

## Colonial elites and their armed slaves: politics, clientele, and self-government of elite households in eighteenth century Minas\*

por

Ana Paula Pereira Costa<sup>1</sup> y Carla María Carvalho de Almeida<sup>2</sup>

Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora/UFJF (Brasil)

---

*The article aims to analyse the actions of elite groups in the Vila Rica district of the Minas Gerais captaincy in the first half of the eighteenth century, in terms of their household administration, understood here in a broad sense. Particular attention is paid to the relationships between these individuals and subordinate groups, notably slaves, in a vertical clientelist sense. Two methodological strategies were used in the research. The first was an exhaustive study of available parish records (births, baptisms and deaths), seeking to establish any possible connections and sociability networks among members of the elite and slaves. The other technique used to unveil these vertical relations was the recovery of more dispersed evidence from miscellaneous documents regarding the Minas Gerais captaincy in the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino.*

KEY WORDS: colonial elites; armed slaves; self-government; Minas Gerais.

---

CITATION / CÓMO CITAR ESTE ARTÍCULO: Costa, Ana Paula Pereira y Almeida, Carla María Carvalho de, “Colonial elites and their armed slaves: politics, clientele, and self-government of elite households in eighteenth century Minas”, *Revista de Indias*, LXXX/280 (Madrid, 2020): 687-718. <https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.2020.019>.

### SOME THEORETICAL NOTES

The proposal of the article is to present some reflections on the behavior of elite groups in the region of Minas Gerais in Portuguese America in the

---

\* The research was funded by Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais/Fapemig and Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico/CNPq.

<sup>1</sup> [appcosta18@gmail.com](mailto:appcosta18@gmail.com), ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8008-1650>

<sup>2</sup> [carlamca@uol.com.br](mailto:carlamca@uol.com.br), ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9048-2661>

eighteenth century. The aim is to outline a discussion about how the idea of self-government took shape in the Minas captaincy, a central element in the characterization of Ancien Regime Catholic monarchies and for the understanding the actions of local elites in colonial dominions. For this, it will be sought to investigate the actions of some previously selected individuals of great economic power, great capacity for command, and great social legitimacy in a sphere in which we understand that the idea of self-government was guided by their behavior, in other words, the administration of their households, understood here in a broad sense. This covered a varied range of actions on the part of the elites, namely, how they conducted their business, how they agreed their matrimonial ties of their children and relatives, how they established relations of *compadrio* with their friends and clients, and in the case of Portuguese America, how they related with their slaves and *administrados*, i.e., those they 'administered.' Taking as a spatial and chronological delimitation the Comarca de Vila Rica in the captaincy of Minas Gerais in the first half of the eighteenth century, it particularly interests us to investigate the relations of these individuals with subordinate groups, notably with slaves, considered through vertical clientelist relations. Within the functions exercised by slaves in the lives of these subjects and within their houses, we highlight in this text the need they had to employ armed slaves. These were used by colonial elites in many services provided to the Portuguese crown, both referring to the conquest of land (helping for example in the fight against internal and external uprisings) and to more 'bureaucratic' services, such as the collection of the quinto real tax and its transport.

In recent years studies about elites have been configured as a theme of great interest for historians who deal with Portuguese America, above all in relation to the role they played in relation to the central power. Interest in this object is directly related to an international historiographic renewal in which the emphasis on the forms of absolutist governments of European monarchies has been relativized, giving way to ideas about the weakness of the central power, political pluralism, negotiated authorities, and the self-government of peoples, idea which consequently modify explanations about the relations between the metropolises and their colonial possessions<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> The bibliography available about this problematic is long. We will indicate only some of the authors who have most directly influenced Brazilian historians: António Manuel Hespanha, John Elliott, Xavier Gil Pujol, Jack Greene, Bartolomé Clavero, Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, Annick Lempérière. Also worth mentioning is a relatively recent text by Jean-Frédéric Schaub published in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, in which the question of colonial studies is raised and to a certain extent this historiographic turn is mapped.

Increasingly prevalent among historians working with this period is that idea that in the South of Europe there prevailed a conception of the world in which the monarchy was the head of society, but not confused with it. For the European monarchy the references are the works of António Manuel Hespanha (1994), and the Spaniards Bartolomé Clavero (1981) and Pablo Fernández Albaladejo (1992), who emphasize the debility or passivity of the crown and the corporatist nature of society. To the extent that it was understood as a naturally ordered organism, the head, identified with the royal figure, had the prerogative of organizing the social body or the various parts of it, whether in the European homeland or in the various overseas areas integrated in the Iberian kingdoms. Also according to these authors, the king could do nothing more than impose justice, limiting himself to respecting the various competing jurisdictions. In the context of the Ancien Regime, justice signified above all maintaining harmony between all the members of the social body, guaranteeing to each what was theirs and in accordance with their status. In other words, guaranteeing jurisdiction, rights, and privileges recognized by the status of each one<sup>4</sup>.

In this conception, communities were responsible not only for the capacity for self-government, but also the interpretation of the Prince's rule. As João Fragoso has highlighted in the case of the Portuguese Empire and Annick Lempérière in the Spanish one, this situation was also found for the American possessions of these monarchs. Although both authors recognize the differences existing in the relations between the center and the periphery in the Old World from those defined in the Americas, the societies structured in colonial areas also had at their top the Prince and at their base communities and municipalities. The idea of the pluricontinental monarchy expressed very well the situation of the Portuguese Empire in the Ancien Regime. The term was initially coined by Nuno Monteiro who highlighted the fundamental role of conquests in the reproduction of the metropolitan social structure, the financial dependence of the crown on imperial revenues, the importance of service to the crown in the overseas territories for the iteration of the large noble houses, and the capacity of colonial elites for autonomous action – who nevertheless still communicated constantly with the monarchy, reaffirming the “centrality of the center”<sup>5</sup>. Returned to by João Fragoso and Maria de Fátima Gouvêa, the expression was also used to affirm that this monarchy was characterized «by the presence of a central power too weak to impose itself through coercion, but strong enough to negotiate its interests with the multiple powers

---

<sup>4</sup> Hespanha, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Monteiro, 2010: 337.

existing in the kingdom and its conquests»<sup>6</sup>. In Portuguese America municipalities – in the figure of their elites – were responsible for the daily administration of economic life, the maintenance of order, the organization of religious worship and religious festivities, the maintenance of good customs and even royal governability.

Understanding how elite groups acted in the administration of this overseas world is thus presented as an instigating and fundamental object. In addition, in the case of Portuguese America it is also necessary to consider that the local elites, although they were guided by the same ordering principles of society as the European Ancien Regime, had to adapt and create their own languages and specific strategies to deal with various ‘peoples’ who molded the society of this ‘great Babylon.’ The meetings and mixing of educated and rustic Europeans, African slaves from various cultures and languages, Indians, and—as colonization advanced—, mulattos, *pardos*, creoles, and *forros*, all gave their tone to his New World. Managing to order all of this or make it function was not a task that was easy for a monarchy weak in resources, administrative agents, and military forces capable of being moved to such a distant and dispersed territory. João Fragoso argued that in Portuguese America:

The administration of daily life—and with this the transformation of the tower of Babel into society—was achieved to a great extent under the auspices of the republic; in other words, in the local institutions, such as local councils, the militia, and fraternities, amongst others. And all of this was done in accordance with the conception of the corporatist world and thus with the blessing of the monarchy and the Church<sup>7</sup>.

Drawing on the lineage of historiographic renewal mentioned above, we defend the need to advance studies about how the actions of elite groups in some form made feasible both life in this diverse and dynamic society and the actual presence of institutions and authorities which represented the Portuguese crown in the various locations occupied in the Americas. Specifically in the case of Minas Gerais, research have sought to trace the social profile of those groups qualified as elites in the region, highlighting the strategies used by them to establish themselves and to reproduce as such which has permitted a complex knowledge of the social profile and composition of these groups, about their strategies of ascension, and the horizontal clientele networks in which they were involved<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> Fragoso and Gouvêa, 2009: 56.

<sup>7</sup> Fragoso and Gouvêa, 2009: 59.

<sup>8</sup> There are many masters’ theses and doctoral dissertations concerned with mapping the elite groups active in Minas Gerais in the colonial period. We highlight only some authors of

However, two types of question seem to still be in urgent need of investigation. We believe that the sociological characteristics and profile of these groups are not sufficiently known. For an adequate understanding of the dynamics of this pluricontinental monarchy, it is also necessary to understand how these men acted politically. Only in this way will it be possible to define with greater clarity the connections effectively existing between rich and poor, between the powerful and the subordinate classes, and between the various centers and various peripheries in the world of the Ancien Regime.

For the investigation of the political action of these individuals two possibilities stand out. On the one hand, the examination of the collective sphere (or what we now call the public sphere), expressed centrally in its actions in the municipal council, but also in the aid often offered to royal authorities for the maintenance of order. On the other hand, the study of a private sphere, that is, the command of their households. Precisely because in an Ancien Regime society the distinction between what was from the collectivity (or public) and what was defined as part of the private sphere was not clear, we believe that the idea of self-government can help us understand the behavior of colonial elites<sup>9</sup>. In this article we focus on the second proposed axis for the investigation, in other words, we seek to gauge the actions of individuals belonging to the elite of the Comarca of Vila Rica in relation to the administration of their houses, and above, the ties they established with their slaves, emphasizing the need to possess slaves to be used as an armed force.

#### POWER, CLIENTELIST NETWORKS, AND ARMED SLAVES IN THE COLONIAL SCENARIO

A question that is becoming increasingly common is the discussion of the impact of relations between slaves and masters on the shaping of political relations and the institutions which configured power in colonial society, since this is not constituted in an automatic manner, as it presumes a social legitimacy. As some studies have recently shown, the effectiveness of colonial political dynamics and power was based on a series of (formal and informal) institutions and mechanisms<sup>10</sup>. We are interested in exploring here one of the

---

these recent historiography who have also proposed to trace social strategies and profiles of these groups: Aldair Rodrigues, Roberta Stumpf, Sofia Antezana, Simone Cristina de Faria, and Virginia Trindade Valadares.

<sup>9</sup> Monteiro, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Fragoso, Bicalho and Gouvêa, 2001. Fragoso, 2005.

informal mechanisms of constituting the power of elite groups in colonial society which is increasingly being placed as a strategic element in behavior, namely, the establishment of vertical networks, in other words, alliances woven with 'subordinate strata:' farmers, freed slaves, and indigenous and African slaves<sup>11</sup>.

António Manuel Hespanha and Ângela Barreto Xavier (1998) have demonstrated that in a monarchy based on the corporatist paradigm, clientelist networks cemented social relations from the top down in the Ancien Regime. In these societies:

Relations of a merely institutional or judicial nature had a tendency to mix and coexist with other parallel relations [...], which assumed themselves to be as or more important than the former, and which were based on criteria of friendship, kinship, fidelity, honor, service [...] relations which obeyed a clientelist loyalty, such as the obligation to grant mercies to best friends, were daily social situations [...], seen as the norm<sup>12</sup>.

When applied to the reality of Portuguese America these propositions substantially alter the mode of conceiving the metropole-colony relationship and the manner of understanding power in these societies. First, by questioning the centrality of metropolitan power and, in second place, by attributing to the clientelist networks the role of cementing social relations, configuring a spiral which structured the relations of power from subordinate groups to the King.

In relation to the formation of Minas colonial society in the first half of the eighteenth century – the moment of the definition of hierarchies, the construction and division of power – the importance of the establishment of vertical networks with African slaves and their descendants, can be very well exemplified by the need of these individuals to use plantations, capital, and slaves by some of these individuals in their ventures of conquest of the captaincy in question, a mechanism which the crown could not do without.

In the eighteenth century, the region of Minas Gerais became very important for the Portuguese Crown, since the gold in this captaincy came to play a significant role in the world scenario in this period, balancing the Portuguese finances. In turn, this increased still further the leading role which Portuguese America had been acquiring in the context of the Portuguese Empire since the seventeenth century<sup>13</sup>. The initial occupation of the region of Minas Gerais

---

<sup>11</sup> Fragoso, 2006: 5.

<sup>12</sup> Hespanha and Xavier, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Boxer, 2000.

resulted from the *bandeiras* carried out by Paulistas, used to these ventures due their experience in the raiding of Indians and exploring other *sertões*. After the discovery of gold in the area and the existence of mineral deposits becoming known, there emerged constant migratory flows to the region, which involved both free people and slaves. Large numbers of people with different aims and carrying out various activities went to the region. For example, from the *sertão* of São Francisco – the Currais River – came cattle traders to try to meet the still incipient local food needs. From Bahia came slave traders due to the demand for labor generated by the new activity in Minas. Most notably there came from São Paulo, other regions of Portuguese America, and Portugal new potential miners to compete among themselves for the possession of the mineral beds and to participate in the local administration<sup>14</sup>.

Minas was in these initial years a frontier space which needed to be conquered. In this context the captaincy was inundated by revolts, mutinies, and intra-elite struggles to define the control of territories in a new region, the search for new areas of mining, and *sertanismo*, as well as being marked by the emergence of quilombos and the concern with inspecting and collecting the quinto real tax (literally the royal fifth) on a product which the Portuguese crown had sought for a long time. In all these situations the men who had the (material and immaterial) conditions to get involved always did this counting on the aid of their private armed force composed of slaves, because without this the chances of success would have been negligible. Therefore, accompanied by their armed slaves, they systematically got involved in putting down uprisings and internal and external conflicts, in the collecting and transport of taxes, and in the settling of new territories in order to be granted mercies and social recognition. According to João Fragoso, while powerful men demanded in various situations and parts of Portuguese America the exclusivity to share authority with the monarchy, this authority was not formally given through charters of *fidalgua* of Portugal or jurisdictional lordship. Above all, it existed as a customary local power of command<sup>15</sup>. One of the foundations of this power was the use of slaves as armed labor.

In relation to the use of slaves as armed labor two reservations of fundamental importance have to be made. While the use of armed slaves by local notables was something mentioned by many of them in their requests for *mercies*, this was unfortunately done in a form which prevents the obtaining of more precise data about the slaves who made up these private militias. In

---

<sup>14</sup> Monteiro, 2002: 285-286.

<sup>15</sup> Fragoso, 2010: 248-249.

the reports only the term ‘armed slaves’ appears, or in a few cases the number of them used in a determined event, without any greater information. This prevents the identification of which slaves acted as armed labor for their masters on various occasions, since the reports about the use of this type of militia contain no data which can allow them be mapped, such as names, origin, ages, etc.

The second reservation refers to the fact that in our analysis we only refer to a private use of armed slaves, a type of informally created personal guard, in other words without the military connotation associated with black and *pardo* units recurrently created during the colonial period in cases of need, with the most famous being known as the *Henriques Tercio*. For this reason, we have chosen to name the entourage of armed slaves used by local notables as private militias, precisely to emphasize the idea of informality in a generic sense which conveys the notion that it is something which, despite being used at determined moments for bellic purposes, cannot be linked to a formal structure of Portuguese military organization. Classically, this formal military structure has been presented as consisting of three types of forces, which establish a pattern valid for the entire Luso-American colony: the regular troops, also known as paid soldiers or troops of the line; the militia and auxiliary units; and the *ordenanças*, irregular military forces. However, as Nauk Maria de Jesus has emphasized, the analysis of the colonial bellic environment based on this classic tripod loses sight of local specificities<sup>16</sup>.

In relation to this question in particular, some papers recently produced under the auspices of the so-called New Military History<sup>17</sup> have sought to fill this gap. An important contribution of this new historiography has been the attention given to the study of other more specific forms of military troops which subdivide forces according to social hierarchies (indigenous, black, mixed, and white)<sup>18</sup>.

In recent decades there has been growing interest in the question of the actions of black and *pardo* soldiers, both freeborn and freed, in the defensive systems of the Iberian empires. According to Priscila de Lima Souza, among these studies there has been a greater volume of references to Spanish territories. In these works, the insertion of free *morenos* and *pardos* in military groups has been an important problem of analysis<sup>19</sup>. Authors such as Maria Eugenia Alemano (2017), Ben Vinson III (2005), José Luís Belmonte Postigo

---

<sup>16</sup> Jesus, 2012: 314-315.

<sup>17</sup> Hespanha, 2013. Castro, Izecksohn and Kraay, 2004. Moreira and Loureiro, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Silva, 2002, 2012, 2013. Cotta, 2010. Paula, 2012. Marta, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Souza, 2017: 111.



(2007), and Juan José Ponce Vázquez (2015) have highlighted the importance of the participation of the Afro-descendant population in the bellic forces of the Crown. According to these studies, the participation of the free colored population in military groups was an instrument used by these groups to improve their social position, although they were linked to companies designated as being composed of *pardos* and *mulatos*, which indicated racial differences and thus segregated the incorporation of these segments<sup>20</sup>. From the same perspective, Luis Belmonte Postigo argues that the military institution allowed the social ascension of the free colored population, with participation in the military forces being an instrument used by these sectors to improve their social position. Amongst other privileges, military jurisdiction, the permission to carry weapons, which was legally prohibited to the rest of the freed colored population, meant that incorporation in the military system was attractive to these groups<sup>21</sup>.

In the panorama of Portuguese America, the possibility of social mobility offered to officers of units composed of Africans and their descendants has also been highlighted, something extremely valued by blacks and *pardos*, whether freeborn or freed. This means that access to officer ranks was a means of ascension for these groups. Basically, military organization covered four types of militias: the auxiliary infantry companies, the *ordenanças de pé*, the *pedestre* units, and the *homens do mato* units<sup>22</sup>. Although these troops of men of color, as they were called in the context, were irregular and caused polemics, there were abundant royal orders and directives for their organization and use in various locations in Portuguese America. The recruitment of these groups and the creation of specific regiments for them was not rare<sup>23</sup>.

Some more recent papers have been concerned with investigating the implications of the militarization through which Portuguese America passed during the colonial period in the lives of Africans and their descendants. Analyzing the formation of black military units in Pernambuco society in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Kalina Vanderlei Silva highlights that socially the black militia became, along with brotherhoods, the principal means of social ascension and distinction for freeborn and freed blacks. According to her, the organization of black soldiers was not unique to the sugar producing area in Portuguese America, rather it was a characteristic of the Portuguese

---

<sup>20</sup> Alemano, 2017: 52.

<sup>21</sup> Postigo, 2007: 4.

<sup>22</sup> Cotta, 2010: 201.

<sup>23</sup> Silva, 2002; 2012. Mattos, 2006.

Empire, with similar examples existing in the Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia<sup>24</sup>.

Francis Albert Cotta, in turn, studies the trajectories of black and *pardo* officers, freed and freeborn, who managed to achieve relative social mobility through their actions and insertion in the military universe of eighteenth century Minas. According to Cotta, having a military rank gave blacks, *mestiços*, and *pardos* an important place in eighteenth century Minas society, since it provided these men with considerable power through the command of large numbers of soldiers and gave them opportunities to adhere to the values seen as ideal by Portuguese Catholic society: such as marriage, formation of a family, and the possession of slaves<sup>25</sup>.

Finally, Luís Geraldo Silva concerned himself with revealing the logic of the functioning of colored troops in colonial Brazil. Looking at the period of the Dutch invasion of the sugar producing Northeast (1630-1654), he emphasizes that at this moment the black and colored militias were created in Portuguese America. Having reconquered Pernambuco and the other captaincies in the North in 1654, to a good extent due to the efforts of the white colonists and the blacks, *pardos*, and Indians subjected to them, the so-called colored tercios were established there and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries spread to practically all the captaincies of colonial Brazil<sup>26</sup>. He also sought to deepen the investigation of the conditions of origin, forms of action, and the institutionalization of black and *pardo* soldiers in Portuguese America, using as case studies Minas and Pernambuco. In relation to the captaincy of Minas Gerais, he presented an analysis in which he sought to understand what he called the sociogenesis of the tercios of blacks and *pardo* soldiers in the eighteenth century. For Silva, the origin of these soldiers in the context of Minas occurred due to the urgency of the need to impose order in the middle of a tumultuous process of the establishment of a political and administrative structure in the region, which in turn led some governors and captains-general to attribute to these forces a non-formal nature. In this way, «they were not conceived as stable military forces tending to institutionalization, but rather had a precarious character»<sup>27</sup>. According to Silva the militias of men of color appear to have been created as provisional bodies with a status similar to the «squadrons of the forest» established in 1715 in the captaincy of Minas, which were formed by a hierarchy of field—or ‘forest’—captains, exclusively aimed

---

<sup>24</sup> Silva, 2002: 2-3.

<sup>25</sup> Cotta, 2010: 108-112.

<sup>26</sup> Silva, 2012: 71.

<sup>27</sup> Silva, 2013: 129.

at fighting *mocambos* and *quilombos*<sup>28</sup>. These troops, in the perspective of this author, only assumed a formal and organized nature after the promulgation of the 1766 royal charter which institutionalized their presence in Portuguese America, as well as leading to a greater diffusion of their use and the presence of officers from African groups and their descendants.

The context of the promulgation of this royal charter was inserted in the military restructuring that occurred after 1756 throughout the Portuguese Empire, due to the Seven Years War, and which had an impact on Portuguese America in the 1760s. In relation to this moment, Christiane Figueiredo Pagano de Mello states that the second half of the eighteenth century is an important landmark for the understanding of the military forces in the colonial territory due to the need for military reorganization. This arose out of the tensions experienced in Europe resulting from the Family Compact, signed in 1761<sup>29</sup>. Due to its involvement in the pact and fearing future attacks, the Portuguese Crown implemented a series of military changes aimed at the defense of its territory and its overseas dominions, changes that would become part of the Marquis of Pombal's reform plans. Therefore, in 1762 Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, the Marquis of Pombal, invited the Count of Schaumburg-Lippe, one of the most prestigious military commanders of the time, to carry out the process of military modernization in Portugal. In this context, the affirmation of the military status, the role of military engineers, the mathematics of ballistics, and tactics allied to a discourse that created an autonomy of knowledge, acquired an unequal status<sup>30</sup>. The main actions carried out were the improvement of fortifications, the introduction of new rules for recruitment, uniforms, and discipline. For the case of Brazil, the mission of military reorganization was delegated to the Austrian lieutenant-general João Henrique Böhmer, as well as the officers D. Luís Antônio de Sousa, Morgado de Mateus, and D. Antônio de Almeida Soares Portugal, Marquis of Lavradio. The directives for the military reorganization of Brazil were based on three pillars: defense of territory, economic expansion, and the strengthening of the central power<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>28</sup> Silva, 2013: 129.

<sup>29</sup> Maxwell, 1996: 126. The Family Compact was a pact signed in 1761 by members of the Bourbon family, then reigning in France and Spain, to mutually defend their states. In the same period France was involved in the Seven Years War against Britain. On this occasion, although D. José of Portugal was married with a Bourbon princess, he could not adhere to the Family Compact and help defend French territory, since he was a British ally. Portugal tried for a time to remain neutral in the conflict, but British pressure led the King to participate in the final phase of the war as its ally, thereby ending up on the side opposed to the Bourbons. Mello, 2004: 69.

<sup>30</sup> Mello, 2012: 109.

<sup>31</sup> Maxwell, 1996: 126.

For the scenario of Minas Gerais and the organization of the military units of men of color, three events had an important impact. The above mentioned royal charter of 22 March 1766 which ordered the formation of military units involving all social groups, including those part of the subordinated social strata; the Luso-Castilian War of 1762-1777 in the south of Portuguese America; the appointment of the Marquis of Lavradio, Dom Antônio de Noronha, as governor of Minas in 1774, whose mandate ran until 1780. Noronha was responsible for the military restructuring of the captaincy of Minas Gerais, reforming the military units existing in the captaincy, including those formed by men of color, as well as initiating intense military recruitment. All of these factors contributed to the 1760s and part of the following decade becoming a period of heavy mobilization involving the restructuring of the defensive apparatus of Brazil<sup>32</sup>.

The studies cited emphasize the presence and importance of blacks and *pardos* in the bellic universe, highlighting the origin of this mobilization, the situations in which it was primordial for the Portuguese Crown, the examples of the benefits they could acquire by linking themselves to the military sphere, and the process of the institutionalization of units of men of color in the contest of the military reorganization that occurred in the Portuguese Empire in the second half of the eighteenth century. However, it should be emphasized, on the one hand, that in this paper we do not deal with the scenario of military restructuring that occurred under the auspices of the Pombaline reforms carried out by the Portuguese crown. Rather, we are concerned with the first half of the eighteenth century, since at this moment the region covered by the research was a frontier zone, which needed to be conquered. In this context the captaincy of Minas was inundated by revolts, mutinies, intra-elite conflicts to define territories of command in a new region, the search for new mining areas, *sertanismo*, as well as being marked by the emergence of quilombos and concerns with overseeing and collecting the *quinto real* tax on a product which the Portuguese crown had long sought. In all these questions, the individuals who had the (material and immaterial) conditions to become involved did this counting on the assistance of their particular armed force made up of slaves, since otherwise their chances of success in any action would have been impracticable.

On the other hand, it is necessary to highlight the difference between the logic of building, recruiting, and operating the arming of blacks and *pardos* in the militias or *ordenanças*, in other words, in a more institutionalized man-

---

<sup>32</sup> Paula, 2012: 52-94.

ner, and the private arming of slaves by their owners who needed a personal armed guard for various situations. The practice of arming their own slaves, whether for war or for other types of confrontations, was widespread among all slaveholding societies and also existed in Brazil. Respecting their regional specificities, the use by regional authorities and local notables of indigenous warriors, armed slaves, ‘unclassified persons’, and free individuals belonging to the lower social groups in the bellic sphere were practices that were common in various parts of Portuguese America<sup>33</sup>. As highlighted by Eduardo França Paiva, armed slaves, despite being something that the colonial authorities strongly feared and prohibited, were relatively common in Portuguese America. In the case of Minas Gerais, he highlights that during the initial decades of the occupation of mining lands this was frequently repeated, often stimulating violence and disorder by the landowners who created their slave militias and by part of the armed slaves themselves. According to Paiva, even the Crown ended up incorporating this practice, creating troops of armed slaves and levying them from landholders loyal to the government. In fact, these dimensions were intermixed in the daily life of the mining and commercial areas, as well as in the routes through Minas Gerais, during the initial decades of occupation<sup>34</sup>. We therefore argue that the use of blacks and their military techniques was essential in many administrative and military tasks.

The practice of arming one’s own slaves, whether to fight in wars, or for various conflicts, existed in almost all slaveholding societies, and also in Brazil. Respecting regional specificities, the use by part of the authorities and local notables of indigenous warriors, armed slaves, ‘declassified’ persons, and free individuals belonging to the poor layers of society were common practices in various parts of Portuguese America<sup>35</sup>. Some authors have highlighted that slaves picking up weapons to fight in various types of conflicts alongside their masters was considered an extension of the services they usually provided<sup>36</sup>. It is thus relevant to highlight the difference between the logic of the mounting, assembling, recruiting and functioning of armed blacks and *pardos* in the militias or *ordenanças*, in other words through a more institutionalized manner, and the private arming of slaves by masters who needed a personal guard for various situations. The latter practice was ordered and inserted in the logic of the household, the private sphere. We start from the assumption that in the region of Minas, the establishment of these ties was

<sup>33</sup> Gomes, 2010: 92-93.

<sup>34</sup> Paiva, 2006: 118.

<sup>35</sup> Gomes, 2010: 92-93.

<sup>36</sup> Finley, 1991. Lovejoy, 2002. Brown, 2006.

constituted in a central manner for the proper administration of the household. While, as mentioned, it was crucial for the elites to maintain a local base of political support with strong parental networks, sustaining and reinforcing strong ties with slaves, for the understanding of these relations it is essential to ask what permitted the powerful slaveholders settled in the Comarca of Vila Rica to arm their slaves to guarantee their power of command and to help maintain royal governability in the region, without these slaves rebelling against their masters. What type of ties allowed this agreement to be possible?

Mapping these vertical relations is not an easy task, since the guiding elements of the possible connections and networks of sociability existing among members of the elite and armed slaves appear in a dispersed manner in the documentation since the use of armed slaves by part of the elite was something constantly indicated by many of them, unfortunately in a manner that prevents the obtaining of more precise data about the slaves who composed these private militias. In the documentation in which this practice was referred to, only the term 'armed slaves' appears or, in a few cases, the number of them used in a determined service was given, though without greater information about the slaves themselves. This prevents the identification of who were the slaves who acted as armed men in services carried out by their masters on various occasions, since in the reports about the use of this militia data such as name, origin, age, etc., was not specified, which prevents their being mapped.

In order to try to escape this impasse, two methodological strategies were used in the research. One refers to the exhaustive study of available parish records (births, baptisms, and death), documentation from notary and tax offices (above all the records of the quintos in the Archive of the Municipal Council of Mariana and in the Casa dos Contos Collection of the Minas Public Archive) about the places which composed the Comarca of Vila Rica seeking to establish the possible connections and networks of sociability existing among members of the elite and the slaves. The other strategy used to unveil these vertical relations was to recover more dispersed evidence, uncertain and difficult to find, but which at the same time, when it is encountered reveals to us the connections of these relations in a very clear way. For the effects of this article we use some cases to exemplify the evidence of these vertical ties found in the documentation collected in our research.

#### MINEIRA ELITES AND THEIR ARMED SLAVES

One such source of dispersed evidence about vertical relations with slaves in which the men of power in Minas involved themselves was found in the

miscellaneous documentation of the Resgate Project, in the Overseas Historical Archive, related to the captaincy of Minas Gerais. It is a document from 1726 and refers to two important members of this elite. In a petition drafted by Fr. José Soveral de Miranda, Vicar of the Church of São Sebastião<sup>37</sup>, the priest asks for justice against the violence practiced in that area by the blacks and slaves of Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite and others. According to the report of the priest:

... at the end of March of this year, violently, without any attention to the sacerdotal habit, *one hundred and something blacks came, all armed*, slaves of Maximiliano de Oliveira and his brother-in-law Caetano Álvares who came with his regiment also armed and by his order and command the said blacks broke the doors and windows of the suppliant and entering with the greatest contempt into his house they stabbed to death a black by the name of Jervásio, Cabo Verde. Being below the bed they stole from the suppliant not only 300 eights of gold (420\$000) and various articles of clothes of his use, offending him in his person hitting him with a club in the ribs and pushed him and fired at him with a musket which because it burst had no effect, which was owned by another and the accused Caetano Álvares later paid its owner Pedro Soares<sup>38</sup>.

According to Fr. Soveral this violence had been caused by:

... the suppliant not wanting to hear the confession of a woman whom the accused – Maximiliano de Oliveira – had asked him to confess and the suppliant was disgusted for knowing with certainty that the aforementioned person was co-habiting with her; and this being public and infamous; and also for not paying the offer of seven blacks and one white man who had died in his house and whom the suppliant had ordered buried in his church and who had been given a warning by him about what he was owing. And since the accused are fearless men, local chieftains, and powerful, accustomed to using similar violence without justice having encountered them: some through dependencies and others through the private respect of this violence and excess, used against the suppliant, without respect for him being a priest<sup>39</sup>.

Annexed to the principal document are various requests and certificates asking that the defendants receive an exemplary punishment. The vicar asked that they been expelled from Minas, first to «avoid the absurdities and subordination that they can work to cover their insolence, and the severe procedure which they should receive. And being arrested when the investigation is car-

<sup>37</sup> São Sebastião was a *freguesia do termo* of Mariana. In current terms, it corresponds to a district in the municipality of Mariana. Currently this location is called Bandeirantes.

<sup>38</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais. Cx.8, Doc. 7. Emphasis Added.

<sup>39</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais. Cx.8, Doc. 7.

ried out and the witnesses will be obliged to testify and say the truth, in addition to be imprisoned, because in this particular case the accused should have an exemplary punishment». The outcome of this situation was the holding of the investigation (devassa), but without the result expected by the vicar. Once again Fr. Soveral wrote to the Conselho Ultramarino (Overseas Council), indignant with the light penalty applied to the slaves who had practiced the crime. He asked that a new investigation be held but that not in the region in order, in his own words: «to prevent subordinations to cover their insolence».

It is interesting to discover that on various other occasions both the above-mentioned Caetano Álvares and Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite asked for mercies from the King, arguing that they had used their armed slaves to defend royal interests (all of their arguments were certified by authorities – governor and councils). According to the certificates included in Caetano Álvares qualification process for the Order of Christ, in 1730, it is reported that he went to aid Rio de Janeiro at the time of the French invasion, at his own expense, with guns, horses and three armed slaves; he had also accompanied D. Brás Baltazar da Silveira to Rio das Mortes to pacify an uprising; in 1721 he had helped the Earl of Assumar put down the revolt of Vila Rica, with 20 armed blacks<sup>40</sup>. In other words, in all these situations Caetano Álvares acted to preserve royal governability alongside his armed blacks. Explaining how these relations were possible and how they were configured constitutes a challenge, which can be very revealing for the understanding of the more daily practices of the exercise of authority in Minas. It should be noted that these are practices which guaranteed the very presence of the crown (or its representatives) in the region, as can be seen in the example of the participation of some of these men in putting down revolts and collecting taxes. As has been highlighted recovering empirical evidence about these questions is not simple. Or perhaps it can be said that it requires an effort in the search of almost random data.

On the other hand, when we analyze this sparse evidence or with a more qualitative nature, along with information from other documental corpus (in this case with parish registers, wills, and inventories), some situations began to be more intelligible. For example, in an initial sample of the wedding register of São Sebastião (1735-1755), the area in which the men mentioned above (Caetano and Maximiliano) lived, the frequency with which their slaves

---

<sup>40</sup> *Habilitação da Ordem de Cristo, 1730*, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa (ANTT) - Letra C - Mç. 12, No. 6.



and *administrados* received the sacrament of marriage is surprising. This was the case of the slaves Francisco Antunes and Rosa, who married on 22 June 1749, both from the household of Caetano Álvares Rodrigues. Between 5 and 20 October of this year another nine couples of slaves from this household married. One marriage per day. In 1746 Sebastião Paes and Maria married, both Carijó Indians under the responsibility of the Guarda-Mor Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite<sup>41</sup>.

Adding another set of information, we know that when in 1750, D. Francisca Paes de Oliveira (wife of Caetano) made her will (opened in 1751), she freed eight of her slaves and stipulated that «they soon be given letters of emancipation and this not take more than a month after my death». In the same document D. Francisca said that «in my house assist Antônio Rodrigues from Angola, emancipated by the letter of emancipation I gave to him and to him belong the slaves Domingos from the Congo nation, Manoel from the Congo nation, and Caetano Cabú. These slaves he acquired with my authority and consent and with that of my husband. And to Antônio Rodrigues I leave alms of 100\$000 for the good services I have always received from him».

Another type of dispersed evidence found is related to, or revealed by, some traits of the relationship of these individuals with members of the ‘poor free men’ segment (in this case a woman). In a civil lawsuit dating from 1740, Coronel Caetano Álvares authorized the use of some canals on his property for the growing of manioc by an orphan, who was his neighbor and goddaughter. The document stated that:

... as being the lord and possessor of two watercourses which ran through the small farm which was left by the deceased João da Silva Guimarães [...] and no possession had the said João da Silva nor his ancestors, he had no doubt of his own freewill to give alms to the orphan daughter he left, he consented [...] in which the said orphan or the purchasers of this farm planted manioc and took advantage of the water which was necessary to sustain the crop and also for the milling with the water born in one of the streams formed below the stream of the said Coronel<sup>42</sup>.

These situations give us clues about how the «the many dependencies» which residents had with these men were constructed or structured – to which the Vicar José Soveral refers, which turned them, in the words of the cleric, «fearless men, local chieftains, and powerful». It was based on these various

<sup>41</sup> *Livro de registro de casamentos da Freguesia de São Sebastião*, Arquivo Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Mariana, Mariana (AEAM), Matrimônios 1735, Out-1807, Set. Available in a digital form in the Family Search site.

<sup>42</sup> *Casa Setecentista de Mariana*, Mariana (CSM), 1º Ofício. – código 467 – auto 10352.

dependencies and social intersections that these individuals guaranteed the social legitimacy for the exercise of authority and the self-government of their households. It is useful to note once again that these were the men on whom the Portuguese crown depended for the collection of the quinto tax, to put down local revolts, and even to guarantee the integrity of their territory (as in the case of the expulsion of the French from Rio and other conflicts elsewhere expelling other foreign invaders), as shown in the governor's certificates of the deeds of Coronel Caetano.

The presence of the practices mentioned under the command of members of the household of Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite and his partner Coronel Caetano Álvares Rodrigues points to paths for the understanding of the arrangements which must have been behind the vertical relations between them and subordinate strata. In relation to slaves, considering that the local political force and the power of command of these two figures was very much based on their armed men, it cannot be denied that there was a need to possess sufficient slaves for this and to establish clientelist relations with them. In lists for the charging of the royal quinto in which the names of these two men appear we can glimpse two relevant pieces of data for discussing this question. On the one hand, we can perceive that both possessed significant numbers of slaves, which allowed them divert slaves from their productive activities and arm them to carry out diligences and valorous services. On the other hand, we can find the presence of slaves designated on the basis of bellic abilities. As it is possible to find the names of slaves associated with the performance of some trades such as blacksmith, cook, shoemakers, etc., we can also find on the list for the charging of the royal quinto some names of slaves associated with carrying out these military functions.

TABLE 1. MILITARY DESIGNATIONS OF SLAVES BELONGING TO MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL ELITE MENTIONED IN THE LISTS FOR THE CHARGING OF THE ROYAL QUINTO, COMARCA OF VILA RICA

Master's Name	Slave's Name	Place of Birth	Designation	Date
Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite and Caetano Álvares Rodrigues (partners)	No information	African – Monjolo	Captain	1723
Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite and Caetano Álvares Rodrigues (partners)	José	No information	Corporal	1723

Master's Name	Slave's Name	Place of Birth	Designation	Date
Custódio Rebelo Vieira	Manuel	African – Congo	Captain	1723
Francisco Ferreira de Sá	José	No information	Captain	1723
Pedro da Rosa Abreu	No information	African – Mina	Captain	1718-1720
Manuel Jorge Coelho	Manuel	African – Angola	Captain	1723
Manuel Jorge Coelho	Pedro	African – Mina	Captain	1723
Francisco Ferreira de Sá	Antônio	African – Benguela	Ensign	1718
Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite and Caetano Álvares Rodrigues (partners)	Pedro	African – Congo	Captain	1718
Bento Ferraz Lima	No information	African – Mina	Captain	1723
Paulo Rodrigues Durão	Pedro	African	Captain	1718-1720
Antônio Martins Leça and Manoel Coelho Neto (partners)	No information	African – Mina	Soldier	1718-1723
Antônio Martins Leça and Manoel Coelho Neto (partners)	Braz	No information	Sergeant	1718-1723
Antônio Martins Leça and Manoel Coelho Neto (partners)	Lourenço	No information	Captain	1718-1723
Antônio Martins Leça and Manoel Coelho Neto (partners)	No information	No information	Ensign	1718-1723

Source: Arquivo Público Mineiro, Belo Horizonte (APM), Coleção Casa dos Contos códices 1022, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1039. Listas de registro para a cobrança dos quintos reais do Arquivo Histórico da Câmara de Mariana, Mariana (AHCM), código 150 and código 166.

In the above table it can be seen that in the lists of *quintos* to which we had access there appear the name of men from the local elite from the Comarca of Vila Rica for whom 15 slaves were found with designations linked to the bellic universe. The use of the above mentioned designation in the documentation in question suggested that the abilities and experiences of these

slaves in combat were recognized and constituted a differential, possessing these abilities was of great weight in the qualification of some slaves. Probably these had to be recurrently selected to serve their masters as armed men. In relation to the study of Maximiliano de Oliveira Leite and his partner Caetano Álvares Rodrigues we can see that in one of the lists made for the *freguesia* of São Sebastião in 1718, in which they declared having 66 slaves, a Pedro Congo, a captain, was mentioned<sup>43</sup>.

Another individual belonging to the elite of the Comarca of Vila Rica who owned slaves with military designations was Francisco Ferreira de Sá, whose example we will also explore. This Portuguese man was one of the first settlers in Minas becoming very powerful and prestigious in the region. In addition to being known as the principal man of the area<sup>44</sup>, he held important ranks such as captain of the militia in São Paulo and later, apparently from 1718, the rank of field master in the auxiliary forces of Guarapiranga<sup>45</sup>. The administrative positions he held further this prestige: he was the quinto tax collector in 1718 the *freguesia* of São Sebastião<sup>46</sup>, and a judge in the council of Vila do Carmo in 1725 and afterwards in 1731<sup>47</sup>.

In a letter from the governor of Minas, D. Pedro de Almeida Portugal, to D. João V, dated 1732, in which he reinforces the capacity of Francisco Ferreira de Sá to continue to hold the position of field master, his power and authority were mentioned by the governor who reported:

... when the king ordered that I reorder the number of officials in Minas and remain only with the few chosen who were the most capable, he was one of them, and I also gave him the rank, as he is an old man, capable and with much authority, who in all the revolutions and mutinies in Minas distinguished himself by following the party of Your Majesty, and always ready to serve with his person and with his armed blacks<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> *Lista de registro para a cobrança dos quintos reais de São Sebastião*, 1718. Arquivo Público Mineiro, Belo Horizonte (APM), CC, código 1024). In another list made for the same *freguesia* in 1723 among the 74 slaves declared by them a slave Monjolo, a captain, and a José, a corporal, were mentioned (*Lista de registro para cobrança dos quintos reais de Mariana e seu Termo*, 1723, Arquivo Histórico isHda Câmara de Mariana, Mariana (AHCM), código 166.

<sup>44</sup> Carvalho, 1933: 22-24.

<sup>45</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais. Cx. 21, Doc. 9. Guarapiranga was a *freguesia* do termo of Mariana. In current terms, it corresponds to a district in the municipality of Mariana. Currently this location is called Piranga.

<sup>46</sup> *Lista de registro para cobrança dos quintos reais*, 1718. Arquivo Público Mineiro, Belo Horizonte (APM), CC, cód. 1024, microfilme 003-004.

<sup>47</sup> Chaves, Pires and Magalhães, 2008: 191-193.

<sup>48</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais, Cx. 21, Doc. 9. Emphasis added.

As he was always ready to serve in whatever diligences were required and to render services to the King with his armed slaves, he must have had a substantial number of them. He was also a very wealthy man and the large slaveowner. In a list of royal *quintos* made in the *freguesia* of São Sebastião from 1718 it is reported that he owned 78 slaves, including Antônio Benguela, an ensign<sup>49</sup>. In another list for 1723 for the *freguesia* of Furquim it was stated that he owned 62 slaves, including José, a captain<sup>50</sup>. At the end of his life (he died in 1732) he possessed a group of 108 slaves, as well as a fortune evaluated at 58:981\$487<sup>51</sup>.

We have here another case in which a member of the local elite engaged in confrontations accompanied by his armed slaves, some of whom possessed military designations, which informs us about possible practices of negotiations and clientelist networks between him and his captives. Once again, the analysis of these connections is based on sparse evidence of a qualitative type. Among the slaves of this field master, the occurrence of marriages between them can be found. For example, the crioulo *pardo* Francisco Dias was married in 1734, at 6 pm, in the parish church of Nossa Senhora da Conceição with Thereza, a crioula from São Paulo, slave of Agostinho Dias dos Santos and daughter of Luiz a crioulo and Maria Conga, an emancipated former slave of Francisco Ferreira de Sá<sup>52</sup>. Adding this information to the data from other documentary corpus (notably baptism, inventory, and will registers), we also identified references to the formation of slave families (in this case not sanctioned by the sacrament of matrimony) in the group of slaves owned by this member of the local elite, which reveals evidence of how the establishment of negotiations between slaves and their masters was possible. From the baptism records we found that 23 of Francisco Ferreira de Sá's slaves were baptized, including adults and children, in the period 1725-1731. Nine children were baptized and reveal informal relations among the slaves of his house. This was the case of the couple Domingos mina aged 40 and Thereza mina aged 30 who baptized two children: Francisco in 1725 and André in 1727<sup>53</sup>. However, Thereza ap-

<sup>49</sup> *Lista de registro para cobrança dos quintos reais*, 1718. Arquivo Público Mineiro, Belo Horizonte (APM), CC, cód. 1024, microfilme 003-004.

<sup>50</sup> *Lista de registro para cobrança dos quintos reais de Mariana e seu Termo*, 1723. Arquivo Histórico isHda Câmara de Mariana, Mariana (AHCM), códice 166.

<sup>51</sup> Read: fifty eight contos, nine hundred and eighty one thousand, and four hundred and eighty seven réis. *Inventário post-mortem*, 1732, Casa Setecentista de Mariana, Mariana (CSM) – 1º Of. – cód. 87 – auto 1842.

<sup>52</sup> *Livro de Casamentos*. Arquivo Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Mariana, Mariana (AEAM), O-24, p. 10v.

<sup>53</sup> *Registros Paroquiais de Batismos*, Arquivo Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Mariana, Mariana (AEAM), livro O-03: 54 and 83.

peared in the inventory list with a “suckling child” called Thomas<sup>54</sup>, whose baptism record was not found, showing that his couple had three children and were together for at least seven years.

Of the rest, in his will Francisco Ferreira de Sá freely emancipated the black Ambrosio «for the good services he rendered», also asking his heirs to help him «if he wants to marry, leaving him alms of 32\$000»<sup>55</sup>. Years before, in 1719, he had emancipated the *parda* Thimotea and her son Calisto, stating the he freely emancipated both and «wanted the slave and her son to serve him while he was alive, and after his death they could be free of all captivity»<sup>56</sup>.

Finally, we can highlight the example of Antônio Ramos dos Reis. Born in Porto, he established a successful trajectory for himself in the mining territory, occupying various important military posts, such as the captain of auxiliaries in the district of São Bartolomeu, field marshal in Vila Rica in 1732, and in 1741 the position of *capitão-mor* of the militia of Vila Rica<sup>57</sup>. In addition to holding important military positions he also held relevant positions, such as *vereador* in 1719, ordinary judge in 1739, 1745, and 1757<sup>58</sup> and was considered for the position of judge of orphans in 1732<sup>59</sup>, both in Vila Rica, also being contemplated with the habit of the Order of Christ<sup>60</sup>.

On all the occasions when the crown needed his help, he always showed himself:

... loyal to Your Majesty in all these services, fulfilling many of his obligations at the cost of his own purse, as when he went in the company of Governor Antônio de Albuquerque to help Rio de Janeiro on the occasion of the French invasion, *bringing his armed slaves* and making this journey at his own expense, and returning to the said Minas it was found on that occasion that some seditious persons among the residents of Vila do Carmo intended to insult the first magistrate of that comarca, Dr. Manuel da Costa Amorim, he went *with his armed slaves* to defend this minister<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> *Inventário post-mortem*, Casa Setecentista de Mariana, Mariana (CSM), 1º Of. – cod. 87 – auto 1842.

<sup>55</sup> *Inventário post-mortem*, Casa Setecentista de Mariana, Mariana (CSM) 1º Of. – cod. 87 – auto 1842.

<sup>56</sup> *Escrituras de Alforria e Liberdade dos Livros de Notas do 1º ofício*, 1717-1719, Casa Setecentista de Mariana, Mariana (CSM), Livro 9: 189v-190.

<sup>57</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais, Cx. 20, Doc. 48.

<sup>58</sup> *Memorial Histórico-Político da Câmara Municipal de Ouro Preto*. Cor & Cor Editorial: Ouro Preto, Dezembro de 2004.

<sup>59</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais, Cx. 22, Doc. 52.

<sup>60</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais, Cx. 31, Doc. 1. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais. Cx. 41, Doc. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Cartas patentes. Revista do Arquivo Público Mineiro, código 1229, ano 4, fascículo 4, ano 1899: 119-121. Emphasis added.

In addition to all these positions and posts which gave him enormous prestige and certified his 'quality,' Antônio Ramos dos Reis was also one of the wealthiest men in Minas Gerais, being the discoverer of a grandiose mineral bed «located on the hill commonly called Morro do Ramos where there is an open cut and various mines with many grids, tanks for collecting water, where there are more than one hundred slaves». In addition, he also had «various houses in Ouro Preto and in Rio de Janeiro, as well as another plantation, also in Rio de Janeiro, with a villa house and chapel, a corral for raising cattle with more than 20 slaves», and a sesmaria in the district of Iguaçu «which he had cultivated for 14 years with his slaves which in his opinion is worth above 60\$000 cruzados»<sup>62</sup>. His estate, as appeared in his will, amounted to 78:400\$000<sup>63</sup>.

Being such a rich man and possessing so many slaves, he could render the King services at his own expense and with his armed slaves. As has been argued above, for slave owners to put arms in the hands of their slaves without fear of these rebelling, they needed to create with them relations of trust which had to be sedimented on bargains which prioritized elements of interest to these slaves such as the possibility of having family life and emancipation.

Through notary records we managed to gain access to a significant number of family connections and marriages between the slaves of Antônio Ramos dos Reis, since the number of registers, of both marriages and baptisms, of slaves belonging to him is expressive. From 1734 to 1748 we found 14 slaves from his house who received the sacrament of marriage<sup>64</sup>, while between 1727 and 1748 59 slaves owned by him were baptized, 32 adults and 27 children<sup>65</sup>. If we accept as true the affirmation in his will that at the end of his life in Minas he possessed more than 100 slaves in his mining works, the records show that a substantial part of the slaves managed to establish parental ties among themselves and with individuals of a different judicial status, such as the *forros* (emancipated slaves). For example, we can cite the family of Gregório Barros, an African from Guinea, and Gracia, also an African from Guinea, slaves of Antônio Ramos. These two slaves married on 26 February

<sup>62</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino-Projeto Resgate/Minas Gerais, Cx. 22, Doc. 52. Testamento. Casa do Pilar de Ouro Preto, Ouro Preto (CPOP), 1º ofício - Livro n.º 20, folha 74.

<sup>63</sup> Testamento. Casa do Pilar de Ouro Preto, Ouro Preto (CPOP), 1º ofício - Livro n.º 20, folha 74.

<sup>64</sup> *Livro de Casamento, 1711-1750*, Arquivo da Casa dos Contos, Ouro Preto (CC), rolo 029, volume 0506.

<sup>65</sup> *Registros Paroquiais de Batismos*, Arquivo Eclesiástico da Arquidiocese de Mariana, Mariana (AEAM), livros O-03 e T-01. *Registros Paroquiais de Batismos, 1711-1750*, Arquivo da Casa dos Contos, Ouro Preto (CC), rolo 027, volume 491 e 493; rolo 104, volume 492.

at 5:45 pm in the parish church of Nossa Senhora do Pilar in Vila Rica<sup>66</sup>. Gracia had three children: Vitorino born in 1736, without any record of a father; Domingas born in 1743, also without a record of a father; and Inácia born in 1746 whose father was Gregório Barros<sup>67</sup>. Another case is that of the slave Quitéria who between 1740 and 1748 had five children all with an unknown father: the first was born in 1740, the second in 1742, the third in 1745, the fourth in 1746, and the last in 1748<sup>68</sup>.

In addition to the possibility of slaves from the household of this powerful man marrying and/or establishing family ties (formal and informal), some also managed to obtain their liberty. In his will dated 1762 he emancipated various slaves giving them not only manumission, but also legacies which helped these captives in their new lives as *forros*. Let us look at some examples.

Antonio Velho, a page of Antônio Ramos dos Reis, after a life of fidelity and the rendering of good services, in which he very probably enjoyed a great proximity with his master due to the function which he played, was not forgotten by the same at the moment of his death. In addition to his liberty, Antônio Ramos left him:

... to live his life at the address of his house where the black Joana Lopes lived and for his death they will give the same house to the Irmandade do Santíssimo [...] I also leave to be divided among him and another two female slaves the white clothes which are found in this vila and to him will be given more my capolé and two of the most used sets of clothes<sup>69</sup>.

For one of the female slaves he also stipulated in his will:

... a letter of emancipation and liberty be given to my slave Maria Apolonia called Agilô and that she choose among all the crioulas who I still have from nine to twelve years of age, one to be her slave and to serve her and also a black to serve her and I leave the house where I live in this town of Ouro Preto for her to live during her life [...] and she will be given all her clothes and also what was given to her for the functions where she served as queen, and she will be given four sheets from those they find and a tablecloth and six

<sup>66</sup> *Livro de Casamento, 1711-1750*, Arquivo da Casa dos Contos, Ouro Preto (CC), rolo 029, volume 0506: 86.

<sup>67</sup> *Registros Paroquiais de Batismos, 1711-1750*, Arquivo da Casa dos Contos, Ouro Preto (CC), rolo 027, volume 491: 07 and 238; rolo 027, volume 493: 28v.

<sup>68</sup> *Registros Paroquiais de Batismos, 1711-1750*, Arquivo da Casa dos Contos, Ouro Preto (CC), rolo 027, volume 491: 114 and 166; rolo 027, volume 493: 20v, 21 and 46v.

<sup>69</sup> *Testamento*. Casa do Pilar de Ouro Preto, Ouro Preto (CPOP), 1º ofício - Livro n.º 20, folha 74.



napkins and one of the covers from my bed, two pillowcases and two towels to wash her hands<sup>70</sup>.

Other slaves who achieved emancipation and some legacies were Sebastiana Ramos, a black from the Courana nation and her two *pardo* children Izidoro and Antônio. Antônio Ramos let them spend their lives «the one in the middle of the houses in which he lives near to the ones that will remain to agilô». For another slave called Anna Ramos and her two children Pedro and Paulo he also left them to live while alive «in the houses where the *par-da* Micaela Ramos died»<sup>71</sup>.

It can be perceived that some of his slaves who had his surname established family ties, were emancipated and even gained properties. Probably such slaves, amongst others who also appeared in his will with the same privileges, achieved them as a result of a series of strategies or personal relations in which they recognized the authority of Antônio Ramos, evidenced in his name. In other words, existing in Antônio Ramos' household slaves were personal relations between him and his slaves, all of whom submitted to the command of a single lord capable of influencing the life of the residents of his household, granting or removing from them, for example, liberty, properties<sup>72</sup>. This involved a reciprocity among unequals and, even though there were tensions, it was a just exchange, since in the slaveholding societies of the Ancien Regime, the notion of justice was equitable: to each one according to their place in the social hierarchy<sup>73</sup>. Obviously, the recognition of vertical solidarity does not signify the absence of conflict between them and their owner<sup>74</sup>.

All this information together allows us assume that the capacity of these individuals to help the colonial authorities, centered almost always on the use of armed slaves, was based on the negotiations established with these groups. With this we do not want to suggest that the permission for the marriage, for the formation of families or the possibility of emancipation, cited above, was a linear act of benevolence and seignorial concession. However, these situations could indicate the existence of a process of constant negotiation between slaves and masters (with specific interests from all sides), which guaranteed

<sup>70</sup> *Testamento*. Casa do Pilar de Ouro Preto, Ouro Preto (CPOP), 1º ofício - Livro n.º 20, folha 74.

<sup>71</sup> *Testamento*. Casa do Pilar de Ouro Preto, Ouro Preto (CPOP), 1º ofício - Livro n.º 20, folha 74.

<sup>72</sup> Fragoso and Gouvêa, 2009: 192.

<sup>73</sup> Fragoso and Gouvêa, 2009: 192.

<sup>74</sup> Soares, 2006: 207-208.

the construction of a relationship of ‘confidence’ which, from the point of view of the masters made them feel safe enough to arm their slaves to act alongside them in bellic activities and, from the point of view of slaves, become their ‘allies’ on their properties.

We are talking about a reality molded by a corporatist conception of society in which the hierarchies were duly naturalized and where the institution of an unequal pact between masters and slaves (according to which the formers were responsible for protection and direction, and the latter obedience) was something acceptable and even searched for. On such a pact was based one of the foundations of the house, since the relations between masters and slaves, and even between these and the free and freed slaves, occurred under the command of the pater power, based on the idea of self-government affirmed by the Philippine Ordinances<sup>75</sup>.

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The empirical indications presented reveal that, while we agree with the ideas of António Manuel Hespanha in arguing that the clientelist networks cemented the social relations in the Ancien Regime societies, it is necessary to expand and radicalize the application of this idea to the understanding of vertical relations—from the top down, principally, among social groups, still today very much centrally applied to the understanding of horizontal relations or when many between groups or individuals of the highest social groups.

Linked to this question, as Sílvia Lara has warned, it is necessary to connect two very rich historiographical traditions much developed in recent years, but which do not dialogue in an effective form: understanding the question of power in the Portuguese Empire and the historiography of slavery<sup>76</sup>. The former has advanced much in relation to thinking about elite groups and their relations with the (local) colonial institutions and those of Portugal (the center of the empire), and also in relation to intra-elite interactions. However, only now does the advance begin more substantially in the investigations of relations between individuals located on the distinct hierarchical scales of these societies. The historiography of slavery in the colonial period has advanced enormously in relation to making the slave the agent and subject of his own history. Nonetheless, there remains more radically linking these considerations in the universe of the explanation of the configuration of colonial society. In

---

<sup>75</sup> Fragoso, Guedes and Krause, 2013: 49-50.

<sup>76</sup> Lara, 2005.

other words, it is necessary that we ask ourselves: what is the impact of relations between masters and slaves on the shaping of political relations and the institutions which configure power in colonial society?

It has been observed that in addition to the use as armed men, the local elite could not do without armed slaves in various situations, whether related to their search for command and status in the services of the King, to the demonstration of social legitimacy, or the resolution of personal conflicts. And by this, we can say that among those masters and their slaves relationships at many moments were based on mechanisms of negotiation and clientelism. This denotes that the logic of governability and the mechanisms of power typical of the Ancien Regime passed through the social layers, horizontally and vertically.

## BIBLIOGRAFÍA

- Aleman, María Eugenia, “Los Blandengues de la Frontera de Buenos Aires y los dilemas de la defensa del Imperio (1752-1806)”, *Fronteras de la historia*, 22/2 (Bogotá, 2017): 44-74. <https://doi.org/10.22380/20274688.104>
- Antezana, Sofia Lorena Vargas, *Os contratadores dos caminhos de ouro das Minas Setecentistas: estratégias mercantis, relações de compadrio e sociabilidade (1718-1750)*, Masters dissertation, Belo Horizonte, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2006.
- Boxer, Charles R., *A idade de ouro do Brasil: dores de crescimento de uma sociedade colonial*, 3ª ed., Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira, 2000.
- Brown, Christopher Leslie and Morgan, Philip D., *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006.
- Carvalho, Feu de, “Termo que se fes na junta, e resolução que se tomou sobre o pagamento dos quintos de Sua Magestade que Deus Guarde, 1714, Villa Rica. Questões históricas e velhos enganos”, *Revista do Arquivo Público Mineiro*, XXIV/1 (Belo Horizonte, 1933): 3-42.
- Castro, Celso, Izecksohn, Vitor and Kraay, Hendrik, *Nova história militar brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 2004.
- Chaves, Cláudia Maria das Graças, Pires, Maria do Carmo and Magalhães, Sônia Maria de, *Casa de vereança de Mariana: 300 anos de história da Câmara Municipal de Mariana*, Ouro Preto, Editora da UFOP, 2008.
- Clavero, Bartolomé, “Institución Política y Derecho: acerca del concepto historiográfico de «Estado Moderno»”, *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 19 (Madrid, 1981): 43-57.
- Cotta, Francis A., *Negros e mestiços nas milícias da América portuguesa*, Belo Horizonte, Crisálida, 2010.

- Elliot, John H., "A Europe of Composite Monarchies", *Past and Present*, 137 (Oxford, 1992): 48-71. <https://doi.org/10.1093/past/137.1.48>
- Faria, Simone Cristina de, *Os «homens do ouro»: perfil, atuação e redes dos Cobradores dos Quintos Reais em Mariana Setecentista*, Masters dissertation, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 2010.
- Fernández Albaladejo, Pablo, *Fragmentos de Monarquía: trabajos de historia política*, Madrid, Alianza, 1992.
- Finley, Moses, *Escravidão antiga e ideologia moderna*, Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 1991.
- Fragoso, João Luís Ribeiro, "Potentados coloniais e circuitos imperiais: notas sobre uma nobreza da terra, supracapitanias, nos Setecentos", Nuno G. Monteiro, Pedro Cardim and Mafalda Soares da Cunha (eds.), *Optima Pars: elites ibero-americanas do Antigo Regime*, Lisboa, ISC, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2005: 133-168.
- Fragoso, João Luís Ribeiro, "Alternativas metodológicas para a história econômica e social: micro-história italiana, Fredrik Barth e a história econômica colonial", Carla Maria Carvalho de Almeida and Mônica Ribeiro de Oliveira (orgs.), *Nomes e números: alternativas metodológicas para a história econômica e social*, Juiz de Fora, Ed. da UFJF, 2006: 27-100.
- Fragoso, João Luís Ribeiro, "Capitão Manuel Pimenta Sampaio, senhor do engenho do Rio Grande, neto de conquistadores e compadre de João Soares, pardo: notas sobre uma hierarquia social costumeira (Rio de Janeiro, 1700-1760)", João Fragoso and Maria de Fátima Gouvêa (orgs.), *Na trama das redes*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2010: 243-294.
- Fragoso, João Luís Ribeiro and Gouveia, Maria de Fátima, "Monarquia pluricontinental e república: algumas reflexões sobre a América lusa nos séculos XVI-XVIII", *Tempo*, 14/27 (Niterói, 2009): 49-63. <http://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-77042009000200004>
- Fragoso, João Luís Ribeiro, Gouvêa, Maria de Fátima and Bicalho, Maria Fernanda, *O Antigo Regime nos trópicos: a dinâmica imperial portuguesa, séculos XVI-XVII*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2001.
- Fragoso, João Luís Ribeiro, Guedes, Roberto and Krause, Thiago, *A América portuguesa e os sistemas atlânticos na Época Moderna*, Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 2013.
- Gil Pujol, Xavier, "Centralismo e localismo? Sobre as relações políticas e culturais entre capital e territórios nas monarquias europeias dos séculos XVI e XVII", *Penélope: Fazer e Desfazer História*, 6 (Lisboa, 1991): 119-144.
- Gomes, José Eudes Arrais Barroso, *As milícias D'El Rey: tropas militares e poder no Ceará setecentista*, Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 2010.
- Greene, Jack, *Negotiated Authorities. Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History*, Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia, 1994.

- Hespanha, António Manuel, *Poder e instituições no Antigo Regime*, Lisboa, Cosmo, 1992.
- Hespanha, António Manuel, “A representação da sociedade e do poder”, António Manuel Hespanha (ed.), *História de Portugal. O Antigo Regime*, Lisboa, Editorial Estampa, 1993: vol. 4, 113-140.
- Hespanha, António Manuel, *As vésperas do Leviathan*, Coimbra, Almedina, 1994.
- Hespanha, António Manuel, “A constituição do Império português. Revisão de alguns enviesamentos correntes”, João Luís Ribeiro Fragoso, Maria de Fátima Gouvêa and Maria Fernanda Bicalho (eds.), *O Antigo Regime nos trópicos: a dinâmica imperial portuguesa, séculos XVI-XVIII*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2001: 165-188.
- Hespanha, António Manuel, *Nova história militar de Portugal. Séculos XVI-XVII*, vol. 2, Lisboa, Círculo de Leitores, 2013.
- Hespanha, António Manuel and Xavier, Ângela Barreto, “As redes clientelares”, António Manuel Hespanha (ed.), *História de Portugal. O Antigo Regime*, Lisboa, Editorial Estampa, 1998: vol. 4, 339-349.
- Jesus, Nauk Maria de, “Para uma história da organização militar na capitania de Mato Grosso”, Paulo Possamai (ed.), *Conquistar e defender: Portugal, Países Baixos e Brasil. Estudos de história militar na Idade Moderna*, São Leopoldo, Oikos, 2012: 313-325.
- Lara, Silvia Hunold, “Conectando historiografias: a escravidão africana e o Antigo Regime na América portuguesa”, Maria Fernanda Bicalho and Vera Lúcia Amaral Ferlini (eds.), *Modos de Governar: ideias e práticas políticas no império português, séculos XVI-XIX*, São Paulo, Alameda, 2005: 21-38.
- Lempérière, Annick, *Entre Dieu et le roi, la République. Mexico, XVIe - XIXe siècles*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2004.
- Lovejoy, Paul, *A escravidão na África: uma história de suas transformações*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2002.
- Marta, Michel Mendes, *Em busca de honras, isenções e liberdades: as milícias de homens pretos forros na cidade do Rio de Janeiro (meados do século XVIII e início do XIX)*, Masters dissertation, Niterói, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2013.
- Mattos, Hebe, “Henrique Dias: expansão e limites da justiça distributiva no Império Português”, Ronaldo Vainfas, Georgina Santos and Guilherme Pereira das Neves (eds.), *Retratos do Império*, Niterói, EdUFF, 2006: 29-45.
- Maxwell, Kenneth, *Marquês de Pombal: paradoxo do iluminismo*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1996.
- Mello, Christiane F. Pagano de, “A guerra e o pacto: a política de intensa mobilização militar”, Celso Castro, Vitor Izecksohn and Hendrik Kraay (eds.), *Nova história militar brasileira*, Rio de Janeiro, FGV, 2004: 67-86.

- Mello, Christiane F. Pagano de, “Forças Militares no Brasil Colonial”, Paulo Possamai (ed.), *Conquistar e defender: Portugal, Países Baixos e Brasil. Estudos de história militar na Idade Moderna*, São Leopoldo, Oikos, 2012: 105-117.
- Monteiro, Nuno Gonçalo, “A «tragédia dos Távoras». Parentesco, redes de poder e facções políticas na monarquia portuguesa em meados do século XVIII”, João Luís Ribeiro Fragoso and Maria de Fátima Gouveia (eds.), *Na Trama das Redes*, Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2010: 317-342.
- Monteiro, Nuno Gonçalo, *História da vida privada em Portugal. A idade moderna*, Lisboa, Circulo de Leitores, 2011.
- Monteiro, Rodrigo Bentes, *O rei no espelho: a monarquia portuguesa e a colonização da América (1640-1720)*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2002.
- Moreira, Luiz Guilherme S. and Loureiro, Marcello José G., “A nova história militar e a América portuguesa: balanço historiográfico”, Paulo Possamai (ed.), *Conquistar e defender: Portugal, Países Baixos e Brasil. Estudos de história militar na Idade Moderna*, São Leopoldo, Oikos, 2012: 13-31.
- Paiva, Eduardo França, “De corpo fechado: o gênero masculino, milícias e trânsito de culturas entre a África dos mandingas e as Minas Gerais da América, no início do século XVIII”, Douglas Cole Libby and Júnia F. Furtado (eds.), *Trabalho livre, trabalho escravo: Brasil e Europa, séculos XVIII e XIX*, São Paulo, Annablume, 2006: 113-129.
- Paula, Leandro Francisco de, *Negros no campo das armas: homens de cor nos corpos militares das Minas setecentistas (1709-1800)*, Masters dissertation, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, 2012.
- Ponce Vázquez, Juan José, “Colaboraciones fronterizas, diplomacia y guerra en La Española, 1660-1690”, *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, 40/142 (Santo Domingo, 2015): 255-284.
- Postigo, José Luís Belmonte, “El color de los fusiles. las milicias de pardos en Santiago de Cuba en los albores de la revolución haitiana”, Manuel Chust and Juan Marchena (eds.), *Las armas de la nación. Independencia y ciudadanía en Hispanoamérica, 1750-1820*, Madrid-Castellón, Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2007: 37-52.
- Rodrigues, Aldair Carlos, *Limpos de Sangue: Familiares do Santo Ofício, Inquisição e Sociedade em Minas Colonial*, São Paulo, Alameda, 2011.
- Schaub, Jean-Frédéric, “La catégorie «Études coloniales» est-elle indispensable?”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 3/63 (Paris, 2008): 625-646. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0395264900023349>
- Silva, Kalina Vanderlei, “Os Henriques nas Vilas Açucareiras do Estado do Brasil: Tropas de Homens Negros em Pernambuco, séculos XVII e XVIII”, *Estudos de História*, 9/2 (Franca, 2002): 145-194.

- Silva, Luiz Geraldo, “Sobre a «etnia crioula»: o Terço dos Henriques e seus critérios de exclusão na América portuguesa do século XVIII”, Andréa Lisly Gonçalves, Cláudia M. Graças Chaves and Renato Pinto Venâncio (eds.), *Administrando Impérios: Portugal e Brasil nos séculos XVIII e XIX*, Belo Horizonte, Fino Traço, 2012: 71-96.
- Silva, Luiz Geraldo, “Gênese das milícias de pardos e pretos na América portuguesa: Pernambuco e Minas Gerais, séculos XVII e XVIII”, *Revista de História*, 169 (São Paulo, 2013): 111-144. <https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2316-9141.v0i169p111-144>
- Soares, Márcio de Sousa, *A remissão do cativo. Alforrias e liberdades nos Campos dos Goitacazes, c. 1750 - c. 1830*, PhD dissertation, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, 2006.
- Souza, Priscila de Lima, *Sem que lhes obste a diferença de cor: a habilitação dos pardos livres na América portuguesa e no Caribe espanhol (c. 1750-1808)*, PhD dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2017.
- Stumpf, Roberta G., *Cavaleiros do ouro e outras trajetórias nobilitantes: as solicitações de hábitos das Ordens militares nas Minas Setecentistas*, Tesis de Doutorado, Brasília, UNB, 2009.
- Valadares, Virgínia Trindade Valadares, *Elites mineiras setecentistas: conjugação de dois mundos*, Lisboa, Edições Colibri e ICIA, 2004.
- Vinson III, Ben, “Los milicianos pardos y la relación estatal durante el siglo XVIII en México”, Juan Ortiz Escamilla (ed.), *Fuerzas militares en Iberoamérica siglos XVIII y XIX*, México DF, El Colegio de México, El Colegio de Michoacán, Universidad Veracruzana, 2005: 47-60.

Fecha de recepción: 2 de julio de 2018.

Fecha de envío de las modificaciones: 21 de noviembre de 2018.

Fecha de aceptación: 18 de febrero de 2019.

## Elites coloniales y sus esclavos armados: política, clientela y autogobierno doméstico en Minas en el siglo XVIII

---

*El artículo tiene como objetivo analizar el desempeño de las élites presentes en el distrito de Vila Rica de la capitanía de Minas Gerais en la primera mitad del siglo XVIII en la gestión de sus hogares, entendida aquí en un sentido amplio. Estamos particularmente interesados en investigar las relaciones de estos individuos con grupos subordinados, en particular con esclavos, analizadas como relaciones clientelares verticales. En la investigación se*

*han utilizado dos estrategias metodológicas. Una se refiere al relevamiento de registros parroquiales (matrimonios, bautismos y defunciones) que busca establecer las posibles conexiones y redes de sociabilidad entre los miembros de la élite y los esclavos. La otra estrategia utilizada para develar tales relaciones verticales es recuperar pruebas más dispersas, ubicadas en la documentación suelta del Archivo Histórico de Ultramar sobre la capitanía de Minas Gerais.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *élites coloniales; esclavos armados; autogobierno; Minas Gerais.*

---