THE HUMAN TRADITION IN
COLONIAL LATIN AMERICA

EDITED BY
KENNETH J. ANDRIEN



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Acknowledgments

This book has emerged from my experiences both as a research scholar and as a teacher. While administrators in higher education often explain that scholarship and classroom teaching reinforce each other, too often they do not. Preparing and teaching a class, grading papers, and spending time with students often takes hours away from conducting research and writing. In the case of this volume, however, that synergism between scholarship and teaching did occur. For over twenty-five years I have listened to my colleagues in various restaurants, bars, and cafés in Spain, Latin America, and the United States recount fascinating stories about the life histories of individuals, which they had uncovered during their archival research. During my time teaching at The Ohio State University, my own students also have found the real lives of historical figures one of the most interesting aspects of history classes. As a result, I have called on my colleagues to contribute some of the more "colorful" stories of ordinary people in colonial Latin America to this volume. I sincerely hope that students at Ohio State and elsewhere will find them an interesting and useful way to understand the past.

In the process of editing this collection, I have accumulated many debts. The History Department at Ohio State provided two dedicated research assistants, Sherwin Bryant and Andrea Smidt, who helped in innumerable ways to bring this volume to completion. Richard Hopper of Scholarly Resources gave me the opportunity to undertake the project and waited patiently for me to conclude it. I would like to thank the many students who took my classes at Ohio State; the joys and occasional frustrations of teaching those courses have inspired this book. As always, my wife, Anne, and our children, Jonathan and Elizabeth, have given me the love and emotional support that sustained my efforts. Indeed, I am dedicating this book to Jonathan and Elizabeth because being a father and watching my own children's efforts to learn about the past have taught me invaluable lessons, which I hope will make me a more sensitive, caring teacher. I trust that they will also make this collection a better and more useful book.

Contents

Introduction
Kenneth J. Andrien xiii

I New World Beginnings and Efforts to Create a Colonial Social Order, 1492–1610 1

1 Gaspar Antonio Chi: Bridging the Conquest of Yucatán 6
Matthew Restall

2 Don Melchior Caruarayco: A *Kuraka* of Cajamarca in Sixteenth-Century Peru 22
Susan E. Ramírez

3 Doña Isabel Sisa: A Sixteenth-Century Indian Woman Resisting Gender Inequalities 35
Ana María Presta

4 Domingos Fernandes Nobre: "Tomacauna," a Go-Between in Sixteenth-Century Brazil 51
Alida C. Metcalf

5 The Mysterious Catalina: Indian or Spaniard? 64
Noble David Cook

II The Mature Colonial Order, 1610–1740 85

6 Ursula de Jesús: A Seventeenth-Century Afro-Peruvian Mystic 88
Nancy E. van Deusen

7 Zumbi of Palmares: Challenging the Portuguese Colonial Order 104
Mary Karasch

8 Diego de Ocaña: Holy Wanderer 121
Kenneth Mills

9 Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala: Native Writer and Litigant in Early Colonial Peru 140
Rolena Adorno

10 AhChan: The Conquest of the Itza Maya Kingdom 164
Grant D. Jones

III Reform, Resistance, and Rebellion, 1740–1825 189

11 Pedro de Ayarza: The Purchase of Whiteness 194
Ann Twinam

12 Victorina Loza: Quiteña Merchant in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century 211
Christiana Borchart de Moreno

13 José Antonio da Silva: Marriage and Concubinage in Colonial Brazil 229
Muriel S. Nazzari

14 Eugenio Sinanyuca: Militant, Nonrevolutionary *Kuraka*, and Community Defender 241
Ward Stavig

15 Juan Barbarín: The 1795 French Conspiracy in Buenos Aires 259
Lyman L. Johnson

16 Miguel García: Black Soldier in the Wars of Independence 278
Peter Blanchard

17 Angela Batallas: A Fight for Freedom in Guayaquil 293
Camilla Townsend

Index 309

Introduction

KENNETH J. ANDRIEN

A major challenge in teaching colonial Latin American history is conveying to students the ways in which major historical events influenced the daily life experiences of common people. All of the essays in this volume address this problem by providing life histories, which show real people in colonial Spanish and Portuguese America adjusting to the large, impersonal historical forces that helped shape their lives. These personal stories seldom deal with momentous historical events, yet each one offers a glimpse into important aspects of everyday life in colonial Latin America. After all, history is never only the affairs of kings, noblemen, and generals; it is also those of more ordinary men and women who cope with daily challenges. At the same time, each of the personal histories contained in this book illustrates a recurring theme in Spanish and Portuguese colonial societies: the enduring social tensions that emerged when the political, social, religious, and economic ideals of the state and the Roman Catholic Church conflicted with the realities of colonial life. These societal tensions could arise from squabbles over a wide range of disparate issues—gender roles, racial and ethnic identities, or religious orthodoxy. Some could be resolved, while others reflected deep sources of discontent that exploded into violence and rebellion. In all cases, these daily "lived" experiences of people in colonial Latin America reveal how men and women dealt with the contradictions between elite notions of order and stability and the more disorderly and uncertain realities of everyday life.

ORDER AND DISORDER

Spanish and Portuguese settlers in the New World (then called the Indies) shared many basic assumptions about social stratification, religious orthodoxy, and entrepreneurship. The conquistadors and those who followed them wanted to establish a new colonial order that guaranteed their own preeminence and also maintained political, social, economic, cultural, and religious ties to their homelands in the Iberian peninsula. These new colonial societies would be rigidly hierarchical, with only

tion in European Colonial Markets," in Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, eds., with Enrique Tandeter, *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology* (Durham, NC, 1995). The cultural impact of writing (including testaments) has been examined in Joanne Rappaport, "Object and Alphabet: Andean Indians and Documents in the Colonial Period," in Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo, eds., *Writing without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham, NC, 1994); and idem, *The Politics of Memory: Native Historical Interpretation in the Colombian Andes* (Durham, NC, 1998).

CHAPTER 4

Domingos Fernandes Nobre

"Tomacauna," a Go-Between in Sixteenth-Century Brazil

ALIDA C. METCALF

The Portuguese settlement of Brazil followed a markedly different course than the Spanish pattern in Mexico and the Andes. The fleet of Pedro Alvares Cabral, en route to India, made the first recorded European landfall on the coast of Brazil in 1500, but the Portuguese crown chose to focus its attention on India instead. No immediate settlement followed Cabral's discovery. Rather, a small but profitable trade in brazilwood developed along the coast. Portuguese merchants as well as interloping French rivals fostered contacts with the indigenous Tupi-Guarani peoples who lived along the long coastline of Brazil. With these tribes, merchants exchanged European trading goods for brazilwood. Over time, this mutually beneficial bartering relationship broke down and the enslavement of Indians began. The first Portuguese settlers arrived at São Vicente, in southern Brazil, in 1532. Other important early settlements were Salvador da Bahia, located in the northeast, which became the capital in 1549; and, farther north, Olinda, the major settlement of Pernambuco. In central Brazil the French established a small Protestant colony at Rio de Janeiro in 1555, which was taken by the Portuguese in 1560.

The success of sugar cultivation in the northeast, around Olinda and Salvador da Bahia, led to a growing demand for Amerindian slaves to work in the cane fields, producing escalating levels of conflict later in the sixteenth century. Gangs of Portuguese began penetrating the rugged wilderness interior (sertão) *in search of Amerindian captives to sell as slaves for the coastal sugar plantations. The warlike indigenous peoples resisted these incursions, but ancient rivalries between tribes made any type of unified response to repel the invaders difficult. Moreover, Portuguese slavers began learning indigenous languages, marrying Amerindian women, and taking part in tribal affairs. Mixed-blood offspring of these relationships* (mamelucos) *often served as cultural mediators, living part-time in the interior among their Tupi-Guarani kinsmen and part-time in coastal Portuguese settlements. Over the years Portuguese and mameluco slave hunters cultivated their Amerindian allies to help them capture enemy groups, turning indigenous rivalries to their advantage and taking larger numbers of slaves for sale in the coastal settlements.*

One of the more famous of these mameluco go-betweens, who made his living by slave trading in the sertão, was Domingos Fernandes Nobre, known among his indigenous kinsmen and followers as Tomacauna. Like his fellow mameluco traders and slave hunters, Fernandes Nobre lived a dual life, moving freely between the Portuguese in the capital and the frontier world of the Tupi-Guarani. When in the interior, Fernandes Nobre became Tomacauna, tattooing his body in the indigenous style and taking part in local religious rituals of the syncretic Santidade cult. Although his ability to function in both the Portuguese and indigenous worlds made him both feared and successful as a slave trader, he eventually ran afoul of authorities along the coast.

In June 1591 a visiting inquisitor from Portugal's Holy Office of the Inquisition arrived in Bahia, and several of the city's citizens denounced Fernandes Nobre for his heretical participation in the Santidade cult. Although he defended himself and escaped the most severe discipline, this case demonstrates the tensions between the hierarchical Europeanized society developing on the coast and the individualistic and pluralistic society evolving in the wilderness. To the inquisitor, the tattooed Tomacauna with his questionable ethics and heretical religious beliefs was a barbarian, a threat to the "civilized" Portuguese colonists in Bahia. Although the sugar planters of the coast relied on mameluco go-betweens to provide slave labor, these individuals also represented European fears that overseas colonies stood on the verge of lapsing into "barbarism" and social disorder. Men such as Tomacauna were necessary to the economic prosperity of sixteenth-century Brazil, but their rugged individualism threatened to undermine the Catholic, family-oriented, and civilized world of Salvador da Bahia.

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When an inquisitor from Portugal's Holy Office of the Inquisition arrived in Brazil's capital of Salvador da Bahia in June 1591, Domingos Fernandes Nobre was not in the city. Neither was he in the Recôncavo, the rich forestlands around the Bay of All Saints into which Portuguese

settlers had carved their sugar plantations. Instead, Fernandes Nobre was deep in the *sertão*, the wilderness, living in a camp with nearly one hundred other men who had left the coastal settlements of Bahia and Pernambuco a year earlier to trade for Indian slaves. Such expeditions, known as *entradas*, had become essential to supply the incipient sugar plantations of the Portuguese colonies of Bahia and Pernambuco with laborers. Many *mamelucos*, men of mixed Indian and Portuguese parentage like Domingos Fernandes Nobre, had become slave traders who used their ability to move between the worlds of the Indian wilderness and the Portuguese coast in order to make their living. Therefore, while Fernandes Nobre and the other leaders of this expedition negotiated with the Indian chief, Arataca, the inquisitor made his entrance into the capital. Thus, the men in the sertão missed the pomp and ceremony that marked the inquisitor's arrival and subsequent transformation of the rhythms of daily life in Salvador.[1]

These mamelucos were go-betweens—men who lived both in the wilderness and in the coastal settlements. Because of their facility with Indian languages and customs and their willingness to use that knowledge for the benefit of the Portuguese colonists, they were essential in the development of the sugar economy in Bahia and Pernambuco. Go-betweens supplied the Indian slaves who labored on the first sugar plantations in Brazil. Yet, as the inquisitor's sojourn in Bahia and Pernambuco would make clear, the Portuguese were not entirely comfortable with their reliance on these men.

The first go-betweens in Brazil were Europeans who had been shipwrecked along the coast and who had survived by joining Indian tribes. One such man in the south was João Ramalho, who, when the Portuguese began their first permanent colony at São Vicente, was living as an Indian. Ramalho forged an alliance between the Portuguese and his tribe that allowed the new colony to survive. As the colony grew, Ramalho became increasingly powerful and began to supply the colonists with Indian slaves from enemy tribes. In Bahia, another go-between was Diogo Alvares Caramurú, who had also been shipwrecked in the early years of the sixteenth century. Like Ramalho, he had married into a local Indian tribe and had considerable influence among them. Caramurú also became an ally of the Portuguese when they attempted to establish colonies in Bahia. The mameluco descendants of Ramalho and Caramurú continued to live as go-betweens, often becoming involved in the Indian slave trade.[2]

The early settlers of Pernambuco and Bahia intended to profit from the new colony, and to do so they needed an economic focus. They chose sugar. Sugarcane had been grown successfully in other Portuguese colonies off the coast of Africa, such as the islands of São Tomé and Madeira,

but its planting, cultivation, harvest, and milling required many laborers. Who would work in the fields and in the mills? The Portuguese had become slave traders along the coast of Africa in the sixteenth century, and planters in Brazil might have thought of obtaining African slaves. But the settlers in Brazil had little capital to finance slave trading across the Atlantic. They turned, therefore, to a more immediate source: the Indians. Later, after the disastrous decline in the Indian population, planters would indeed look to Africa for slaves. But in the sixteenth century, planters had little sense that the combination of disease and slavery would drastically reduce the Indian population. Instead, they viewed Indians as an unlimited resource of cheap labor whom they could enslave for their own profit.[3]

The Portuguese crown saw as its moral obligation the conversion and baptism of the Brazilian Indians into the Christian faith. To this end the crown designated the Society of Jesus (or Jesuits) to evangelize in Brazil, yet the economic interests of the settlers clashed with the moral obligations of the distant crown. Moreover, the Indians of Brazil were not the peaceful "noble savages" that early reports described. Rather, they lived in many different tribes, some of which practiced violent warfare. Cannibalism was sometimes the result of such wars. Even some of the Portuguese who became parties to intertribal warfare were put to death in cannibalistic ceremonies. Thus, while the crown did not want to see widespread Indian slavery in Brazil, by royal legislation it provided the loopholes that colonists used to enslave Indians freely. According to law, Indians who made war against the Portuguese, or who practiced cannibalism, could be taken legally as slaves.[4]

Indian slavery became commonplace in Bahia and Pernambuco after the 1560s. And so, when the inquisitor arrived in Bahia in 1591, the men with Domingos Fernandes Nobre were trading for slaves. In the sertão, the leaders of the entrada sent gifts and promises each morning to Arataca. The chief was an avowed enemy of the Portuguese, but because of the size of this particular entrada, the gifts promised each day, and the skill of the expedition's leaders, he kept the peace. In return for swords, pistols, gunpowder, and the repair of arms that the Indians already possessed, Arataca exchanged Indians. The leaders of the expedition carefully controlled these negotiations and insisted that the men trade with the Indians only through them. But the men soon learned that if they patterned themselves after Fernandes Nobre, they too could deal on their own with the Indians.[5]

His fame as a man of the wilderness was legendary in Bahia. Fernandes Nobre was a mameluco—his mother was Indian and his father Portuguese—and he drew on this dual identity to exploit the wilderness. He was as accustomed to living in the sertão among Indians as he was to

living in the city among the Portuguese settlers. In the wilderness he was known by his Indian nickname, "Tomacauna." He spoke Indian languages, and parts of his body were tattooed in the Indian style to signify that he was a brave warrior. Seeing and perhaps admiring his example, some of the men on this expedition also spoke in the Indian dialect and tattooed their bodies to more convincingly offer arms to be traded for slaves.

While Fernandes Nobre negotiated in the wilderness, his wife saw or most certainly heard about the procession, Mass, sworn declarations of faith, and decrees of of July 28, 1591, in honor of the inquisitor. To her it must have brought back memories, however sketchy, of her childhood in Portugal where the presence of the Holy Office and its procedures for ferreting out heretics were etched into the memories of local townspeople. On that Sunday in Salvador, the bishop of Bahia led a procession from the Church of Our Lady of Ajuda to the cathedral. The governor, judges, members of the city council, priests, and clerics solemnly accompanied the inquisitor, who was escorted under a canopy of golden cloth. Inside the cathedral, he sat on a red velvet chair beneath a crimson damask canopy in the main chapel. Mass was said in Latin, followed by a sermon preached in Portuguese by the provincial of the Jesuit mission. Then the archdeacon of the cathedral mounted the pulpit and read the edicts brought by the inquisitor from the king of Portugal. The notary of the inquisitor next stepped up to read, in Portuguese, a document of the late Pope Pius V in favor of the Holy Office and in opposition to those who dared to criticize it.

The inquisitor then moved to an altar in the middle of the chapel, which was richly adorned with a silver cross, four silver candlesticks, two missals resting on damask cushions whose pages were held open by two silver crosses. One by one, the governor, judges, councilmen, and other officials approached the altar, knelt, placed both hands on the crosses on the missals, and swore to uphold the faith. In a loud voice the notary asked the congregation to promise to do so as well. At the end of the ceremony, the notary affixed these documents to the door of the cathedral along with one that stated that under pain of excommunication, all residents of the city and one league around it must denounce within thirty days anything they knew, or had seen, or had heard, against the holy Catholic faith. He affixed another document to the church door stating that the inquisitor would grant thirty days of grace during which time those residents who confessed their faults would not lose their properties.[6]

The arrival of the inquisitor in Salvador brought to Brazil, for the first time, an institution well known in Portugal. The Portuguese Inquisition shared many similarities with the Spanish Inquisition, which had been brought to Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth

century. The Inquisition had as its mission the elimination of heresy from Catholicism. The Spanish inquisitors fixed their attention on the *conversos*, Jews who had converted to Christianity and who then had married into old and established Catholic families. Actively pursuing them, the inquisitors accused, tried, and punished thousands of conversos for crimes of heresy. When Ferdinand and Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain in 1492, many crossed the border into the kingdom of Portugal, where there was no Inquisition. But there too, the Jews faced pressures. A decree of 1496 forced all Jews in Portugal to convert to Christianity and to be known thenceforth as New Christians. In 1546 the Portuguese Inquisition began and the New Christians quickly became the major target. Many of them took refuge in Brazil. In 1580, when King Philip II of Spain took the crown of Portugal, the Portuguese Inquisition became even more influenced by the Spanish Inquisition. Because so many New Christians had settled in Brazil, the Inquisition authorized its first visit there in 1591. Brazil would never have a resident Holy Office, as did Mexico and Peru, but through occasional visits and the work of *familiares*, a privileged group of literate individuals who served the Inquisition, its presence was felt in the colony.[7]

With the arrival of the inquisitor in 1591, a new era in the history of the city of Salvador had thus begun. But the men of the wilderness were not there to see it. In Salvador and in the Recôncavo, many pondered the instructions brought by the inquisitor. Their thoughts may have turned first to the obvious heresies: secret Judaism, the reading of banned books, and covert Protestantism. Other crimes sought out by the inquisitor might have crowded into their thoughts: blasphemy, bigamy, bestiality, sodomy, and witchcraft. Only later, perhaps, did the go-betweens come to mind: the odd way that they moved back and forth between two worlds, stepping into and then casting off opposite identities at will.

When the men returned to the city of Salvador in December 1591, the period of thirty days of grace had ended. Unbeknown to Domingos Fernandes Nobre, four people had already denounced him. On August 7 a twenty-three-year-old mameluco accused him of worshipping an Indian idol in the wilderness seven years earlier. On August 21 a student in the Jesuit school denounced him for worshipping the same idol and participating in a heretical cult in the sertão of which the idol was a part. That same day, Paula d'Almeida gave an even fuller account of how Fernandes Nobre had knelt three times before the idol, rebaptized himself in the ritual of the cult, and offered fishhooks and knives to the cult's Indian leader. Then, on August 26, Diogo Dias, a mameluco farmer, gave a complete account of this sect, known as Santidade, or holiness. Dias appeared before the inquisitor, who sat with his assistants and the

leading clergy of Salvador da Bahia at an inquisitorial bench, or court, that questioned each person who presented him or herself. Dias related that a number of Christian Indian slaves had fled from the Jesuit missions and from the estates of their masters into the wilderness. There, the members of the sect had built their own church with a baptismal font, an altar, a confessional, and an idol shaped like an Indian, which they called their god. Domingos Fernandes Nobre, Diogo Dias continued, was part of this movement for eight or nine months. Then, because the cult encouraged all the slaves to flee from their masters and because the masters feared that they would attack the city, the governor commissioned a company of men (of which Diogo Dias was a part) to apprehend the sect members and imprison its followers. But, according to Diogo Dias, Fernandes Nobre fled deep into the sertão and took the followers of the sect with him. From there, Fernandes Nobre took the Indians of the sect to the parish of Jaguaripe in the Recôncavo, to the estate of his own patron, a Portuguese sugar planter.[8]

The Santidade sect appealed to the Indians as well as to the small but growing number of African slaves in Bahia. It was a millenarian sect, and, as is common in such movements, it predicted imminent divine intervention to save the faithful who suffered under the yoke of oppression. Influenced by indigenous traditions of renewal and revival together with the Christian teachings of the Jesuits, the believers retreated into the wilderness where they built their own religious community. Mamelucos and free Indians were attracted to the rituals of the sect and to its baptisms, dancing, smoking of tobacco, and speaking in tongues. The sect appeared to validate those considered outcasts (such as slaves) or marginal (such as mamelucos) by the dominant Portuguese culture of Salvador. According to the standards of the Inquisition, it was clearly a heretical sect and one that required the punishment of any Christian who believed in it.[9]

On January 12, 1592, after the men from the expedition had returned to Bahia, the inquisitor granted another thirty days of grace, this time to the residents of the parishes of the Recôncavo, the agricultural hinterland of forests, sugar plantations, and small farms around the Bay of All Saints. Mamelucos tended to live in the Recôncavo as opposed to the city of Salvador, because in the Recôncavo they worked for sugar planters or claimed small farms cut from the forest. Men whom Fernandes Nobre had known for most of his life, including some who had been with him on the most recent expedition to Chief Arataca, began to denounce him. A Portuguese carpenter who had been with Fernandes Nobre on the recent entrada claimed that the men had eaten meat on Catholic holy days when meat was forbidden. Men such as Fernandes Nobre, he stated, had servants and slaves with them who easily could have obtained

fish, beans, or fruit. A soldier who also had just returned from the same expedition stated that in the wilderness Fernandes Nobre told him that he had joined in the Santidade sect seven years ago out of fear that the Indians would kill him. Men who confessed their sins to the inquisitor also implicated Fernandes Nobre. One confessed to truly believing in the sect, while four others maintained that they "pretended" to believe in its teachings to fool its adherents. All of them implicated Domingos Fernandes Nobre as one who had bowed deferentially before the idol and told them to do the same.

On January 21, Isabel Beliaga, Domingos Fernandes Nobre's wife, went to the inquisitor to testify to what she knew. Isabel, forty years old and a native of northern Portugal, first denounced the habits of women she had known in Pernambuco. These women were New Christians, accused by Isabel of secretly practicing Judaism. Then she denounced her husband. Perhaps Isabel denounced him to protect herself, or perhaps she hoped to minimize his sins. She referred to her husband as Domingos Fernandes Tomacauna, thereby, perhaps inadvertently, reinforcing his dual identity. But she accused him only for the tattoos that his body bore. Isabel stated that she "had heard" that he tattooed himself to show Indians that he was brave and to escape certain death at their hands. She concluded by describing another man who she knew also tattooed himself. Isabel may have intended to show how modest her husband's sins were compared to those of the New Christians, or how explicable they were, given the dangers that he faced in the wilderness.

Domingos Fernandes Nobre "Tomacauna" arrived home after most of the rest of the expedition. He returned to Bahia via the northern cities of Pernambuco, apparently during the middle of the grace period. He may not have heard his local priest read to the assembled parishioners the document sent by the inquisitor to every parish of the Recôncavo, but he certainly would have known of its being tacked onto the church door. For reasons that we shall never know, he decided to confess his faults to the inquisitor on February 11, the last day of grace granted to the residents of the Recôncavo. By that time, fourteen people had denounced him and his name and his faults had come up in the confessions of eight more. Although every person who passed before the inquisitorial bench was required to swear to uphold the secrecy of the Holy Office, it is unrealistic to think that the inquisitor operated in total secrecy. Perhaps Fernandes Nobre feared for the fate of his soul as well as for the confiscation of his property if the inquisitor found him guilty of heresy.

This confession provides a fascinating glimpse into the life of a go-between. His dual identity was reflected in his Portuguese and Indian names. Born in Pernambuco, and presumably baptized Domingos Fernandes Nobre, his father was a Portuguese stonemason, while his

mother was a free Indian woman. From the time he was eighteen years old, he confessed that although he remained a Christian at heart, he lived more as an Indian than as a white man. He went into the wilderness on many expeditions, lasting for many months, either in search of gold or Indians. It was during such expeditions that he became Tomacauna: he tattooed his legs, arms, and buttocks with red *urucu* and black *genipapo* inks, tied feathers in his hair, and walked naked among the Indians. He explained to the inquisitor that he tattooed himself for the same reason that Indian men did—to show that they were brave warriors. He danced, sang, and shook the rattles in Indian ceremonies; he smoked tobacco and drank fermented palm wines. He accepted women given to him—sometimes as many as seven—and lived with them as wives, according to Indian custom. This he did, he told the inquisitor, so that the Indians would accept him as one of theirs, call him nephew, and treat him well. On his last expedition as well as on others, he had knowingly violated the law by trading arms to Indian nations known to be at war with the Portuguese. During all of the time he spent in the wilderness, he never abstained from eating meat on holy days, nor did he pray or commend himself to God.

Tomacauna described in detail his association with the Santidade religious sect. In his version of events, he had led a company of soldiers into the wilderness with the goal of imprisoning the followers of the sect. When he met up with its members, he doffed his hat and bowed to their idol in order, in his words, "to make them understand that he believed in their heresy." Then he and his men took part in a procession with the idol. Having won their confidence, Tomacauna sent this branch of the sect back to the Recôncavo, where, on the estate of his patron, they built a village and church. Tomacauna continued on deeper into the wilderness in search of the rest of the sect. In a place known simply as Tall Palms, Tomacauna met the leader, "the one they call Pope." Tomacauna greeted him on bent knee, then "wailed and lamented" in the Indian style. He danced, celebrated, sang, played their musical instruments, "drank the smoke," and allowed himself to be revered and adored as a saint. All of this, Fernandes Nobre maintained to the inquisitor, he did to deceive them and to bring them to the Recôncavo.

Following his confession, as was customary, Fernandes Nobre reappeared before the inquisitorial bench. When asked why he had joined in the ceremonies of the Santidade sect, he responded that while he knew perfectly well that they were wrong, he took part only because of his material interest in bringing the believers to the Recôncavo, where, his patron hoped to make use of their labor. When told that he must confess if he had ever left the true faith—because he could be absolved only by the Inquisition—he replied that he had never left the holy Catholic faith.

And when asked how many times he had not refrained from eating meat on holy days, he replied that there were many times, but, being such a large man, he was obliged to do so.

Tomacauna's confession reveals that he lived in a complex and ambiguous world with few moral absolutes. Although he claimed to have kept the holy Catholic faith in his heart, his behavior suggests that he adopted whichever religious practices best suited the occasion. Apparently, he learned from a young age to use his imposing physical presence and cunning mind to survive in dangerous situations. How much did he really reveal to the inquisitor? How trustworthy is his confession? Given what is known about him, it seems likely that Fernandes Nobre, with a convincing display of outward humility, told the inquisitor what he wanted to hear.

In fact, while the inquisitorial bench did not believe Fernandes Nobre's insistence that because of his great size he could not exist without meat, the inquisitor did show mercy. He reprimanded the go-between for his many errors but recommended lenience, because he had confessed during the grace period. Various penitences were required. Among them, Fernandes Nobre was to make an even fuller confession of his entire life and to continue confessing regularly for six months. During those six months, he was to receive special religious instruction from a priest and was to fast on five Wednesdays following Easter. The inquisitor also imposed one onerous punishment: Tomacauna was never to return to the wilderness. From now on, Tomacauna would again be simply Domingos Fernandes Nobre.

This sentence paralleled those received by other mamelucos found guilty of similar faults. Together they reflect the inquisitor's willingness to forgive their past behavior, yet he was not willing to let them return to the sertão, the place where they had made their living. In the eyes of the inquisitor, the mamelucos had to maintain their Portuguese heritage; they could not continue to slide back and forth between Indian and Portuguese identities.

Seen through the eyes of such a bastion of Portuguese culture as the inquisitor, the mameluco go-betweens were rude, uncivilized, and backsliding Christians. They set poor examples for others because they encouraged relativism and an extreme individualism. In their world, moral decisions were made based not on principles but on the immediate need. Go-betweens remained true only to themselves; loyalty to an Indian tribe or to the Portuguese colony depended on the situation. Such attitudes served the go-betweens well in the fluid and ambiguous world in which they lived, but they were diametrically opposed to the values of Portuguese colonization. For the crown and the Church, colonization had moral imperatives such as the evangelization of Indians, the propagation of a

Portuguese culture in a new land, or the obedience of colonists to the officials of the crown and Church. As it turned out, the inquisitor could not prevent the go-betweens of the late sixteenth century from returning to the sertão. But, increasingly, they would be pressured to assimilate more fully into the Portuguese culture or else to retreat from the core of the colony and move with the frontier toward the wilderness.

The early Portuguese colony in Brazil depended on go-betweens, those men who could move easily between the very different Indian and Portuguese worlds. In the earliest days, the survival of colonists depended on good relations with neighboring Indians. Shipwrecked Portuguese go-betweens became essential first intermediaries. As the colonies became established, however, and as sugar emerged as the economic motor of Bahia and Pernambuco, the Portuguese depended on go-betweens not for good relations with neighboring tribes but for supplying the sugar plantations with Indian slaves. Mameluco slave traders such as Domingos Fernandes Nobre led expeditions into the wilderness to capture Indians, usually illegally, for the sugar planters. To take an expedition into the wilderness and return with hundreds of slaves required a special kind of leadership, cunning and treachery in dealings with Indian tribes, and a hardened attitude toward the future of the men, women, and children who would be reduced to slavery. Because of their own experiences, the mameluco go-betweens understood Indian life better than anyone else in the colony, but to make their own livings they chose to work on behalf of the sugar planters and to encourage the violence of slavery. The planters clearly recognized the contribution of the go-betweens to their success; indeed, many employed them on their own estates. But as the colony developed and became more Portuguese in its culture and outlook, the go-betweens, with their dual identities, embodied less and less of the ideals of the Christian Portuguese colonists.

First in Pernambuco, then later in Bahia, a disastrous decline in the Indian population forced sugar planters to search for other laborers. African slaves already outnumbered Indians on the sugar plantations in Pernambuco when the inquisitor finished his work in Bahia and began it anew in Pernambuco. By the seventeenth century, Bahian planters began to rely increasingly on African slaves. As the labor demands of the sugar plantations changed, the mameluco go-betweens had less to offer the planters. Indeed, the wilderness itself was rapidly disappearing beyond the cane fields. Only on the frontiers could go-betweens still cross from the Indian to the Portuguese world and live in the complex and contradictory ways suggested by the life of Domingos Fernandes Nobre "Tomacauna." In succeeding centuries, go-betweens paved the way for Portuguese, and later Brazilian, colonization of the wilderness to the north, south, and west. But they would not inherit the world they helped

to create, nor would their distinctive lifestyle survive past the initial stages of colonization. Like the Indians they had exploited, the go-betweens found themselves cast aside by the advancing colonial culture.

NOTES

1. This dignitary came as a "visiting" inquisitor, meaning that his presence in Brazil was limited to a specific time. Brazil did not have its own formally established Holy Office of the Inquisition with a permanent, resident inquisitor, as did Mexico and Peru.

2. There are brief accounts of João Ramalho, Diogo Alvares Caramurú, and Domingos Fernandes Nobre "Tomacauna" in John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

3. Stuart Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550–1835* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28–72; Alexander Marchant, *From Barter to Slavery: The Economic Relations of Portuguese and Indians in the Settlement of Brazil, 1500–1580* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1942). On the sixteenth-century Portuguese slave trade in Africa see A. C. de C. M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441–1555* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

4. Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 474–501; Thomas Cohen, *The Fire of Tongues: António Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 13–49. Famous accounts of cannibalism in sixteenth-century Brazil include: Hans Staden, *Hans Staden: The True History of His Captivity*, trans. Malcolm Letts (New York: R. M. McBride & Company, 1929); and Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, trans. Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

5. Trials of mamelucos, Inquisition Archive, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, (hereafter ANTT), Lisbon, Portugal. For Portuguese readers, many of the confessions and denunciations have been published; see *Primeira Visitação do Santo Ofício às partes do Brasil pelo Licenciado Heitor Furtado de Mendonça: Confissões da Bahia 1591–1592* (Rio de Janeiro: F. Briguiet, 1935); and *Primeira Visitação do Santo Ofício às partes do Brasil pelo Licenciado Heitor Furtado de Mendonça: Denunciações da Bahia 1591–1593* (São Paulo: Paulo Prado, 1925).

6. This description of the ceremony marking the arrival of the visiting inquisitor is drawn directly from the documents written by the notary of the Inquisition. Portuguese readers may find it in *Confissões da Bahia*, pp. 39–45.

7. On the Portuguese Inquisition, see Francisco Bethencourt, "Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 403–22. An excellent starting point for the Spanish Inquisition is Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995).

8. Trial of Domingos Fernandes Nobre, ANTT. Portuguese readers may find his confession and the denunciations of him in *Confissões da Bahia* and *Denunciações da Bahia*.

9. On the Santidade sect of Bahia, see Alida C. Metcalf, "AHR Forum: Millenarian Slaves? The Santidade de Jaguaripe and Slave Resistance in the Americas," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 1531–59.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Provocative insights on the roles of go-betweens in the conquest of the Americas are offered by Steven Greenblatt in *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1991) and by Tzvetan Todorov in *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York, 1983).

Understanding Brazil in the sixteenth century begins with study of the indigenous peoples; John Hemming provides a highly readable overview in *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (Cambridge, MA, 1978). A modern translation of a French Protestant's observations of sixteenth-century Indian life is Janet Whatley's *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, otherwise called America* (Berkeley, 1990); another vivid firsthand account is *Hans Staden: The True History of his Captivity* (London, 1928). The early relations between Indians and Portuguese are explored by Alexander Marchant in *From Barter to Slavery: The Economic Relations of Portuguese and Indians in the Settlement of Brazil, 1500–1580* (Gloucester, MA, 1966), while the best discussion of the development of the sugar plantation is to be found in *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1550–1835* (New York, 1985), by Stuart Schwartz. The early Jesuit mission is of paramount importance for understanding sixteenth-century Brazil; see relevant sections of Dauril Alden's *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750* (Stanford, 1996), and Thomas Cohen's *The Fire of Tongues: António Vieira and the Missionary Church in Brazil and Portugal* (Stanford, 1998). Unfortunately, little has been written in English on the Portuguese Inquisition and Brazil, but an excellent overview is Francisco Bethencourt's "Portugal: A Scrupulous Inquisition," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford, 1990), edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen.