

Wolof General, c. 1840s

The Wolof states of the seventeenth century, located in today's Senegal, included the Kingdom of Baol and the port of Portudal (discussed in this article), as well as Waalo and Kayor. This Wolof general holds a rifle with a sword or dagger concealed under his tunic. Many West African states had strong military forces. The Senegambian states possessed both infantry and cavalry and employed a variety of weaponry, including firearms, swords, lances, spears, daggers, bows and arrows, shields, helmets, and protective clothing. The artist, David Boilat, was of French-African parentage, spoke Wolof, and had lived in the region. Source: Boilat, *Esquisses Sénégalaises* [*Sketches Senagalese*] (Paris: P. Bertrand, 1853), plate 4.

Massacre at Portudal?:

Reexamining the *Rainbow*, Boston's First Transatlantic Slaving Voyage, 1644–45

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Editor's Introduction: *This article examines the first known slave voyage from British North America, that of the *Rainbow*, which sailed from Boston in 1644–45 to West Africa. Carefully reviewing the historiography, Dr. Kelley demonstrates how the *Rainbow*'s voyage came to be seen as the first transatlantic slaving voyage from Boston, much as the landing of a group of slaves in Jamestown in 1619 from a captured Dutch ship has been characterized as the beginning of African slavery in Virginia.*

*However, newly discovered documents from the High Court of Admiralty (HCA) in London reveal hitherto unknown details regarding the voyage, especially about events on the coast of Africa. The HCA sources demonstrate that the ship had only recently been registered in New England and its voyage was not initially intended as a slaving expedition. The HCA documents also reveal far more specific details about the journey and its aftermath. The *Rainbow* sailed to Portudal, located in the militarily powerful Senegambian kingdom of Baol, where the crew's efforts to attack and enslave residents were successfully repulsed. All of the court depositions agree that the landing party was forced to withdraw, and none tell of any actual fighting on the part of the sailors. John Winthrop's brief references to an assault that "killed many people" and "neare 100 slaine," which many historians have relied upon over the last two centuries, appear to*

have been based on inaccurate and incomplete evidence. The author's careful investigation of the African aspects of the voyage further recasts assumptions about European strength and African weakness in the seventeenth century.

Dr. Kelley argues that these new sources force a reconsideration of the early American slave trade, underscoring the many obstacles faced by colonial traders. The Rainbow's failure and its foiled effort to attack the port of Portudal help to explain why New Englanders' involvement in the transatlantic slave trade did not become either common or profitable until the mid-eighteenth century. Characterizing the Rainbow's voyage of 1644–45 as the seamless beginning of the New England transatlantic slave trade is both misleading and ahistorical. During the seventeenth century, New England merchants dispatched a total of only fourteen slaving ships to Africa.

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Scholars of John Winthrop's Boston are well familiar with the voyage of the *Rainbow*, which has become one of the staple anecdotes in the history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the early history of New England slavery. The details vary with each telling, but a composite version of the story would have the *Rainbow* sailing from Boston to the Cape Verde Islands in 1644 or 1645 under Captain James Smith, perhaps in consort with the *Blossom* under Miles Cawson and the *Seaflower*, commanded by Robert Shapton. In most versions the *Rainbow* then leaves the Cape Verde islands, having shed the other two vessels, and sails to an unspecified location on the "Guinea Coast," where it meets with two unnamed London vessels. There the sailors lure several Africans aboard and take them prisoner, after which they go ashore to seize more by assaulting a "village." They are repulsed, but in retreat employ a small cannon to kill one hundred people. The *Rainbow's* captain then sells its prisoners in Barbados and returns to Boston in 1645, with only two Africans remaining on board.

According to this version, news of the attacks on the African coast soon leaks out and a legal case ensues. The Massachusetts General Court charges the *Rainbow's* captain, James Smith, and mate Thomas Keyser with murder, "man-stealing" (a capital offense under the 1641 Body of Liberties) and "Sabbath-breaking" (since the attack apparently occurred on a Sunday). The court, however, does not convict them on these charges, but does rule that

the two Africans whose whereabouts were then known, including one who had served as an interpreter, had been enslaved and brought to New England illegally. It orders them returned to Africa in 1646, bearing a letter expressing “indignation” at the mariners’ conduct. What happened to the rest of the *Rainbow* captives is not known for certain, but most had probably never made it to New England from Barbados.¹

Historical accounts of the *Rainbow*’s voyage first began to appear in Massachusetts newspapers in 1819, and from their content we can infer that they were based on John Winthrop’s “journal.” Copies of Winthrop’s writings (which he never referred to as a journal) had been circulating among historically minded Bostonians since the late eighteenth century. Noah Webster had published some of Winthrop’s writings in 1790, but his edition left off before the incident in question, so it was not the source for the earliest accounts. However, Winthrop’s papers did continue to circulate amongst the members of the Massachusetts Historical Society and probably formed the basis for the earliest newspaper accounts. In 1826 a complete edition of Winthrop’s journal was finally published and from this point most accounts of the *Rainbow* relied upon it.² Although he did not cite it, George Bancroft seems to have relied upon Winthrop for his account in the first volume of his *History of the United States of America* (1842), as did other nineteenth-century chroniclers, such as Richard Hildreth.

Meanwhile, the story continued to appear sporadically in newspapers throughout the antebellum period, all recirculating the same basic information. Eventually, in 1866, George Moore presented a more scholarly account of the incident, citing the *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay*, which were published in 1853–54, along with Winthrop’s journal. Most modern historians, however, know the tale mainly from Elizabeth Donnan’s landmark 1935 collection, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America*, which reproduced all of the documents known of at the time.³

For the past eighty years, historians ranging from Lorenzo Greene (1942) to Winthrop D. Jordan (1968) to Wendy Warren (2016) have based their interpretations almost solely on these materials.⁴ However, a new cache of documents in the British National Archives has emerged that offer a great deal more information, clearing up several points of confusion and in some cases contradicting and/or correcting the historical record. The materials, from the High Court of Admiralty (HCA), have been known to maritime historians for several decades. John Appleby first brought them to light in a 1995 article to support the argument that the early English slave trade was larger than previously believed. More recently, Richard J. Blakemore has

used them to explore violence and English commercial ambitions in Africa during the Civil War. Neither author, however, focuses on the *Rainbow* itself or its significance as the first Bostonian or “American” transatlantic slave vessel. Although the HCA documents cannot provide an objectively “true” account of the voyage and tell us very little about the Massachusetts side of the story, they furnish a much clearer understanding of events in Africa.

Firstly, the HCA documents offer correctives to the basic chronology and other details of the voyage. Secondly and more importantly, they provide specific information regarding events on the African coast. Hamstrung by a lack of specific information on where the *Rainbow* actually went in Africa, earlier interpretations were forced to generalize about “Africa” and “the Guinea coast.” By providing specific geographic information, the new documents allow us to ground the incident in a specific African historical context. As it happens, the *Rainbow*’s crew encountered not a defenseless “African village,” but the main port of the militarily powerful West African state of Baol, which successfully repulsed the sailors’ attack.⁵

This, in turn, forces a rethinking of the early New England slave trade. Historians have traditionally viewed the *Rainbow* as the first example of what would become a significant economic pursuit for colonial New England. But the *Rainbow*’s voyage actually demonstrates the opposite: early New England slavers were both inexperienced and underfinanced. Although not all early voyages ended as badly as the *Rainbow*’s, the very small number of vessels dispatched to Africa in the seventeenth century suggests that New England merchants recognized that the transatlantic slave trade was challenging and not something they could profitably pursue at that time. As a business enterprise, the *Rainbow*’s voyage was a failure, and a very public one at that. It is hardly surprising that it spawned so few immediate imitators. Instead, it would take nearly a century for the transatlantic slave trade to become an established sector of New England’s economy.

A “BOSTON VESSEL”? THE *RAINBOW*’S BRITISH ORIGINS

The *Rainbow*, along with its consorts the *Blossom* and the *Seafflower*, came to the High Court of Admiralty’s attention as a result of a complaint made in 1646 by a group of London merchants. The merchants, who were connected with the Guinea Company, the forerunner of the Royal African Company, feared that the violence, lawlessness, and foiled attack perpetrated by the crew of these three vessels would bring the “Dishonour of our Nation” within Africa and allow the Dutch and the French to increase their share of the African trade at England’s expense. The court’s final decision is not

known (those records did not survive), but it did investigate the complaint by taking depositions in London from a dozen mariners who had served aboard the *Blossom* and *Seaflower*. Additional information comes from a separate case involving goods damaged aboard the *Blossom* on its passage home to London. However, because the *Rainbow* returned to Boston and not to London, none of its sailors were deposed, which is unfortunate since it means we know relatively little about what happened after it parted ways with the other two vessels. The High Court of Admiralty documents therefore offer a partial account of the entire *Rainbow* saga, addressing only those events that occurred on the African coast.⁶

Legal depositions, of course, are highly mediated documents that require careful handling. People involved in legal proceedings tend to think very instrumentally. Even when not lying, they may not tell the whole truth. In this case, Captains Cawson and Shapton (although not Smith, since he was in Boston) had every reason to deny or minimize the scale and scope of any violence perpetrated on the African coast. The other seamen who were deposed, however, were not on trial themselves and had no direct incentive to lie. They may have been subject to patron-client pressure from the defendants, especially if they hoped for future employment. On balance, however, the depositions are convincing. For one thing, whatever pressure the seamen may have felt to provide testimony favorable to their former captains may well have been offset by pressure from the merchants who brought the complaint. There is also a striking consistency in the mariners' statements, from men on different ships and in different stations, including a part-owner of one vessel, a ship's carpenter, and several seamen (all among the seventeen deponents).

The first point that the documents clarify pertains to the vessels' origins. In most historical accounts all three are presented as New England vessels, making this the first "American" transatlantic slaving voyage. The Admiralty Court documents, however, establish with near certainty that neither the *Blossom* nor the *Seaflower* had any connection at all to Boston or any other British colonial port and so should not be considered as American vessels. The only thing connecting the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* to Boston is a copy of an original consortship agreement—an agreement to sail together and aid each other—signed by the captains and mates of the three vessels, which happens to rest in the Massachusetts Archives (and was reprinted in Elizabeth Donnan's widely used document collection), likely as a result of the *Rainbow* litigation. Nothing in the consortship agreement says or implies that it was signed in Boston, as has often been assumed.

On the other hand, the admiralty court documents describe the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* with perfect consistency as being "of London." All of the crew

members who gave depositions about the 1644–45 voyage were listed as residing in the greater London area (two sailors who gave depositions about an earlier voyage by the *Rainbow* were listed as “of New England”). The *Blossom* and *Seaflower*, then, were English vessels, plain and simple and almost certainly never even touched at Boston. This revelation clears up a related problem in some historical narratives, involving the apparent disappearance of the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* after the signing of the consortship agreement, as well as the sudden appearance of two unnamed London vessels. It is now clear that the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* were the very same “Londoners” mentioned in Winthrop’s diary who took part in the raid on Portudal. This, in turn, eliminates the need to have them vanish in the middle of the Atlantic, as they do in some retellings.⁷

Thus, the *Rainbow* only barely qualifies as a “Boston” vessel. According to depositions from two sailors who shipped aboard the *Rainbow* on a previous voyage, Captain Smith and the *Rainbow* were based in London as late as 1642. Late that year, however, Smith sailed from London with the *Rainbow* on a complex multilateral voyage, touching at the Cape Verde Islands, several locations on the African coast (including Portudal on the Petite Côte in Senegambia and up the Gambia River), and from there Barbados and then Madeira. Deeply in debt, Smith was overheard saying that if he returned to London he “should lye in prison all dayes of his life,” so he apparently decided while at Barbados to take the *Rainbow* to New England instead, probably in 1643. We know that he was in Massachusetts in the following year, because he was involved in a minor controversy that came to the General Court’s attention. Smith and Thomas Keyser, the mate aboard the *Rainbow*, apparently had intervened in a dispute between a Portuguese vessel and the residents of Hull, Massachusetts, and with the blessing of a sympathetic magistrate, seized money and goods as a reprisal. However, the Portuguese captain complained to the General Court and was awarded compensation.

Smith eventually built a house for himself in Massachusetts and became a member of Boston’s First Church. As of 1644, Smith owned a quarter share in the *Rainbow* (whether he always had or whether he purchased the share later is not clear). He also seems to have sold or engineered the sale of shares in the vessel to Bostonians David Selleck, a soap-boiler, and Isaac Grosse, a brewer. According to one of the London deponents, the *Rainbow* was at that point reputed to be “of Yarmouth,” a small town on Cape Cod, though it apparently sailed out of Boston.⁸

THE *RAINBOW*'S ITINERARY AND TIMELINE

The High Court of Admiralty documents also shed light on the vessels' itineraries. The revelation that the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* were never at Boston means, contrary to some narratives of the episode, that the consortship agreement was signed elsewhere. The deposition of Andreas Bengellye, who served aboard the *Blossom*, tells us the location: all three vessels "Sett Sayle all together from the Maderas and Sayled to the Coast of Guinney." The consortship agreement, then, was surely signed at Madeira, a place frequented by ships from both Boston and London. Bengellye's deposition also suggests that the vessels sailed straight from Madeira to the African coast, which at first glance might appear to contradict the captains' agreement to rendezvous at "Cape Devird," but the English used the term to signify both the Portuguese archipelago (the present-day Cabo Verde) and the point on the African mainland after which the islands were named (Cap-Vert, the site of modern Dakar, Senegal).⁹

The revised itinerary raises further issues regarding the voyage's timeline. Three key dates anchor the story in time: a departure date of 1644 from London for the *Blossom* and *Seaflower*, mentioned in several of the Admiralty Court documents; a departure date from Boston of early November 1644 for the *Rainbow*, deduced from Winthrop's journal (although it must be said, without complete certainty); and the consortship agreement dated February 13, 1644.¹⁰ It is the latter date that seems the most problematic, since it implies a nine-month gap between the signing of the consortship agreement and the departure of the *Rainbow* from Boston. The confusion has led scholars to propose several timelines. Some have suggested that the *Rainbow* actually made two voyages from Boston to Africa, one in 1644 and another in 1645. The timing of the supposed first voyage is based on the February 13, 1644 consortship agreement; the dating of the supposed second voyage is presumably anchored by Winthrop's journal entry of July 1645. Others seem to have worked from the timeline implied by the arrangement of the documents in Donnan's collection, starting with the signing of the consortship agreement in Boston in February 1644, presuming a departure by all three vessels from Boston in November of 1644 (based on Winthrop's journal), with a return to Boston in 1645.¹¹

The answer is fairly straightforward. By the conventions of the English calendar at the time, in which the new year only began officially on March 25, a document dated February 1644 would be, by modern dating, February 1645. Later in the seventeenth century, the English adopted the dual-dating convention, by which such dates would be rendered as February 1644/5,

but that convention was not widely used in the 1640s.¹² Thus, Winthrop's journal suggests (again, it must be said, without complete certainty) that the *Rainbow* sailed for Madeira from Boston in November 1644. Smith, Cawson, and Shapton therefore signed the consortship agreement at Madeira in February 1645, and the *Rainbow* (but not the *Blossom* or *Seaflower*) returned to Boston via Barbados in April 1645. This was a quick but hardly impossible turnaround, especially since the slavers did not actually attempt to negotiate a purchase or wait for the delivery of the captives, which was the most time-consuming part of most slaving voyages. There was therefore only a single voyage from Boston by a single ship, the *Rainbow*, in 1644–1645.

THE *GEORGE*: MILES CAWSON'S FAILED 1642 VOYAGE

Matters of timing aside, the real value of the High Court of Admiralty depositions lies in what they reveal about events in Africa. The story that emerges is quite complicated. It begins in 1642, when a ship named the *George* sailed from London to Africa under the command of Miles Cawson, who would later command the *Seaflower*. As we shall see, the *Blossom*'s and *Seaflower*'s later voyage was a direct outgrowth of Cawson's debacle with the *George*.

In 1642 the *George* anchored off the Petite Côte, a stretch of coastline south of modern-day Dakar, Senegal. Cawson sent some trade goods ashore to Portudal, which was the principal trading center for the Wolof kingdom of Baol. (One deponent said that Cawson first traded at Rufisque, the main port of the Wolof kingdom of Kayor on the Petite Côte just north of Baol before moving on to Portudal.) Along with most of the other polities in the region, Baol had been involved in Atlantic trade since the fifteenth century. Two hundred years of exchange, and slave trading in particular, had wrought great change in the region. Baol had once been a province in the Jolof confederacy, but the growing Atlantic trade had allowed it, along with several other coastal provinces, including Kayor, to become independent in the mid-fifteenth century. Baol and the other polities in the region all possessed large and powerful cavalries, which they maintained by trading captives to the Portuguese for horses. The disintegration of Jolof in the second half of the sixteenth century set off cycles of violence, all of which fed the slave trade. By the late sixteenth century, the English, French, and Dutch had all begun trading in the region.¹³

Although human beings had comprised a significant portion of the trade at Baol and the Petite Côte at large, slaves were just one commodity among several, the others being cowhides, gold, beeswax, cloth, and ivory. With



Soldier and Cavalryman Senegambia, 1780s

Although these drawings are from the 18th century, they offer a good representation of the military forces maintained by the Kingdom of Baol. All of the Wolof kingdoms had strong military traditions.

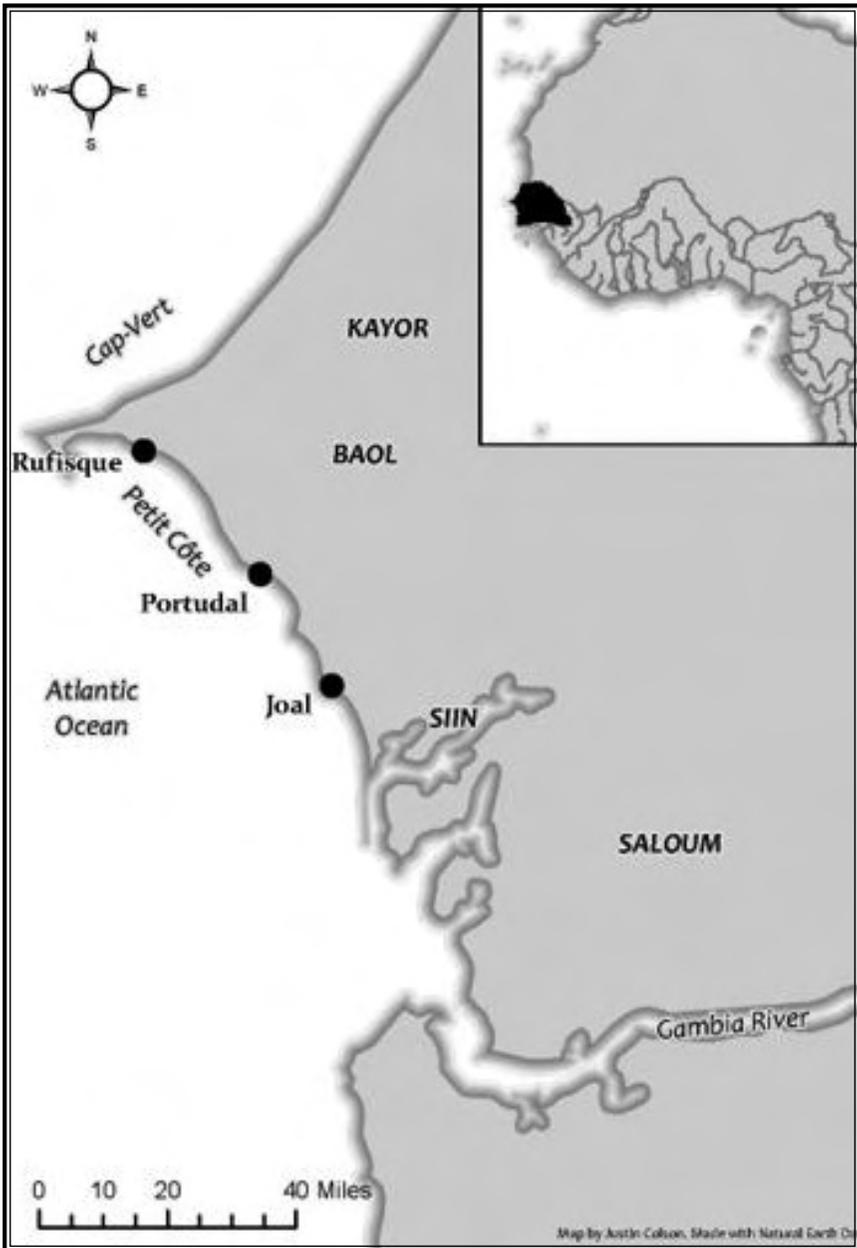
Left: This soldier is depicted holding a lance/spear, with a sword and a pistol under his belt.

Below: Cavalryman with spear, bow, and quiver of arrows.

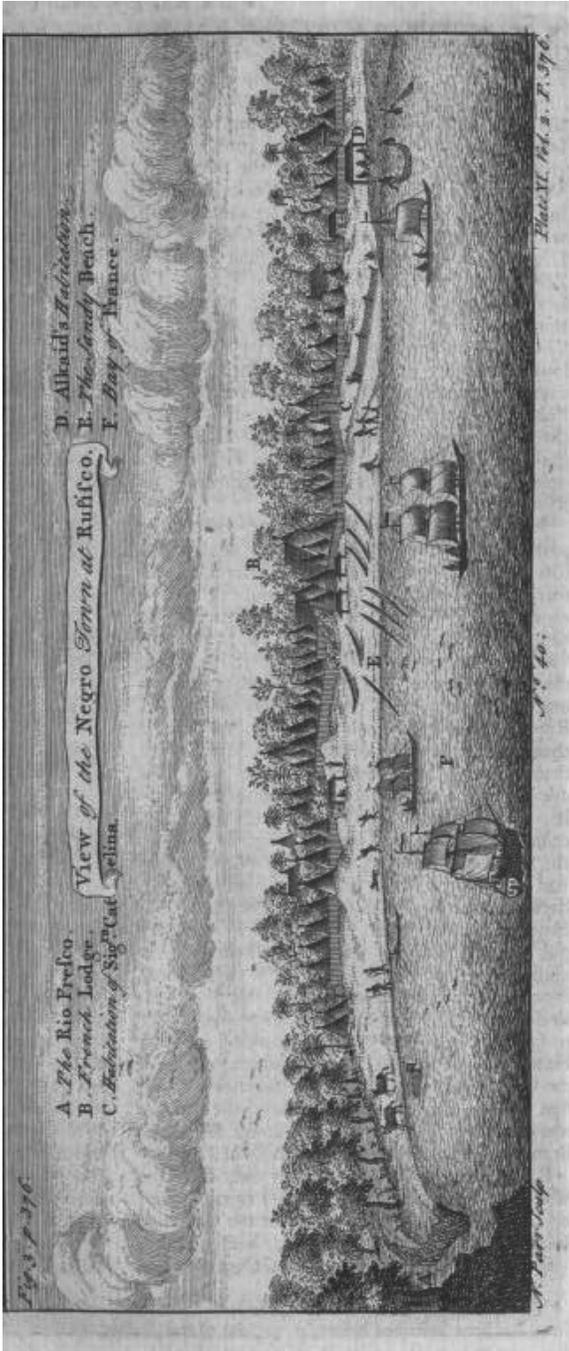


In the 1780s the French artist who made these engravings lived in the Senegal region for two years. He writes that his engravings were made from drawings that were mostly done on the spot.

Source: René Claude Geoffroy de Villeneuve, *L'Afrique, ou histoire, moeurs, usages et coutumes des africains* (Paris, 1814), Vol. 3, pp. 36 and 120.



Senegambia and the Petite Côte in the Seventeenth Century



“View of the Negro Town of Rufisco,” c. 1700

An image of Rufisque, a town near Portudal, that probably looked very similar. It was the main port of the Wolof kingdom of Kayor. The drawing even notes the residence of the Alcaide. However, it presents the image of an undefended and defenseless African village, which this article challenges, and fails to suggest the presence of military forces capable of rebuffing European attacks. Similar to most images of Africa from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, it was drawn by an artist who never actually visited the region. Source: Jean Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea; and of Ethiopia Inferior, etc.* 1732, <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rufisque#/media/Fichier:Rufisco.jpg>.

no slave-based colonies of their own prior to the mid-seventeenth century, English traders in Africa had focused more on the non-human goods and commodities. In 1591–92 alone, the English reportedly took on at least 18,500 hides on the Petite Côte. With the emergence of Barbados as a slave-based colony beginning in the 1640s, English traders were increasingly interested in acquiring captives. These were available, of course. Some of those enslaved at Baol had been born locally and by convention could not be sold to Europeans, but those who had come from outside could be traded away. War captives were the most numerous, sold to Europeans on the assumption that it was wise to send them as far away as possible. Criminals were similarly undesirable, although Atlantic demand undoubtedly prompted more questionable convictions than in years past. Lastly, captives who were purchased from outside of Baol were also viewed as outsiders with no implied right to remain.¹⁴

At Portudal, like virtually everywhere on the African coast, maritime commerce was under the control of the local polities, who enforced a set of rules regarding customs, residency, and trade practices. For many years there had been a Portuguese-African merchant enclave at Portudal, but by the time the *Rainbow* arrived it was either in steep decline or gone altogether.¹⁵ Cawson therefore dealt directly with the Baol state, represented by an official administrator known as an “Alcaide,” whose enslavement to the King (or Teeñ) of Baol ensured his loyalty.

Disputes between Europeans and Africans were a common feature of the slave trade. Wariness and mistrust prevailed, and violence was common. Before the arrival of the Europeans, Africans had devised a repertoire of practices to handle these disputes, and Europeans soon learned to abide by them. Disputes were settled through an indigenous process of adjudication known as a “chai” or “palaver,” to which Europeans had to submit if they wanted to trade. Violence was integral to this system. Debts might be settled by seizing property, including people. Sometimes these actions set off cycles of retaliatory violence before they were finally settled. Trade, in other words, always carried with it the possibility of violence, and after two centuries of sustained European-African contact, all parties knew to remain on guard. In this environment, surprise attacks like the one rumored to have occurred on the *Rainbow*’s voyage would have been difficult to pull off.¹⁶

Cawson’s 1642 voyage with the *George* was one of several undertaken by independent traders at a time when the Guinea Company, which held a national monopoly on African trade, was in a weak political position. The English Civil War had begun, and the Guinea Company’s ties to the Stuart family were a liability.¹⁷ Cawson took the *George* to Saloum and to Portudal,

where he paid customs to the Alcaide. At Portudal he negotiated an agreement to store his trade goods, which included a large amount of iron, in a rented warehouse. Things soon went awry. The most likely cause was a failure on Cawson's part to observe regional trading conventions, which were intricate and could only be mastered through experience. Customs needed to be paid to multiple officials, in the correct assortments and quantities of trade goods, and not just for landing the cargo but for procuring wood, water, and food. Various local "captains" also needed to be paid, as did the Alcaide every time they met. Whatever the cause, a dispute arose and the Alcaide at Portudal allowed Cawson's warehouse to be plundered and his men to be beaten. (One deponent testified that three of his men were killed, but Cawson never said so himself). Cawson was forced to abandon his goods and return to London.¹⁸

THE 1645 ATTACK: CAWSON SEEKS REVENGE

The subsequent voyage of the *Blossom* and *Seaflower*, which sailed from London in 1644–45, was a direct outgrowth of Cawson's 1642 debacle with the *George*. Cawson, as his men would later testify, wanted recompense for the loss of his goods and revenge for the "insolencies committed by the Negroes," which he undoubtedly viewed in racialized terms. Exactly how Cawson persuaded Captains Robert Shapton and James Smith to help him is unknown, especially since Smith was based in New England and/or Barbados by this time. It is conceivable that Smith simply ran into Cawson and Shapton at Madeira and was persuaded to turn a wine-trading voyage into a slaving voyage. But since Smith had been in London as recently as 1642, it is also possible that he had previous contact with Cawson and/or Shapton and that there was prior coordination.

The plan from the start seems to have been to seize residents of Portudal by force. The February 1645 consortium agreement obliged the captains to help each other with "what troubles shall accrue" by seizing captives. Their violent intent can also be seen in their choice of anchorage. Although most vessels trading on the Petite Côte anchored on the leese side of the Cap-Vert Peninsula and sent pinnaces down to Portudal, the *Rainbow*, *Blossom*, and *Seaflower* went to the shallower, more treacherous anchorage off Portudal, thirty miles to the south, the better to launch their attack. Then, before dawn one Sunday morning, they dispatched a landing party in three boats, one from each ship, armed with swords, muskets and small artillery pieces. Cawson and Shapton later testified that they merely intended to seek redress for the earlier dispute but were seized and imprisoned by the Alcaide, which prompted a second attempt to land. Other deponents, however, testified that

the foiled attack came first, followed by a second landing to “invite” the Alcaide to negotiate aboard ship.¹⁹

As the landing party came ashore, the Alcaide and his captains were waiting for them. Cawson and Shapton later said that there were between 4,000 and 5,000 soldiers on the beach. This is a probable overstatement—Cawson’s and Shapton’s defense was predicated on the notion that the Alcaide attacked them first—but it is not impossible. The Teeñ of Baol maintained a personal guard of no less than 200 men and could call upon standing regiments of full-time soldiers, including cavalry and a corps of elite enslaved soldiers known as “ceddos.” The Teeñ of Baol would have been able to muster at least a few thousand men, but probably not on such short notice. Still, we can be certain that the Teeñ maintained a large contingent to protect his main port, certainly enough to fend off a dozen or two men in boats. Cawson’s reappearance with two additional ships two years after his initial dispute would have put the Alcaide on his guard, perhaps even prompting a request for more troops. The notion that Smith, Cawson, and Shapton surprised an unsuspecting African “village” is clearly incorrect. This was a well-defended port, with a military garrison that knew to expect conflict.²⁰

At this show of force (or, in the telling of Cawson, Shapton, and several others, after facing several volleys of arrows), the landing party returned to the ships. Later that morning, the captains sent a party ashore to invite the Alcaide and others to come aboard the ships and talk trade. The Alcaide, his interpreters, and additional personnel came aboard two of the vessels, where they were subdued and imprisoned. The ship captains then demanded a ransom for their return, locking most of the delegation in the hold but reportedly allowing the Alcaide to stay in one of the cabins. Negotiations continued over the next week, and somewhere between sixteen and twenty captives were exchanged for less-valued substitutes. This was a common practice in much of Africa, especially for elite captives and particularly in Muslim-influenced areas like Senegambia. Not all of the hostages were redeemed, however, and the vessels departed with at least one of the Alcaide’s interpreters aboard.²¹

WINTHROP’S ALLEGED MASSACRE: UNDERESTIMATING THE KINGDOM OF BAOL

Whether Smith, Cawson, and Shapton (or some combination of them) killed one hundred residents at Portudal, as reported in Winthrop’s journal, is perhaps the most difficult question to answer. Historians, most recently Wendy Warren in *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early*

America (2016), have based their interpretation on two sources, an entry in Winthrop's journal from July 1645, and an entry in the diary of Richard Saltonstall from October 1645. Of the two, Winthrop's is the more detailed. He notes that he heard that they had "assaulted one of their Townes and killed many people" and that there were "neare 100 slaine by the confession of some of the mariners." However, the fact that this entry was made three months after the *Rainbow* arrived in Boston suggests that it took some time for the allegation of a massacre to work its way through the grapevine to Winthrop. Saltonstall does not mention how he heard about the alleged attack, but the lack of detail in his account, as well as the fact that he wrote six months after the *Rainbow*'s return, may indicate that his information was also based on waterfront hearsay. Finally, the fact that no mention of a massacre was made in the aftermath of the trial suggests that the rumors were eventually deemed unreliable.²²

None of the Admiralty Court depositions describe anything resembling the bombardment mentioned in Winthrop's journal. Of course, the deponents might have kept silent on the question out of an unwillingness to implicate themselves in a mass murder. Yet while this explanation makes perfect sense for the accused—Cawson and Shapton—it is harder to explain why the other deponents, who were not on trial, would fail to mention such a large-scale massacre. Moreover, several of the deponents were clearly hostile to Cawson and Shapton and offered damning testimony on other matters. Some of the sailors, for example, had been unhappy at the prospect of making an assault. John Hacker protested to Cawson that his "designe was not lawfull" and in return was called a "coward." Andreas Bengellye recalled that the crew of the *Blossom* initially refused to man the boats for the raid. Shapton then threatened to withhold their wages if they refused and offered them one-tenth of the proceeds from any sales of slaves.

All of the depositions agree that the landing party was forced to withdraw, and none tell of any actual fighting on the part of the sailors. Finally, as documents from a separate court proceeding reveal, there was a great deal of dissent aboard the *Blossom* on the homeward voyage from Barbados to London. Poor caulking ruined some of the cargo and food, and the crew was given only partial rations. Cawson blamed the leaks on his carpenter, who was very ill from his time in the tropics, and denied him food and water for two days. The resulting "difference and dissent" amongst the crew would presumably have removed any inhibition against speaking of a mass murder, but nothing was said.²³

It is, of course, possible that an attack occurred later, assuming the *Rainbow* stayed on the coast after *Blossom* and *Seafflower* departed. That is,

Winthrop's accusation may be interpreted as applying solely to the *Rainbow*, with Smith landing, seizing captives, and killing a large number of people after the other vessels had already departed. This could explain the absence of any mention of the killing in the London depositions, since any crimes that took place after their departure would not have been known or described. This, however, ran counter to the consortium agreement, in which the captains agreed to stay together until reaching Barbados.

It is also worth noting that while Smith and Keyser were charged with murder, the Massachusetts court verdict addressed only the dispute over the return voyage of the *Rainbow* and the issue of "man-stealing." The 1641 Body of Liberty had defined this as a capital offense: "There shall never be any bond slaverie, villinage or captivitie amongst us unless it be lawfull captives taken in just warres, and such strangers as willingly selle themselves or are sold to us." To be sure, the court may have declined to impose a penalty simply because the lives in question were African, but then we would have to ask why the court took man-stealing seriously enough to mandate the return of the African translators (and bear the expense) while failing to punish the more serious crime of murder.

Perhaps the most compelling reason to question Winthrop's reference to a massacre is that it overestimates the power of the *Rainbow*'s crew and underestimates the ability of an African state to defend itself. In other words, Winthrop's account is questionable not because Smith and company *would* not have attacked at Portudal (after all, they tried) but because they likely *could* not have prevailed, at least to the degree alleged in Winthrop's journal. To believe they succeeded requires us to dismiss the depositions, all of which say the landing party was turned away. It also assumes that Smith and at most one or two dozen men could have actually pulled off a raid for a significant number of captives, killed a large number of people, and made their escape, against a well-organized and militarily capable state that would have been on high alert for any violence or trickery.

The story told in the depositions of a landing party repulsed in a hail of arrows, with men wounded and the captains barely escaping with their lives, is much more plausible and much more easily reconciled with what we know about the Kingdom of Baol. Lastly, historians have long pointed to disease as a factor that prevented Europeans from wielding significant territorial power in Africa. The depositions do not address disease aboard the *Rainbow* or *Seaflower*, but they do reveal that the crew of the *Blossom* suffered greatly and that eight or nine of them died. The other crews surely suffered similarly, which would have made it even more difficult to mount a successful attack.²⁴

None of this is to suggest that European and American slavers were above attacking and killing Africans. It is a matter of record that Europeans did occasionally mount raids on the African coast—Nuno Tristão in the fifteenth century and John Hawkins in the sixteenth century are the most famous examples. But even with the advantage of surprise, both paid a terrible price in the lives of their men (or in Tristão's case, his own life). One Portuguese slaver of the era remarked that “the people of this land [near the Senegal River] are not as easy to enslave as we wished,” and eventually both the Portuguese and the English concluded that it was more profitable to purchase captives than to seize them.²⁵ Abduction, known as “panyarring,” did persist through the era of the slave trade. From the perspective of a slave ship captain, it made a certain amount of economic sense. But it was almost always done opportunistically, on a small scale, mostly because major attacks stood almost no chance of succeeding.²⁶

Whatever happened at Portudal, the three vessels sailed to Barbados, where they sold what captives they had. The depositions from the High Court of Admiralty suggest the total number was small, twenty or fewer, consistent with the notion that these were the captives given in exchange for the release of the kidnapped Alcaide and his men. It is possible that the ships managed to procure additional captives by trading or raiding. Winthrop indicated in his journal that the *Rainbow* took on captives at the Cape Verde islands, which suggests an additional stop, but this may reflect Smith's initial cover story, designed to hide his involvement in the Portudal affair, or it may simply have been a rumor. Be that as it may, the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* returned directly to London from Barbados, never calling at Boston.

Word of Cawson's and Shapton's hostage-taking exploits and foiled attack leaked out, causing consternation among London's African traders. Fearing that the captains' deeds would result in the “destruction of that Trade and Comerse” of the Guinea traders, they brought a formal complaint to the High Court of Admiralty. The *Rainbow* remained at Barbados while Smith and first mate Thomas Keyser argued over who had control of the vessel. Keyser wound up sailing the *Rainbow* to Boston, where word of the Portudal incident also came out, resulting in the Massachusetts General Court's decision to release the few captives who had made it that far and return them to Africa.²⁷

A REAPPRAISAL: MISCONSTRUING THE SLAVE TRADE

In the final analysis, there can be no doubt that Smith and his confederates intended to attack and enslave free men, women, and children at Portudal.

The notion that Smith and his crew raided and killed at will, however, misconstrues the way the slave trade actually functioned. At the heart of the matter is the problematic image of Africans as the guileless victims of the European traders, as exotic and savage “others,” lacking in states, culture, commerce, military forces, and history. These ideas find expression in the geographical imprecision of most historical accounts, which usually place the action in an unspecified location on the “Guinea coast.” But as contemporaries understood, and as the incident at Portudal clearly shows, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Baol was a powerful state, with military forces, commercial networks, and discriminating consumers. And experience—Portudal’s leaders had been dealing with Europeans for almost two hundred years when the *Rainbow* appeared. This experience is reflected in the abilities of the Alcaide’s interpreters, who spoke English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese (rendered as “Spanish” in the documents). When New Englanders arrived on this coast in the mid-1600s, they had little choice but to accept the terms laid out by local states and traders. Trickery and violence might gain them a few captives, but hardly enough to sustain a profitable trade. The apparent failure of Cawson (on both of his voyages), Shapton, and Smith to trade successfully is a good illustration of the point—Africans were not naïve nor defenseless. In the seventeenth-century, procuring captives was both difficult and expensive.

The Portudal incident has additional implications for our understanding of the early colonial slave trade. A number of historical accounts have portrayed the *Rainbow* as a harbinger of things to come.²⁸ No doubt they have in mind not only the establishment of slavery in New England, but also the emergence of an American arm of the transatlantic slave trade. American ships would ultimately transport over 300,000 Africans to New World captivity (mostly to the Caribbean). But that is true only in the longest of views. In the near and medium terms, the *Rainbow*’s voyage did not inspire Bostonians to plunge heavily into the transatlantic slave trade. The entirety of New England averaged about one transatlantic slaving voyage every four years for the remainder of the century. Most Africans in seventeenth-century Massachusetts arrived via the intercolonial trade, not aboard transatlantic slave ships. It was only after about 1730, when New Englanders solved the problem of trade goods and gained experience in Africa, that they were able to embark upon a regularized and profitable transatlantic trade in captives.²⁹

Indeed, merchants in seventeenth-century New England were simply not capable of initiating a regular and profitable transatlantic slave trade. The few voyages they dispatched tended to be improvised and opportunistic, and would-be slave-traders rarely tried a second time. The facts that the

Rainbow was only nominally an “American” vessel, and that the *Blossom* and *Seaflower* were London-based vessels, hints at the serious challenges faced by early colonial traders. Perhaps the most important obstacle was a lack of capital. The English slave trade was dominated by wealthy, occasionally even aristocratic, investors. The *Rainbow*’s owners consisted of a ship captain, a soap-boiler, and a brewer.³⁰ Procuring a proper assortment of trade goods—iron, textiles, and the like—necessitated importing and re-exporting expensive manufactures and taxed the resources of most colonial merchants.

In the final analysis, the fact that Smith had to resort to subterfuge and violence to procure captives was a sign of weakness, not strength. It was a direct consequence of the inability of the *Rainbow*’s owners to finance a proper voyage. New Englanders also lacked the commercial networks to convey information about precisely which goods were in demand. Finally, they lacked experience in African trade, which was likewise essential to success. White New Englanders, then, could not simply raid themselves to success in the transatlantic slave trade. Profitability required more than just ships and armed men.³¹

The Portudal incident highlights several truths about African slavery in Puritan Massachusetts. As several scholars have suggested, the post-voyage litigation, far from indicating a principled opposition to slavery as an institution, actually helped to legitimize bondage within the colony. The 1641 Body of Liberties had barred “bond slaverie, villinage or Captivitie” but excepted war captives and “such strangers as willingly selle themselves or are sold to us.”³² By voiding the enslavement of the two men from the *Rainbow* and returning them to Africa with a written apology, the General Court implied that slavery was tolerable as an institution in Massachusetts as long as it stayed within the rules. The General Court in effect drew a line between what it viewed as legitimate and illegitimate enslavement, with the implication that enslavements done in accordance with the strictures of the Body of Liberties would be acceptable.

The Massachusetts chapter of the *Rainbow*’s story thus remains unchanged by the Admiralty Court documents. However, the new findings alter the African chapter of the story considerably. Smith, Shapton, and Cawson attacked not a stereotypically defenseless, unsuspecting African village, but the chief port of a sophisticated, well-armed state—and met with predictable results. Ready and willing as they may have been to embrace transatlantic slaving, New Englanders would have to look elsewhere for captives until they developed the ability to conduct a regular and profitable trade.

Notes

1. Accounts include Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620–1776* (New York, 1942), 20–21; Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518–1865* (New York: Viking, 1962), 61–62; James A. Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981), 346; Larry D. Gragg, “The Troubled Voyage of the *Rainbow*,” *History Today* 39, no. 8 (1989): 36–41; Larry D. Gragg, “‘To Procure Negroes’: The English Slave Trade to Barbados, 1627–60,” *Slavery and Abolition* 16, no. 1 (1995): 65–84; Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (New York: Liveright, 2016); Mark Peterson, *The City-State of Boston: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Power, 1630–1865* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 61–62. Vessels and mariners names have been spelled various ways. For consistency, I have adopted the most common spellings in the High Court of Admiralty documents (see below).
2. On Winthrop’s papers, see Malcolm Freiberg, “The Winthrops and Their Papers,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 80 (1968): 55–70; Richard S. Dunn, “John Winthrop Writes His Journal,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1984): 185–212. For the first complete published version of the journal, see James Savage, *The History of New England from 1630–1649*, 2 vols. (Boston: Thomas B. Wait and Son, 1826). The *Rainbow* is discussed in vol. 2: 243–44.
3. George Bancroft, *History of the United States, from the Discovery of the American Continent*, 10 vols. (Boston: Little and Brown, 1842–74), 1:173–174; Richard Hildreth, *The History of the United States of America*, 6 vols. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1863), 1: 282; George Moore, *Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts* (Boston: Appleton, 1866), 28–30; Elizabeth Donnan, ed. *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935; reprint, Octagon Books), 3: 4–9.
4. Greene, 20–21; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 69–70.
5. John Appleby, “‘A Business of Much Difficulty’: A London Slaving Venture, 1651–1654,” *Mariner’s Mirror* 81, no. 1 (1995): 3–14; Richard J. Blakemore, “West Africa in the British Atlantic: Trade, Violence, and Empire in the 1640s,” *Itinerario* 39, no. 2 (2015): 299–327.
6. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), HCA 30/849, fol. 636.
7. For the consortship agreement as an accurate rendering of the version in the Massachusetts Archives Collection 60: 290, see Donnan, ed. *Documents*, 3: 4–5. The archival document is clearly a contemporary copy of an original, since the signatures of the captains are all in the same hand. Numerous documents in the HCA series establish the nationality of the *Blossom* and *Seaflower*. For examples, see Libel Against Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, April 28, 1646, HCA 24/108, fol. 7; Allegation of Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, April 28, 1646, TNA HCA 24/8, fol. 8; Deposition of Johannes Hacker, HCA 13/60, fol. 532. See also Blakemore, 303.

8. TNA HCA 13/60, pg. 90, Deposition of John Denton; TNA HCA 13/60, pg. 534; Deposition of Richard Bartholomew. See also TNA HCA 23/14, pg. 321, Interrogatories posed to William Reana. On Smith's clash with the Portuguese vessel, see Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 3 vols. (Boston: William White, 1853), 2: 79–80. On Selleck, see Paulette Clark Kaufman, "David Selleck of Somerset, England, and of Massachusetts and Virginia: Soap Maker and Merchant Trader," *The Genealogist* 19, no. 1 (2005): 3–40. On Grosse, see Samuel Adams Drake, *Old Boston Taverns and Tavern Clubs* (Boston: W. A. Butterfield, 1917), 122; Samuel Peck Bradshaw, "Gross Genealogy: The Descendants of Ezra Carter Gross and His Line of Descent from Isaac Gross," (1921), 3, online at <https://archive.org/details/grossgenealogyde00brad> (accessed 15 February 2018).
9. Deposition of Andreas Bengellye, TNA HCA 13/60, 548–549; Donnan, *Documents*, 3: 4–5. For English sailors of the era, it was probably more common still to refer to the specific islands of the Cape Verdes (e.g. "St. Jago" for Santiago or "Mayo" for Maio) rather than to the archipelago as a whole.
10. Winthrop recorded the arrival in Boston of an unnamed vessel with "Africoes" from the island of Maio in the Cape Verdes on April 13, 1645, noting that the vessel had departed in early November 1644. This strongly suggests the vessel was the *Rainbow*, although it cannot be established with certainty. See Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–1649* (Cambridge: Belknap-Harvard, 1996): 573; Donnan, *Documents*, 3: 6.
11. For the two-voyage interpretation, see the map in Warren, *New England Bound*, 38; Donnan, *Documents*, 3: 4–9.
12. C. R. Cheney, *A Handbook of Dates for Students of English History* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1961). Although he does not draw attention to it, Larry Gragg seems to have interpreted the dates and chronology correctly, with the consortship agreement signed in February 1645 (modern calendar). See Gragg, "The Troubled Voyage of the *Rainbow*," 36; idem, "'To Procure Negroes,'" 76.
13. Libel of Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, April 28, 1646, TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 7; Allegation of Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, April 28, 1646; TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 8; Deposition of William Wager, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 548; Deposition of Jacobus Allen, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 574; Deposition of Johannes Cutler, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 575. On the history of Jolof, Baol, and the Petite Cote, see Philip D. Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa: Senegambia in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 8–11; James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); George E. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers: Ecology, Society, and Trade in West Africa, 1000–1630* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 200–223; Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, trans. Ayi Kwei Armah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7–17, 44; George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio

University Press, 2003), 82–93; Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jean Boulègue, *Les Royaumes Wolof Dans l'Espace Sénégalais (XIIIe-XVIIIe Siècle)* (Paris: Karthala, 2013). For a description of the armies in the region, see André Donelha, *Descrição da Serra Leoa e Dos Rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde / An Account of Sierra Leone and the Rivers of Guinea (1625)*, ed. and trans. Avelino Teixeira da Mota and P.E.H. Hair (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações, 1977), 51.

14. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 211, 214. On slavery in Senegambia and among the Wolof, see Martin A. Klein, “Servitude among the Wolof and Sereer of Senegambia,” in *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 335–363; Searing, *West African Slavery*, 27–58. On the insider/outsider distinction in African slavery, see Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1–9; Sean Stilwell, *Slavery and Slaving in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8–12 and *passim*.

15. P.E.H. Hair, ed. *Description of the Coast of Guinea, by Francisco de Lemos Coelho, 1684* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool History Department, 1985; reprint, 2007), 39. Lemos Coelho’s observation was made sometime between c. 1646 and 1669, at which time the Luso-African population at Portudal was either gone or marginalized.

16. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 205; Manuel Alvares, *Ethiopia Minor and a Geographical Account of the Province of Sierra Leone* (c. 1615), trans. P.E.H. Hair (Liverpool: University of Liverpool History Department, 1990), 5; Hair, *Description of the Coast of Guinea, by Francisco De Lemos Coelho, 1684*, 39. On violence and trade, see Randy Sparks, “Gold Coast Merchant Families, Pawning, and the Eighteenth-Century British Slave Trade,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 70, April (2013): 317–342; Sean M. Kelley, “The Dirty Business of Panyarring and Palaver: Slave Trading on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Eighteenth Century,” in *Slavery, Abolition and the Transition to Colonialism in Sierra Leone*, ed. Paul Lovejoy and Suzanne Schwarz (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2014), 89–108.

17. John W. Blake, “The English Guinea Company, 1618–1660,” *Proceedings--Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society* 2/3, no. 1 (1945): 14–27.

18. On customs and tolls at Portudal, see Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 218. On the deaths of Cawson’s men at Portudal in 1642–43, see the Deposition of William Wager, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 548. Cawson and Shapton, however, did not claim that any of their men died. See Allegation of Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 8. Saloum is given as “Brysal” in the allegation, an English corruption of the Portuguese place name “Borçalo,” which is itself a rendering of “Bur Saloum,” or “King of Saloum.” For discussion, see Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 207–208; P.E.H. Hair, ed. *An Interim and Makeshift Edition of André Alvares De Almada’s Brief Treatise on the Rivers of Guinea* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 1984), Ch. 4, pg. 30.

19. Allegation of Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 8–9; Deposition of Johannes Hacker, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 532; Deposition of William Foulger, TNA HCA 13/60, fols. 590–591. On Cawson’s desire to avenge “insolencies” suffered at Portudal, see the Interrogatories Posed to William Reana, TNA HCA 23/14, fol. 321. For the consortship agreement, see Donnan, *Documents*, 3: 5. For ships anchoring at the Cape Verde peninsula, see Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 205. On the anchorages at Cap-Vert and Portudal, see *Africa Pilot, or Sailing Directions for the West Coast of Africa*, Part I, Third Edition (London: Hydrographic Office, 1880), 131, 133.

20. On Baol’s military capability, see John K. Thornton, *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800* (London: Routledge, 1999), 37. According to Cawson and Shapton, there had been another violent dispute between an English ship and the Alcaide at Portudal in 1643. If so, that would certainly have heightened awareness. See their allegation, TNA HCA 24/108, fols. 8–9.

21. Libel of Robert Shapton and Miles Cawson, April 28, 1646, TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 7; Deposition of Johannes Hacker, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 532; Deposition of William Foulger, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 590–591; Deposition of William Wager, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 548; Deposition of Andreas Bengellye, TNA HCA 13/60, fols. 548–549; On the presence of interpreters, see Shurtleff, ed. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay*, 2: 168. For a discussion of ransoming in Muslim West Africa, see Jennifer Lofkranz, “Protecting Freeborn Muslims: The Sokoto Caliphate’s Attempts to Prevent Illegal Enslavement and Its Acceptance of the Strategy of Ransoming,” *Slavery & Abolition* 32, no. 1 (2011): 112, 119–122. The question of whether Baol and other states on the Petite Côte can be considered to be “Muslim” is a complex one. Many rulers and administrators were nominally Muslim, but fell short in the eyes of the more devout, especially for the practice of selling Muslim captives to non-Muslims. For discussion, see Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 51–54; Rudolph T. Ware III, *The Walking Qur’an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 100–109; Paul E. Lovejoy, *Jihad in West Africa During the Age of Revolutions* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2016), 36–39.

22. Dunn, Savage, and Yeandle, eds., *Journal of John Winthrop*, 604; Robert Earle Moody, ed., *The Saltonstall Papers, 1607–1815* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society), 1:138–139.

23. Deposition of Johannes Hacker, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 532; Deposition of Andreas Bengellye, TNA HCA 13/60, fols. 548–9; Libel of Miles Cawson and Robert Shapton, TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 7; Deposition of William Foulger, TNA HCA 13/61, fols. 6–7; Deposition of Richard Denby, TNA HCA 13/61, fols. 8–9; Deposition of Robert Waugh, TNA HCA 13/61, fols. 9–11; Deposition of Philip Jourdan, TNA HCA 13/61, fol. 11.

24. Deposition of Richard Denby, TNA HCA 13/61, fols. 8–9; Deposition of Robert Waugh, TNA HCA 13/61, fols. 9–11; Deposition of Philip Jourdan, TNA HCA

13/61, fol. 11. These depositions were generated by a separate case regarding damage to the *Blossom's* cargo. See above.

25. Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa*, 78; Gomes Eannes de Azurara, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), Vol. 2: 252–257, also 136–146, 176–183, 192–202, 218–223, 227–229; Harry Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins: Queen Elizabeth's Slave Trader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 23, 64–66.

26. On panyarring, see Kelley, “Dirty Business of Panyarring and Palaver,” op. cit.

27. Libel of Robert Shapton and Miles Cawson, June 28, 1646, TNA HCA 24/108, fol. 7; Deposition of Johannes Hacker, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 532; Deposition of William Eaton, TNA HCA 13/60, fol. 547; Deposition of Andreas Bengelleye, TNA HCA 13/60, 548–549; Gragg, “The Troubled Voyage of the *Rainbow*,” 38–39.

28. For examples, see Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England*, 21; Gragg, “To Procure Negroes,” 73; Warren, *New England Bound*, 42, 44.

29. Statistics are from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/Qq1nBL92>. Some historians have noted that the database does not include all voyages and thus understates the true number. Although it is certainly possible that some voyages have gone unrecorded, there is no evidence at all to suggest that seventeenth-century New England dispatched significant numbers of transatlantic slave ships. On the historic trajectory of the North American slave trade, see David Eltis, “The U.S. Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1644–1867: An Assessment,” *Civil War History* 54, no. 4 (2008): 365–371. On the intercolonial trade, see Gregory E. O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619–1807* (Williamsburg and Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute for the University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 201.

30. Gragg, “The Troubled Voyage of the *Rainbow*,” 38. New England dispatched a total of fourteen slaving vessels to Africa during the seventeenth century. See *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/2Pi8X2IB, accessed April 17, 2018. On the occupations of the *Rainbow's* owners, see Kaufman, “David Selleck” and for Grosse, see Samuel Adams Drake, *Old Boston Taverns and Tavern Clubs* (Boston: W. A. Butterfield, 1917), 122; Samuel Peck Bradshaw, “Gross Genealogy: The Descendants of Ezra Carter Gross and His Line of Descent from Isaac Gross,” (1921), 3, online at <https://archive.org/details/grossgenealogyde00brad> (accessed 15 February 2018).

31. On the importance of accumulated knowledge in the organization of slave trading voyages, see Stephen D. Behrendt, “Markets, Transaction Cycles, and Profits: Merchant Decision Making in the British Slave Trade,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser. 58, no. January (2001): 171–204; Stephen D. Behrendt, “Human Capital in the British Slave Trade,” in *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, ed. David Richardson, Suzanne Schwarz, and Anthony Tibbles (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 66–97.

32. Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641), online at <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/masslib.html> (accessed July 16, 2020).



Army of Foutatoro: Cavalry and Foot Soldiers, Senegambia, 1818

Engraving by Ambrose Tardieu in *Travels in the Interior of Africa, to the Sources of the Senegal and Gambia* (London, 1820), facing p. 135. Although it depicts a different time and state, Baol's military forces were probably quite similar.



Chief Flanked by Two Soldiers, Court of Benin, 1550–1650

A remarkable series of brass plaques adorned the exterior of the royal palace in Benin City. They were created by a guild of craftsmen who worked for the Oba, Benin's absolute monarch. The tiny Portuguese soldiers in the background speak to Benin's heightened military and economic power following European contact. Other reliefs depict a variety of weapons: swords, lances, muskets, spears, shields, helmets, and protective clothing. Benin City lay over 2,000 miles southeast of Portugal. Source: African Collection, Peabody Museum, Harvard University.



Chief Flanked by Attendants, Court of Benin, 1550–1650

Benin was in a very different part of Africa than the Wolof states and had a different military tradition. It lay in an ecological zone where it was not possible to maintain horses (due to the tsetse fly) or have a cavalry. Benin was more of a naval power, using boats to dominate the lagoons to its west. Although these are striking images, in U.S. terms it would be analogous to using a picture of Sitting Bull to illustrate an article on the Pequot War. However, these plaques provide a rare, African representation. Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.