

## Small-scale urban slavery: the African presence in Petrópolis during the 19th century

### Escravidão urbana de pequena escala: a presença africana em Petrópolis durante o século XIX

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#### Resumo

Este artigo propõe repensar a presença de escravizados no século XIX em Petrópolis, situada na província do Rio de Janeiro, a partir de uma perspectiva em que se analisa a cidade em simbiose com a capital do império, a cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Em contraste com a maior parte dos estudos sobre Petrópolis no Oitocentos e com os relatos dos viajantes da época, a análise da imprensa petropolitana permite identificar uma cidade que reproduziu no seu interior algumas das principais características da escravidão urbana brasileira.

**Palavras-chave:** Petrópolis; Escravidão urbana; Imprensa; Século XIX.

#### Abstract

This article aims to rethink the presence of enslaved individuals in Petrópolis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from a perspective that analyzes the city in symbiosis with the capital Rio de Janeiro. In contrast to most studies about the city in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the accounts of travelers of the time, the analysis of the press allows us to identify a city that reproduced some of the main characteristics of Brazilian urban slavery.

**Keywords:** Brazilian slavery; Urban Slavery; Press; Nineteenth century.

## Introduction

In one of the first travel books published in Brazil, Carlos Augusto Taunay sketched a bucolic scene for Petrópolis, which the French author thought deserved the titles “paradise on Earth” and “the house of health and wellbeing”. At a certain point, that author described that the “benevolence of relationships does not stop in any steps of the social staircase”. According

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to Taunay, in Petrópolis “the slave is docile, the master complacent; you do not hear shouting or beating”<sup>1</sup>. This is one of the few quotes related to slavery in the city presented by a visitor in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It seems to us, however, that the French observer failed in examining more closely the everyday life in Petrópolis at the time, which, according to our findings in this article, was a kind of small-scale reproduction of the urban slavery of that century.

As suggested by Robert Slenes, we cannot trust blindly in the “biased and crosseyed” view of foreigner observers and “well off” Brazilians<sup>2</sup>. In his study, Slenes inverted the view that the French Charles Ribeyrolles had on the enslaved individuals’ mindset<sup>3</sup>. Travellers’ analyses, mainly regarding the unfavored layers of society must be used carefully and always challenged, so that we do not reproduce silencing and biased views. Ribeyrolles was also in Petrópolis in 1858, observing that “some bourgeois households show off here and there are two-story façades”. In his interpretation, “that is not a city, in the real meaning of the word”, what was identified was the “relative prosperity of Petrópolis, when compared to other Brazilian settlements”. About the African presence, for example, very little was said: he referred to “blacks, mixed-race and Portuguese” workers developing the *Povoação-Palácio* (Population-Palace, the project for the foundation of the city of Petrópolis) – which occurred years before his visit to the city – he also revealed liking “more in Petrópolis the simple *varandas* than the peristyles, and the flowers more than the walls, which in fact is better aligned with black washerwomen who hang and dry clothes under the house”<sup>4</sup>.

As regards Petrópolis, it is not only the need to oppose Taunay’s view, but also to fill in a gap left in the travel reports. In fact, the travelers of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that visited Petrópolis were always impressed by the city’s characteristics, which contrasted with those of Rio de Janeiro, mainly the climate, and practically ignored the presence of enslaved people there, as Ribeyrolles, for example. If in Rio de Janeiro, foreigner observers reported extensively the African presence, the same did not occur on the mountains. The fact that the city where the emperor Dom Pedro II used to spend the

<sup>1</sup> TAUNAY, Carlos Augusto. *Viagem Pitoresca a Petrópolis*. Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo & Henrique Laemmert, 1862, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> SLENES, Robert. *Na senzala uma flor – Esperanças e recordações na formação da família escrava*. Campinas, Editora da Unicamp, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> While the French denied that the family could take part in the life of those enslaved, Slenes identified strong African cultural resistance between those captured in creating family relationships and new meanings to the captivity, anchored, for instance, in ancestral values brought to Brazil.

<sup>4</sup> RIBEYROLLES, Charles. *Brasil Pitoresco*. Tomo II. Rio de Janeiro, Tipografia Nacional, 1859, p. 145 e 152.

summer did not have the presence of slavery as noticeable as in the Court might justify such absence since all travelers that visited Petrópolis had firstly been in the capital of the empire. In Rio de Janeiro, slavery was evident for foreigner observers. In Petrópolis, greater analytical effort might have been required to see it, the type of effort that the “cross-eyed” view of the foreigners was not able to make. However, we cannot reproduce such silencing in studies on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Petrópolis.

The historiography about the city has shown some struggle to recover its African history<sup>5</sup>, but, in general, it is still firmly anchored in the idea of the “most European city in the empire”<sup>6</sup>. Most of the research on its genesis highlights the European contribution, mainly German<sup>7</sup>, but also Portuguese<sup>8</sup>. There was no other city in Brazil “only populated by European and white settlers”<sup>9</sup>, but in Petrópolis, the presence of African people and their descendants is not discussed and very little has been studied about it in the historical context, as already diagnosed by Camilla Cardoso<sup>10</sup>.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of strong regulation of conducts and postures, and in such scenario, the elite sought to make the enslaved work

<sup>5</sup> CARDOSO, Camilla Vieira Sayão. *Africanos e descendentes na sociedade petropolitana (1866-1886): principais aspectos da saúde e da doença*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Fiocruz, 2022; DIAS, Paola Vanessa Gonçalves. *Do apagamento à fala pública: a memória negra em Petrópolis a partir da trajetória do Quilombo da Tapera*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2016; SILVA, Lucas Ventura da. *Movimentando a abolição: sociabilidades, emancipação e liberdade na Petrópolis imperial (1884-1888)*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> MAUAD, Ana Maria. “Imagem e auto-imagem do Segundo Reinado”. In NOVAIS, Fernando A. (org.). *História da vida privada no Brasil: Império: a corte e a modernidade nacional*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> AULER, Guilherme. *Famílias Germânicas da Imperial Colônia de Petrópolis*. Petrópolis, Tribuna de Petrópolis, 1962; COPELLO, Jorge Olmar Marialva. *Emigrantes Alemães e a sua inserção no processo histórico de formação da Povoação-Palácio de Petrópolis (1845-1886)*. Niterói, Master's Dissertation, UNIVERSO, 2009; PEDROSO, Margarida Maria Mendes. *Petrópolis: De Povoação-Colônia a Elevação à Categoria de Cidade: Um estudo sobre sua Formação Urbana*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, PUC-Rio, 2014; RODRIGUES, Maria das Graças Duvanel. “Os Imigrantes alemães e a construção da educação na Petrópolis colônia”. In Luchese, T. A.; Kreutz, L. (Org.). *Imigração e educação no Brasil: histórias, práticas e processos escolares*. v. 1. Santa Maria, UFSM, 2011; SOUZA, Beatriz Cristina Pereira de. *Os nomes geográficos de Petrópolis/RJ e a imigração alemã: memória e identidade*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> ANGELO, Elis Regina Barbosa. “Os portugueses na formação de Petrópolis, cidade imperial: marcas, expressões e memórias urbanas”. In *População e Sociedade*, Porto, 2016, vol. 25, pp. 87-104; MULLER, Mariza. *Os Portugueses na Formação de Petrópolis*. Edição do autor, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> SCHWARCZ, Lilia; GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. “Introdução”. In *Dicionário da escravidão e liberdade*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> CARDOSO, Camilla Vieira Sayão. *Africanos e descendentes na sociedade petropolitana (1866-1886): principais aspectos da saúde e da doença*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Fiocruz, 2022, p. 28.

something “transparent and silent”<sup>11</sup>. For being a region occupied by the elite close to the imperial structure, it is not surprising that Petrópolis has exercised this silencing effort. Founded in 1843 as the *Povoação-Palácio* of Petrópolis, the region was planned to serve as the emperor’s summer house and relaxing spot, and from 1845 onwards, it was initially populated by thousands of Germans who arrived as a result of a contract between the Rio de Janeiro government and the merchant Charles Delrue, vice-consul of Brazil in Dunkirk. When the palace construction finished in 1856, D. Pedro II, who had been accommodated in the ongoing construction since 1849, started to spend longer periods in the city. The noblemen and diplomats who surrounded him decided to build their residences nearby<sup>12</sup>, turning the city into a summer capital.

The summer residence status of Petrópolis, according to Roderick Barman, prevents it from being studied in isolation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century since its relationship with the city of Rio de Janeiro reveals that the “country’s capital and the summer residence existed together in a type of symbiosis”<sup>13</sup>. Although that author practically did not mention slavery in his analysis, his perspective allows a better reflection upon this theme. Considering that it is a region whose everyday life evolved in a type of symbiosis with the city that owned the most enslaved workers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it certainly could not live or develop in the absence of the slavery system. Furthermore, the connectivity of Petrópolis was not only with the capital, but also with closer regions such as Paraíba do Sul and Vassouras, since it was inserted in the Rio de Janeiro-Vale do Paraíba-Minas Gerais axis, which after the end of the transatlantic slave trade to Brazil in 1850, “was fundamental for the preservation of slavery in the Brazilian national state structure”<sup>14</sup>. This article defends that the presence of enslaved and freed black individuals in Petrópolis was larger than is imagined. And, in this context, its history must be rethought to provide a view that identifies those populations as belonging to the historical construction of that city.

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<sup>11</sup> SCHWARCZ, Lília. *As barbas do imperador: D. Pedro II, um monarca nos trópicos*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1998, pp. 116 e 195-205.

<sup>12</sup> MAURO, Frédéric. *O Brasil no tempo de Dom Pedro II*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1998, p. 190.

<sup>13</sup> BARMAN, Roderick. “Imperial Cities and Seasonal Residences: Petrópolis, Summer Capital of Brazil (1843–1889), and its European Counterparts”, In *The Court Historian*, London, 2008, vol. 13, n.º 1, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> PARRON, Tâmis. *A política da escravidão no Império do Brasil, 1826–1865*. São Paulo, Master’s Dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, 2009, p. 243.

## Rethinking the African presence in Petrópolis

Travelers' reports of slavery in Petrópolis are residual. We address some here, starting by that of the North American Presbyterian pastor James Fletcher, who visited Brazil in the 1850s and criticized what he classified as the German's moral deterioration in Petrópolis. According to that missionary, the "degraded peasant" was positioned above the African, but absorbed the "vices" of the latter into the European behavior, thus reaching, in his view, a "lower degree than that of the black individuals"<sup>15</sup>. In Fletcher's biased interpretation, highly representative of the thought of that time, the Germans living in Petrópolis were degenerated due to the lack of a moral population around them.

In 1854, Marguerite Tollemache visited Petrópolis and was accommodated at the *Quartirão Presidência*. The English woman portrayed some scenes from the region and in one of those works of art, three black children appear – it is unknown whether they were enslaved or free<sup>16</sup>. José Nicolau Tinoco, a Brazilian reported who was very close to the Court of D. Pedro II, referred in 1885, in his *Petrópolis – Guia de Viagem* (Petrópolis – Travel Guide), that the ward of the Santa Tereza Hospital charged 1\$200 to treat enslaved individuals<sup>17</sup>. Son of British citizens, but born in Brazil, Tomas Cameron, in 1879, referred to the same hospital in his text *Os Estabelecimentos úteis de Petrópolis* (Petrópolis useful facilities), and reported the presence of enslaved individuals being treated in that space<sup>18</sup>.

Finally, the Spanish Carmen Oliver de Gelabert visited Petrópolis in 1870 to meet her son, Sebastien, who studied at the Kopke School<sup>19</sup>. The

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<sup>15</sup> KIDDER, Daniel P.; FLETCHER, James. *Brazil and the Brazilians: portrayed in historical and descriptive sketches*. Philadelphia, Childs & Peterson, 1857, p. 301.

<sup>16</sup> The evidence that the drawing was produced in Petrópolis is in the signature, which reads "*Presidência*". In other works, the artist wrote "*Presidência, Petrópolis*" in the title, as in *View from my Bedroom Presidencia Petropolis*. The drawings can be found in the collection of the Instituto Moreira Salles, at: [www.brasiliaiconografica.art.br/autores/18800/marguerite-tollemache](http://www.brasiliaiconografica.art.br/autores/18800/marguerite-tollemache).

<sup>17</sup> TINOCO, José Nicolau. *Petrópolis – Guia de Viagem*. Rio de Janeiro, L. Winter, 1885.

<sup>18</sup> CAMERON, Tomas. *Os Estabelecimentos úteis de Petrópolis*. Petrópolis, Tipografia de B. P. Sudré, 1879.

<sup>19</sup> Institution located at Rua Nassau, currently Av. Piabanha. That was "the first private school opened in Petrópolis". It occurred in 1848, when Henrique Kopke "occupied the building built in the Nassau block", with the institution, which opened in 1850, for several years "deserving concept and providing solid intellectual and moral instruction to many Brazilians who occupied distinct positions in society". (RAFFARD, Henri. "*Jubileu de Petrópolis*". In *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, Rio de Janeiro, Tomo LVIII, parte II, 1895, pp. 101-102). André and Antônio Rebouças studied at Kopke (GOMES, Flávio dos Santos; SCHWARCZ, Lília Moritz. "André Rebouças". In *Enciclopédia Negra*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2021, p. 51). According to Carlos Fróes, Henrique Kopke was a Portuguese of German origin. Three

author of *Viaje Poética a Petrópolis* (A Poetic Trip to Petrópolis) admitted in her writing that her observations focused on the analysis of nature, without paying attention to unpleasant scenarios such as slavery. She was enchanted with the native vegetation and the flower scent and wrote that she enjoyed appreciating the forest in a poetic way and did it with pleasure because it “distracted my senses from things that affected me”, as for example “ugly flies that naturally make life something worse and uncomfortable”. Some pages ahead, during her visit to the *Entre Rios* train station (*Três Rios*), in the *Vale do Paraíba*, she reported having seen a farm “with so many black people working the land that she had never seen as many flies in her life as the number of black individuals in that field”<sup>20</sup>. By comparing enslaved individuals to flies, that author reveals another issue she preferred to ignore in order to distract her senses – perhaps explaining why enslaved workers are rarely mentioned in her memories.

As pointed out by Lucas Ventura da Silva<sup>21</sup>, Petrópolis actually had less enslaved individuals than other regions of the Rio de Janeiro province. This was probably due to the almost exclusively urban character of slavery there, which contrasted with the large farms of the Vale do Paraíba region, for example – it seems relevant to highlight that, despite being crossed by one of the affluents of the Paraíba do Sul river, it did not shelter large farm plantations, for being located in a region where the productivity was not as good as that obtained in lower areas –, but also for the fact that the city development started in a period after the end of the transatlantic slave trade to Brazil – Petrópolis became officially a municipality in 1857. In 1872, in a period of gradual reduction of the enslaved workforce in Brazil, around 6% of the 7 thousand inhabitants of Petrópolis were enslaved individuals. For comparison, the urban area of Rio de Janeiro had a population of 228 thousand inhabitants in 1872 and 16% of them were enslaved<sup>22</sup>.

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years before, Henrique obtained a Brazilian naturalization letter, apparently, to be entitled pursuant to the local law, to become the principal of a school (FRÓES, Carlos. *A família Kopke e sua obra em Petrópolis*. Petrópolis, IHP, 1997). Henrique was also one of the shareholders in a newspaper in Petrópolis, *O Parahyba*. At Kopke, according to an article published on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1859 in the same newspaper, students were taught French, English, Mathematics, Algebra, Latin and Geography.

<sup>20</sup> GELABERT, Carmen Olivier de. *Viaje Poética a Petrópolis*. Rio de Janeiro, Imprensa del Apostol, 1872, pp. 129-153.

<sup>21</sup> SILVA, Lucas Ventura da. *Movimentando a abolição: sociabilidades, emancipação e liberdade na Petrópolis imperial (1884-1888)*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 2023, p. 71.

<sup>22</sup> *Recenseamento da população do Império do Brasil de 1872*. Retrieved from: <https://dataspace.princeton.edu/handle/88435/dsp01h989r5980>.

The 6% reported, naturally, did not include free and freed black individuals who lived in the city – dozens of free African men, for example, worked in Petrópolis in road works such as the construction of the *Picada do Paty do Alferes* and the *Serra da Estrela*, road, as published in the newspapers of that time<sup>23</sup>. In fact, according to the death register books of 1866-1886<sup>24</sup>, we could estimate that out of each 10 black men in Petrópolis, four were enslaved, four were free, and two had been freed.

However, the 6% recorded might not have included many of the enslaved workers who spent some time in Petrópolis serving their masters, and after that went back to Rio de Janeiro with the elite, within the movement existing between the Brazilian capital and the Court's summer capital. "Annually, a current of migrants moves from the Court to Petrópolis", as witnessed by a chronicle writer of the newspaper *O Parahyba*, in 1858<sup>25</sup>. The Journey to Petrópolis started on a steamboat which left Rio de Janeiro towards Mauá, from there, it went to the foot of the Serra da Estrela using the railway (opened in 1854), while the way to the top of the mountain was covered by carriages – in 1883 the railway was extended to the top of the mountain. Actually, there was a third class of tickets to Petrópolis, which on several stretches included enslaved individuals and free workers who accepted to take their shoes off<sup>26</sup>. This suggests that it was not unusual to see enslaved people travelling between Rio de Janeiro and Petrópolis.

This fact is mentioned several times in the newspapers of the time, mainly in advertisements. Some examples include the news from 1854 reporting that the "slave Jesuína, crioula" had escaped in Petrópolis. Her master informed his address in Rio de Janeiro, at Rua da Quitanda, and a second address in Petrópolis, a country house at Rua de Joinville, so that he could receive any information about the fugitive<sup>27</sup>. In 1858, a piece of advertisement informed that a fugitive had been identified, describing him as "a black man called Joaquim, from the Mozambique nation, with a crooked right big toe", trying to find the master and enquiring "how much

<sup>23</sup> On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1859, *O Parahyba* published that there were 36 free African men working on the Serra da Estrela road.

<sup>24</sup> CARDOSO, Camilla Vieira Sayão. *Africanos e descendentes na sociedade petropolitana (1866-1886): principais aspectos da saúde e da doença*. Rio de Janeiro, Master's Dissertation, Fiocruz, 2022, p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> *O Parahyba*, 24 de fevereiro de 1858.

<sup>26</sup> KLUMB, Henry. *Doze horas em diligência. Guia do viajante de Petrópolis a Juiz de Fora*. Rio de Janeiro, Editor J. J. da Costa Pereira Braga, 1872.

<sup>27</sup> *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*, 14-15 de abril de 1854.



the reward for information is”. Weeks later, Geraldo da Silva Correa, who resided in the capital, published an advertisement offering “100\$000 reward for the presentation of the black Joaquim from the Mozambique nation, with a crooked right big toe, to verify whether that was his slave who had fled some time ago”<sup>28</sup>. In the following year, the police station of Petrópolis informed that “since October 14<sup>th</sup>, the black João was arrested, he reported that José Porfírio, who lived at Rua da Quitanda, in Rio de Janeiro, was his master and that he had escaped four years ago”<sup>29</sup>. Also in Rio de Janeiro, in 1860, a certain Filipe, from the Cabinda nation, was looked for. Despite being enslaved by Joaquim Martins Côrrea, from Rio de Janeiro, he had escaped in Petrópolis in the dawn of July 29<sup>th</sup><sup>30</sup>. In 1867, an enslaved individual born in Sergipe called Manuel also fled in Petrópolis, and the person looking for him informed the addresses at Rua dos Pescadores, in Rio de Janeiro, and Rua dos Protestantes, in Petrópolis<sup>31</sup>. In 1881, José, from Pernambuco, was arrested in Petrópolis and recognized as “J. A. Abreu’s slave”, his master lived in Rio de Janeiro<sup>32</sup>. Several examples indicated enslaved individuals linked to masters who lived in the capital, who before escaping had probably traveled regularly between Rio and Petrópolis.

Printed advertisements in the capital also targeted workers, mainly enslaved ones, for families and business in Petrópolis. Therefore, in 1859, somebody was looking for “a black cook to prepare trivial food for a family in Petrópolis. Candidates should go to Rua do Rosário, n.º 33 B”<sup>33</sup>. At different moments, there were pieces of advertisements, for example, seeking to buy “a great and excellent black maid”<sup>34</sup>, a “good black gardener”<sup>35</sup>, “a perfect black baker”<sup>36</sup>, or rent “a good oven and stoven cook”<sup>37</sup>, all to work in Petrópolis.

Urban areas sometimes absorbed fugitive enslaved individuals from the surrounding areas. This occurred because in cities “there was a margin of shade and comfort that attracted enslaved and formerly enslaved people,

<sup>28</sup> *O Parahyba*, 28 de março de 1858.

<sup>29</sup> *O Parahyba*, 31 de outubro de 1859.

<sup>30</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 27 de agosto de 1860.

<sup>31</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 20 de abril de 1867.

<sup>32</sup> *Mercantil*, 30 de novembro de 1881.

<sup>33</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 4 de junho de 1859.

<sup>34</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 5 de fevereiro de 1867.

<sup>35</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 9 de maio de 1856.

<sup>36</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 16 de junho de 1855.

<sup>37</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 11 de maio de 1870.



who added to crowds that challenged the control of the dominant classes”<sup>38</sup>, since it was not always possible to “know a person’s social condition only from their appearance”, as indicated by Sidney Chalhoub<sup>39</sup>. Even if less intensely than in other urban regions, the small city of Petrópolis sheltered on its streets fugitive individuals coming from other places. This is confirmed by this advertisement from 1873, published in the *Diário de Minas*, printed in Ouro Preto, which informed that José Marciano da Silva Brandão, a farmer from Simão Pereira, looked for “the enslaved man called Ricardo, 35 years”, who had fled six months before and who “when escaping would go to Petrópolis, where he had relatives”<sup>40</sup>. Another newspaper called *Mercantil*, printed in Petrópolis in 1875, informed that Antônio was arrested. He was a mixed-race man, who said that he “was enslaved by Neto, a dweller of Cantagalo”<sup>41</sup>. In 1879, a similar note informed the prison of Amaro in Petrópolis”, who “belonged to Dr. José Caetano de Almeida, from the Vitória farm, in the municipality of Vassouras”<sup>42</sup>.

The excerpts above give evidence that although there were fewer enslaved individuals in Petrópolis than in other regions of Rio de Janeiro, the city was not a space freed from the slavery ties. In the next section, we also use some printed newspapers as source of data, but this time, by systematizing the advertisements, we seek to show with more clarity and relevance the African presence in the Petrópolis of the 1800s.

## Slavery in Petrópolis according to newspapers

Printed periodicals and their advertisements have been highlighted as a rich source to understand the “hidden corners of slavery”, using an expression introduced by the historian Tom Costa<sup>43</sup>. The systematic analysis of advertisements published mainly in regions with widespread presence of enslaved individuals, as in Brazil, might provide precious quantitative and qualitative information for a better understanding of the dynamics of

<sup>38</sup> DIAS, Maria Odila da Silva. “Nas fímbrias da escravidão urbana: negras de tabuleiro e de ganho”. In *Estudos Econômicos*, São Paulo, 1985, vol. 15, pp. 93-94.

<sup>39</sup> CHALHOUB, Sidney. *Visões da liberdade: uma história das últimas décadas da escravidão na Corte*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 1990, p. 213.

<sup>40</sup> *Diário de Minas*, 5 de maio de 1873.

<sup>41</sup> *Mercantil*, 6 de Janeiro de 1875.

<sup>42</sup> *Mercantil*, 9 de julho de 1879.

<sup>43</sup> COSTA, Tom. “What can we learn from a digital database of runaway slave advertisements?”. In *International Social Science Review*, Winfield, 2001, vol. 76, n.º 1/2, p. 38.

enslaving societies, as defended by some authors<sup>44</sup>. Therefore, seeking a better understanding of Petrópolis, we will analyze the advertisements of one of the first periodical publications of that city, *O Parahyba*, created in December 1857, which circulated up to the end of 1859. Printed twice a week at Rua do Imperador, n.º 51, it also circulated in several regions of *Vale do Paraíba*. The publication of advertisements on its pages used to cost 80 réis per line, while the annual subscription would cost 10,000 réis in Petrópolis and 12,000 réis for subscribers in other regions.

When examining the 202 issues of *O Parahyba*, printed between 1857 and 1859<sup>45</sup>, we found 832 different advertisements published in that newspaper. Geographically they can be organized as follows: 85% referring to businesses and transactions within the borders of Petrópolis or the neighboring area such as Paty do Alferes, São José do Vale do Rio Preto and Secretário. Other regions that also appeared were Bemposta (4%) and Paraíba do Sul (3%), which were relatively near Petrópolis. *O Parahyba* also published advertisements coming from Rio de Janeiro (4%). Other places that had brief appearance were Campos, Cantagalo, Juiz de Fora, Magé, Mar de Espanha, Valença and Vassouras.

Contrasting with travelers' accounts and the mainstream historiography about the city of Petrópolis, the systematization of such advertisements reveals a significant presence of slavery in the routine of Petrópolis (Table 1). The types of advertisement printed in that newspaper varied and covered a diversity of areas, many related to the city development process. Some examples are the commerce of books and carriages, the classified ads offering jobs (teachers, gardeners, carriage drivers, cooks, maids). Events were also advertised (balls at the Bragança Hotel, performances at the Progresso Petropolitano Theater). There were also professionals advertising their skills and offering their services to readers (medical doctors, teachers, lawyers, photographers, watch makers, carpenters, leather craftsmen and locksmiths) and real estate transactions (houses, pieces of land), resulting from the interest the city attracted due to the periodical presence of the emperor and his court – the arrival of a royal court is able to impact the real estate market in a city, just like what happened in Rio de Janeiro after the arrival of prince

<sup>44</sup> GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. "Jogando a rede, revendo as malhas: Fugas e fugitivos no Brasil Escravista". In *Tempo*, Niterói, 1996, vol. 1, n.º 1, pp. 67-93; MOTT, Luiz. "O escravo nos anúncios de jornal de Sergipe. 1833-1864". In *Sergipe colonial e imperial: religião, família, escravidão e sociedade: 1591-1882*. São Cristóvão, UFS, 2008; PIRES, João Victor Ribeiro. "A escravidão como um negócio disseminado no jornal da Corte de D. João VI no Rio de Janeiro (1808-1821)". In *Anuário de Estudios Americanos*, Sevilha, 2022, vol. 79, n.º 1, p. 171-204.

<sup>45</sup> Nine issues in 1857, 103 in 1858 and 90 in 1859.

Dom João in 1808<sup>46</sup>. Even with such mosaic of ads published, the most frequent were those related to the purchase, sale and rental of enslaved people or news about the runaways, which also had a commercial component since they almost always included the values the advertisers offered as a reward for those who found the fugitives.

**Table 1:** Advertisements published in the newspaper *O Parahyba*, in Petrópolis, 1857-1859

Type of advertisement	Number of appearances	Percentage
Enslaved individuals	114	13.5%
Real Estate	77	9%
Services offered	75	9%
Job opportunities	65	8%
Events	65	8%
Animals	59	7%
Credits, debts	53	6%
Food and consumables	43	5%
Lost property	43	5%
Furniture and home appliances	31	3.5%
Carriages and transports	30	3.5%
Books and printed publications	25	3%

Source: *O Parahyba*, 1857-1859

When analyzing the numbers, we found 832 printed advertisements, 69 referring to runaways and 45 regarding their purchase, sale or rent. In other words, 114 publications, or 13.5% of the total ads, were directly associated with slavery in the region. Out of the 45 commercial ads referring to slavery, 44 refer to Petrópolis and neighboring areas – any analysis of a small city like Petrópolis must take into account the rural area around it, which in that case included regions such as Secretário, Paty do Alferes and São José do Vale do Rio Preto – one advertisement referred to Bemposta. Among the ads referring to fugitive individuals, 44, or 64%, were from Petrópolis and neighboring areas, while eight referred to Bemposta, five to Paraíba do Sul, five to Campos, three

<sup>46</sup> PIRES, João Victor Ribeiro. “Comércio intenso e preços em alta: o mercado imobiliário no Rio de Janeiro joanino (1808-1821)”. In *Mosaico*, Goiânia, 2021, vol. 14, n.º 1.

to Rio de Janeiro, and one to Juiz de Fora, one to Cantagalo, one to Magé and finally, one that informed an escape that had occurred in Minas Gerais.

According to Flávio Gomes, “running away might have been the most common protest”<sup>47</sup>. In cities, as mentioned before, with free, freed and enslaved African people working every day, it was not always easy to identify a fugitive. Printed advertisements were tools to help locate them. The owners of fugitive enslaved workers published detailed ads and informed values paid as a reward to possible catchers. Machado de Assis was inspired by the routine of one of those slave catchers to write the short story *Pai Contra Mãe*: “Cândido Neves read the announcements, copied them, tucked them in his pockets and left in the pursuit”, narrated Machado, who indicated the activity as “an occupation of that time”<sup>48</sup>.

Such landscape was reproduced in Petrópolis, both in the more urban portion and in the rural area. When leafing through the pages of ads in *O Parahyba*, there are varied runaway accounts. In Alto da Serra, on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1858 an “enslaved individual called Justino” who was a carpenter” owned by Luiz José Fernandes de Azevedo ran away. In June, according to the same newspaper, the police believed “that the burglar who invaded the agency house had been the enslaved individual belonging to Luiz José Fernandes de Azevedo, who had been chased, but was still missing”<sup>49</sup>. There were cases in which the enslaved people had “licenses to go out”. Rita took advantage of that to escape from her master<sup>50</sup>. For this reason, owners were afraid of allowing their enslaved workers to go out, so that one ad indicated the possibility of renting “a black woman who could cook trivial food, sew, wash clothes and do other house chores, with the condition of not going out alone”<sup>51</sup>.

The commercial center of Petrópolis was Rua do Imperador. Carlos Augusto Taunay’s travel guide described it as place where “buildings were occupied by hotels, workshops, stores, grocery shops, bakeries, butchers and stables”<sup>52</sup>. The work of enslaved people was developed in those businesses and the ads evidenced that. For example, Hamburgo Hotel at Rua do Imperador,

<sup>47</sup> GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. *Mocambos e quilombos: uma história do campesinato negro no Brasil*. São Paulo, Claro Enigma, 2015, p. 9.

<sup>48</sup> ASSIS, Machado de. *Machado de Assis: contos e crônicas*. Rio de Janeiro, Malê, 2019.

<sup>49</sup> *O Parahyba*, 3 de junho de 1858.

<sup>50</sup> *O Parahyba*, 18 de julho de 1858.

<sup>51</sup> *O Parahyba*, 8 de abril de 1858.

<sup>52</sup> TAUNAY, Carlos Augusto. *Viagem Pitoresca a Petrópolis*. Rio de Janeiro, Eduardo & Henrique Laemmert, 1862, p. 26.

owned a “black woman for all types of work”<sup>53</sup>. Three stores at numbers 18, 21 and 56, looked for enslaved cooks to work for them<sup>54</sup>. At numbers 36 and 56, enslaved women were sought to take care of children<sup>55</sup>, while at number 3 “slaves are bought, strong black men preferred, even if they have no specific skills”<sup>56</sup>.

There were also spaces used as a market for enslaved individuals at Rua do Imperador. During its existence, the *Clube do Comércio*, operating at n.º 16, on the corner of Rua D. Januária, was one of the most important ones. They advertised that “at Clube do Comércio you can rent, buy and sell slaves”. Published for the first time on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1858, this ad was repeated 17 times in *O Parahyba* up to September 1858. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the business was sold to a “new entrepreneur”. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1859, the newspaper informed that “a two-story house, where the Clube do Comércio was previously located”, was available to let. In addition to the Club and several other people in the street who were individual sellers, there was also in one of the stores at n.º 56, the office and agency belonging to Olive and Brothers, which apart from intermediating the purchase and sale of estate, were also involved in the activity of “locating skilled workers, both free and enslaved, wet nurses, etc.”<sup>57</sup>. Those wanting to buy “blankets for slaves”, could find them at the store owned by Inácio José da Silva, at n.º 50<sup>58</sup>.

Enslaved work, however, was not only found in the main street of the city. At Rua D. Januária, a French bakery had an enslaved worker called Firmino, from the “Congo nation”, working at the oven. Firmino, in fact, fled from the bakery in January 1859<sup>59</sup>. We also found out that the Presidência Hotel owned “eight good slaves”<sup>60</sup>, while the Inglês Hotel, had an ad published in Rio de Janeiro, about a fugitive worker that was missing since 1864, they had “a slave called Manuel, mixed-race man from Bahia”<sup>61</sup>.

Like in other urban regions, the announcers in Petrópolis, seeking to locate fugitive enslaved workers, published detailed runaway ads, which

<sup>53</sup> *O Parahyba*, 2 de outubro de 1859.

<sup>54</sup> *O Parahyba*, 9 de maio de 1858; *O Parahyba*, 16 de maio de 1858; *O Parahyba*, 22 de julho de 1858.

<sup>55</sup> *O Parahyba*, 27 de junho de 1858; *O Parahyba*, 27 de janeiro de 1859

<sup>56</sup> *O Parahyba*, 17 de junho de 1858.

<sup>57</sup> *O Parahyba*, 28 de outubro de 1858.

<sup>58</sup> *O Parahyba*, 11 de julho de 1858.

<sup>59</sup> *O Parahyba*, 6 de janeiro de 1859.

<sup>60</sup> *O Parahyba*, 31 de março de 1859.

<sup>61</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 19 de abril de 1864.

allowed us to obtain some information about the enslaved people everyday life, for example, the work they did and the presence of punishment in their routine. In 1858, Rita, an enslaved woman from the Benguela nation, escaped from Jorge Karmm's house, in Vila Teresa, with "several signs of punishment on her body". In 1859, "on March 19<sup>th</sup>, a black bricklayer, 45 years old, from the Mozambique nation, fled from Rua D. Januária, n° 14. He has signs of broken bones and lacks the front teeth"<sup>62</sup>. From an ad published in Rio de Janeiro, in the *Jornal do Commercio* newspaper, we learned that the "slave called Martinho, from the Sofala nation, in his forties, used to sell *quitanda* (itinerant vendors selling fruit, vegetables, eggs and, in some cases, cooked food) next to the bridge at Rua do Imperador", in Petrópolis. The announcer looked for that individual who had been missing since March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1860 and informed that he showed "signs of having been beaten and was used to escaping"<sup>63</sup>. Another enslaved worker selling *quitanda* in Petrópolis was the "black Felipe, from the Inhambane nation", described as a *quitandeiro* and bricklayer, who had run away on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863<sup>64</sup>. A cook from the Mozambique nation called José fled from Rua D. Januária, n° 21, in Petrópolis, and was suspected to have headed to the Court<sup>65</sup>.

The information in those ads allowed the location of fugitives in private works. Roberto, for instance, who "worked in the construction of *Casa dos Seis Bilhares* in this city, and in another construction close to the Renânia mill, opposite his master's home", ran away from Petrópolis "using the Mauá road"<sup>66</sup>. Another ad informed that the enslaved worker called José Pernambuco worked in the construction of the palace at Rua D. Afonso, belonging to Joaquim Antônio dos Passos, one of the richest merchants in the region<sup>67</sup>.

Private construction jobs were not, at least among the announced enslaved individuals, the most frequent occupation. We found ads in *O Parahyba* informing 25 different occupations, with noticeable concentration of certain domestic services among enslaved women, such as ironer, washer, cook, and seamstress: the ironing function was mentioned 13 times in the period studied; cook appeared 12 times; washer, 11 times; while seamstress

<sup>62</sup> *O Parahyba*, 10 de abril de 1859.

<sup>63</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 27 de abril de 1860.

<sup>64</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 11 de março de 1863.

<sup>65</sup> *Jornal do Commercio*, 3 de abril de 1864.

<sup>66</sup> *O Parahyba*, 15 de novembro de 1859

<sup>67</sup> *Mercantil*, 22 de dezembro de 1875.

appeared 7 times. Other jobs appeared such as soaping, mentioned twice; doing the shopping, and looking after children, once each. There are also general references such as “all house chores” or “home arrangements”.

Regarding male enslaved workers, the services were less concentrated and more varied. The cook job was the one that appeared more times as an indication of occupation, with five references in *O Parahyba*. Occupations such as carpenter, bricklayer, sawyer, drover, farrier, vegetable grower appeared twice each in the ads found. Eleven other functions were indicated, once each, as follows: furniture maker, tailor, messenger, blacksmith, oven operator, butler, ditch-digger, small farm worker, farm caretaker, responsible for harnessing and giving medicine to animals. The cook activity calls attention for being referred frequently for both men and women, something already noticed in other cities, even in larger numbers such as in Rio de Janeiro and Niterói<sup>68</sup>.

In addition to occupations, some news and ads allow the perception that the enslaved population was not passive in the slavery context. In some of the cases described, the features adopted by the resistance exercised by the enslaved individuals were alarming, even if as Keila Grinberg pointed out, “we have to think whether the crimes committed by enslaved individuals were always acts of resistance against slavery”<sup>69</sup>. Even if not all crime represented a conscious fight for freedom, the press in Petrópolis recorded some cases of unlawful action that became common in the city.

Thomaz José da Porciúncula, Md, director of the Petrópolis Hospital since 1853, appeared in the news of *O Parahyba* after one of the enslaved people owned by him “stabbed another black man owned by Mr. Antônio José da Rocha Fragoso”<sup>70</sup>. The German Jacob Veit, at Quarteirão Darmstadt, was also in the news for “keeping a fugitive slave, who had in the past shot a justice agent”<sup>71</sup>. In March 1859, there was a burglary in the city’s prison, which enabled five prisoners to escape, “the mixed-race man Hermenegildo Marcolino Silvestre, deserter from the 1<sup>st</sup> artillery battalion”, the “black Ventura, owned by D. Júlio Macke, arrested as requested by Antônio José Correia Lima” and “another suspected of having escaped, by the 2<sup>nd</sup> district

<sup>68</sup> PIRES, João Victor Ribeiro. “Resistindo ao fogo: escravizados cozinheiros e a alta demanda anunciada nos periódicos fluminenses do século XIX”. In *Perspectivas Afro*, Cartagena de Indias, 2024, vol. 4, n.º 1, pp. 39-58.

<sup>69</sup> GRINBERG, Keila. “Castigos físicos e legislação”. In SCHWARCZ, Lília; GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. *Dicionário da escravidão e liberdade*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2018.

<sup>70</sup> *O Parahyba*, 24 de dezembro de 1857.

<sup>71</sup> *O Parahyba*, 14 de fevereiro de 1858.



police office”<sup>72</sup>. Another case occurred at Rua de D. Francisca, where “two black men were found in the kitchen of a house”. The cook of the house tried to expel them and “was later attacked by them in front of the shed next to the directory, and he would have been beaten more if the noise had not called the attention of Mr. Lopes”. The piece of news ends requesting stricter measures than those applied to the “three black men of the directory, who were found with knives and pocketknives, but were only arrested for one night”<sup>73</sup>.

In the section “Crônica Judiciária” of *O Parahyba* the news informed that the “slave Roque, charged by justice with severe injury crime”, was sentenced “to suffer 300 lashes and wear an iron collar for one year”<sup>74</sup>. Some days later, another piece of news informed the death of “Mrs. Pegels, Mr. Thouzet’s mother-in-law”, victim of “poisoned food coming from the court”. Vicente, an enslaved man, was suspected of that crime, according to the piece of news, which also informed that he was believed to be already in jail<sup>75</sup>. The last few examples illustrate a paradox that, according to Hebe Mattos and Keila Grinberg<sup>76</sup>, persisted throughout the whole slavery period in Brazil, that is, the enslaved individuals were at the same time a property and a person since while the slavery system allowed the ownership of enslaved individuals, it also provided for the criminal liability of enslaved people.

## Final Considerations

We could notice that due to the higher number of ads linked to the urban area, the slavery characteristics found in Petrópolis, respecting the proportions, show a character very similar to that of the slavery dynamics in the Brazilian urban areas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We also observed that mainly regarding enslaved women, the expressions “tanks, stoves, and brooms”, used by Leila Algranti to classify the functions of the urban slavery<sup>77</sup>, were reproduced in the mountains, along with the fact that the cooking function predominated in Petrópolis as in other cities of the state of Rio de Janeiro. In

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<sup>72</sup> *O Parahyba*, 10 de março de 1859.

<sup>73</sup> *O Parahyba*, 28 de outubro de 1858.

<sup>74</sup> *O Parahyba*, 28 de março de 1858.

<sup>75</sup> *O Parahyba*, 31 de março de 1859.

<sup>76</sup> MATTOS, Hebe; GRINBERG, Keila. “Código Penal Escravista e Estado”. In SCHWARCZ, Lília; GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. *Dicionário da escravidão e liberdade*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2018.

<sup>77</sup> ALGRANTI, Leila Mezan. *O feitor ausente. Estudo sobre a escravidão urbana no Rio de Janeiro*. Petrópolis, Editora Vozes, 1988, p. 83.

urban areas, as suggested by Flávio Gomes when analyzing Rio de Janeiro<sup>78</sup>, some masters considered temporary escapes as ordinary and predictable, so that “they waited some time while they expected the return of the enslaved individuals”. This was not different in Petrópolis. When analyzing the ads, which usually informed the time the individual was missing, there were many ads that were only published weeks after the individual’s “evasion”<sup>79</sup>.

Other characteristics of the urban slavery can be seen in Petrópolis such as the enslaved workforce in urban services which include hotels, bakeries, construction work, etc. In cities, “run aways were constantly in the news, that is, in the newspapers that were published every day”<sup>80</sup>, and we also saw that in Petrópolis, the same phenomenon was verified. Even the small street market being run by the so-called *quitandeiros*<sup>81</sup>, to a certain extent, this can be verified in the ads of two enslaved workers who sold *quitanda* in Petrópolis.

In this article, we sought to show that slavery in Petrópolis was more active than shown in the historical studies of the city. We also showed that, as taught by Robert Slenes, we cannot be deceived by the biased view of observers and foreigner travelers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As regards Petrópolis, if we consider, for example, the description left by the French Carlos Augusto Taunay in 1862, we saw that slavery in Petrópolis was not docile, owners were not complacent and screams and violence were observed. Charles Ribeyrolles, when visiting Petrópolis, praised the “newly born city” press, which “has denounced the negligence and inability that delights with such precipices”, revealing that “*O Parahyba*, mainly, fought it fiercely”<sup>82</sup>. If the French traveler had read more attentively some of the ads in the newspaper, he would certainly have more to say about the local slavery than the little or nothing he wrote about it. Even if on a smaller scale when compared to other regions of Rio de Janeiro, slavery occupied a remarkable space in Petrópolis in the 1800s, according to the statistics of the newspapers of the time reveal.

<sup>78</sup> GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. “Jogando a rede, revendo as malhas: Fugas e fugitivos no Brasil Escravista”. In *Tempo*, Niterói, 1996, vol. 1, n.º 1, pp. 67-93.

<sup>79</sup> To cite two cases reported in *O Parahyba* and referred to in this article: the news about the escape of the “black, bricklayer, from the Mozambique nation” was published almost a month later, while Luiz José Fernandes de Azevedo announced the runaway of a carpenter almost two months later.

<sup>80</sup> SCHWARCZ, Lília; GOMES, Flávio dos Santos. “Introdução”. In *Dicionário da escravidão e liberdade*. São Paulo, Companhia das Letras, 2018.

<sup>81</sup> SOARES, Luiz Carlos. *Urban slavery in nineteenth century Rio de Janeiro*. Londres, Tese de doutorado, University of London, 1988, p. 184.

<sup>82</sup> RIBEYROLLES, Charles. *Brasil Pitoresco*. Tomo II. Rio de Janeiro, Tipografia Nacional, 1859, p. 171.

Recurring to the analytical proposal by Roderick Barman<sup>83</sup>, Petrópolis in fact existed together in a symbiosis with Rio de Janeiro, it was a kind of appendix of the empire capital. That scenery was part of a space of circulation of the elite close to the court, and at the same time of enslaved black individuals who worked in diverse urban sectors. The numbers presented in this study and the perspective of analysis proposed create the possibility of rethinking the historical view of the African and Afro-descendent presence in Petrópolis in the 1800s. The historiography shows that the Brazilian urbanization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century cannot be separated from slavery. The same applies to Petrópolis.

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<sup>83</sup> BARMAN, Roderick. “Imperial Cities and Seasonal Residences: Petrópolis, Summer Capital of Brazil (1843–1889), and its European Counterparts”, In *The Court Historian*, London, 2008, vol. 13, n.º 1, pp. 3-20.

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