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CHAPTER SIX

DEMONYM CARTOGRAPHY: NATIVE PEOPLES AND INQUISITION IN PORTUGUESE AMERICA (18TH CENTURY)*

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Epidemics raged in the Americas, causing many deaths from the germs brought to the Natives of South America. Portuguese immigrants exploited the Indigenous with indiscriminate slave labour. Religious orders reduced Natives in their missions. The challenges above were not the only ones faced by the Native Peoples of Brazil. One more was yet to come: the Holy Office Trial act.

This text proposes to map the crimes historically reported as having been committed against the Natives and their descendants in what I consider to be a demonym cartography of the Holy Inquisition in Portuguese America during the eighteenth century. The reason I began this research is not only because the case mentioned above is the only one in the Americas,¹ but also because, despite the recent contributions of

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¹ Different from the trials installed in America, the Lisbon Inquisition implicated the Natives of Brazil in their three visitations: in the sixteenth century in the states of Bahia and Pernambuco, in the seventeenth century, and in the third and last visitation in Pará, Maranhão and the Black River (Amazon Region). In Mexico, the execution of Don Carlos, chief of the Texcoco in 1539 removed the Natives from the jurisdiction of the Holy Office by Philip II in 23 February 1575. It is important to note, however, that the Natives remained under the bishop's jurisdiction, considered to be as severe as the inquisitional action: Henry Kamen, *La Inquisición española* (Madrid: Alianza, 1973); Richard Greenleaf, *La Inquisición en la Nueva España. Siglo XVI* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995). Jorge E.H. Traslosheros, "El Tribunal Eclesiástico y los indios en el Arzobispado de Mexico," *Historia Mexicana* LI, no. 3 (2002): 485-516.

research on the trial act in Brazil, few studies approached the issue of Native peoples, properly speaking.² To stick to what we know about what happened to the Indigenous and their mixed-race descendants, the focus lay on the Third Visitation, specifically in “Grão-Pará.” Nevertheless, the richness of sources, spanning the whole century, is abundantly sufficient to cover the experience of these populations from diverse regions and ethnic origins, facing the presence of the Holy Office in the whole territory of Portuguese America.³ As it covers a broad and diverse ethno-cultural and

² Ronaldo Vainfas, *A heresia dos Índios: catolicismo e rebeldia no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995); Barbara Ann Sommer, *Negotiated Settlements: Native Amazonians and Portuguese Policy in Pará, Brazil* (New Mexico: University of New Mexico, 2000); Almir D. Carvalho JR, “Índios cristãos. A conversão dos gentios na Amazônia Portuguesa (1653-1769)” (PhD diss., Unicamp, 2005); Alida C. Medcalf, *Go-between and the Colonization of Brasil (1500-1600)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Luiz Mott, “Um tupinambá feiticeiro do Espírito Santo na garra da Inquisição (1737-1744),” *Revista Dimensões XX* (2006): 13-27; Luiz Mott, “Um congresso de diabos e feiticeiras no Piauí colonial,” in *Formas de Crer: Ensaio de história religiosa do mundo luso-afro-brasileiro, séculos XIV-XXI*, ed. Ligia Bellini, Evergton Sales Souza and Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio (Salvador: Editora Corrupio, UFBA, 2006), 129-160; James E. Wadsworth, “Jurema and Batuque: Indians, Africans, and the Inquisition in colonial northeastern Brazil,” *History of Religions* 46, no. 2 (2006): 140-161; Maria Olindina Andrade Oliveira, “Olhares inquisitoriais na Amazônia Portuguesa. O tribunal do santo ofício e o disciplinamento dos costumes (XVII-XIX)” (Master’s thesis, UFAM, 2010); Stuart Schwartz, *Cada um na sua lei: Tolerância religiosa e salvação no mundo atlântico ibérico* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 2009), 187-268; Carlos Henrique A. Cruz, *Investigação Corema: beberagens e pactos demoníacos em um aldeamento indígena do Brasil colonial (século XVIII), forthcoming*. My own work, Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende, “Devassas gentílicas: inquisição dos índios na Minas Gerais colonial,” in *Caminhos Gerais: estudos históricos sobre Minas (séc. XVIII-XIX)*, ed. Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende and Maria Sílvia Bruger (São João del-Rei: UFSJ, 2005), 9-48; and “Brasis coloniales: índios e mestiços nas Minas Setecentistas,” in *História de Minas Gerais: As Minas Setecentistas*, Vol. 1, ed. Maria Efigênia Lage de Resende and Luiz Carlos Villalta (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2007). See also regarding the Third Visitation act in Pedro Marcelo Campos, “Inquisição, magia e sociedade. Belém (1763-176)” (Master’s thesis, UFF, 1995); Evandro Domingues, “A pedagogia da desconfiança - o estigma da heresia lançado sobre as práticas de feitiçaria colonial durante a Visitação do Santo Ofício ao Estado do Grão-Pará (1763-1772)” (Master’s thesis, Unicamp, 2001); Yllan de Mattos, “A última inquisição: os meios de ação e funcionamento da inquisição no Grão Pará pombalino (1763-1769)” (Master’s thesis, UFF, 2009).

³ There is vast documentation of an inquisitorial nature. In addition to the books concerning the three visitations, there is a series of Prosecutor’s Notebooks

geographic landscape, the inquisitorial documentation is valuable and illustrative, as it makes it possible for us to follow the cultural dilemmas imposed on the Indigenous by interethnic contact with the Portuguese, Portuguese-Brazilians and Africans, recovering their manner of “living in colony.” These sources are fragments from an array of infractions committed by the Indigenous, portraying their trajectories, their practices and their everyday experiences in the New World. By means of these reports it is possible to follow the complexity of the forms of insertion of the Native peoples in historical contexts and specific regions in the colony, as in the eighteenth century case of Minas Gerais, which I take as an illustration in parts of this text.

Demonym Cartography: A Panorama of the Natives’ Sins

According to Anita Novinsky, during the period lasting from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, among the 1076 Brazilian prisoners sentenced by the Holy Inquisition, thirty three men (4.24%) and seven women (2.69%) were either Indigenous or *mamelucos*, i.e. of mixed race.⁴ It is important to note, however, that the denunciations in the Prosecutor’s Notebooks distort the number of accusations against Natives, significantly amplifying them.⁵

In the eighteenth century, the Holy Office received 273 denunciations against Natives, in different degrees of contact and situations, as a result of a long process of conquest and colonisation, ranging from recently contacted Natives (who did not even speak Portuguese) to Native villagers newly installed in the missions by religious orders, and mixed-race

(Cadernos do Promotor) and their respective trials. In this text, I use data from the Third Visitation (1763-1769), Book (785 (mic. 5221), published by Amaral Lapa, and the denunciations registered in the Prosecutor’s Notebooks in their 4 indices, concerning the eighteenth century, deposited in the National Archive of *Torre do Tombo*: Amaral Lapa, *Livro da Visitação do Santo Ofício da Inquisição do estado do Grão-Pará (1763-1769)* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1979), 81-105. In the section “Qualification of persons whose names appear in the Book of the Inquisition Holy Office Visitation in Grão-Pará,” there are, in the inventory, 55 Natives, 17 *mamelucos* (mixed-race: Native and European), and 6 *cafuzos* (mixed-race: African with Native South Americans); in total, 78 of native descent.

⁴ Anita Novinsky, *Inquisição: prisioneiros do Brasil (séculos XVI-XIX)* (Rio de Janeiro: Expressão e Cultura, 2002), 33.

⁵ It is important to observe that not all the denunciations in the Prosecutor’s Notebooks, as Bruno Feitler points out, were actually carried out by inquisitorial trial: Bruno Feitler et al., eds., *A Inquisição em xeque: temas, controvérsias, estudos de caso* (Rio de Janeiro: Eduerj, 2006), 44.

descendants, no longer tribal, incorporated as everyday colonials. In this account, we found 168 of those denounced identified as Natives of various origins: *Jê*, occupants of a vast area in central high plains (“planalto central”); *Tupi-Guarani*, who inhabited the Atlantic coast and the Amazon; *Aruaque*, who lived on the banks of the Orinoco and Negro rivers, throughout the mid-Amazon River and the heads of the Madeira River. Yet, in these registers, the ethnic origin is rarely defined, including only a few ethnical references⁶ or rough groupings, namely *Tabajara*, *Gueguê*, *Baré*, *Paiacu*, *Caipós*, *Curumariá*, *Pataxó*, *Nhambiquara*; most appear under the form of generic terms defining an Indigenous origin, such as “gentile from the land,” *carijó*, or *tapuia*. In addition, there is the case of other 105 other accused who are referred to by designations of mixed race such as *caboclo* or *mameluco* (mixed race between European and Native Peoples) and *cafuzo* (mixed race between African and Native Peoples), indicating they have Native Brazilian heritage. All these terms marked the an adscription of Indigenous identity, in a profusion of contact situations that significantly resize and amplify the cultural mosaic of those accused, bringing important implications for comprehending the dimensions of the act of inquisition concerning Native Peoples. Most importantly, to acknowledge this, while treating inquisitorial material in the perspective of Native History, one must emphasise the historicity of the ethnic identities and cultures constructed in the different processes of

⁶ In general, the designations that appear in the sources are not proper ethnic groups but ethnonyms, i.e. names attributed in the contact process, in which fragmented groups are reordered by war, by the reduction in settlements, or by other causes in the varying historical processes, as shown in historical and anthropological literature. A good example is the case of *Tabajara*, very frequent in documentation, which is a classificatory category of the *Tupi* able to denominate groups that could establish relations of reciprocity or conflict. João Pacheco de Oliveira, “Uma etnologia dos ‘índios misturados’: situação colonial, territorialização e fluxos culturais,” in *A viagem da volta: etnicidade, política e reelaboração cultural no Nordeste indígena*, ed. João Pacheco de Oliveira (Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Contracapa, 1999), 11-41. On this subject, see also: Stuart Schwartz, “The Formation of Colonial Identities in Brazil,” in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 15-50; Stuart Schwartz, “Brazilian Ethnogenesis: Mestiços, Mamelucos, and Pardos,” in *Le Nouveau Monde Mondes Nouveaux. L’expérience Américaine*, ed. Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel (Paris: EHESS/CNRS, 1996), 7-27; Guillaume Boccara, “Etnogénesis Mapuche: Resistencia y Reestructuración entre los Indígenas del Centro-Sur de Chile (Siglos XVI-XVIII),” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (1999): 415-61.

contact to which they were subjected, with reference to specificities from each region; this requires deeper studies.

Be that as it may, the reach of the inquisition did not exclude Native Peoples or mixed races, including the descendants of Native Peoples, as it adopted the same procedures as those applied to those of European descendant in the colony. Such denunciations were usually received by either missionaries or priests in the Indigenous’ act of confession and, with a license so as not to break the seal (though not always expressed by the confessor), were forwarded to the commissary, who would then send them for the analysis of the trial court.⁷ Some of these reports involved the religious themselves, particularly in scandalous cases of solicitation. This was the sin of the famous Friar Henrique de Populo, a Capuchin from the province of Santo Antônio, in Vila Maria do Icatu in Maranhão, denounced by Friar João de Vilar of the Society of Jesus. Despite constant disagreements between religious orders who quite often quarrelled, according to appalling testimony given to the commissary of the Holy Office, the Indigenous woman Maria was solicited by Friar Populo, who “laid her down on the floor of the sacristy and copulated with her, to her utter horror at being so treated in such a holy act.”⁸ The *ad turpia* solicitation, transgression during the sacramental act of confession, was a common practice from which Native women did not escape either. The then-common defence that fornication with non-European women was no sin extended throughout churches and holy temples, endorsed by some religious who preached, with liberality and impertinence, as did Friar Antônio da Trindade in Minas, that every woman who had illicit communication with a man of the cloth would receive a full indulgence, “putting this belief among gentiles.”⁹ It sounds to the ears as a good justification “in conscience” for many priests faltering in their work, who did not even spare the incarcerated maidens in prayer, attacked by the

⁷ In Brazil, Jesuits exercised the decisive role as interlocutors of the Holy Office. As religious orders were forbidden to be installed in Minas Gerais, the commissaries of the Holy Office there were recruited from the secular clergy: Aldair C. Rodrigues, “Sociedade e Inquisição em Minas colonial: os familiares do Santo Ofício (1711-1808)” (Master’s thesis, USP, 2007), 21-23.

⁸ National Archive of *Torre do Tombo* (ANTT), Lisbon Inquisition (IL), bk. 275, 75-78; 426; 438.

⁹ ANTT, CP (Prosecutor’s Notebooks), bk. 268, 0994, doc. 487. For Vainfas, the solicitants did not cultivate heretical doctrines. They were priests averse to the vow of chastity who took advantage of the moment of intimacy of confession to seduce women. On the discussion of fornication, see Ronaldo Vainfas, *Trópico dos Pecados. Moral, sexualidade e Inquisição no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2010), 79-89.

sexual appetites of their voracious confessors. There is the testimony of Custódia Maria da Piedade, a *Carijó* woman who, at the young age of twenty two, was solicited by not one, but many priests, such as Father Antônio Álvares Pugas, Father João da Costa, Father Manoel Pinheiro de Oliveira, Father João Luís Brado—all were her confessors during the ten years in which she was locked up at *Contemplation of our Lady of Conception of Macaúbas*.¹⁰

If the weight of being a crime of inquisitorial nature fell on solicitation, as it harmed the sacrament of confession, there were many other crimes that involved the clergy, whom the moralising discourse of the Church did not always touch profoundly. Many priests were accused of leading a “dissolute life” with Indigenous women. In Minas Gerais, twenty four priests, two clerics in *minoribus* and three friars were denounced in diocesan visits for living with *Carijó* concubines.¹¹ Others were denounced for not fulfilling their obligations in the ministry of the priesthood. Father Francisco Fernandes Guimarães himself was coadjutor in São José del-Rei, now called Tiradentes, and was forced to acknowledge the faults of Vicar Ferraz, who let “the *Carijó* Braz da Costa die without the due sacraments.” He also used to proceed to the baptism of adults without examining if they were instructed in matters of faith and admitted during Lent to many married men when their wives were absent, such as Francisco Rangel, “that he lived with a *Carijó* woman.”¹² His

¹⁰ ANTT, IL, Process 256. Father Antônio Álvares Pugas, chaplain of *Contemplation das Macaúbas*, was denounced in 1741, arrested in 1742 and questioned in the prison of the inquisition in 1743. On soliciting in colonial Brazil, see Lana Lage da G. Lima, “A confissão pelo avesso: o crime de solicitação no Brasil Colonial” (PhD diss., USP, 1990). Lana Lima informs us that 403 women denounced 425 priests for solicitation in Brazil between 1610 and 1810. In order to try to de-characterise the inquisitorial crime, fathers Antônio Álvares Pugas and Manoel Pinheiro de Oliveira tried to benefit from the fact that, at *Contemplation*, there was no confessional and confessions took place at the bars of the Chapter House: Lana Lage da G. Lima, “As Contraditas no Processo Inquisitorial,” in *IV Reunião de Antropologia do Mercosul* (Curitiba, November 2001). At *Contemplation of Macaúbas*, 147 women lived between 1720 and 1822. See Leila Mezan Algranti, *Honradas e devotas: mulheres da colônia: condição feminina nos conventos e recolhimentos do sudeste do Brasil, 1750-1822* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1993).

¹¹ Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende, “Gentios Brasília: índios coloniais em Minas Gerais setecentista” (PhD diss., Unicamp, 2003), 268.

¹² In addition to the illegitimate character, the term “bastard” has another meaning: “Born and descending from an illicit union.” Or also “son of a public woman, born from incest, from an unmarried mother,” “generated from different species and, as

negligence or slip suggests that he covered for himself. Some gossipers of the time said that he was living in sin with “a widow from the caste of the land,” that is, of Native descendant.¹³ Additionally, the priests would “walk through the woods” committing true “follies.” Father Antônio Soares, in Barbacena, had been living for years with a bastard woman of the land, Maria Pais, with whom he had children, living in parts of Sapucaí, “away in the woods, looking more like a brute than a clergyman.” He was arrested and sent to Rio de Janeiro.¹⁴ These cases, among others involving Indigenous, are fruits of the inquiries (“*Devassas*”) carried out in eighteenth century Minas Gerais, known as a “minor inquisition.”¹⁵

Inquisitorial denunciations against Native peoples reached the whole colony and led to the inquisitorial court. They impressively reached the furthest and most inaccessible places, covering practically the whole territory.

The concentration of the denunciations in Pará during the 60s suggests to us that the repercussions of the Third Visitation of the Holy Office in Grão-Pará stimulated, with its presence, denounces in a territory “infested” by Indigenous. However, as the graph below indicates, these data, if compared in the time spectrum of the whole eighteenth century, continue a rising trend since the 1740s.

a consequence, degenerating nature.” So “bastardising is denegenerating”: D. Raphael Bluteau, *Vocabulário Português e Latino* (Coimbra, 1712), vol. 2, t. I, 63-64. Hence the common use of the term “bastard” to designate Natives and their children.

¹³ Mariana cury archive (ACM), bk. 31, *Devassa*, 231v.

¹⁴ ACM, Book 31, Z1, *Devassa* 1738, 145-148v.

¹⁵ About the Natives who were denounced in the inquiries, cf. Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende, “*Devassas gentílicas: inquisição dos índios na Minas Gerais colonial*,” in Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende and Maria Sílvia Bruger, eds., *Caminhos Gerais: estudos históricos sobre Minas (séc. XVIII-XIX)* (São João del-Rei: UFSJ, 2005), 9-48. About the *devassas* themselves, as they were known in pastoral or diocesan visits, see works by Francisco Vidal and Iracy Del Nero da Costa, “*Devassas nas Minas Gerais do crime à punição*,” *Anuário de Estudos Americanos* 39 (1982): 465-474; Laura de Mello de Souza, “*As devassas eclesiásticas da Arquidiocese de Mariana para a história das mentalidades*,” *Anais do Museu Paulista* 33 (1984): 65-73; Luciano Raposo A. Figueiredo, “*Segredos de Mariana: pesquisando a inquisição mineira*,” *Acervo* 2, no. 2 (1987), 1-34; Caio César Boschi, “*As visitas diocesanas e a inquisição na colônia*,” *Revista Brasileira de História* 7, no. 14 (1987); Luciano Figueiredo, “*Peccata Mundi: a pequena inquisição mineira e as devassas episcopais*,” in *As Minas Setecentistas*, ed. Maria Efigênia Lage Resende and Luiz Carlos Villalta (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2007), v.2, 109-128.

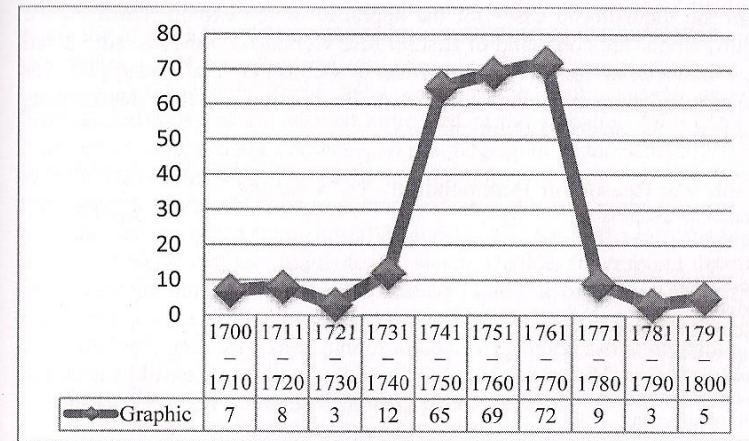
Table 6.1: Region - 18th Century

Region / Denunciations	Quantity
Amazonas	06
America	02
Bahia	06
Ceará	16
Maranhão	11
Mato Grosso	01
Minas Gerais	14
Pará	128
Paraíba	03
Pernambuco	20
Piauí	10
Rio de Janeiro	14
Rio Grande do Sul	08
São Paulo	14
Tocantins	01
Unlisted	18
Not found	01
Total	273

Sources: ANTT, Lisbon Inquisition, Prosecutor's Notebooks [1700-1802]

Many historians assert that the role of the Third Visitation, interpreted by some as extemporaneous, was connected with the context of *reformas pombalinas*, whose political project for the region was aimed at "the safety and preservation of the territory, the valuing of agriculture and civilising Natives."¹⁶ To civilise the Indigenous meant, according to the Directory of Natives (1757), to promote their conversion to Christianity, reinforced by teaching the Portuguese language and adopting Portuguese names and habits to transform them into vassals of the King.

¹⁶ Mattos, *A última Inquisição*, 20. Oliveira, *Olharesinsuisitoriais*, 78.

Table 6.2: Denouncements - Period - 18th Century

If the Third Visitation was an actual effort towards *pombalina* instrumentalization, seeking to normalise faith and habits in the strategic region of Grão-Pará (which would justify the attention on Native populations in that region), greater importance arises from the reach of the denunciations compared with the Inquisition of previous periods, and yet its actions extended throughout the whole territory, with more than half the denunciations diffused through other regions. In addition, we know that the politics of the Marquês of Pombal were adapted to the various realities and contexts, not always in harmony with the idea of law, as was the case in Minas Gerais when he governed there. Lobo da Silva distorted its application.¹⁷ Perhaps for this specific reason, in Minas Gerais, the inquisitorial machine associated with the bishop's power competed with the same vigour, using their resources reinforced by the network of agents of the Holy Office, with action from family members and commissaries, whose powers of social control in their territory noticeably increased in this period.¹⁸ In such tight ties of complicity, the bishop's visits played the

¹⁷ Hal Langfur, "Uncertain Refuge: Frontier Formation and the Origins of the Botocudo War in Late Colonial Brazil," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 2 (2002): 248-249.

¹⁸ The peak was reached in the period from 1721 to 1778, when it reached 1011 cooperants. In the case of Minas Gerais, 23 commissaries are indicated. See Aldair C. Rodrigues, "Sociedade e Inquisição em Minas colonial: os familiares do Santo Ofício (1711-1808)" (Master's thesis, USP, 2007), 21.

role of gathering denunciations and, after the usual investigations, they sent the inquisitorial cases for the appraisal of the Lisbon States Palace court. Under the command of Bishop José Geraldo Abranches, who acted in Minas Gerais for 50 years—in what was considered a “rehearsal”¹⁹ for his role as Visitor in Pará years later—the Indigenous and their descendants were also the object of attention.

Table 6.3: Reason for Denunciation - 18th Century

Reason for denunciation *	Quantity
Bigamy	78
Sorcery	63
Black magic	31
Talisman	09
Pact with the devil	11
Superstition	11
Healing (Medicine Man's actions)	12
Heretical proposition	03
False confession	06
Divination	06
Demonic summoning	04
Consecrated particle	05
Blasphemy	04
Charms	02
Bestiality	02
Icon profanation	02
Ambush	02
Malefic act	02
Indignant deals with the devil	02
Charming	01
Catching sacred particle	01
Apostate	01
Drinking <i>jurema</i> potion under superstitious circumstances	01
Devil worship	01
Lewd conduct	01
Desecration	01
Evil	02
Diabolical summoning	01
Receiving communion without fasting	01
Not attending Mass	01
Removing the holy sacrament from the church tabernacle	01
Using poisons and selling a Native woman	01
Unlisted	04
Total	273

Sources: ANTT, Lisbon Inquisition, Prosecutor's Notebooks [1700-1802]. * as indicated in source

¹⁹ Figueiredo, “*Peccata Mundi*,” 114.

From them come fourteen inquisitorial denunciations against Natives and their descendants that were readily forwarded: superstition (three), consecrated particle (three), sorcery (two), devilish pact (two), evil (two), desecration (one), talisman (one).

As far as concerns Brazil, the reasons for the denunciations against Natives and those of mixed race registered in the so-called Prosecutor's Notebooks were various, according to the judgement of the secretary who was in charge of taking notes at his discretion at the heading of the document, the nature of the crime being later categorised by the prosecutor after the fashion of the Inquisitorial Regiment. It is not difficult to suppose a generalisation of the inquisitorial sieve. Unable to respond to the amplitude and dimension of the deviations to Catholic orthodoxy related to the denunciations, and facing the profusion of the crimes, it seems the court defined, instead, a spectrum of action in a general range on which it acted. In addition, according to the principles of the Inquisitorial Code, we could fit these crimes into the following parameters:

Table 6.4. 18th Century

Reason for denunciation, according to the Inquisitorial Code – 1774	Quantity
Title VII: Apostates, renegades and heretics	01
Title VIII: Blasphemers and those uttering heretical, fearful or scandalous propositions	14
Title IX: Desecrating the Holy Sacrament or icons or receiving communion without fasting	11
Title XI: Sorcery, fortune telling, divination, judiciary astrologists and malefic deeds	158
Title XII: Bigamists	78
Title XVIII: Disturbing the ministry of the Holy Office	01
Title XXII: Committing the disgraceful act of sodomy	02
Others	04
Unlisted	04
Total	273

Sources: ANTT, Lisbon Inquisition, Prosecutor's Notebooks [1700-1802]

Restricted to the inquisitorial perspective, this model was unable to take account of the nature and specificity of the crimes on the American continent. In the Indigenous perspective, it is hence fitting that the investigations of historians perform an archaeology of such Indigenous practices that to these populations marked an insertion of their own into

the colonial world. Only by closely reading the denunciations, taking into account the particular experiences of these Indigenous groups and the regional context of the application of different politics towards these Natives, can one clarify the true meaning of the denunciations. The typology of the crimes, the nature of the infractions takes hold of a larger range of meanings, resulting from a greater or lesser degree of proximity and intensity of contact with colonial society, thus impressing a gamut of meanings much more complex than the court labels following the canons of the inquisitorial regiment. It is necessary to consider these denunciations in the context of the diverse and different regional historic processes to which these populations have been submitted.

Since we cannot here deepen this discussion, it is important to bring to our attention that studies of identity—in the sense of taking interethnic contact between the Indigenous and society in its multiplicity of perspectives—are marked by dynamic socio-cultural interactions.²⁰ As a historical construct, identity is defined by self-attribution and by another's social acknowledgement. It is precisely in this complex relation that Indigenous identities are constantly rebuilt, from exchanged cultural appropriations reproducing, recreating, and renewing themselves in the historical process. One must abandon the idea of a pretentious unity or essence attributed to the culture of Indigenous societies built from an archaic tradition: monolithic, static and ahistorical. These societies are not "cold" or without history, intrinsically opposed to change. On the contrary, they are flowing and supple. Their agents act in a relational perspective with other social actors and are able to respond to challenges that stem from their different historical processes, promoting strategic cultural mixtures and adaptations.

This is the case, for example, in the denunciations for sorcery and magic-religious practices of Indigenous people accused of being involved in the theft, selling and bargaining of consecrated particles for the production of amulets, popular pouches of magic that, once attached to the neck, would protect the person against black magic or of talismans used as love charms to "seduce and attract the will of the lover," practices of

²⁰ Guillaume Boccard, ed., *Colonización, resistencia y mestizaje en las Américas (Siglos XVI-XX)* (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2002); Lea Geeler and Evelyne Sanchez, "América: identidades movidas," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* (2005); accessed February 22, 2012, <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/444>; María Regina Celestino de Almeida and Sara Orтели, "Atravesando fronteras. Circulación de población en los márgenes iberoamericanos. Siglos XVI-XIX," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* (2011); accessed February 22, 2012, <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/60702>.

African origin found in both Portugal and Brazil. This kind of report shows, in an excellent way, the convergence of Native Brazilian and African heritages inherent to colonial life, where Indigenous magic, Christianity and even Islamic practices seem to melt together towards a greater power and efficacy.²¹ Practices circulated among Native Brazilians and Africans in a school of magic office, crossing the territory—as was the case of the Indigenous Anselmo da Costa of the bishopric of Grão-Pará, accused of magic in 1764²² and ending up in Minas Gerais in 1799—with João, another sacrilegious Indigenous who had sewn a pouch, obtaining with this "a good relic to keep the body away from the evils of snake bits, iron and stick-hitting."²³ In many cases, the Indigenous were the ones who, being the true masters of such magical practices, "taught"—here I mean to reinforce this sense—the populations of African origin and those of European descent such arts, editing and adding other elements, in an amalgam of hybrid religious practices constituting a sharing in the dominion of or a dispute over what is sacred. The use of plants, objects, prayers mediated by divinations, fortune-telling and conjurations formed part of the richness of elements incorporated that confirmed the importance of such practices and rituals to the Natives when, rearranging, elaborating on and editing to their own and those of others, they sought, after their own fashion, to confront everyday adversities in the profusion of cultural matrices in the colony.²⁴

Another good example is the sorcery with dolls, commonly used and broadly documented in the archives of the inquisition, using earth from a grave, hair, nails and bones—whose origin lies in African traditions, but was also re-appropriated by Natives. The Indigenous woman Narcisa was accused of producing precisely such sorcery in the shape of a doll made of hair, fish bones, rags and strings, all stuck with needles and pins. When unmaking the doll, a sister of the one affected had wounds in her hands that could only be healed with exorcisms and blessed olive oil.²⁵

Acting in addition to these Natives were others who uncovered such evils using divination, performing African magic, naming the evil-doers and unearthing their evil deeds. They also produced omens and extraordinary healings, to the surprise of many of European descent, who often resorted to them. A famous case is that of Sabina, an Indigenous

²¹ Daniela Buono Calainho, *Metrópole das Mandingas. Religiosidade Negra e Inquisição Portuguesa no Antigo Regime* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008), 156.

²² ANTT, Process 213.

²³ ACM, JE (Ecclesiastic Judgement), n. 2783, [1800].

²⁴ Souza, *O Diabo e a terra de Santa Cruz*, 221-224.

²⁵ ANTT, process 13202.

woman who worked for about 20 years in the city of Belém, in the state of Pará and its surroundings, helping those from the lower to the upper classes, even the governor himself, João de Abreu Castelo Branco—leaving to show that, under the surface, the combination of everyday strengths merged two symbolic universes, mixing their practices: the Christian and the Indigenous, in an amalgam of beliefs in colonial daily life. While they used smoke, suction and herbs to heal—a characteristic of the Native tradition—they also affirmed the value of Christian gestures, prayers and exorcisms, as shown in Almir Carvalho's study.²⁶

The court was more rigorous with those who participated in true pagan rituals. This was the case of “diabolical summoning,” so frightening to the ears of the inquisitors. Many Indigenous were accused of participating in demonic “congresses,” drinking *jurema* potions while the master, playing the *maracá*, intoned the dance with Natives singing. Those who tasted the drink fell to the ground and had visions of the dead—in a macabre scenario described as collective possession.²⁷ It was due to such an event that, in 1720, D. Souza e Castro, Principal Indigenous and governor of his Tabajara nation, in the village of the mountains of Ibiapaba, went personally to the court of the Holy Office in Lisbon.²⁸ He told, by means of his interpreter,²⁹ Father Antônio de Souza Leal, that the Native woman Antônia Guiragasu “summoned demons who answered to various questions from the other world.” For this, “she smoked great fumes of tobacco in a pipe until she was out of her mind.” The denunciation was collected and translated by an interpreter of the denouncer who did not even speak Portuguese. It does not seem improbable that there have been many misunderstandings in cultural translation.³⁰ Unfortunately, we do not have more thorough or deeper descriptions of the beliefs that inspired such a ritual, but we know it was not an isolated denouncement in Ceará. There was a spread of “devil worship” from there to Paraíba, according to the

²⁶ Carvalho JR, *Índios cristãos*.

²⁷ ANTT, bk. 299, 381-382.

²⁸ ANTT, bk. 286, 585-593.

²⁹ When the Natives could not speak Portuguese, the inquisitorial court summoned an interpreter who performed the translation in an “interpreter’s term.” See ANTT, IL, Brief 47 – Forms of the term of reduction and interpreter.

³⁰ About difficulties in “cultural” translations because of language, see Icíar Alonso Araguás, esús Baigorri Jalón and Gertrudis Payàs Puigarnau. “Nahuatlato y familias de intérpretes en el México colonial,” *Revista de Historia de Traducción* 2 (2008): 1-7; Maria Cândida D.M. Barros, “Um caso de política linguística: a questão do intérprete e do discurso religioso no Brasil colonial,” *Ameríndia* 11 (1986): 69-77.

convergence of the reports in a broad movement, as James Wadsworth pointed out.³¹

Years later, another *Tapuia* Native was denounced in the village of Corema, in Paraíba, in 1753, confirming these practices. In his confession, Antônio Barroso “denounced himself in regret,” “spontaneously and voluntarily” for “the mistakes committed against the holy Catholic faith.” His confession is very rich as it encompasses all sorts of denunciations that fell on the Natives. He told that: “since he was a little boy, he had made pact with the devil who he visibly brought with him, holding him from his left side” and that, in the presence of the same demon, he had “given his body and soul,” “denying God, the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and all angels and saints in Heaven.” All this was proved with “a paper written in his own blood that the demon extracted from his body, making a slit in him” as a sign of his subservience. He started then to worship him as his true lord and god. And he said that, many times, he had committed “foul acts with the demon,” unholy and sodomising meetings with the demon in the form of a black man and sometimes taking the shape of a goat.³² Antônio Álvares Guerra, commissary of the Holy Office, soon reputed him as an apostate. It is impossible not to associate this denunciation with a the rituals of beverages so common in the ethnographic reports that crossed landscapes and colonial eras, reprised in the sabbatical plot that, from the inquisitors’ point of view, repeated itself here through the inspiration and transmigration of the diabolical imagery to the other side of the ocean. In the eyes of the inquisition, it was a dangerous and heretical perversion in an intricate game involving the action of the court, between the imperative of repressing such gentile rituals and the pressure of colonial authorities fearful of severe correction that would bring about disastrous instability in the region.

Interesting and little studied are the heterodox ideas and behaviours as certain studies show them to be found in the Portuguese-Spanish world.³³ Not unrelated to these are the accusations against the Natives in the cases of the desecration of holy icons, as in the case of the Indigenous woman Isabel, “of the deal of Thomas Luís Teixeira,” for having, according to her, under the command of her master, thrown from the two-storey house where they lived “a vase of fetid filth” with such an impact on the procession walking by that the statue broke on the ground and the people,

³¹ Wadsworth, *Jurema and Batuque*.

³² ANTT, Notebook 114, bk. 306, 95; doc. 211-214.

³³ Stuart Schwartz, *Cada um na sua lei. Tolerância religiosa e salvação no mundo atlântico ibérico* (São Paulo: Cia das Letras, 2009); Vainfas, *Trópico dos Pecados*, 309-355.

all covered with filth, screamed in the riot: "Jew! Jew!" A similar case is that of Cristina, a *Carijó* woman from Itaverava, Minas Gerais, also accused along with her master, Domingos Morato, of setting fire to the image of Christ, of Veronica and the rosary.³⁴ Denunciations pointing at Jewish acts performed by those of European descent in the colony could also suggest complicities built with the domestic contact between Indigenous and their New-Christian³⁵ administrators, manifested by means of such behaviours, still little investigated.

Due to the negative talk that took place in the alleys of these places, denunciations for bigamy were certainly one of the most frequently reported infractions. As it was a violation of the union sanctified by the church, bigamy was responsible for an avalanche of denunciations. In fact, it was so common that the reason the denouncers alleged was usually that it was the typical gentile lifestyle, reminiscent of polygamous practises, as common sense and the discourse of the church at the time suggested.³⁶ Yet, even if this justification was not critically reproduced, one can better understand the sense of these unions for the Natives, which assumed their own characteristics and interpretations—with meanings that go beyond the banal and episodic sense, commonly attributed to the relationships with Indigenous women.³⁷

In Minas Gerais for example, it was not bigamy that fell on the Native population, but the predominance of unions not sanctioned by the church, as is often found in the inquiries of the bishops' visits.³⁸ As it escaped the

³⁴ ANTT, IL, bk. 297, doc. 241, v.253.

³⁵ The "New-Christians" (*Cristão-Novos*) were Jews who converted to Catholicism, sometimes forcibly (Translator's Note).

³⁶ Cf. Resende, *Gentios brasílicos*, 221. See also Resende, *Devassas gentílicas*, 9-48.

³⁷ Ronaldo Vainfas, "Moralidades brasílicas: deleites sexuais e linguagem erótica na sociedade escravista," in *História da vida privada: cotidiano e vida privada na América Portuguesa*, ed. Laura de Melo e Souza (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 231.

³⁸ For a discussion on taking concubines and marriages in the colony, see: Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, *Sistema de casamento no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Edusp, 1984); Ida Lewkowicz, "Vida em família: caminhos da igualdade em Minas Gerais (séculos XVIII e XIX)" (PhD diss., USP, 1992); and "Concubinato e casamento nas Minas Setecentista," in *História de Minas Gerais, As Minas Setecentistas*, ed. M. Efigenia L. Resende and Luiz Carlos Villalta (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2007), vol. 2, 531-547; Luciano Figueiredo, *Barrocas famílias: vida familiar em Minas Gerais no século XVIII* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1997); Fernando Torres-Londoño, *A outra família: concubinato, escândalo e Igreja na colônia* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1999); Sílvia Maria Jardim Brügger, *Minas patriarcal - Família e*

control of the Church, taking concubines was massively denounced in the inquiries as a "crime against the family,"³⁹ involving 660 accusations against Indigenous during the bishop's visits in Minas Gerais during the eighteenth century.⁴⁰

These data suggest once more the specificity of the nature of these crimes in Minas Gerais, in part at least justified by the nature of the insertion of Native populations into the colonial world. Not in accord with the policy of interethnic marriages in 1755, the Law of the Directory of Indigenous was implemented in 1758, favouring those who married Native women;⁴¹ in Minas Gerais, there was a prominent divide between law and custom, opposing the idea that Pombal's politics were effective in their imperative application to the whole colony. The attempt to guarantee this equality was here a failure, where animosity regarding unions with Indigenous women mirrored the difficulty for the society of Minas Gerais in accepting marriage between unequals.⁴² When the phase of occupying and populating the mining region was over, they sought, due to the intense racial mixture that was produced and that made social borders more fluid

sociedade (São João Del Rei - Séculos XVIII e XIX) (Belo Horizonte: Annablume, 2007). More specifically in the case of Natives in colonial Minas Gerais, see Maria Resende, *Gentios brasílicos*, especially chapters 3 and 4.

³⁹ According to Luna, these were "crimes against the institution of the family: incest, bigamy, taking concubines, sodomy, bestiality, pre-marital sex, forbidden marriage without a legitimate dispensation, fathers or husbands who allowed their daughters or wives "to harm themselves," couples who lived apart with no just cause, husbands who gave their wives an "indecent life": Francisco Vidal Luna and Iraci del Nero da Costa, "Devassa nas Minas Gerais: do crime à punição," *Boletim do CEPEHIB* 3 (1980): 3-7 (also published in *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 39 (1982): 465-474.

⁴⁰ See Resende, *Devassas gentílicas*, 14.

⁴¹ On this subject, see Rita Heloísa de Almeida, *O diretório dos índios: um projeto de civilização do Brasil no século XVIII* (Brasília: Ed. UNB, 1997); Ângela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: Colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para os Descobrimientos Portugueses, 2000), 151-169.

⁴² Ronaldo Vainfas considered that racial prejudices—clearly noted in expressions such as "clean blood," "infected races"—were not rooted in the enslavement of Africans and Native South Americans, since these prejudices, transplanted from Portugal to Brazil, predated it. In colonial reality, the prejudices of colour—derived from an enslaving colonialism—victimised non-white women: Vainfas, *Moralidades brasílicas*, 238-239. In Minas Gerais, the natives' bad reputation was recurrent. For example: Adão Magnão was denounced for propositions and, among other ideas, he argued that "gentiles were not people," Minas Gerais [S/D]. ANTT, Prosecutor's Notebooks, bk. 319, doc. 390.

and less precise, to limit and link by means of distance, so as to define a hierarchical society in social space. For example, many relatives did not hesitate to resort to the ecclesiastical authorities to put an end to mixed weddings, ill-regarded in the governed area (“*capitania*”), putting various restrictions on marriages between their white relatives and Indigenous women. Facing this, it was not unusual for malcontent relatives to interpose all sorts of obstacles to those getting married.⁴³ On the contrary, according to the Indigenous perspective, marriage had a very particular sense, following their own logic that was not limited to the doctrinal principles of the Catholic Church and in a sense that was very far from the reasons which motivated bigamy in other parts of the colony. For the Native peoples in Minas Gerais, marriage was a marker of the condition of free men.

On the other hand, the idea of lawful life with a Native woman hides the diverse reality, that is, the value of affection in these illicit relations, so common in Minas Gerais that they competed with marriage as a stable relationship, thus becoming the reason for an even greater scandal.⁴⁴ Many of European descent were denounced precisely for “overestimating” and “dealing affectionately” with their Native consorts. Some displayed their Native consorts publicly with no shame, embarrassing puritans. The renowned Captain Matias Barbosa was severely criticised for his spiteful behaviour: he brought his Indigenous concubine “to the Mass, with shoes on, well dressed, with a veil and with other slaves.”⁴⁵ It seems the indignation of the most ardent ones, in addition to the fact that it was “public and notorious,” deviated precisely in order to portray the affection many ended up devoting to their concubines, especially in cases of adultery, thus damaging the bonds of holy matrimony. Thus, an inversion of the socially consecrated order was produced: concubines took the place of the wife, dressed in dignity and supported, while wives suffered in misery and shame. A situation qualified so conveniently as “scandalous” for representing a clear challenge to the orders of the Church was always invoked by denouncers and reinforced by ecclesiastical judgement.

⁴³ Such paternal decisions were supported by the Church, which reproached clandestine weddings celebrated without the consent of the parents or, in their absence, tutors or caretakers. See examples: ACM, PM, José da Costa Silva & Ana Joaquina (1793), Barra Longa, cabinet 4, folder 486, process 4852; José Gonçalves Bastos & Agostinha Joaquina de São José (1789), Conselheiro Lafaiete, cabinet 5, folder 510, process 5098.

⁴⁴ See Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende, “Amores proibidos, amores possíveis,” *Revistas do Arquivo Mineiro* XLVII, no. 1 (2011): 64-77.

⁴⁵ ACM, bk. 23, *Devassa*, 121.

Bigamy was an easy target as a common behaviour among Natives—as well as for a great number of those of European descent. What we can infer from these denunciations is that the Church played a role in emphasising a disqualifying discourse against Indigenous, based in the roots of the “gentile of the land,” which in their eyes constituted the main reason, if not the main justification of such “unlawfulness and promiscuity.” In this sense, the Church naturalised the proposition that Native origins impose certain behaviour, tainted by libido, disseminating such an idea everywhere. Reproaching this conduct and imputing lecherous behaviour to those of Indigenous origin, it sought to affect colonial everyday life, immersing the Natives in a way of living that differed greatly from the standards dictated during the visitations.

Explosively prevalent, bigamy was a cause of concern for the inquisitorial court.⁴⁶ To try to escape their control, Natives resorted to all sort of gimmicks: they lied about their marital status, stating they were either single or widowed, spreading the news of the death of their spouse, presenting false testimonials, changing their names—all expedients tricks, often adopted by other bigamists. However, what draws special attention is the frequent attempt of being declared innocent under the claim that they did not know they were “committing a sin.”

This pretext did not only mark the sagacity of the Indigenous in pinning the responsibility on their evangelisers, but also stimulated the reflection on a debate quite heated at the time on the assumed innocence of the Indigenous, based on the principle of their “invincible ignorance.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Of the denouncements carried out in trials, twenty four are for bigamy (Felicía Ana’s being fragmented in three trials). Seventeen have no final sentence, either due to the fact of being fragmented, or inconclusive. Six others were taken as “extraordinary cases of absolution” and only one proceeded to sentencing: that of Custódio da Silva.

⁴⁷ In the eighteenth century, this thesis is referred as an example of the Jesuits’ atrocities. “For the same reason, a gentile who ignored invincibly the true God, will not sin formally worshiping idols. Accordingly, he will not sin, in any way, if, for invincible ignorance, he follows the Antichrist.” (Compêndio Histórico do Estado da Universidade de Coimbra (1771), II Centenário da Reforma Pombalina, por Ordem da Universidade de Coimbra, 1972, Appendix to the Second Chapter of the Second part, 19, paragraphs 40-48.) Vieira defended this theses in Clavis against Suárez and Saint Thomas Aquinas who, based in Saint Paul, understood all pagans had inscribed in their heart the natural law that teaches them to discern good from evil and to love God. For this reason, pagans were not excluded from guilt: Pedro Calafate, *As Grandes Questões da Clavis Prophetarum e o seu contexto doutrinal*. Forthcoming. See especially the topic “A questão do pecado filosófico nos povos americanos: fora da igreja pode haver salvação.”

According to this thesis, Indigenous, for their invincible ignorance of the natural law, committed only venial sin. Despite the gravity of their sins, they could not be taken as intentional offences towards God and, therefore, no eternal punishment would be fit. This was an important counterargument at *Escola Peninsular da Paz*, shared by Francisco de Vitória and Father Antônio Vieira. It seems to have touched at least some members of the court based on the content of the judgements. This could help explain the disagreement among sentences and the controversy over crimes of the same inquisitorial nature.

The fact is that “ignorance” and lack of knowledge were widely used by Natives, voiced by their advocates. This is the defence used by Antônio da Silva, an Indigenous, born in the Capuchins’ mission, bishopric of Pernambuco, 24 years of age. He was denounced and sentenced for getting married a second time, while his first and legitimate wife was still alive. The missionary Friar Antônio de Nazaré arrested him. He spent two years in jail and was then shipped to Lisbon. In his confession, he claimed he was guilty only “for ignoring the great evil he was committing,” attributing his crime to the inefficiency of the doctrine teaching.⁴⁸ However, this Indigenous man did not even have the time to be heard. The *alcaide* in charge of the secret prisons communicated to the inquisitors that he had died shortly after a severe case of water retention.⁴⁹ Others did not even survive the journey, such as Nazário Gonçalves, from the village of São José, in São Paulo, who married a second time after changing his name to José Pacheco. He was arrested in Minas Gerais where he lived and was taken to be delivered to the Holy Office. Before he arrived there, he died of an obstruction of the bowels worsened by a high fever while crossing the Atlantic.⁵⁰ Some were not even arrested. In 1756 in Minas Gerais, a *Carijó* married woman committed “superstitions,” but was “relieved from being penalised” because it was “with no pact, out of simplicity, because she is a gentile from the land who barely knows God.”⁵¹

In 1751, Felícia Ana from the Black River got around the court due to her lack of knowledge of doctrine, as, according to her testimony, “she did not know what heaven or hell was, nor had anyone ever instructed her.”⁵² Rosaura, a Native *Japurá*, showed her disregard for law. She was roughly reprimanded and forced to maintain marital life with her first husband. Her

⁴⁸ ANTT, IL, Process 6275.

⁴⁹ ANTT, IL, Process 6275.

⁵⁰ ANTT, IL, Process 6275.

⁵¹ ANTT, Prosecutor’s Notebooks, bk. 308, 0380-0382, doc. 151-152.

⁵² ANTT, IL, Process 2911.

second marriage was nullified. She actually got married three times, according to the inquisitor who investigated her case.⁵³

Many claimed lack of knowledge of doctrine so as to try to justify themselves. The implicit criticism coming from the Natives of the missionaries’ role of evangelising and the inefficiency of religious learning was also applied when the Indigenous claimed they were married against their will, a clever expedient jeopardising the validity of matrimony, according to the Constitutions and Christianity’s own terms. When asked if he knew he had committed bigamy, the Indigenous Custódio reported that his missionary, Father Bento da Cruz, “forced him to get married and thus considered, ignorantly, that his first marriage was null and that he could freely marry for a second time.”⁵⁴ He did not seem to be so ignorant in matters of faith and worked them out in his favour. He was then scolded and set free.

Such arguments seem to have been considered and the inquisitorial court dwelled on this matter, favouring milder sentences, “acknowledging their ignorance, great rusticity and lack of instruction.” Finally, the decisions portray a “benign interpretation” of the Natives as being “poor and miserable, born and raised as pagan gentiles, not receiving any instruction in doctrine and mysteries of faith and more necessary things for salvation, who did not even leave the regrettable ignorance and total rusticity that are properly ordinary of Natives!”⁵⁵—repeated justifications in final dispatches.

There is one extraordinary case of condemnation for bigamy: that of Custódio da Silva, an Indigenous born in the village of Menino Jesus of the Church of Igarapé Grande in Maranhão, denounced by the Friar of São José de Santa Teresa in 1741.⁵⁶ At the age of 28, he presented his testimony by means of an interpreter, Father Aires, because he could not speak Portuguese. He was judged and qualified as a bigamist. At his

⁵³ ANTT, IL, Process 222.

⁵⁴ ANTT, IL, Process 6689.

⁵⁵ ANTT, IL, Process 2701.

⁵⁶ ANTT, IL, Process 11178. ANTT, IL, Brief 31, unnumbered. “In the printed list of people who were sentenced, read in the public *auto da fé* celebrated at the Church of the Convent of São Domingos in Lisbon, 26 September 1745, being the general inquisitor his Eminence, Reverend Sire Nuno da Cunha, presbyter cardinal of the Holy Church of Rome in the title of Santa Anastácia do Conselho do Estado” there is the name of Custódio da Silva, Indigenous, carpenter, born in the village of Menino Jesus, of Igarapé Grande, resident at Roça do Marayo, bishopric of Pará, prosecuted for bigamy and sentenced to scourging and 5 years in the chain gang.

sentencing, he pleaded his ignorance of the Catholic faith. Instructed in the mysteries of faith, he fulfilled the penalties and spiritual penance imposed on him. Looked upon by a multitude, he performed the *auto da fé* as it is usually done. He was then scourged *citra sanguinis effusionem* through the public streets of Lisbon as far as the Church of São Domingos, where, in the presence of King D. João V, the Prince and the infants D. Pedro and Antônio, inquisitors, more ministers and the whole noblesse, he was sentenced to be exiled for five years working in his Majesty's chain-gang.

How to explain the disparities among sentences, the rigour of the court in this one and singular case and complacency in the others, if the nature of the crime of bigamy was the same? Bigamy, considered a mixed forum crime, had its jurisdiction shared by civil justice, bishops and the inquisitorial court, which could lead to conflicts in interpretation and competence.⁵⁷ The Inquisition in charge sometimes acted severely in cases when the defendants "felt badly" towards the Sacrament of matrimony, attacking Christian doctrine and, consequently, the Church; sometimes more complacently, taking softening circumstances into account, judging it not to be properly a matter of faith.⁵⁸ In this case, one should seek to emphasise the interpretational rivalries and tensions on how the "invincible ignorance" of the Natives reverberated at the court. One should also consider that similar crimes were appreciated differently, according to the time or to the court's judgement, showing that the court did not follow the protocol rigorously, as Francisco Bittencourt pointed out. So the analysis of the cases and their sentences is revealing, when compared throughout time and diverse regions, suggesting different interpretations and decisions taken by inquisitorial agents. In many of those cases, what slips between the lines is an institution limited by conflicts of competence, critical towards the efficiency of evangelisation, mocked by the Natives' supposed ignorance of doctrine, unable to control immense territories and their peoples, the "tropicalisation of the conscience" of the clergy, the reticence of colonial authorities and the weakening of the Court itself—all reasons competing with an action that hung between austerity and the application of the law and the reality of Native South-Americans of each portion of the great and different Brazil.

⁵⁷ Isabel M.R. Mendes Drumond, "O Brasil Setecentista como cenário de bigamia," in *Estudos em homenagem a Luís António de Oliveira Ramos*, ed. Francisco Ribeiro da Silva et al. (Porto: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto, 2004), 309.

⁵⁸ Drumond, *O Brasil setecentista com cenário da bigamia*, 309. Vainfas, *Trópico dos pecados*, 322-327.

Perhaps for the same reason, in the rattle of the final years of the Holy Office's action, the court released an opinion acknowledging, in 1810, the failure of inquisitorial action facing the persistency of superstitions among the Indigenous that still ravaged the colony.⁵⁹ When consulted regarding these practices and other "frivolities," it recommended that "the facts referred to of simple superstition belong to the knowledge of the Holy Office, however, granting the ignorance and materiality with which the work is done, you shall be able to absolve the penitents implicated in similar failings, [...] imposing on them the spiritual penance judged necessary for correction." That is, it seems the Holy Office finally accepted the sterility of this territory for the vines of the Lord.

Finally, the inquisitorial denunciations here reported are highlighted for using the Indigenous perspective to describe different perceptions that built on the challenges the Indigenous lived. In order to understand this complex scenario, the comprehension of Indigenous identity and culture should be, then, characterised by flexibility. This should be more fluid and relational, analysed in each historical context in the complex landscape of the multiple experiences of Native peoples of the colony. As the new native history teaches, it would be necessary to take into account the reconstructions of identities and cultures in various situations of contact involving both Indigenous and their descendants. This text was an effort in that direction. While attempting to adopt this point of view, I sought to behold in these inquisitorial narratives a Native plot, scenery still so little known of our Indigenous Brazil, of our Indigenous Minas Gerais.

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⁵⁹ ANTT, Lisbon Inquisition, Brief 28, doc. 19. Letter of the court in response to the consultation by Marcos Pinto Soares.

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