

*Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theatre of Shadows* compiles an extensive collection of essays on the status of women throughout the vast Portuguese colonial space, from Brazil to the Far East, crossing Europe, Africa and India, between the 16th and the 20th century. Absent or mystified, silenced or victimized, women in the History of Portugal and its colonial venture are the living example of the part historiographical discourse, ideology and popular memory have played in the construction of identities, their practices and representations. The production and critical consumption of History have long revealed countless gaps and silences within its own discourse. This book questions the reason for such gaps and silences and wonders about the real role of all those who do not or have never had access to power and to the perpetuating word, those whose voices have been systematically erased from sources and documents because of past or present attending interests.

*Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theatre of Shadows* congregates a wide assortment of disciplines so as to provide multiple independent viewpoints, sources and methodologies. By bringing authors from around the world together, this work ensures that the various cultures and memories that are part of the global saga, as well as the various versions of the history of the Portuguese colonial empire, may be heard.

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WOMEN IN THE PORTUGUESE COLONIAL EMPIRE

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## WOMEN IN THE PORTUGUESE COLONIAL EMPIRE: THE THEATRE OF SHADOWS

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greater events in Dili happened, and women needed a representative, the natural choice would be Alice.

That woman operated a series of connections between several national institutional levels and the local “base”. She was once nominated for the position of Subdistrict Administrator, but she wasn’t accepted because of her husband’s polygamy. Women like Alice were the heart of OPMT and because of it they obtained a great influence over other women from their district. In a way, this also enabled them to run for a position in the legislative body. This was the profile of many of the congresswomen elected for the Timorese Parliament.

### The Future of Tradition

Mother Guilhermina, Micató, Manuela, Alice. Women in different positions of authority, recognized as legitimate voices in different ways by several segments of the Timorese society. Such plurality of positions is surely a matter of disagreement and it can explain the tendency of the women’s movement in East Timor to segmentarity—only in Dili, in 2003, there were 16 NGOs, all of them concerned with women rights, many of them with the same purposes, fighting for the same resources<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand, if such plurality still disturbs us, foreigners, or *malai*, it also disturbs the *katuas* of Timorese villages who seem to have dealt quickly with it, identifying a domain in which all the categories became equal: the State; and a way to connect them to one another: through education. They kept the villages, however, as the niche of tradition. How does the access to education and to the qualification for State positions depend on a previous condition of eligibility given by the voices of “traditional” lineages that is a matter for another essay.

<sup>1</sup> The book mentions several women who took part in many moments of resistance. Who were they and which families did they come from are questions that would help us to understand how their belonging to certain lineages operates as an authority factor.

<sup>2</sup> Significantly, almost all of the resistance leaders’ wives had a religious education from local schools. OPMT founder, Rosa Muki Bonaparte, was one of the few women who studied in the Portuguese metropole, during the colonial period.

<sup>3</sup> *Tais* is the typical Timorese fabric, worn as traditional clothing.

<sup>4</sup> About this issue, it is important to notice the existence of a clear dispute of generations, in which younger women (integrating NGOs) are easily credentiated by international cooperation to receive resources to the detriment of older ones (generally affiliated to mass organizations like OPMT and OMT).

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE FEMININE IDEAL OF 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY COLONIAL BRAZIL<sup>1</sup>

MARIA DE DEUS BEITES MANSO

#### The Theme

Taking into consideration the elevate number of possible sources related to the feminine ideal of 18<sup>th</sup> century colonial Brazil, we have selected for this work the documental nucleus related to Teresa de Jesus Maria that, following the process of her divorce (1751), was incarcerated in the charitable house of the ‘Santa Casa da Misericórdia’, against her will. For many years, although incarcerated, she maintained litigation against her husband and the local authorities that wanted to punish her and to keep her away from the society in which she had always lived. The documentation that was produced allows us to understand the role of “women’s shelters” in the colonial society, with regards to women from Bahia<sup>2</sup>.

The construction of the ‘Women’s Shelter’, a physical space that served as the background for the story of Teresa de Jesus, started in 1705. It was inaugurated in 1716, and closed in 1859 due to disciplinary and administrative problems in its internal organization<sup>3</sup>. The funds that allowed its construction, and part of its maintenance, came from a donation from João Mattos Aguiar that, following his death, left in his will the order to build this shelter, intended primarily for the daughters of middle-class families, of marrying age and whose honour was somehow in danger. They were accepted for shelter or for reclusion and, when they were to marry, they would receive a dowry. Shelters would also receive widows or single women of good reputation, who would pay for their room and boarding. Women’s shelters also included women abandoned or rejected by their husbands, and supported by the *Misericórdias* (the houses of charity), through the donations of pious people. This fact not only

played a social role, but also contributed to the formation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century ideology of Bahia<sup>4</sup>. Both convents and shelters were spaces that projected the values of society, which interacted with them, and they weren't closed institutions, "distinct from society"<sup>5</sup>.

The proceedings of Teresa de Jesus's divorce take place in a golden age for the emergence of the women's shelters of the Brazilian empire. These were not new institutions; they already existed in the territories under Portuguese rule and in other regions of Portuguese presence. These institutions did not promote a contemplative life, but rather they prepared women for certain roles within the moral codes imposed by society.

### The Context

In general, historians have considered women in the Old Regime as an inferior element of society, an element without an existence outside of the male influence. Influenced by the Judeo-Christian culture, the woman was considered as an inferior and submissive being, whose ideal should be the Virgin Mary. This was the culture that dominated the European mentality and which was transferred by the Portuguese colonial agents to Brazil. Their perspective shaped the societies that were being constructed<sup>6</sup>, as documented by Gilberto Freyre, in his *Casa-Grande e Senzala*, where he relates the idea of a colonial, submissive, and reclusive woman<sup>7</sup>.

Even though society imposed rules in order to foster the feminine ideal and, above all, to prevent any misbehaviour, there were certainly women that tried to overcome that normative barrier, becoming insubmissive and staying away from the actual model. If such an attitude was present in the western culture, outside of this culture, the reality could, at first, be easily changed. Although there was a concern to preserve the western tradition, we know that the intrinsic dynamism of the relationships between the different social groups that characterized the overseas society, mainly the Brazilian societies, due to the merging of Europeans and Brazilians, of indigenous and native populations, tolerated relationships and marriages that were not easily accepted in the Old World. In fact, according to Leila Mezan Algranti, recent studies show that women were not only subjected to the domination of their father or husband; in many cases, they assumed the leadership at home and in businesses<sup>8</sup>. In reality, society imposed rules, but mechanisms of tension and rebelliousness were always present<sup>9</sup>.

The non-observance of certain principles from the Old World can be explained not only by the lack of women that would leave to the Empire, but also by the material opportunities sometimes accomplished there by the Europeans. This allowed them to grow in social and economical terms

and, once established, they would marry women from a higher social stratus.

The low European overseas demography was a constant, and numbers tend to lower when we look at it from the women's point-of-view. The lack of European women and the difficulty to socialize with indigenous women generated many mechanisms to meet the men's needs: sending of king's orphans, kidnapping, purchase, and negotiation<sup>10</sup>. In the case of Brazil, considering the specificity of the Portuguese colonisation, a significant number of concubine relationships took place, assured by the social subordinates of the inferior segments of society: the slave and the Indian. These relationships generated a mestizo society that, at times, rivaled with the European element.

The documents that we will analyze were found in the Public Archives of the State of Bahia (Brazil) and in the Overseas Historic Archive (Lisbon), and concern the proceedings of the divorce of Teresa de Jesus Maria (1751), married a second time to Francisco Manuel da Silva, the cousin of her first husband and his former administrator. After the divorce, she was "placed" at the home of a citizen called Gregorio Pereira and, afterwards, she was relocated to the shelter of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Bahia. Even though she was born rich and lived a rich life with her first husband, she finished poor, ill treated, and humiliated by a younger man who belonged to a lower social and economic status. With her second marriage she broke several social rules, and she ended up by also opposing the decisions of her husband, of the civic and religious authorities, and of society in general.

Throughout this study, it is possible to understand the steps, lives and trajectories of the women that entered the shelter of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Bahia. In some cases, women from lower social classes were able to appropriate significant political, social and symbolic power. At the same time, there are also women from higher social classes who went through lawsuits of demotion and degradation, as in the case presented here. Here, we intend to study the roles that those women—in the plural—played, and, particularly, to capture the "getaways" and the gestures of insubordination towards the *status quo* that relegated them to male dominance.

### "The Sin" of Teresa de Jesus: The story of a relationship

To the twenty-two documents recovered from the Public Archives of the State of Bahia<sup>11</sup> that refer to Teresa's struggle to leave the shelter where she was placed against her will by the Archbishop in 1751, with the

support of the Vice-Roy and her husband, we have to add another dozen documents from the Overseas Historic Archives in Lisbon<sup>12</sup>, as her husband fled to Portugal after the divorce.

Teresa de Jesus Maria was the daughter of Bento de Souza Guimarães, who was originally from Itapicuru de Cima, an exporter of sugar, tobacco and shoes' soles to Portugal. Teresa first married Manuel Fernandes da Costa, born in Itapicuru de Cima, a businessman, slave-trader and sergeant major. They had a son who would become a sergeant major like his father, and a daughter who would marry João Lopes Fiúza. The son-in-law, who started as an administrator<sup>13</sup>, learned the art of the business and became the "man in charge", and was later promoted to Captain of the district of Nossa Senhora da Ajuda in São Salvador.

After becoming a widow, Teresa, aged more than fifty and failing in her health, remarried in 1750 to Francisco Manuel da Silva, cousin of the first husband and their administrator, who was seemingly much younger than her<sup>14</sup>. The process of divorce started in 1751. Even though the word *divorce* is used in the documentation of the era, it was only a separation, with no rights to remarry. Marriage by the Justice of the Peace did not exist and only the holy sacrament of marriage consecrated the union of the couple. Only the death of one of them could dissolve the marriage<sup>15</sup>.

Teresa suffered physical abuse and humiliating insults, as confirmed by different witnesses. According to the moral and social canons, although she was the victim of her husband, she could not live by herself in her own house, far from the male authority. That was the reason why she was placed against her will, but with the complicity of the local ecclesiastic and civil authorities, in April 1571, in a home of good moral reputation, belonging to Gregório Pereira, which functioned as a *de facto* domestic prison.

Shortly after that, on 27 April of the same year, she was moved to the women's shelter of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia, once again against her will<sup>16</sup>. Even though she possessed sufficient material wealth to support her, she was only able to leave the shelter in 1761, after a process that lasted for ten years. In order to be admitted into this shelter, her husband promised to pay a large dowry, a promise that was never fulfilled. This was due to the fact that, after the division of the inheritance, he fled to Portugal with the help of his brother and with a total of one thousand *cruzados*.

The proceedings seemed to follow the norm that was customarily imposed to any divorced woman but, in this case, the decision was not accepted by Teresa, who from the beginning of her imprisonment refused to reside in the shelter. This gave her the courage to bring a petition to the

king, explaining how she had been a victim of injustice and violence, complaining about the large amount of money spent with her imprisonment and the status of protection imposed upon her<sup>17</sup>. Already imprisoned by decision of the Archbishop, the priest and the Vice-Roy, the king asked his representative for a clarification on this matter.

The demander, far from conforming to the decision, took a dynamic and legal attitude, trying to prove that she was the victim of a plan that would leave her without her fortune. In reality, each and every one of the legal documents based on the declarations of the witnesses, and even the testimonies of those presumably responsible for her imprisonment, ended up proving her complaints, which allowed her to leave the shelter and to be handed to the home of her son-in-law. In the extensive report elaborated by the Vice-Roy, even though he criticized the poor character and the bad example that Teresa represented to society, he never accused her of adultery or of any other type of "frivolity/female sin"<sup>18</sup>.

As she was a rich woman, Teresa was able to gather a great number of men of a high economical and social position who were willing to confirm the thefts that her husband had done to her. Among them were: José Vieira Guimarães (landowner), António Costa Oliveira and João Rodrigues de Almeida (businessmen), Jerónimo Ferreira (shoemaker), Manuel António Campelo (merchant) and Francisco Correia Lima Gusmão (record-keeper of executions)<sup>19</sup>. There were also some individuals from the domestic scene, an area in which she could interact, several slaves and a widow, who provided the most extensive testimonies.

Of the three slaves that testified, two were women: Marcela de Jesus, a black woman, slave of the couple, single, about 20 years old, who swore that she had seen the husband hit Teresa twice; Eufrásia de Jesus, a dark woman, also the couple's slave, 35 years old, who confirmed seeing the husband's brother hit Teresa twice, and seeing the accused sleep in a separate bed with a knife and a machete. In his testimony, the male slave, Eusébio Fernandes da Costa, a dark man, 17 or 18 years old, confirmed the physical abuses by the husband and brother-in-law, stating that the offended had her fingers mutilated due to the abuses received from her husband; he also declared that there were big arguments between them and that the husband accused her of receiving secret letters from her son-in-law. Finally, he also confirmed the elevated expenses that were made when transporting Teresa to the shelter, and the fleeing of the husband to Portugal, carrying with him a "great fortune"<sup>20</sup>.

### Searching for Rights: The allegations of Francisco Manuel da Silva

Presenting himself as a businessman from the city of Bahia, Francisco Manuel da Silva sent an official letter to the Vice-Roy, in 1753, when he was already living in Lisbon. He presented a complaint against Manuel Fernandes da Costa and João Lopes Fiúza Barreto, Teresa's son and son-in-law, accusing them of wanting to kill him in order to take the couple's wealth. In this manner, the accused became the victim.

In his letter, he accuses his wife of being "tyrannical", saying that she did not talk to the family since she had become a widow, due to lawsuits for properties. After her second marriage, she reconciled with her children, who eventually became the cause of their separation. According to him, by order of the ecclesiastic judge, she was brought to the home of Gregorio Pereira Abreu (a businessman), where she stayed for nine months, while maintaining and controlling all her possessions. He added that, because of her attitude and as nobody else would accept her, with the exception of her son-in-law, she was sent by order of the Archbishop to the shelter of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia. She was given an allowance of 600 thousand *reis*, an amount he considered excessive, considering that Teresa had already appropriated the couples' personal properties<sup>21</sup>.

In order to ratify his version, he presented five witnesses, almost all resident in Portugal: two businessmen, a surgeon, a sailor, and a deacon. It is curious to note that only one of these witnesses (a businessman) lived in Bahia, and that the sailor served aboard the same ship that was used by Francisco Manuel da Silva in his escape to Lisbon.

### The Testimony of the Authorities from Bahia

Based on the synopsis of the Vice-Roy, we get the idea that the decision taken by both the General Vicar and the Archbishop about Teresa's imprisonment was correct, not only because of her attitude, but also due to the poor example that Teresa set by marrying a simple administrator<sup>22</sup>.

Some of the accusations formulated by Teresa are recognized to be correct, such as the fact of being "imprisoned" in the shelter so that they could keep the 100 thousand *reis* per year, without this money being used for her room and boarding<sup>23</sup>. It appears that this was the amount that the husband had to pay so that she would be accepted into the shelter.

Bearing in mind the witnesses and the contents of the documents that Teresa requested, one must conclude that the proceedings were not clear,

they did not follow the set standards. There was a primary objective: to isolate Teresa de Jesus. Besides other declarations, the magistrate, João Eliseu de Souza, confirmed that her husband, Francisco Manuel da Silva, was able to obtain from the Archbishop and the General Vicar the authorization to incarcerate his wife in the shelter, after stealing her fortune, which amounted to more than 200 thousand *cruzados*.

A peculiar information came from the Municipal Council of the Cathedral of Bahia, in a letter directed to the king, where the Purveyor and the brothers of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia requested the release of Teresa from the shelter and her moving into another location: "[...] because of the serious and intolerable damage she was doing to the Santa Casa, and the embarrassment and bad example she offered to the education of the young girls that lived in that shelter [...]"<sup>24</sup>. According to the Municipal Council, she had only been authorized to live in the shelter if her husband paid a donation and if there wasn't any kind of inconvenience. But Teresa's poor health and rebellious actions finally led to an agreement between her and her husband, in 1761, by means of which Teresa was dismissed from the shelter and transferred into the home of her son-in-law. The couple's personal properties<sup>25</sup> were divided and a compromise with Teresa's relatives was set, so that they no longer would harass the former husband.

### Conclusion

As we have already said, the cultural models of the European settlers in Brazil tended to change or to adapt to new realities, especially on what concerns the hierarchies of society. In line with Kátia Mattoso, Stuart Schwartz wrote, "The essential distinction between noble and peasant tends to be leveled, because Portuguese settlers were surrounded by a sea of natives, that made everybody European, in fact, a potential gentleman"<sup>26</sup>. However, even though there was certain egalitarianism in society, above all because of the peculiarities of the Portuguese colonisation, in this process of Teresa's divorce we can verify that the social origin still weighted heavily.

On the one hand, Teresa was initially sheltered as a form of punishment, not only for having married someone who was socially inferior to her, but also for breaking one of the holy sacraments of the church. On the other hand, being a woman and being condemned by society, she did not stop being part of the "nobility", and as a member of the elite, she was always treated as *Dona* [Lady] Teresa.

If the social distinction of the victim weighted in the decision of the sentence, it is also true that, along with the dispute, we see a discourse of male domination, of reaffirmation of her husband's authority over her. Teresa did not exist in society, independently from her husband. It was a difficult struggle between a woman and the ecclesiastic and civil authorities, which provides evidence of the moralistic and misogynistic attitude of the different authorities.

In the discourse of authorities, we read the superiority of the man over the woman, for whose conduct he was responsible. As women were more the daughters of Eve than the daughters of Mary and because chastity belts were no longer made, for the peace of mind of absent husbands, it was the shelter's responsibility to maintain the conduct of women, to control their sexuality and to guard their honour<sup>27</sup>.

We can admit, as it was repeatedly stated in the proceedings, that Teresa was placed in the shelter because of the high dowry that her husband promised to pay, but it is equally undeniable that the decision condemned her morally and socially, with the purpose of transforming her into a good example for society. To prove this, we have the outcome of the lawsuit. It is possible that Teresa's liberation was also influenced by her poor state of health, but what turns out to be undeniable is that her transfer to her son-in-law's house was allowed because that solution would leave her again under a male authority—she would remain under the control of her daughter's husband. This also conformed to the wishes of the shelter's authorities—also males—that wanted to get rid of a woman from whom they could only expect social scandals and who was a terrible example for the other women therein.

Along this process, the shelter of the Santa Casa da Misericórdia is seen as an instrument at the service of the local authorities and established values, which perpetuates and guarantees the stability of society in Bahia during the colonial period.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Ana P. Melo and Richard F. Mello, and reviewed by Clara Sarmiento. If we look at the Portuguese and Brazilian historiographical panorama, we can verify that the inclusion of studies about women is recent, particularly on what concerns women's inferior social role. After the 1970s, we notice a greater interest for these themes: Algranti, Leila Mezan. *Honradas e Devotas Mulheres da Colônia: Condição feminina nos conventos e recolhimentos do Sudeste do Brasil: 1750-1822*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Ed., 1993; Priore, Mary del. *Histórias das Mulheres no Brasil*. São Paulo: Contexto, 1997; Faria, Sheila de Castro. *A Colônia em Movimento: Fortuna e família no cotidiano colonial*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1998; Almeida, Suely Creusa Cordeiro de. *O Sexo Devoto:*

*Normalização e resistência feminina no império português. Séc. XVI-XVIII*. Recife: Ed. Universitária/UFPE, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> This work is the result of an investigation conducted in the Public Archives of the State of Bahia (APEB), between June and September 2005. Our stay was possible due to a sabbatical granted by FCT. We would like to thank the Gulbenkian Foundation's International Service for awarding a new grant that will allow us to develop a new investigation.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, A. J. R. Russel. *Fidalgos e Filantropos. A Santa Casa da Misericórdia da Bahia, 1550-1755*. Brasília: Ed. Universidade de Brasília, 1981, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> —. *Fidalgos e Filantropos*, p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> Algranti. *Honradas e Devotas*, p. 324.

<sup>6</sup> See: Mattoso, Kátia M. de Queirós. *Bahia Século XIX. Uma Província no Império*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Nova Fronteira, 1992; Priore, Mary Del. *Mulheres no Brasil Colonial. A mulher no imaginário social. Mãe e mulher, honra e desordem. Religiosidade e sexualidade*. São Paulo: História Contexto, 2003; Junior, João Luís Correia and Costa, Marcos Roberto Nunes (org.). *Os Mistérios do Corpo. Uma Leitura Multidisciplinar*. Recife: INSAF, 2004; Almeida, Suely. *O Sexo Devoto*, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Freyre, Gilberto. *Casa-Grande & Senzala: Formação da família brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal*. Rio de Janeiro: Maia & Schmidt, 1933.

<sup>8</sup> Algranti. Leila Mezan. *Honradas e Devotas Mulheres da Colônia*, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> Almeida. *O Sexo Devoto: Normalização e resistência feminina*, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> See: Coates, Timothy. *Degredados e Orfãos: Colonização dirigida pela coroa no império português: 1550-1755*. Lisboa: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 1998, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Public Archives of the State of Bahia (APEB), *Ordens Régias*, vol. 17, doc. 55 a. We would like to thank Marlene and Teresa for their help in the research at APEB and also to Josué Cardoso for his collaboration. Despite the searches made in the Archive of Cúria Metropolitana in the City of Salvador, we were not able to locate the proceeding of the divorce. We also thank the technicians of the Archive for their help during the research, especially Dr. Venetia.

<sup>12</sup> Historic Overseas Archive (AHU), *Conselho Ultramarino, Documentos avulsos, Capitania da Bahia*, box 3, 4 and 30.

<sup>13</sup> Both Teresa's second husband and son-in-law were administrators, even though the husband fled to Lisbon, the petitions that were brought to the King show that he was a businessman. This fact proves the great social mobility and the capacity of assimilation that existed in the society of Bahia. See: Mattoso, *Bahia Século XIX. Uma Província no Império*, p. 582.

<sup>14</sup> The age is not certain, but he is always referred as a "young man". That indicates the age difference between him and his wife.

<sup>15</sup> Lebrige, Arlette. "A Longa marcha do divórcio". In *Amor e Sexualidade no Ocidente*, introduction and notes by Georges Duby. Lisbon: Terramar, 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Nascimento, Ana Amélia Vieira. *Patriarcado e Religião. As Enclausuradas Clarissas do Convento do Desterro da Bahia, 1677-1890*, p. 20. According to the documents, it seems that Teresa accepted being placed in the home of a citizen, but

she always refused to enter the shelter or any other place: AHU, *Conselho Ultramarino: Documentos Avulsos da Capitania da Bahia*, cx 4, fol. 498v.

<sup>17</sup> APEB, vol. 58, fol. 319v.- 320.

<sup>18</sup> APEB, vol. 58, doc. 3, fol. 315.

<sup>19</sup> AHU, cx.4, doc. 1, fol. 494. N° doc. 2, in addition to some businessmen, there were also two pharmacists.

<sup>20</sup> APEB, vol. 58, fols. 331- 334.

<sup>21</sup> AHU, fol. 357v. This is a mutual accusation.

<sup>22</sup> This observation seems to contradict what we wrote about the social mobility in Bahia, where, in fact, people would often become rich through a good marriage, although the “old aristocracy” did not always accept those newcomers in their environment.

<sup>23</sup> In the petitions presented by Teresa, she always argues that she was misled into being locked up, with violence, due to the bad faith of the ones that intervened in the process.

<sup>24</sup> AHU, cx 30, doc. 5631-5632.

<sup>25</sup> Her husband, who was already living in Portugal, says that he was poor, that he only had access to some houses in Oporto that he was renting for 24,000 *reis*. Teresa kept everything that they had in Brazil.

<sup>26</sup> Schwartz, Stuart B. *Segredos Internos. Engenhos e escravos na sociedade colonial*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1988, p. 212.

<sup>27</sup> Araújo, Emanuel. “A Arte da Sedução: Sexualidade Feminina na Colônia”. In *História das Mulheres no Brasil*, Priore, Mary Del (coord.), p. 58.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MEANDERS OF FEMALE SUBORDINATION: WHEN THE SERVANT BECOMES THE MASTER

ISABEL PINTO

The territory that comprises Portugal, due to a variety of factors, like the easy access by sea, a mild climate and rich natural resources, has been a place of convergence and fusion for people of different origins and cultures: Romans, Visigoths, Jews, Arabs, and slaves from the most diverse origins. These slaves were easily acquired in the markets of Arabia, Africa and even in the famous market of Goa where, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, slaves from the most diverse parts of Asia and Africa could be bought and sold. In Portugal, the number of slaves became so high that, in 1520, king D. Manuel forbade taking slaves of any caste or race to Europe<sup>1</sup>.

All these circumstances contributed to the diversity of Portuguese people and culture and, above all, to the capacity of making contact with other nations. Confirming this assumption, there is the policy of marriage, which, for political and economical reasons, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, D. Afonso de Albuquerque implemented in Asia, with the purpose of encouraging a faster colonization and a stronger connection to the land. That policy consisted in, among other privileges, the concession of property to those Portuguese who married local women. These lands became free of taxes in 1518.

The number of such marriages must have been considerable, not only because of the referred advantages, but also because Portuguese women were rare in the occupied territories, considering that, at first, it wasn't even allowed for them to go on board, for it was considered that “it increased the number of useless people for the war and distracted men”. In 1505, with the departure from Lisbon of the first Viceroy of India, an exception was opened, as with him travelled 1500 men, many of them nobleman who were given permission to bring along female relatives. However, although since then, and in similar situations, it became possible