plantation economy.

São Tomé and Príncipe was the territory with the strongest slave weight in the entire Portuguese Empire. In 1758 they represented 70% of the total population while in 1807 the number decreased to the still very expressive amount of 55%. Following Stuart B. Schwartz's account of Colonial Brazil we can describe São Tomé and Príncipe as a slave society not simply in the obvious fact that its labour force was predominantly slave but rather in the juridical distinction between slave and free, in principles of hierarchy based on slavery and race, in the seigneurial attitudes of masters, and in the deference of social inferiors. Through the diffusion of these ideals, slavery created the basic facts of the social life of the archipelago.<sup>1</sup> São Tomé and Príncipe had a specific kind of society, restricted in its own geographical

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart B. SCHWARTZ, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society Bahia, 1550–1835*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 245–8.



1 Map of São Tomé and Príncipe

Source: A. H. de Oliveira MARQUES, João José Alves DIAS, *Atlas Histórico de Portugal e do Ultramar Português*, Lisboa, Centro de Estudos Históricos, 2003, p. 360.

limits, heavily influenced by slave trade and uneven economic trends with Brazil and the African coast.

In São Tomé and Príncipe, around the second half of the eighteenth century, the plantation economy had collapsed and most of its agriculture was polycultural, the economy was weaker and less diversified than Brazil, and the trade and slave trade had important but declining local impacts. Domestic slavery was dominant and most of the slave owners possessed few slaves. Besides this, the local society had few middle ranking social categories, the population was condensed around small urban coastal centres, the number of mulattoes (pardos) and whites was meagre and the islands were clearly peripheral in the context of the Portuguese Empire.

The archipelago consists in 4 islands, São Tomé, Fernando Pó, Príncipe and Ano Bom. The islands of São Tomé, Príncipe and Ano Bom were discovered circa 1480, and Fernando Pó a few years later.<sup>2</sup> The archipelago

<sup>2</sup> Scholars previously considered 1470 as the discovery date for the archipelago, but recent studies have shown differently; Arlindo CALDEIRA, “Aprender os trópicos: plantações e trabalho escravo na ilha de S. Tomé,” in Margarida Vaz do Rego Machado, Rute Dias Gregório, and Susana Serpa Silva (coord.), *Subsídios para a história da escravatura insular séculos XV a XIX*, Ponta Delgada, Universidade dos Açores, Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2014, p. 25.

was uninhabited,<sup>3</sup> and the first settlers arrived only in 1486. This first settlement, probably composed solely by Portuguese people, didn't flourish, and new measures were taken by the Crown to promote the occupation of the territory. Since it was difficult to convince the Portuguese to move to the islands, Álvaro de Caminha, one of the first “capitães-donatários,” was authorized by the King to take a contingent of “degredados” and young Jews with him in 1493.<sup>4</sup> Even so, these settlement enterprises had only a limited success, due to the archipelago's environment, which was inadequate for the Europeans and caused a high mortality. Therefore, from the beginning of the colonization, it was necessary to import large groups of slaves from the coast of Africa, especially from Congo, not only to guarantee the working force, but also to populate the territory.<sup>5</sup>

In 1753, a political and administrative reform was implemented and, as a consequence, the capital was transferred from the city of São Tomé, in the island of the same name, to the recently established city of Santo António, in the island of Príncipe. This relocation was related to the poor climate and poor sanitary conditions of São Tomé, which were considered best in Santo António. However, this transfer was surely influenced by local political and economic interests.<sup>6</sup>

A few decades later, in 1778, the islands of Fernando Pó and Ano Bom were delivered to the Spanish Crown by a political agreement. These islands were still legally Portuguese territories in the initial years mentioned in this study. Even though Ano Bom had a small Portuguese and slave colonization, these territories didn't take a significant part in the political and economic dynamics of the archipelago, and weren't included in the first population

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<sup>3</sup> With the exception of Fernando Pó that, due to the proximity with the African continent, had a small African population.

<sup>4</sup> “Degredados” were criminals sentenced to be sent to the colonies for several years as punishment for their crimes. The young Jews were the children of the Jews that had fled from Castile after the conquer of the Kingdom of Granada. More information on this subject is given by Robert GARFIELD, *A History of São Tomé Island, 1470–1655: The key to Guinea*, San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press, 1992, pp. 12–6.

<sup>5</sup> Gerhard SEIBERT, *Camaradas, clientes e compadres: colonialismo, socialismo e democratização em São Tomé e Príncipe*, Lisboa, Vega, 2002, p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> Lúcia Maria Leiria TOMÁS, *As Ilhas do Golfo da Guiné em Setecentos (1700–1750)*, PhD dissertation in História dos Descobrimentos e da Expansão Portuguesa, Lisboa, Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2004, p. 64. Although the official version concerning only sanitary reasons may not have been the real one, we do not share the idea that the capital transfer had been decided centrally by the Marquês de Pombal, to “punish” the social agitation in São Tomé; Jorge Eduardo da Costa OLIVEIRA, *A Economia de S. Tomé e Príncipe*, Lisboa, Instituto para a Cooperação Económica, Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1993, p. 84.

chart of 1758.<sup>7</sup> This reveals the Portuguese Crown’s view of these peripheral islands inside the larger archipelago, and the lack of interest to administrate them. Therefore, they will not be addressed in this study.

The island of São Tomé, with 859 square kilometres, was divided in this period in 8 parishes: Sé, Nossa Senhora da Conceição, Guadalupe, Nossa Senhora das Neves, Santo Amaro and São Paulo, Santíssima Trindade, Sant’Ana, and Madalena. The parishes of Sé and Nossa Senhora da Conceição constituted the only city, São Tomé, which received its charter in 1535.<sup>8</sup> As for Príncipe, it presents a considerably smaller size, with only 142 square kilometres. It had one city, Santo António, with only one parish, Nossa Senhora da Conceição.

A complex society emerged in São Tomé and Príncipe as a result of its origins. The first settlers were not only Europeans, but also free Africans from the continent, white slaves, and one free black man from Portugal.<sup>9</sup> Due to the difficulties to secure the Europeans in the territory, the relations between the white colonizers and the black slaves were encouraged, resulting in a mulatto group that would eventually be freed by Royal order. There was also a growing group of freed black men, called “forros,” which had received their manumissions from particular slave owners or from the islands authorities.<sup>10</sup> These “forros” participated actively in the social and political life of the islands, and were themselves small landowners, and owners of domestic and farming slaves. Later, in the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, the introduction of the coffee and cocoa farming allowed a recolonization of the islands by the Portuguese and, at the same time, an increase in the number of slaves brought from the African coast. These changes prevented the formation of a consolidated Creole society, due to the existence of such diverse groups and rooted cultural heritage, leaving São Tomé and Príncipe with a society of African identity.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The evolution of the island of Ano Bom has been studied by Arlindo CALDEIRA, “Escravidão e liberdade: notas para uma história da ilha de Ano Bom,” in Avelino de Freitas de Meneses and João Paulo Oliveira e Costa, *O reino, as ilhas e o mar oceano*, Vol. 2, Lisboa/Ponta Delgada, Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2007, pp. 623–43.

<sup>8</sup> Manuel do Rosário PINTO, *Relação do descobrimento da ilha de São Tomé*, Lisboa, Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2006, pp. 60–2.

<sup>9</sup> G. SEIBERT, op. cit., 2002, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> The different specificities of São Tomé and Príncipe’s society were carefully analysed in Isabel Castro HENRIQUES, *São Tomé e Príncipe: a invenção de uma sociedade*, Lisboa, Vega, 2000, pp. 33–50.

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard SEIBERT, “Crioulização em Cabo Verde e São Tomé e Príncipe: Divergências históricas e identitárias,” *Afro-Ásia*, no. 49, 2014, pp. 41–70.

The economic basis of the islands from the sixteenth century onwards was the production of sugar cane, being São Tomé the first territory of the Portuguese Empire to establish the “plantation” agriculture.<sup>12</sup> The sugar cane sector fell into decline in the seventeenth century, due to the natural conditions of the archipelago’s climate, and specially the competition with the Brazilian market, considering that the Brazilian sugar was of much better quality.<sup>13</sup> Another important element that contributed to the decline of the sugar production was the attacks from the Angolar population, formed by runaway slaves living inside of the island that came to the plantations to steal and destroy the sugar mills.<sup>14</sup> The economic focus had to change and the slave trade—that was already an important activity due to the preferential geographical location of the archipelago in the Gulf of Guinea—received an important investment. The agricultural production that had always existed also increased, as a way to produce subsistence goods in order to establish exchanges with the slave ships, becoming the strongest commercial income of that time.<sup>15</sup>

However, ship-chandling and agricultural production did not become as strong as the sugar cane production had been, and the economy declined; the administration was also inefficient, and there were many conflicts between the different insular authorities, which hindered the archipelagos’ development.<sup>16</sup> Despite the Royal decrees that forced the slave ships to stop in São Tomé and Príncipe on their way from and to Brazil, many avoided doing so to evade the tax payment that it implied.<sup>17</sup> This kind of tax payment ended in 1808.<sup>18</sup>

The farming of coffee and cocoa was introduced in the islands in the beginning of the nineteenth century, brought from Brazil, and gradually

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<sup>12</sup> A. CALDEIRA, op. cit., 2014, pp. 41–2.

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard SEIBERT, “São Tomé & Príncipe. The first plantation economy in the tropics,” in Robin Law, Suzanne Schwarz & Silke Strickrodt (eds.), *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, Suffolk, Jams Currey, 2013, p. 56; Daniel Barros Domingues da SILVA, “O Tráfico de São Tomé e Príncipe, 1799–1811: Para o Estudo de Rotas Negreiras Subsidiárias ao Comércio Transatlântico de Escravos,” *Estudos de História*, Vol. 9, no. 2, 2002, pp. 35–51.

<sup>14</sup> Gerhard SEIBERT, “Os angolares da ilha de São Tomé: Náufragos, Autóctones ou Quilombolas?,” *Textos de História*, Vol. 12, no. 1/2, 2004, pp. 43–64.

<sup>15</sup> Carlos Agostinho das NEVES, *S. Tomé e Príncipe na segunda metade do séc. XVIII*, Lisboa, Instituto de História de Além-Mar, 1989, pp. 79–85; G. SEIBERT, art. cit., 2014, p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> C. A. NEVES, p. 52.

<sup>17</sup> Arlindo CALDEIRA, *Mulheres, sexualidade e casamento em São Tomé e Príncipe (séculos XV a XVIII)*, Lisboa, Cosmos, 1999, pp. 27–30.

<sup>18</sup> Augusto NASCIMENTO, “S. Tomé e Príncipe” in Valentim Alexandre and Jill Dias (coord.), *Nova História da Expansão Portuguesa — O Império Africano 1825–1890*, Lisboa, Editorial Estampa, 1998, p. 277.

became the most important activity of the archipelago's economy in later decades.<sup>19</sup> Other crops, such as cinnamon and ginger, developed and prospered in a similar chronology.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, the economy of São Tomé and Príncipe was weakened and in a transition period. This situation entailed obvious consequences for the demographic evolution of the archipelago, such as a meagre growth of its population, a declining but persistent importance of slavery, unbalanced age groups and the scarce presence of mulatto and European population.

The main corpus for this research is the statistical data produced by São Tomé and Príncipe's authorities. These censuses were made to answer the royal decrees that the Portuguese Crown issued from 1776 onwards. The orders instructed the assembling of information on population, and the production of charts in all Portuguese possessions, according to a general model decreed in Lisbon. Locally the information was mostly collected by the catholic parish clergymen, military and militia officers, and crown officials. This first set of numbers was then sent to the governor's office, which was the final producer of a complete and standardized chart that should follow the prescribed categories and age groups. Theoretically these documents should be done and sent each year. However, its real production was fluctuant between different territories and throughout the years. In more populated colonial areas, with extensive and dense bureaucratic, religious and military networks, its production was more regular. Brazil and India had thus a higher number of population charts series than the African possessions where these censuses are less frequent and sometimes cover mainly the chief villages and urban areas.<sup>21</sup>

The demographic data collected for São Tomé and Príncipe is of high significance, since it was one of the first of its kind to be produced in the African continent, and has very complete information concerning slave numbers and social categories.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, one has to be careful when

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<sup>19</sup> Coffee was introduced in 1787 and cocoa around the 1820s.

<sup>20</sup> C. A. NEVES, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–9.

<sup>21</sup> For the evolution of the production process of the statistical data see Paulo Teodoro de MATOS, "Population Censuses in the Portuguese Empire, 1750–1820: Research Notes," *Romanian Journal of Population Studies*, Vol. VII, no. 1, 2013, pp. 5–26. The 1758 population charts were accompanied by a letter from the Governor of São Tomé and Príncipe, Luiz Henrique da Motta e Mello, where he accounts the orders he received from the Secretary of State to collect information on sex, age and race of the archipelago's inhabitants; ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO ULTRAMARINO [AHU], *Conselho Ultramarino*, Cód. 1492, fl. 145v.

<sup>22</sup> José C. CURTO, "Sources for the pre-1900 population history of Sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Angola, 1773-1845," *Annales de démographie historique*, 1994, pp. 319–38.



analysing this kind of population enumerations. In São Tomé and Príncipe its elaboration was not regular, and it did not always happen simultaneously in both islands.

A significant part of the information is housed at the Historical Overseas Archive (AHU—Lisbon). It is also possible to find some documents at the National Archive of Torre do Tombo (ANTT). The existing data is quite different from year to year as we may observe in the sources description. Despite the royal decrees and other orders, there is not an increase in the amount of data included in the census: the changes are not consistent and they seem to be a result of local authorities' decisions and constraints, not a response to central government demands. The only chart that appears to have been produced as an outcome of the Crown's orders is the one for the island of São Tomé in 1777: the age categories were directly drawn from the Royal decree of 1776.<sup>23</sup> This relative speed and attention allows us to think that the guidelines of the metropolis were, nevertheless, coming to the overseas territories shortly. The other population censuses have different age structures and social categories, or do not include them at all.

The main common element in the charts is the total of population; nonetheless, one also finds regular information about racial composition and the number of slaves. There is fewer data regarding age groups, and birth and death numbers are almost inexistent, which hinders the calculus of birth and death rates.<sup>24</sup> This absence of records that were traditionally collected by the local catholic clergymen suggests a weak net of parishes, churches and priests in the archipelago.

The accuracy of the information is another problem when dealing with statistical historical data within this time frame. For instance, the slave numbers may not be correct, as the owners might not want to give full disclosure; the Angolares were also not included in the first official charts for the island of São Tomé, and they constituted an important population with significant effects in the economic production of the islands. In any case, even if the data is reliable, it is a small universe. Conclusions must be taken prudently and the data presented on the following pages cannot be considered definitive.

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<sup>23</sup> AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, Cód. 583, fls. 171–2.

<sup>24</sup> Birth and death data are only given for São Tomé in 1777 and for Príncipe in 1778. However, in the second case, the total of population for that same year is not available and the information only covers a few months; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 16, Doc. 44.

|      | São Tomé         |               |                   |                    |               | Príncipe         |               |                   |                    |               |
|------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|
|      | Total population | Age structure | Births and deaths | Racial composition | Free/Non-free | Total population | Age structure | Births and deaths | Racial composition | Free/Non-free |
| 1758 | x                | x             |                   | x                  | x             | x                | x             |                   | x                  | x             |
| 1770 | x                |               |                   | x                  | x             |                  |               |                   |                    |               |
| 1771 | x                |               |                   | x                  | x             | x                |               |                   | x                  | x             |
| 1777 | x                | x             | x                 |                    |               | x                | x             |                   | x                  | x             |
| 1778 |                  |               |                   |                    |               |                  |               | x <sup>a</sup>    |                    |               |
| 1807 | x                |               |                   | x                  | x             | x                |               |                   | x                  | x             |
| 1810 | x                |               |                   | x                  | x             |                  |               |                   |                    |               |
| 1814 | x                |               |                   |                    | x             |                  |               |                   |                    |               |
| 1822 |                  |               |                   |                    |               | x <sup>b</sup>   |               |                   | x                  | x             |
| 1830 | x                |               |                   |                    |               | x                |               |                   |                    |               |
| 1839 | x                | x             |                   |                    | x             | x                | x             |                   |                    | x             |
| 1844 | x                | x             |                   | x                  | x             | x                | x             |                   | x                  | x             |

2 Demographic sources for São Tomé and Príncipe (1758–1844)

Sources: Op. cit. in Appendix 1.

<sup>a</sup> This document is a birth and death relation, but its information starts at 20<sup>th</sup> June and ends at 12<sup>th</sup> September 1778.

<sup>b</sup> This document only details the white population.

The population of São Tomé and Príncipe’s archipelago followed a significant decreasing pattern throughout the seventeenth century, probably due to the difficult living conditions, such as malaria, famines, and the economic decline.<sup>25</sup> The lack of European population previously mentioned continued to be a problem, which led the authorities to offer financial support to those who chose to live in the islands.<sup>26</sup>

Between 1700 and 1750 the population grew, as pointed by Lúcia Tomás.<sup>27</sup> However, the total number of inhabitants presented for the end of the period, 1756, is certainly too high: 18,000 in São Tomé and 15,000 in Príncipe. This author stresses the lack of global censuses and the insufficient information available, justifying the decrease of population in the following years with the breakdown of sugar production and bad governance policies.

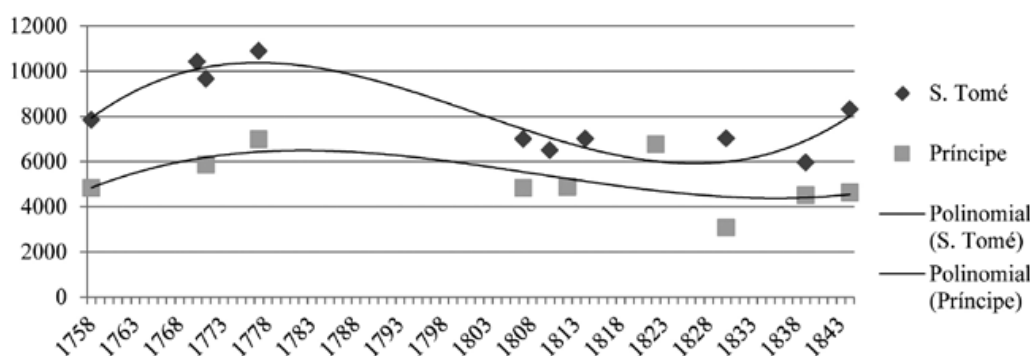
In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, official data shows an increase in the number of inhabitants. After the 1770s we assist to a strong

<sup>25</sup> Cristina Maria Seuanes SERAFIM, *As Ilhas de S. Tomé no século XVII*, Lisboa, Centro de História de Além-Mar, 2000, p. 271.

<sup>26</sup> *Idem, ibidem*, p. 274.

<sup>27</sup> L. M. L. TOMÁS, op. cit.

contraction, more pronounced in São Tomé. In the beginning of the nineteenth century the population continued to show a very weak growth. This slow development was more significant in Príncipe, which, being the capital, had a more important administrative role in the slave trade; the island of São Tomé remained declining, but at a smaller pace. In 1807 São Tomé had less than 7,000 inhabitants, and Príncipe didn't reach 5,000. This confirms the information given by historian Carlos Neves, in one of the few studies focusing on this timeframe.<sup>28</sup>



### 3 Population evolution for São Tomé and Príncipe (1758–1844)

Sources: Op. cit. in. Appendix 1.

For much of the first half of the nineteenth century there are no studies produced, so it is important to surpass the limit of 1820 to understand the long-term evolution. The number of inhabitants of São Tomé stagnates in the 1810s and 1820s, presents a very low figure for 1839 and only in the 1840s seems to recover. The population in Príncipe has an uneven evolution, growing in 1822 but decreasing significantly in 1830. In the beginning of the 1840s it stabilizes around 4,500 inhabitants.

In the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century the situation changed and the islands had some of their best years, benefiting from the boost that the modern plantation farming of cocoa and coffee gave to the local economy, and from the amount of contract workers that were brought to the islands, that deeply changed the demographical and social structure of the territory.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> C. A. NEVES, op. cit., p. 150.

<sup>29</sup> Augusto NASCIMENTO, *Poderes e quotidiano nas roças de S. Tomé e Príncipe: de finais de Oitocentos a meados de Novecentos*, Lousã, Tipografia Lousanense, 2002; Denise Marta de Sousa Castilho de Matos MOURA, *São Tomé e Príncipe. Roças, hierarquias e quotidianos brancos 1820–1875*, MA dissertation in History of África, Lisboa, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 2003.

During the time frame studied here, the highest population number was reached in 1777, with 10,893 inhabitants in São Tomé and 6,986 in Príncipe. Soon after, malaria, other tropical diseases, a persistent economic stagnation, the reduction of the slave trade and a decrease in the import of working force explain a continuous fall. Such high number of population would only occur again in the island of São Tomé in the beginning of the 1860s, when the farming of coffee was already widespread. This attracted new residents and compelled the farmers to bring more African contract workers, which started to benefit from the increase of modern medicine procedures, drugs and some health assistance. Príncipe did not reach this much population until the twentieth century.

Sources were found with data that lacks reliability: José António Caldas claims that in 1756 São Tomé had 18,000 habitants, and Príncipe had 11,000;<sup>30</sup> Cunha Matos refers 13,220 habitants in São Tomé in 1789;<sup>31</sup> letters from the Senate of Príncipe indicate that the island had 8,000 free habitants and 11,000 slaves in 1796, which might be related with the interest in the capital transference;<sup>32</sup> these values are much higher than what would be expected for those years, and they do not include any description of the data collection.

Carlos Neves calculated the total population of São Tomé and Príncipe in the second half of the eighteenth century between 30,000 and 35,000 habitants. Even if one keeps in mind the deficiencies in data collection and the population segments that were not considered in the official records, such as runaway slaves and the “angolares,” these numbers are too high.

With respect to the population average growth, if in the period from 1758 to 1807 the evolution was similar in both islands, with an initial growth until 1777 and a pronounced decrease in the latter years, from 1807 on the pattern is different from one island to the other. The faster recovery of Príncipe mentioned earlier is confirmed, since the island grew over 2% a year until 1822, while São Tomé was still decreasing more than 1%. That is reflected in the average growth for the whole period, which was negative for São Tomé, and positive for Príncipe. It is possible to see that there are different growth rates for each island, and this may be related with a decrease in the slave population in the island of São Tomé between 1771 and 1807.

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<sup>30</sup> José António CALDAS, *Notícia geral de toda esta capitania da Bahia desde o seu descobrimento até o presente ano de 1759*, Bahia, Tipografia Beneditina Lda., 1951, p. 520.

<sup>31</sup> Raimundo José da Cunha MATOS, *Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África*, Rio de Janeiro, Ministério da Justiça e Negócios Interiores, 1963, p. 143.

<sup>32</sup> AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 27, Docs. 3 and 5.

|                    | 1758-1771 | 1771-1777 | 1777-1807 | 1807-1814/1822 | 1758-1814/1822 |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>São Tomé</b>    | 1.62      | 2.29      | -7.36     | -1.23          | -0.33          |
| <b>Príncipe</b>    | 1.48      | 3.00      | -1.22     | 2.27           | 0.53           |
| <b>Archipelago</b> | 1.55      | 2.65      | -4.29     | 0.52           | 0.10           |

#### 4 Population average growth for São Tomé and Príncipe<sup>33</sup>

Source: Op. cit. in Appendix 1, 1758, 1771, 1777, 1807, 1814 and 1822.

<sup>a</sup> The year 1814 concerns only to São Tomé, and the year 1822 concerns only to Príncipe.

These long-term demographic transformations may be the consequence of several events such as undocumented epidemics or drought years that influenced the agricultural production. It is known that the capital was transferred from São Tomé to Príncipe in 1753, which may explain two different things: firstly, a stronger growth of population in Príncipe between 1771 and 1777, and a smaller decrease in the next period; secondly, the existence of more white inhabitants in Príncipe than in São Tomé throughout this period, which are most definitely connected with the imperial administration.

Something happened between 1777 and 1807 that caused a significant population drop. However, the documentation does not present any valid reasons for this change, so it is only possible to present hypotheses: epidemics, droughts that caused famines, very sharp decline of the slave trade that led to the departure of a significant number of populations. Carlos Neves stresses that the cause of this reduction is the economic decline of the archipelago, and the underselling of slaves, conjectures that the data supports.<sup>34</sup>

The growth of Príncipe ended still in the eighteenth century, and for the first decades of the nineteenth century the population decreased. This suggests that the capital transference only had positive effects in Príncipe for a few years, and the political and administrative role was not enough to keep population in the island.

As for birth and death rates, valid numbers were produced for the island of São Tomé in 1777: the birth rate was 23‰, and the death rate was 31‰.<sup>35</sup> The birth rate is clearly lower than what would be expected for that time and period, and it has to be considered that there might have been an underestimation of the births. The death rate is in line with the numbers for other colonial territories, and it was not surprising if it had been higher, considering the tropical climate and the frequent landing of slaves in the

<sup>33</sup> The year 1814 concerns only São Tomé, and the year 1822 concerns only Príncipe.

<sup>34</sup> C. A. NEVES, op. cit., p. 150-1.

<sup>35</sup> AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 16, Doc. 44.

islands, which increased the spread of some infirmities, such as malaria. This caused a negative physiological balance, and prevented the stability of the population evolution. It must be stressed, however, that this is not only a small universe, but also a slave society, which meant that a large portion of the population was brought to the island, and not born there. The archipelago's slave population depended on the African and Atlantic slave trade and maintained a high proportion of Africans. The slaves suffered a heavier mortality, while freemen mostly remained a minority of the total population.

Regarding the balance between population living in the urban areas and rural population in São Tomé, the larger weight of population was living in the local small urban centres, a reality that grew stronger between 1770 and 1814.<sup>36</sup> In such a hilly island this concentration is most definitely related with its geography but also with the decadence of the plantation agricultural production. However a question remains: is it a cause or a consequence?<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately there is not this kind of information for Príncipe, which prevents a comparison between the islands.

| 1770 | 1771 | 1777 | 1814 |
|------|------|------|------|
| 55   | 60   | 70   | 71   |

5 Population living in the small urban centres, São Tomé (1770–1814) (%)

Source: Op. cit. in Appendix 1, 1770, 1771, 1777, 1814.

The population charts regarding São Tomé and Príncipe comprise information about gender, racial composition and juridical conditions. There are no details on religion, which could be a consequence of the lack of information on that subject, or a deliberate choice of the authorities, since the slave population—which was the majority of the archipelago's population—was baptized and, therefore, catholic.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> We followed the criteria used in the statistical charts to distinguish urban from rural territories, since it wouldn't be accurate for this territory and period to consider urban centres the spaces with more than 5,000 inhabitants. The urban population of São Tomé is the population living in the parishes of Sé and Nossa Senhora da Conceição. This is obviously a debatable choice, but it also takes into account the political and administrative importance that the city of São Tomé had for the whole archipelago.

<sup>37</sup> C. A. NEVES, op. cit., pp. 79–80.

<sup>38</sup> For more information on the church in São Tomé and Príncipe see *Idem, ibidem*, pp. 163–70.

|             | Year | Whites | %   | Mixed Race | %   | Blacks | %    | Total  |
|-------------|------|--------|-----|------------|-----|--------|------|--------|
| São Tomé    | 1758 | 21     | 0.3 | 156        | 2.0 | 7,660  | 97.7 | 7,837  |
|             | 1771 | 76     | 0.9 | 180        | 2.2 | 7,847  | 96.8 | 8,103  |
|             | 1807 | 47     | 0.7 | 189        | 2.7 | 6,762  | 96.6 | 6,998  |
| Príncipe    | 1758 | 32     | 0.7 | 173        | 3.6 | 4,626  | 95.8 | 4,831  |
|             | 1771 | 111    | 2.3 | 171        | 3.5 | 4,568  | 94.2 | 4,850  |
|             | 1807 | 80     | 1.7 | 194        | 4.0 | 4,555  | 94.3 | 4,829  |
| Archipelago | 1758 | 53     | 0.4 | 329        | 2.6 | 12,286 | 97.0 | 12,668 |
|             | 1771 | 187    | 1.4 | 351        | 2.7 | 12,415 | 95.8 | 12,953 |
|             | 1807 | 127    | 1.1 | 383        | 3.2 | 11,317 | 95.7 | 11,827 |

6 Racial composition of São Tomé and Príncipe (1758, 1771 and 1807)

Source: Op. cit. in Appendix 1, 1758, 1771, 1807.

One of the main features of the archipelagos' society was the size of the black population when comparing to the European and mixed race inhabitants.<sup>39</sup> The small size of the white population (around 1% for the whole archipelago) is a consequence both of the difficulties to convince Europeans to move to an economically declining archipelago, and of their high mortality, caused by malaria and other local infirmities and diseases, in an era long before the widespread use of quinine.<sup>40</sup> Príncipe had a slightly larger amount of white and mixed race inhabitants than São Tomé, a consequence of the political and administrative centrality that the island had as capital of the territory.<sup>41</sup>

|             | Year | Free  | %   | Slave | %   | Total  |
|-------------|------|-------|-----|-------|-----|--------|
| São Tomé    | 1758 | 2,818 | 36% | 5,023 | 64% | 7,841  |
|             | 1771 | 3,487 | 43% | 4,616 | 57% | 8,103  |
|             | 1807 | 3,896 | 56% | 3,102 | 44% | 6,998  |
| Príncipe    | 1758 | 974   | 20% | 3,857 | 80% | 4,831  |
|             | 1771 | 2,176 | 37% | 3,674 | 63% | 5,850  |
|             | 1807 | 1,370 | 28% | 3,459 | 72% | 4,829  |
| Archipelago | 1758 | 3,792 | 30% | 8,880 | 70% | 12,672 |
|             | 1771 | 5,663 | 41% | 8,290 | 59% | 13,953 |
|             | 1807 | 5,266 | 45% | 6,561 | 55% | 11,827 |

7 Free and non-free population in São Tomé and Príncipe (1758, 1771 and 1807)

Source: Op. cit. in Appendix 1, 1758, 1771, 1807.

<sup>39</sup> Mixed race people were born from the mix of the white settlers and the black natives.

<sup>40</sup> C. A. NEVES, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>41</sup> *Idem, ibidem*, pp. 150–1.

A different perspective is offered by the comparison between the free and non-free population in the archipelago. The majority of population were slaves, with Príncipe presenting the highest percentage, 80% in 1758, although these numbers decreased from 1758 to 1807. São Tomé had a similar evolution, but with much lower percentages, staying below 50% in 1807. We were able to calculate the amount of slaves by parishes in São Tomé for the year 1771, to evaluate the spatial distribution, and 34% of them lived in the main city.

The unbalance in the percentage of slaves between the islands is a noticeable characteristic, especially considering the environmental differences between the two islands: São Tomé had fertile and highly productive soils, contrary to Príncipe, which had sterile lands in parts of the island. São Tomé had a stronger agricultural production, and it was expected for it to have a much higher proportion of slaves. What happened was the contrary. One hypothesis to explain this difference was the fact that the capital was in Santo António, in the Príncipe island, so the slave traders would choose to stay there for administrative reasons. There was also an existent rule during part of the period studied, by which it was mandatory for the slave trade ships to stop in Príncipe for inspection. Therefore, there were more slaves in that part of the territory when the authorities performed the counts. But it is necessary to be careful when looking at the numbers, because the sources don't confirm whether or not the passing slaves were taken into account in the population charts. Even so, the number of slaves present in the islands in these years is still highly significant, which poses the question: why didn't the slave proportion of São Tomé and Príncipe's society decrease faster?

The amount of slaves amongst the population is one of the features that make São Tomé and Príncipe such an interesting subject for analysis, particularly considering that it was no longer a plantation society and that the slave trade was in sharp decline. Not only it was an almost unique case in the Portuguese Empire, but there aren't many other colonial territories with such a strong slave society, apart from the Caribbean.

Considering some other parts of the Portuguese Empire that had economies dependent from the slave work, it's possible to see that the slave percentage of population never reaches the level it had in São Tomé and Príncipe. For instance, in Minas Gerais, a captaincy of Brazil that had a very strong mining production, the slave proportion is about 30% of the population. Another example is Maranhão, a territory with an economy based on cotton production, where the slaves constituted 40% of the total population.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Maria Luiza MARCÍLIO, "Crescimento histórico da população brasileira até 1872," *Cadernos CEBRAP*, São Paulo, Vol. 16, 1973, pp. 12 and 14.



When comparing with a typical sugar plantation society, such as the captaincy of Bahia, the slave percentage is quite similar to the highest numbers of São Tomé and Príncipe: in the sugar plantation areas, Bahia had 70% of slaves.<sup>43</sup> This highlights the significance of the situation of São Tomé and Príncipe, which wasn't a plantation society anymore, but still maintained a strong number of domestic slavery, engaged in subsistence agriculture. Furthermore, the fact that the number of white and mixed race inhabitants barely increased throughout the years is representative of the little investment made in the islands. The comparison between São Tomé and Príncipe and Bahia is actually very important, due to the amount of slave ships passing by the islands and following for that captaincy. As reported by Daniel B. Domingues da Silva, about 20% of the ships that anchored in the archipelago belonged to Bahia.<sup>44</sup>

On an international perspective, one possible case to compare São Tomé and Príncipe with would be the British Caribbean islands, especially Tobago and Saint Vincent. Even though they are geographically larger, it represents an insular society, with a plantation economy dependent from slavery, dedicated mainly to sugar cane production, but also to coffee and tobacco production. The racial composition of this territory had similarities with São Tomé and Príncipe, especially the reduced amount of white people, but the mixed race inhabitants occupied a larger part of its demography.<sup>45</sup> As Barry Higman summarizes, the Caribbean slave population was severely dependent on the Atlantic slave trade, which led to a larger amount of African slaves. They suffered a high mortality, and the free proportion of population was always much smaller.<sup>46</sup> Considering these elements, the Caribbean slave population was subject to a great stress, something that also happened in the peripheral São Tomé and Príncipe, although in a system dominated by subsistence agriculture and domestic slavery.

Slaves in Tobago and Saint Vincent composed around 80% of the population in 1775, and they reached 90% in 1810.<sup>47</sup> Looking at São Tomé and

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<sup>43</sup> S. B. SCHWARTZ, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

<sup>44</sup> D. D. SILVA, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–4. Half of the slave ships belonged to local owners but were mainly engaged in trading with Brazilian ports.

<sup>45</sup> Richard B. SHERIDAN, “The formation of Caribbean plantation society, 1689–1748” in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, The Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 384–414.

<sup>46</sup> Barry W. HIGMAN, “The Slave Family and Household in the British West Indies, 1800–1834,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 6, no. 2, 1975, p. 263. This author focuses especially on the constitution of the slave family, giving interesting information about the impact that the economic activity and the different purposes of slavery had on it.

<sup>47</sup> Jack HAREWOOD, *The population of Trinidad and Tobago*, C.I.C.R.E.D. Series, 1975, pp. 1–5.

Príncipe, the numbers follow the opposite path that accompanies its economic decline: the archipelago as a whole had 70% of slaves in 1758, and only 55% in 1807. However, the discrepancy between the two islands of the archipelago is notorious: in 1807 São Tomé had only 44% of slaves, while Príncipe had 72%.

|                  | São Tomé | Príncipe | Archipelago |
|------------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>1758</b>      | 110      | 97       | 105         |
| <b>1771</b>      | 80       | 82       | 81          |
| <b>1777</b>      | 70       | 74       | 72          |
| <b>1807</b>      | 93       | 89       | 92          |
| <b>1814/1822</b> | 93       | 98       | 96          |

8 Sex ratio in São Tomé and Príncipe (1758, 1777 and 1814/1822)<sup>48</sup>

Source: Op. cit. in Appendix 1, 1758, 1771, 1777, 1807, 1814, 1822.

<sup>a</sup> The year 1814 concerns only Sao Tome, and the year 1822 concerns only Principe.

The data regarding the sex ratio presents several interesting challenges. The numbers for 1758 are proper for an economy greatly influenced by the slave trade: there were more men than women, due to the higher number of male slaves in traffic. This disproportion drops significantly in the 1770s.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the masculinity rate rises again, and approaches a more balanced level in 1814/1822. This trajectory might suggest the existence of a slow and steady natural growth among slaves living in the archipelago, which compensated the decrease in the male slave imports and helped the local reproduction of working force. Even with this trend for some meagre natural growth it is also probable that in São Tomé and Príncipe many male slaves could not live with siblings, parents, or collaterals in family households. This was one of the general characteristics of a slave system and had strong impact on family structures, for example on the strongly debated frequency of nuclear, extended or matrifocal units. The historiography has only briefly mentioned this tendency, but it didn't present any visible reason for it.<sup>49</sup>

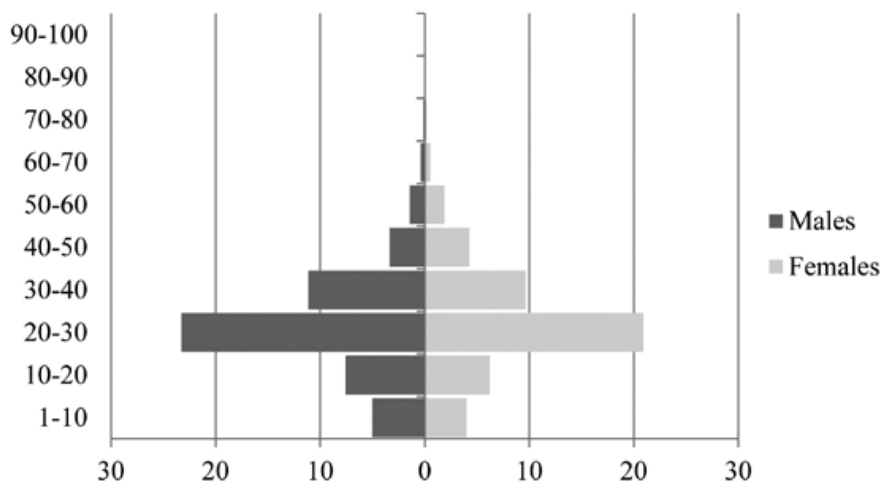
An hypothesis can be drawn connecting the decrease in the number of men and the decline of the slave trade, but it is necessary to consider that part of the male slave population was not counted, or that there may have been counting errors in the original population charts. The small increase in the masculinity rate of the archipelago, between 1771 and 1814/1822, can, thus, be associated to its tiny natural growth of population by the end

<sup>48</sup> The year 1814 concerns only São Tomé, and the year 1822 concerns only Príncipe.

<sup>49</sup> C. A. NEVES, op. cit., p. 151; A. CALDEIRA, op. cit., pp. 78-80.

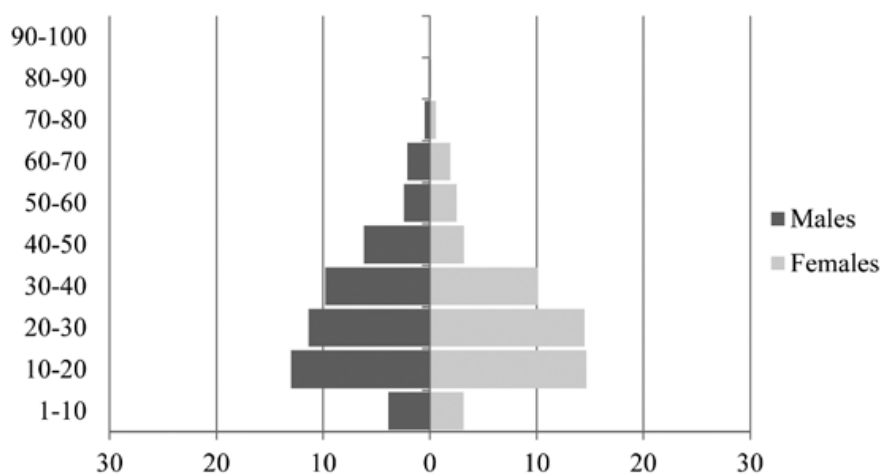
of the period. However, as we will see in the age structures, the different age groups remained generally unbalanced, stressing again the influence of slavery and the difficulty to achieve a stable growth.

Regarding the age groups the documentation shows obvious differences between the two islands in 1758. In São Tomé is possible to see a weak natural population growth, which is probably related with the weight of the imported slave population in the island, and the low fertility associated. Príncipe presents a different structure, but is similar when it comes to the youngest ages.



9 Age structure of São Tomé (1758)

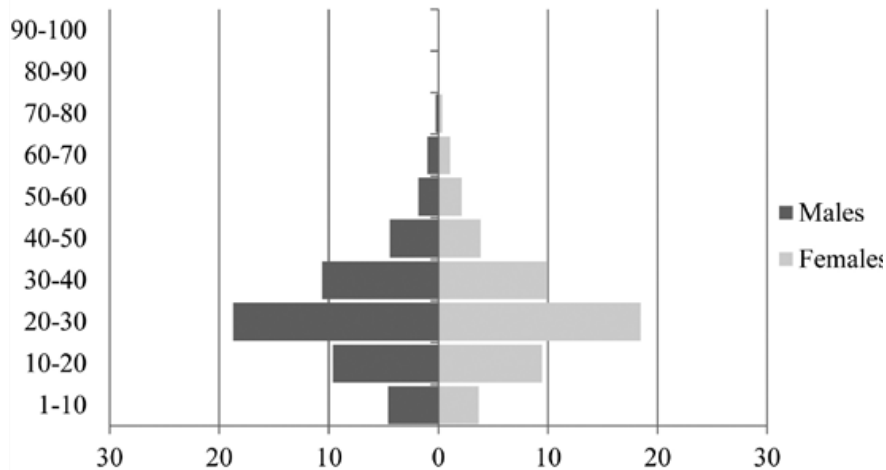
Sources: Op. cit., Appendix 1.



10 Age structure of Príncipe (1758)

Sources: Op. cit., Appendix 1.

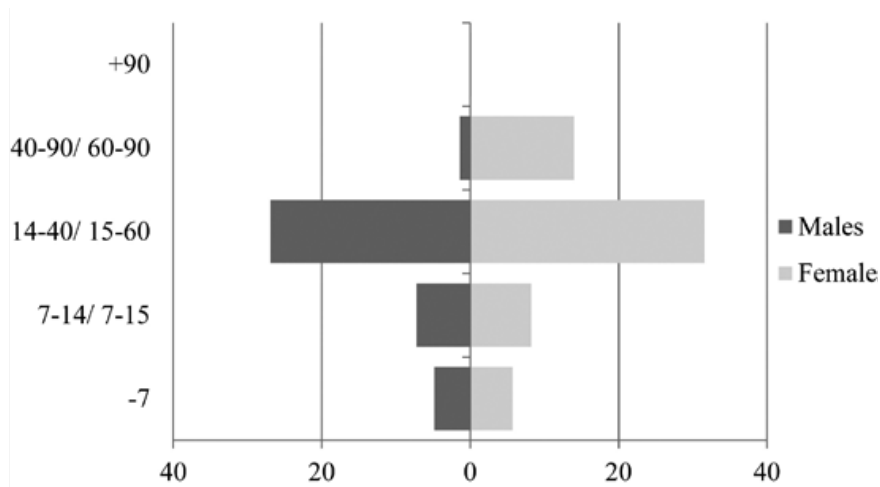
For the entire archipelago there is a contraction of the first age class, mainly caused by the low birth rate, a common feature in slave societies. However, we need to add further explanations such as high infant mortality, poor nutrition and the fact that most of this information was produced using parish records that only account baptisms. The 20–30 years age class is much larger than the previous and the following ones. This is both the result of the amount of working age slaves brought to the islands and the persistence of a slave society.



11 Age structure of São Tomé and Príncipe (1758)

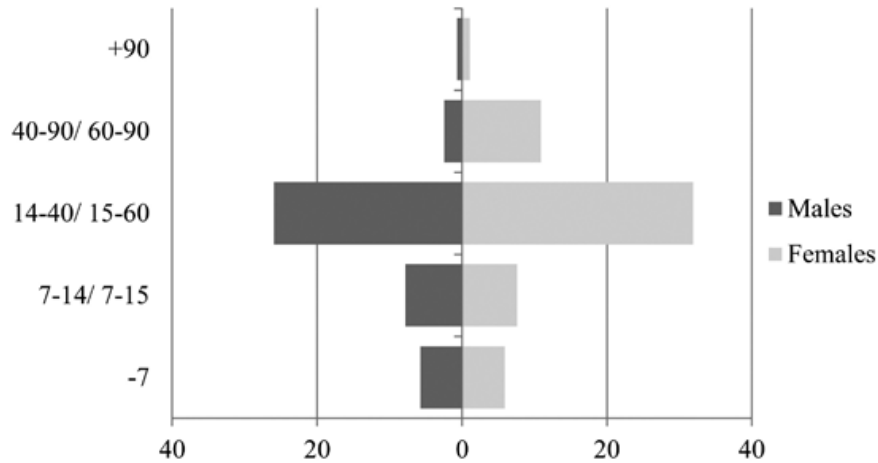
Sources: Op. cit., Appendix 1.

In 1777 the islands maintained the characteristic of having minor percentages of the population in the first age classes. The 40–90/60–90 age class shows a very significant difference between sexes, with much more women than men. Both these characteristics are effects of the slave trade.



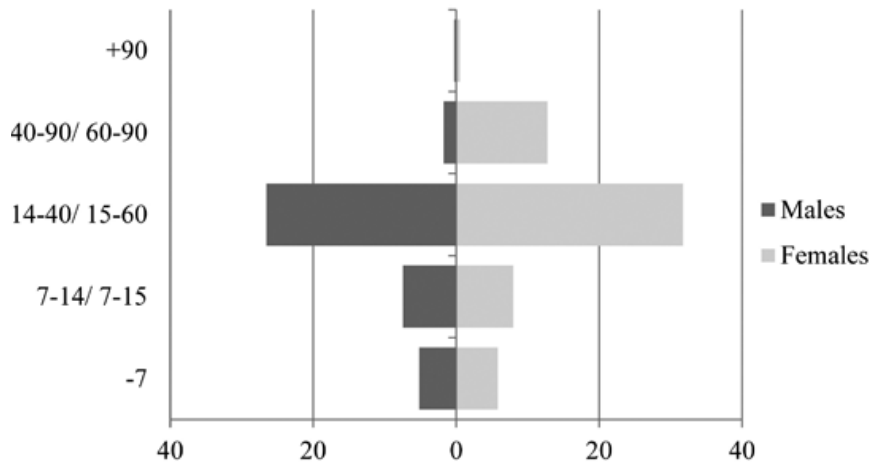
12 Age structure of São Tomé (1777)

Sources: Op. cit., Appendix 1.



### 13 Age structure of Príncipe (1777)

Sources: Op. cit., Appendix 1.



### 14 Age structure of São Tomé and Príncipe (1777)

Sources: Op. cit., Appendix 1.

Considering that the islands received slaves from the African coast, it's reasonable to suppose that there should be more men than women. This occurred in direct opposition to, for instance, the case of Angola, a source for slavery, where there were more women than men, as the data produced by John Thornton shows.<sup>50</sup> However, in São Tomé and Príncipe there was a significant reduction in the proportion of men. Why did this happen? Since the archipelago was a kind of slave storehouse, that were sent to Brazil afterwards, was the age structure balanced in 1758, and it became unbalanced in 1777 due to a continuous departure of slaves? Was the selling of slaves a solution found by the local elites and slave owners to deal with the

<sup>50</sup> John THORNTON, "The slave trade in eighteenth century Angola: Effects on demographic structures," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 14, no. 3, 1980, pp. 417-27.

lethargic economy? Or was the age structure unbalanced in 1758, but it was masked by the counting of the passing slaves, which were not counted in 1777? The data by racial categories does not give any explanation for this evolution, and one must contemplate as well the possibility of a miscalculation in these numbers.

As for the age structure by racial categories only the 1758 information was used, since it's the most complete. Both islands have similar structures regarding white population, with a large majority being males (85%), mostly in the age groups between 20 and 50; this is a consequence both of the trade and administration occupations that Europeans had on the territory, and the fact that most of them circulate in broader geographic regions, and sometimes leave the archipelago after a short stay. Concerning the mixed race individuals, there are more women than men in the archipelago, and there are more mixed race children in São Tomé than in Príncipe (23% against 11%). Even if these differences seem interesting, it is necessary to consider that the absolute numbers are very small, so the sample can easily be skewed.

| São Tomé |      |     |            |      |      |        |      |      |        |      |      |
|----------|------|-----|------------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|
| Whites   |      |     | Mixed Race |      |      | Blacks |      |      | Slaves |      |      |
| Ages     | M%   | F%  | Ages       | M%   | F%   | Ages   | M%   | F%   | Ages   | M%   | F%   |
| 1-10     | 0.0  | 0.0 | 1-10       | 10.7 | 12.5 | 1-10   | 5.0  | 3.9  | 1-10   | 4.0  | 2.8  |
| 10-20    | 0.0  | 0.0 | 10-20      | 14.3 | 10.7 | 10-20  | 7.6  | 6.1  | 10-20  | 8.0  | 7.0  |
| 20-30    | 23.8 | 4.8 | 20-30      | 12.5 | 16.1 | 20-30  | 23.5 | 21.0 | 20-30  | 23.9 | 22.9 |
| 30-40    | 47.6 | 0.0 | 30-40      | 8.9  | 3.6  | 30-40  | 11.1 | 9.7  | 30-40  | 8.0  | 10.0 |
| 40-50    | 14.3 | 0.0 | 40-50      | 7.1  | 1.8  | 40-50  | 3.3  | 4.3  | 40-50  | 4.0  | 5.0  |
| 50-60    | 4.8  | 0.0 | 50-60      | 0.0  | 1.8  | 50-60  | 1.4  | 1.9  | 50-60  | 1.6  | 2.0  |
| 60-70    | 4.8  | 0.0 | 60-70      | 0.0  | 0.0  | 60-70  | 0.3  | 0.5  | 60-70  | 0.3  | 0.4  |
| 70-80    | 0.0  | 0.0 | 70-80      | 0.0  | 0.0  | 70-80  | 0.1  | 0.2  | 70-80  | 0.1  | 0.2  |
| 80-90    | 0.0  | 0.0 | 80-90      | 0.0  | 0.0  | 80-90  | 0.1  | 0.0  | 80-90  | 0.1  | 0.0  |
| 90-100   | 0.0  | 0.0 | 90-100     | 0.0  | 0.0  | 90-100 | 0.0  | 0.0  | 90-100 | 0.0  | 0.0  |

| Príncipe |      |     |            |      |      |        |      |      |        |      |      |
|----------|------|-----|------------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|
| Whites   |      |     | Mixed Race |      |      | Blacks |      |      | Slaves |      |      |
| Ages     | M%   | F%  | Ages       | M%   | F%   | Ages   | M%   | F%   | Ages   | M%   | F%   |
| 1-10     | 0    | 0   | 1-10       | 5.1  | 6.3  | 1-10   | 3.9  | 3.0  | 1-10   | 3.1  | 2.6  |
| 10-20    | 0.0  | 0.0 | 10-20      | 9.1  | 12.6 | 10-20  | 13.2 | 14.8 | 10-20  | 13.4 | 15.7 |
| 20-30    | 15.6 | 0.0 | 20-30      | 13.7 | 20.6 | 20-30  | 11.2 | 14.3 | 20-30  | 10.9 | 14.7 |
| 30-40    | 62.5 | 0.0 | 30-40      | 7.4  | 13.7 | 30-40  | 9.5  | 10.1 | 30-40  | 9.1  | 10.3 |
| 40-50    | 9.4  | 3.1 | 40-50      | 2.3  | 1.1  | 40-50  | 6.3  | 3.2  | 40-50  | 5.5  | 2.9  |
| 50-60    | 3.1  | 0.0 | 50-60      | 1.7  | 1.7  | 50-60  | 2.5  | 2.6  | 50-60  | 2.8  | 3.0  |
| 60-70    | 3.1  | 0.0 | 60-70      | 1.7  | 1.7  | 60-70  | 2.1  | 1.9  | 60-70  | 2.5  | 2.3  |
| 70-80    | 0.0  | 3.1 | 70-80      | 0.6  | 0.6  | 70-80  | 0.5  | 0.6  | 70-80  | 0.5  | 0.6  |
| 80-90    | 0.0  | 0.0 | 80-90      | 0.0  | 0.0  | 80-90  | 0.1  | 0.1  | 80-90  | 0.1  | 0.1  |
| 90-100   | 0.0  | 0.0 | 90-100     | 0.0  | 0.0  | 90-100 | 0.0  | 0.0  | 90-100 | 0.0  | 0.0  |

15 Age structures of São Tomé and Príncipe by social category (1758) (%)

Source: Op. cit., Table 1, 1758.

The numbers for the black racial group are significantly more complete in Príncipe than in São Tomé. In both cases the first class is small, never exceeding 5% of the population. This might be caused by high mortality of children and low birth rates, commonly associated with slave societies. However, it is also possible that the sources, made with the help of the parishes' clergymen, were produced by estimation and did not include all minors or children under the age of confession, counting mainly children baptisms.

The slaves' data is quite similar to the black ones, since almost all slaves were black individuals.<sup>51</sup> The 20–30 years class is hegemonic in São Tomé, consisting of 45% of the population, while the population of Príncipe seems to be distributed more equally between the 10 and 40 years. This may reflect the fact that, in absolute numbers, there were more slaves in São Tomé than in Príncipe, or that the specific uses of the slaves were different from one islands to the other: for instance, the geographical conditions São Tomé allowed a wider use of slaves for agriculture, whilst in Príncipe, being the administrative capital and existing more white population, there might be more domestic slaves.

### **Final remarks**

This study is the first to focus solely on the demographic evolution of the archipelago of São Tomé and Príncipe between the second half of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century.

São Tomé and Príncipe was clearly a slave society, and its features were much stronger than in other Portuguese colonial territories: not only the amount of slaves was very significant, but the number of white and mixed race inhabitants was also meagre. The archipelago was highly dependent from the slave trade, but was not structured around a plantation economy. Its economy was declining and was poorly diversified with an agriculture based on polycultural farming. The archipelago's population centres were small and few.

Considering the economic transition São Tomé and Príncipe faced in these years, the amount of slave population might be a consequence of the slave trade, even if it was declining, and of their reuse as domestic slaves in the frame of a subsistence agriculture, where “Forro” households possessed a few number of them. Slavery begins to decrease slowly, but in 1844 slaves

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<sup>51</sup> The chart for Príncipe in 1771 mentions 6 mixed race slaves, but it seems to be the only situation in which this happens; AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino*, São Tomé, Cx. 13, Doc. 4.

still composed over 40% of the archipelagos.<sup>52</sup> Such high number is unusual, given the economic transformations occurred. A final explanation for these values is a point that we leave open for further investigations.

As for the population growth rate, there was a significant decrease of the population from 1777 to 1807. The main element to cause this seems to be the reduction of the slave population, which affected dramatically the population structure. In the first decades of the nineteenth century the population numbers almost don't change, and it's only in the 1840s that the archipelago starts to grow again.

The black population was the main element in São Tomé and Príncipe's society, above 96%. The sex ratio shows that there were more women than men in the archipelago during these years. Nevertheless, if from 1758 to 1777 there seems to be a significant increase in the number of women, the numbers do not keep up from 1777 to 1814/1822. It is also important to stress that most of the population of São Tomé lived in the main township, which reveals the decreasing importance of forms of plantation agriculture.

The age structures for this period reflect the influence of the amount of slaves of working age in the territory. The lower age classes are considerably small, which is a result of the slave mobility and the high mortality that caused a lack of births. For the same reason, the working age classes are much wider.

These are important ideas to better understand the demographic trends of São Tomé and Príncipe. However, this investigation remains in progress as for the following years of the century, and the data available for that period might strengthen the population evolution analysis.

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<sup>52</sup> José Joaquim Lopes de LIMA, *Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1844, p. 2-A.



## Appendix 1 Demographical Sources for São Tomé and Príncipe (1758–1844)

| Year | Title   | Reference   |
|------|---|---|
| 1758 | <i>Mapa geral de todos os Habitantes que se acham existindo nesta Cidade e Ilha de S. Tomé, e em todo o seu território com distinção dos Brancos Pardos, e Pretos dos livres e dos escravos, como também dos sexos, e idades de todos divididos pelas suas diferentes classes segundo a ordem de S. Majestade de 7 de Junho de 1757 Ilha do Príncipe e de Maio 20 de 1758</i>                                 | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 9, Doc. 87.           |
| 1758 | <i>Mapa geral de todos os Habitantes que se acham existindo nesta Cidade de Santo António da Ilha do Príncipe, e em todo o território desta mesma Ilha com distinção dos Brancos, Pardos, e Pretos dos livres e dos escravos, como também dos sexos e idades de todos divididos pelas suas diferentes classes segundo a ordem de S. Majestade de 7 de Junho de 1757 Ilha do Príncipe e de Maio 28 de 1758</i> | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 10, Doc. 8.           |
| 1770 | <i>Relação Sumária dos Habitantes desta Cidade de Santo António da Ilha do Príncipe tirada pelos róis da Confissão, do que eles constavam, e deles as suas Famílias do número de uma única Freguesia de Matriz de Nossa Senhora da Conceição, com a distinção da qualidade das pessoas, assim machos como as Fêmeas</i>   | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 13, Doc. 4.           |
| 1770 | <i>Sumária Relação dos habitantes desta Ilha, e cidade de S. Tomé, Tirada pelos Róis das Confissões, do que deles constavam e deles as suas famílias do número de Oito Freguesias, duas na cidade e seis fora dela com a distinção das qualidades das pessoas assim machos como fêmeas</i>  | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 13, Doc. 22.          |
| 1771 | <i>Rol dos habitantes da Ilha de S. Tomé que consta de oito Freguesias, duas na cidade e seis extra muros</i>   | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 13, Doc. 22.          |
| 1777 | <i>Relação de todas as pessoas Brancas, Pardas, e Pretos foros, e cativos que há nesta Ilha do Príncipe, declarando as Suas Idades na forma das dez classes que Sua Majestade Fidelíssima que Deus dê me fez mercê assinar na Sua Real Ordem de 21 de Maio de 77</i>  | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 16, Doc. 4.           |
| 1777 | <i>Relação que Sua Majestade Fidelíssima que Deus Guarde manda formar dos números dos Habitantes desta Capitania, Se deve dividir nas classes seguintes 1777</i>  | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 16, Doc. 44.          |
| 1807 | <i>Mapa da População das Ilhas de Príncipe e São Tomé no primeiro de Janeiro de mil oitocentos e sete</i>   | AHU, <i>Conselho Ultramarino</i> , São Tomé e Príncipe, Cód. 1467, fl. 46.        |
| 1810 | <i>Mapa da População da Ilha de S. Tomé 1810</i>  | ARQUIVO NACIONAL DA TORRE DO TOMBO [ANTT], <i>Ministério do Reino</i> , maço 497. |

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|------|--|---|
| 1814 |  | Lima, José Joaquim Lopes de, <i>Ensaio sobre a statistica das possessões portuguezas</i> , Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1844, pp. 3-4.                        |
| 1821 | <i>Mapa da População Branca da Cidade de Santo António da Ilha do Príncipe em Dezembro de 1821</i> | ANTT, <i>Ministério do Reino</i> , maço 497.  |
| 1822 | <i>Mapa da População da Ilha do Príncipe</i>   | ANTT, <i>Ministério do Reino</i> , maço 497.  |
| 1822 | <i>Mapa da População Branca actual da Ilha de S. Tomé neste presente ano de 1822</i>               | ANTT, <i>Ministério do Reino</i> , maço 497.  |
| 1827 |  | Matos, R. J. da Cunha, <i>Compêndio histórico das possessões de Portugal na África</i> , Rio de Janeiro, Ministério da Justiça e Negócios Interiores, 1963. |
| 1830 |  | <i>Arquivo das Colónias</i> , Vol. II, no. 10, 15-04-1918, pp. 147-8.   |
| 1839 | <i>Mapa Estatístico da Província de S. Tomé e Príncipe Ano de 1839</i>                             | AHU, <i>Secretaria de Estado do Ministério do Ultramar</i> , <i>São Tomé e Príncipe</i> , 1L, maço 485.   |
| 1844 |  | Lima, José Joaquim Lopes de, <i>Ensaio sobre a Estatistica das possessões portuguezas</i> , Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1844, p. 2-A.                        |

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## Appendix 2 São Tomé and Príncipe's Population (1758–1822)

| Year | Island   | Population |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     |        | Total  |
|------|----------|------------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------------------|--------|--------|
|      |          | Whites     |       | Mixed Race |       | Blacks |       | Slaves |       | Others <sup>1</sup> |        |        |
|      |          | Men        | Women | Men        | Women | Men    | Women | Men    | Women | Men                 | Women  |        |
| 1758 | S. Tomé  | 20         | 1     | 70         | 86    | 1,506  | 1,131 | 2,503  | 2,520 | 4                   | 7,841  | 12,672 |
|      | Príncipe | 30         | 2     | 71         | 102   | 437    | 332   | 1,846  | 2,011 |                     | 4,831  |        |
| 1770 | S. Tomé  | 45         | 34    | 102        | 99    | 1,425  | 1,830 | 2,073  | 2,478 | 2,335               | 10,421 |        |
|      | Príncipe |            |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     |        |        |
| 1771 | S. Tomé  | 42         | 34    | 81         | 99    | 1,407  | 1,824 | 2,151  | 2,465 | 1,565               | 9,668  | 15,518 |
|      | Príncipe | 62         | 49    | 75         | 90    | 362    | 532   | 1,680  | 2,000 | 1,000               | 5,850  |        |
| 1777 | S. Tomé  |            |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     | 10,893 | 17,879 |
|      | Príncipe | 61         | 55    | 52         | 96    | 385    | 671   | 2,475  | 3,184 | 7                   | 6,986  |        |
| 1807 | S. Tomé  | 30         | 17    | 96         | 93    | 1,672  | 1,988 | 1,574  | 1,528 |                     | 6,998  | 11,827 |
|      | Príncipe | 41         | 39    | 87         | 107   | 486    | 610   | 1,666  | 1,793 |                     | 4,829  |        |
| 1810 | S. Tomé  | 30         | 17    | 96         | 93    | 1,172  | 1,988 | 1,574  | 1,528 |                     | 6,498  |        |
|      | Príncipe |            |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     |        |        |
| 1812 | S. Tomé  |            |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     |        |        |
|      | Príncipe |            | 100   |            | 200   |        |       | 1,660  | 1,793 | 1,416               | 4,869  |        |
| 1814 | S. Tomé  |            |       |            |       |        |       | 1,573  | 1,528 | 3,902               | 7,003  | 11,928 |
|      | Príncipe |            |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     | 4,925  |        |
| 1822 | S. Tomé  |            |       |            |       |        |       |        |       |                     |        |        |
|      | Príncipe | 50         | 42    | 84         | 77    | 434    | 643   | 2,783  | 2,645 |                     | 6,758  |        |

Source: Op. cit. in Appendix 1.

<sup>1</sup> Namely priests without racial status information or other individuals without sex distinction.

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