



Changing Lusospheres

**Europe, Brazil, Africa. On old and new connections
between centers and peripheries**

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Cristina Donza Cancela & Antonio Otaviano Vieira Junior*

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Quitéria and other lives across the ocean: Mazagan immigration in the colonial Amazon, Grão Pará (1769–1778)¹

Antonio Otaviano Vieira Junior

Introduction

Quitéria Maria do Rosário was walking the streets of the city of Belém, in the captaincy of Grão-Pará, in 1778. She was a woman whose life crossed the Atlantic and was associated with the trajectory of so many other immigrants who were forced to leave North Africa and anchor in 18th-century Amazon. She made a living from trade, which she did with the help of her two enslaved servants, and headed a household that was dedicated to “dealing in foodstuffs.” She was a married woman and a “freed black” although she did not live with her husband. She was a character who helped to colour with various shades of meaning what the Portuguese Crown referred to as “people who were in Mazagão Square until it was evacuated.”² Quitéria broke with such a broad designation and demanded recognition of the distinction and demanded recognition of the multiple possibilities of existing within a group of immigrants who had left Morocco.

¹ This research was funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), with the participation of Scientific Initiation scholarship holders Allan William Lebrege and Maycon Cristian Leal de Araújo.

² AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 5, 1779, cx. 82, doc. 6.720.

Beyond Quitéria's trajectory, the tactics³ adopted in the face of the Amazonian landscape scenario, and the experiences⁴ of an immigrant in the lands of Grão-Pará, we are interested in analyzing the group and the multiple strategies⁵ used by those who joined her on this journey. Quitéria had originally arrived in the Amazon from the Portuguese fortress of Mazagão. She and more than two thousand other people were forced to leave their homes and take up residence on another continent: an entire city emigrated on the same day, first to Lisbon and months later, from Lisbon to Belém. In this spatially long and temporally short process of immigration, lives were rebuilt. Between the collective migratory experience and individual survival strategies, Quitéria became part of the colonial Amazonian universe, in a world that was different from her old home and which required efforts to adapt—a process that was associated with ceasing to be “Mazagão people.”

Where Quitéria came from

Before setting foot in Grão-Pará, Quitéria lived on the edge of the Atlantic, near the present-day Moroccan city of El Jadida. She lived as enslaved person in a walled citadel characterized by the Portuguese efforts to dominate the African coast since 1514, when the fortress of Mazagão was built. The construction of the fortress was linked to the need to set up trading posts to supply the Lusitanian ships that were trying to get around the continent on their way to India. These trading posts formed a network of mutual support in the Dukkala region, both in the military

3 The concept of “tactics” refers to short-range strategies, including ways of supporting a family. “In particular, we need to study how ‘tactical’ choices create the conditions that either block or enhance the realization of strategies for the long term. Another field of interest is the way in which combinations of tactics are chosen and changed” (Kok 2002, 481).

4 Although experience is lived collectively and is responsible for part of the formation of social classes, it is not a “pure, unmediated” reality (Middleton 2016, 180). It is important to consider the individualities and multiple social markers involved in the construction of meanings for collective experiences.

5 We do not enter the debate about the awareness (or lack thereof) of the actions of these immigrants, but we do consider the behaviors adopted and the results achieved by the “Mazaganistas” after they arrived in Grão-Pará. We start from the assumption that the concept of strategy is “to be understood as an hypothesis regarding the nature of human action” (Kok 2002, 466). For this, we value the different social markers and the role of the family.

sphere and in the supply of food. At the center of this network, Mazagão was the longest-lasting fortress, only being evacuated in 1769. Protected for years by the military engineering employed in its construction, it had sea-facing fronts in order to allow independent supplies if it were surrounded by land, it was rectangular in shape with walls eleven meters wide and fourteen meters high, and it once housed a town with 700 houses and approximately 2,600 inhabitants (Vidal 2008, 16–22).

Mazagão was initially inhabited by a population of Lusitanian origin, including islanders from the Azores, and it was marked by disputes between Muslims and Catholics as well as by intense cultural exchanges. In addition to the constant martial tensions, the isolation of the fortress created similarities between those who lived within its walls and those who lived outside them. This aspect was recorded by one of the governors of Mazagão, José Vasques Álvares da Cunha, who stated in May 1760 that “those inside the Square [of the fortress] as well as those outside, which can only be distinguished by the fact that some have beards and the others don’t.”⁶ Over the centuries, the “Mazaganists”⁷ reinvented their identities and cultural practices, and, although they served the king of Portugal, they had needs and daily lives that often placed them far from Lisbon.

Until 1769, it was unlikely that Quitéria and the other two thousand inhabitants of Mazagão would ever have imagined that their lives were going to be embedded in the forests and rivers of the Amazon. The relationship between the fortress of Mazagão and colonial Amazonia was strengthened when the population of the Lusitanian “square,”⁸ which had existed on the African coast for more than 250 years, was evacuated on the orders of the late Portuguese king Dom José I. The order came after a siege, which was begun in December 1768 by Sultan Mulah Mohamed and lasted until March of the following year. What happened next was impres-

6 Coimbra University Archive (AUC), CCC, doc. 25.

7 We will work with the definition of “Mazaganist” as someone who lived in the fortress of Mazagão but was not necessarily born there.

8 At a basic level, the population was divided between those who lived in the fortress (the residents) and those who were doing military or administrative service (the “fronteiros”), who did not stay for more than four years. In this population group, we found a significant presence of Azorean immigrants (mainly from the island of São Miguel), convicts from the kingdom, foreign commercial representatives, and Arabs among the floating population (Vidal 2008, 30–34).

sive: the displacement by sea of an entire city: 469 families and 225 lone individuals who, together, amounted to 2,093 immigrants. “[...] an urban society separating itself from its stone shell [...] A city without walls, provisionally distributed in 14 floating neighborhoods, sets sail for Lisbon” (Vidal 2008, 51). In the midst of this population was Quitéria, listed by the fortress administrators as “family number #258,” in the household of her former owner and his wife⁹.

Having set foot in Lisbon, Quitéria barely had time to adapt to the capital of the Empire. She and the other Mazaganists arrived in March 1769 and stayed in Lisbon until September of the same year, when they left for a new destination. In fact, this fate had been considered by the Crown even before the abandonment of Mazagão, on March 16, 1769, when secretary of state for the navy and overseas territories Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado sent a letter to the governor of Grão-Pará containing the following order: “With these families [of Mazagans] the King Our Lord orders that a new settlement be established on the northern coast of the Amazon to join hands with Macapá and Vila Vistosa.”¹⁰

The Mazaganists crossed the Atlantic to reach the port of Belém in Grão-Pará in a compulsory immigration, which they themselves described as “violently transported to the aforementioned state of Pará.”¹¹ Since the right not to leave Lisbon was conditional on the express authorization of the king, it is possible to find a list of thirty-six names of Mazaganists who did not travel to the Amazon but stayed in Portugal.¹² These include cases such as that of Francisco Xavier da Silva Palma, who had been banished to Mazagão for six years; that of Luís Manoel de Macedo, who was waiting for his children to recover from an illness in the city of Lisbon so that he could later live in Portugal with his sister in Vila Viçosa; that of Teresa Maria de Jesus, who, because her husband had died, was allowed to live with her father, a servant of the Count of Cunha; and that of José de Moares, a surgeon, who stayed to look after sick immigrants¹³. The restric-

9 AHU, codex 1.784.

10 AHU, codex 595.

11 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

12 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, September 15th, 1770, cx. 66, doc. 5.673.

tions on allowing the Mazaganists to remain in Lisbon highlight not only the Portuguese Crown's plan to transfer the fortress in its entirety (or nearly so) but also the resistance in part of this population toward emigrating to the Amazon: a place described by some of the immigrants with "loathing."¹⁴

The final destination of these immigrants was not chosen without reason: it was linked to the Portuguese efforts to strengthen and colonize the frontiers of Portuguese America. In the case of the northern frontier, there was tension due to the proximity to French Guiana. In this sense, as mentioned by Mendonça Furtado, the settlement of these immigrants would not be in the city of Belém, but in a village created and named especially for this purpose: Vila de Nova Mazagão. The governor of the state of Grão-Pará and Maranhão at the time, João Pereira Caldas, remembered the usefulness of the presence of the Mazagans for "the defense and security of the Macapá Barrier against the French neighbors."¹⁵ His speech followed macro-political tensions that had been orbiting the northern edges of Lusitanian America since the 17th century: the French invasion of Maranhão in 1612; the Treaty of Utrecht, signed in 1713 "to prevent any occasion of discord that might arise between the vassals of the Crown of France and those of the Crown of Portugal [...] over the lands of the Cabo Norte"¹⁶ (Guedes 1989, 210); the epidemic of 1748–1750, which ravaged the captaincy of Grão-Pará and caused its governor to worry about foreign forces that "might take advantage of the weakness of our troops to encourage some project that might disturb our conservation"¹⁷; and even in the years 1751–1754, when the Crown financed an influx of Azorean immigrants who were to be settled on the northern borders, mainly in Macapá. The defense of Cabo Norte was planned by the Portuguese administrators on the basis of forming a belt of villages (Macapá, Vistosa da Madre

13 *Ibid.*

14 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

15 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 5th, 1779, cx. 82, doc. 6.720.

16 "The coastal lands above the northern bank of the Amazon River were identified as "The Lands of Cabo do Norte" due to a cape that actually existed on the coast and which was baptized as such in the 17th century, with the name later being extended to the entire region (Araújo 1998, 145).

17 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, April 26th, 1749, cx. 31, doc. 2.910.

Deus, and Nova Mazagão) and partly built on the displacement of individuals who crossed the Atlantic. It was a region where “culture and settlement” were to be encouraged as a territorial defense strategy (Costa 2018), and it was made up of people with very different origins: Azorean immigrants, various indigenous peoples, enslaved people from Senegambia and Angola, as well as the Mazaganists. Although of a macro nature, linked to the disputes between European countries over possessions in America, the efforts to colonize Cabo Norte directly interfered in the lives of those who were forced to immigrate to the Amazon. The life of Quitéria, an enslaved woman, was directly affected by the concerns of the King of Portugal and the pressures imposed by the French Crown.

On January 11, 1770, less than a year after the evacuation of the fortress, ten ships bringing the Mazaganists anchored in Grão-Pará, and Quitéria would set foot on Amazonian soil for the first time. The estimate is that 1,642 individuals arrived, divided into 388 families (Martins 2010). These individuals came from the same place—the fortress of Mazagão in Morocco—but they brought different “baggage”: differences in age, gender, freedom status, occupation, military rank, family size, marital status, and title of nobility. These elements would later be directly linked to the possibilities of building strategies and tactics for social integration and survival; they were elements that gave other colors to the idea of a “Mazagão People.” A new world opened up before the eyes of these displaced people, with a natural environment so different than the one they knew, in what they described as a “transportation to a climate so far away.”¹⁸

In the land that received them—Grão-Pará—the impact was also significant, especially when we consider the number of immigrants disembarking. This was a lot of people arriving in a single day; even the immigration of Azoreans, during its three years (1751, 1752, and 1754), with funding from the Crown, did not reach such a figure, with 945 islanders disembarked at the port of Belém (Vieira Junior 2017). Still in terms of contextualizing the significance of this number of Mazagan immigrants, we should point out that when the population of the entire captaincy was counted in 1773, divided into 74 villages/parishes/localities, only six of them had a population greater than the 1,642 Mazaganists who arrived. Despite the

18 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

immigrants' complaints and the difficulties of adapting to the new land, in three years the population of Mazagan origin living in the captaincy had increased by 18% compared with the number of people who had landed in 1770. This growth is explained by the reconstitution of families, the children born after the arrival, and the increase in the ownership of enslaved people—the latter received as payment of debts owed by the Crown to officials or soldiers who served in the fortress¹⁹. The increase in this population and the construction of new families broadened the perspective on “the Mazagão people”: new nuances emerged, including those married to locals, and children born in Grão-Pará.

Quitéria went from being a captive to being an owner, and she did so by acquiring enslaved people and setting up her own home in Belém. This change in social status was made possible by the rapid accumulation of capital — probably the result of her work as a food vendor, which allowed her to buy not only two captives but also her own freedom. On the chessboard that reveals the daily life of Grão-Pará, Quitéria made moves to cope with the new land, sometimes taking advantage of the opportunities created and sometimes fighting against the baggage she had brought with her from Mazagão; namely, her condition as a slave, a black woman, a single woman, and a woman over thirty—at the time, something considered very close to old age.

But let us go back to the arrival and try to understand it from the viewpoint of the local rulers. If the number of immigrants arriving was significant, imagine that this arrival took place in a single day and involved a population with no experience of the region. Immediately, demands were made for supplies and shelter for the immigrants, which required administrative measures. The governor of the state of Grão-Pará and Maranhão, who welcomed the immigrants, had already been informed by Lisbon that the Mazaganists would be coming and tried to prepare himself, at least minimally; for example, he paid for five sumacas (small, two-masted boats) loaded with dried meat to come from Paraíba and Bahia²⁰. The governor-general of the captaincy went so far as to say that “the people from Mazagão that His Majesty was pleased to send to this state [of Grão-Pará

19 AHU, captaincy of Pará, February 14th, 1774, cx. 72, doc. 6.100.

20 AHU, captaincy of Pará, January 18th, 1770, cx. 66, doc. 5.680.

and Maranhão] have made this city [of Belém] very populous [emphasis added], so that it cannot be envied by the [cities] of our Kingdom”²¹. He went on to report, in a hyperbolic and laudatory tone, that in addition to dried meat, the Mazaganists were supplied with flour and fish, as well as a duly equipped hospital to care for their sick, and “that the same Mazaganists are delighted with the good life they lead and the abundance they experience”²².

From another perspective—that of the newcomers—the sense of support was quite different. The feeling of being “pleasantly pleased” was not shared by the immigrants themselves. Some did not see their arrival in the new land in such a generous light. For example, Domingos Pinto asked to return to the kingdom of Portugal, claiming that his wife had acquired “a serious illness that is incurable in this climate”²³. The idea that Grão-Pará had contaminated “airs”²⁴ was repeated in the petition of Isidoro José da Fonseca Cabral Mesquita, a sixty-five-year-old sergeant-major who made a request to return to the kingdom because he felt “compelled to change airs in order to restore his health.”²⁵ These excerpts make it clear that the transfer to Grão-Pará was not as generous an action as some of the local authorities wanted it to appear, nor as the Crown wanted to believe. The document sent to the Queen in 1778 by the so-called representatives of the immigrants (judges, councilors, and the magistrate of the district of Mazagão) made their perceptions of the transfer clear: “It was announced that they were destined for settling in Pará, and they immediately felt repugnant to being transported to such a distant climate, since they recognized that this was not the reward they deserved for their services.”²⁶ That relocation was seen as a journey reserved for “those who, in order to escape the punishment deserved for their atro-

21 AHU, captaincy of Pará, January 12th, 1770, cx. 65, doc. 5.579.

22 *Ibid.*

23 AHU, captaincy of Pará, November 15th, 1777, cx. 78, doc. 6.484.

24 In the 18th century, it was a common belief that environmental phenomena interfered with people's health. This was the basis of “aerism.” In other words, the concept of contamination through “miasmas” was gaining ground. Until the mid-19th century, theories of contagion seemed absurd and succumbed to the Hippocratic conception that disease was the result of an imbalance in the body's “humors” (Czeresnia 1997).

25 AHU, captaincy of Pará, April 5th, 1791, cx. 100, doc. 7.966.

26 AHU, captaincy of Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

cious crimes [...] and not a people who are always faithful, always constant and only exercised in the throes of war”²⁷. And even though the local governor had made an effort to supply the Mazagans with dried meat and fish, his efforts were seen by the immigrants’ representatives as ineffective, because “these foodstuffs are ordinarily useless for sustenance, they double the illnesses they suffer, rather than preserving their health”²⁸.

Quitéria, on the other hand, was not so bothered, because the new home brought the possibility of freedom, marriage, and material enrichment. The process of relocation gradually acquired different meanings among those involved, meanings that fragmented the group initially known as the “Mazagão people.”

Hell for some, opportunity for others

The group of immigrants who arrived in Belém in a compulsory migration from Mazagão was not homogeneous. ranging from enslaved people to qualified members of the Order of Christ, men to women, from single to married and widowed, in addition to many other differences (age, occupation, family size, etc.). Thus, as mentioned above, the immigrants had to deal with and struggle with the baggage they brought with them, which meant developing different tactics that were often associated with the composition of the household and family. The reconfiguration of the Mazagan families in the new land is clear, for example, in the case of Quitéria herself, who embarked in Mazagão in a household group made up of herself and her owners but once in the Amazon became free, took up residence, got married, and acquired two enslaved people, all in the short span of nine years (1769–1778).

The couple who owned Quitéria in Mazagão were Luís Loureiro Rego and his wife, Jacinta Valente. Their household structure and family configuration also changed between 1769 and 1778: They had two daughters, and Luís’ mother, Dona Isabel Cereja, moved in with her son. Still in

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

the fortress of Mazagão, Dona Isabel headed her own household and shared it only with a twelve-year-old slave²⁹. In Belém, at the advanced age of sixty-four, she moved in with her son and her daughter-in-law, thus increasing her ownership of slaves to two individuals, “a mulatto and a black woman”³⁰. The household Quitéria knew in Morocco underwent changes in Grão-Pará. It was divided into two: one composed of Quitéria and her two enslaved servants; and the other composed of her two masters, Dona Isabel, the couple’s two new daughters (born in Grão-Pará), and four more enslaved people — in the second part of the household was an increase from three to nine people.

In the original composition of Quitéria’s household, there was not only a reconfiguration of the domestic unit, especially in the group of people who lived in the house, but also a reconfiguration of the social position of the people who lived there. As white people from the Kingdom of Portugal, her former masters were treated as “good people,”³¹ even though they lived in “great poverty and [...] there is no way to make a living”—in the society of the Old Regime, economic distinction is different from social distinction (Sampaio 2010). In addition, if the number of women associated with the household of Luís and Jacinta (Quitéria’s former owners) was increased, they joined the exclusive category of “Donas” [Mrs.] (Silva 2002), a kind of treatment that Jacinta did not receive in Mazagão. In fact, for these immigrants, despite their original social status, the move to Grão-Pará was a point of “transition” in the course of their lives³², but these transitions did not happen in the same way, and the social markers and tactics adopted were fundamental in shaping them. The same immigration experience unfolded into different representations and possibilities.

29 AHU, Codex 1.784.

30 AHU, Codex 1.790.

31 As Roberta Stumph reminds us about Minas Gerais in the 18th century, “dignity was also measured by behavior and those who followed the lifestyle of the nobility were also recognized as such” (Stumph 2009, 117).

32 This means considering the same individual at different times in their life—in our case, in different phases related to the migratory process: embarkation, destination, settlement, and return. At the same time, throughout the “life course,” these phases are considered in relation to the corresponding phases of the immigrant’s life, which Jan Kok calls their “position.” This “position” can be marital status, paternity, occupation, residence, age, etc. After arrival, these individuals change “position,” and this change is called an “event” or a “transition” (Kok 2007).

In Belém, Quitéria had married another slave, whose master was Antônio Loureiro. It is reasonable to infer that Antônio Loureiro was a relative of Luís Loureiro, indicating that the marriage market for Quitéria was limited to her master's initial social network; as far as marriage was concerned, Quitéria was still a Mazaganist. The marriage could have had a broadening effect on Quitéria's condition: she was no longer a slave but an owner, who was leaving someone else's home to set up her own, and she was no longer a single woman but a married woman—elements which, when added together, meant an upward social shift (Silva 2002).

This was the trajectory of Quitéria's and of Luís and Jacinta's households in the city of Belém in 1778. However, Belém was not the final home envisioned by the Lusitanian administrators for the Mazagan immigrants. Even before they arrived in Lisbon, the planned destination of the population evacuated from the fortress of Mazagão was the north of the captaincy of Grão-Pará (Vidal 2008, 138). Perhaps this was because they were perceived by the Crown as "frontier people"³³ who were more capable of settling and ensuring colonization under pressure from foreign kingdoms "exercised in the throes of war." A new village that was built in Cabo Norte in 1770, Vila Nova de Mazagão, was conceived as the final home for the immigrants (Costa 2018). In this sense, we can understand why Quitéria's husband lived in Nova Mazagão while his wife waited in Belém for a possible order to move from the governor of Grão-Pará.

The Mazagans had their residential destinations compulsorily decided and financed, although they resisted and asked for the right not to go to Nova Mazagão. This was the case for João Maneta, an elderly man who was eighty years old and blind, who asked Queen Maria I not to transfer him, his daughters, and his sons-in-law from Belém to Nova Mazagão "so that in the same [city of Belém] they could be perpetual residents whose grace others have achieved"³⁴. Or, to give another example, Gaspar Amorim Amora, who, after marrying for the second time in Belém, went to live with his new wife (also a Mazaganist) on a farm where he tilled the

³³ The frontier is seen here not only as defining geographical and political landmarks but also as "epistemological"; in other words, to the difference in perceptions of the world and tensions between empires and colonies (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2009).

³⁴ AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 13th, 1783, cx. 90. doc. 7.349.

land and traded in canoes³⁵. Others simply fled, like José Rodrigues, who went to Mato Grosso to make rammed earth and had still not returned by 1778; Inácio José da Penha de França “fled a long time ago to Minas”; and Lázaro Valente de Loureiro, who went to Bahia, leaving “his wife and children in considerable abandonment” in Belém³⁶. In practice, we can observe a capillarity on the part of the Mazaganists, finding them in several towns and rivers in Grão-Pará: Macapá, Joanes, Vigia, Souzel, Pinhel, Benfica, Cametá, Azevedo, São Caetano de Odivelas, Rio Abeté, Rio Turauá, Rio da Boavista, and Igarapé do Jamboassú.³⁷

The internal migration of the immigrants was directly associated with the social markers of these individuals. For example, we can find Mazaganists who disembarked in Belém bearing the noble distinction of knight of the Order of Christ, the main Portuguese military order (Olival 2001), who were soon appointed village directors³⁸; examples include Francisco Fernandes de Macedo, director in the village of Porto de Mós, and Salvador Rodrigues do Couto, director in the village of Ponte de Pedra. We highlight Dona Antônia Valente here, who married Paulo Fernandes Belo, deputy captain, knight of the Order of Christ, and director of the town of Soure, in Belém. What stands out is the fact that Paulo Fernandes was born in the fortress of Mazagão and arrived before the great influx of Mazagans, in other words, before 1770. However, other Mazaganists, even if they were not qualified by the Order of Christ, could still be appointed director: Domingos Cardoso was appointed director of the village of Souzel; Antônio Gonçalves Lêdo was made director of the village of Benfica; and João Pedro became director of Lugar de Outeiro.³⁹

We should not jump to the conclusion that the distinction of nobility made by some Mazaganists served the same purpose. For example, there were differences among the immigrants who had qualified for the Order

35 AHU, codex 1.790.

36 *Ibid.*

37 *Ibid.*

38 The director was responsible for the administration of the indigenous people in the villages. Through a series of responsibilities, his fundamental duty was to bring “civilization” to the indigenous people, including spreading the use of the Portuguese language (Coelho 2006).

39 AHU, codex 1.790.

of Christ: in 1778, the knight Inácio Freire da Fonseca owned a wood factory, twenty-two slaves, and a house on Rua da Praia de Santo Antônio in Belém; in the same year, the knight André Cardoso de Miranda lived on a farm in the Igarapé do Caraparú and was experiencing “considerable poverty, because until now the work of his fields has not corresponded to things that are useful for him to be able to live off with fortune”; and the knight Lourenço de Pina also “live[d] in poverty” in the Igarapé do Caraparú. Although the qualification of the Order of Christ interfered with occupying positions and accumulating wealth⁴⁰, it was no guarantee of such as it was linked to other elements, such as marriage and setting up a kinship network, slave ownership, property management, and place of residence.

Returning to the task of settling immigrants in Cabo Norte, the transfer of almost two thousand people from Africa to Grão-Pará, with a stopover in Lisbon, was quick and took less than a year. However, due to individual decisions and the natural and structural difficulties, the journey of these immigrants from Belém to Nova Mazagão took a long time. In December 1778, a list was sent to the queen with the names of 494 Mazagans who were still living in the city; in other words, 30% of the population that had disembarked in 1770. This list was divided into three “classes”: the first class was made up of those who had not been told to leave Belém for Nova Mazagão; the second class included those who had received the “tools and rations they were entitled to” but had not been transported to Nova Mazagão; lastly, the third class included those who were on the road “that leads to Vila de Ourém”⁴¹ (a village founded by Azoreans). In this list, Quitéria’s name appeared in the tenth family, ranked as “first class.”⁴²

During the wait to move to Cabo Norte, new couples formed—as was the case with Inês Maria. At the time of the evacuation of the fortress in Morocco, she was ten years old. Nine years later, in Belém, inserted into the local marriage market, and taking advantage of her age and her

⁴⁰ The military orders were part of what Fernanda Olival would call the “economy of mercy,” which made part of Old Regime society dependent on royal favors in exchange for providing services to the king. At the same time, these mercies meant the possibility of social advancement for their beneficiaries (Olival 2001).

⁴¹ AHU, codex 1.790.

⁴² *Ibid.*

initial status as a single woman, she became the central figure in her original family and started to support her widowed mother and brother, something that was made possible only because she married Captain João Gonçalves Calheiros, the owner of seventy enslaved people and whose business included rice farming, sugar mills and commerce.⁴³ Her husband lived in the city of Belém, where Inês Maria also continued to live. Isabel Torres, also a Mazaganist, was the widow of the judge of orphans in the village of Cametá and, in the same village, married for the second time and remained there. Dona Catarina Valente married the director of the village of São Caetano de Odívalas, in Morocco. Catarina was married⁴⁴ and, probably during the relocation period, became a widow. The Mazaganist Mariana Manoel was a widow in Mazagão, and in the Amazon she married Manoel Pires, a *pardo* [“brown-skinned”] Portuguese. As the final example, so as not to tire the reader, we cite Mrs. Violante Lopes, who left Mazagão at the age of sixteen and married Maurício José, director of the village of Óbidos, in Belém⁴⁵. Quitéria also married, but, unlike the other situations mentioned above, she did not follow her husband; in contrast, her husband went to Nova Mazagão and she remained in Belém. Could the families formed by women who came from Mazagão and married people from Belém be classified as “Mazaganists”? Or did these women and their dependents gradually join the ranks of the city’s former residents?

It is clear that the immigrants interacted with the population of Belém and other locations while they waited for the final transfer, thus remaking their lives, expanding their families, building new livelihoods for their households, and resisting the Crown’s initial directives. Just as a qualification of the Order of Christ could form an element of social insertion for some Mazaganists, marriage was a means widely used by single and widowed Mazaganist women. In other situations, however, even women from the Mazaganist community who married in Belém still struggled to make ends meet: this was the case for Francisca Maria, who married a soldier who later died—struggling to survive, she became the

⁴³ AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, June 22nd, 1785, cx. 94, doc. 7.509; AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 12th, 1778, cx. 79, doc. 6.637.

⁴⁴ AHU, codex 1.784.

⁴⁵ AHU, codex 1.790.

owner of “two *cachaça* [“brandy”] taverns”; and for Mrs. Antônia Maria, who married her stepfather’s brother in Belém (her mother was widowed and had married for the second time in Belém) and was living “in total helplessness, as [her husband] has no agency due to his total incapacity.”⁴⁶

Just as the conditions were varied, so were the interconnections between the markers of “differences” (nobility, marital status, gender, generation, origin) (Brah 2006). The life opportunities of the migrants did not follow rules, although we can find points of convergence. One of these elements was their attempt not to put down roots in their destination village, Nova Mazagão.

Settling and adaptations

Though shoulder-to-shoulder in the process of moving from Morocco, after arriving in the New World these immigrants sought different paths and possibilities; Quitéria, for example, continued to live in Belém, while other Mazagans settled in different villages and on different rivers. However, most of them went to Vila Nova Mazagão in compliance with the orders imposed by the Crown. In 1773 there were 1,325 Mazagans in Belém and 543 in the new village; four years later there was a reversal, with 494 immigrants in Belém and 1,763 in Vila Nova de Mazagão.⁴⁷ The increase in the population of Nova Mazagão was reinforced by the king’s imposition of the displacement of these immigrants, a cause for complaint by Mazagan representatives: “the great loss of freedom they experience when they leave their home [in Nova Mazagão].” Indeed, the death of King Dom José I in 1777 meant that many of the residents who had already settled in Nova Mazagão were able to leave, bypassing the initial order to settle there:

“[...] until the time that news reached us [in Belém] that Our Lord had called the Most Honorable King Dom José the First to Heaven; for since then the same people [of Nova Mazagão] have been in such a state of

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 14th, 1774, cx. 72, doc. 6.100.

worry and restlessness, hoping that their requests would be granted and that His Majesty of this State would order them to re-export this contingent.”⁴⁸

There was a clear dispute between the immigrants relocated to the new village and the colonial authorities. This dispute was characterized by the material conditions of settlement, the tactics and strategies adopted in the face of the Amazonian landscape, and the continued “dilution” of the immigrants into a more general and less specific population in terms of origin, a slow transformation from “Mazaganist” into “inhabitant of the captaincy.” The attempt to settle these “people” in Nova Mazagão was in line with the Crown’s view of perceiving them as a unit, a “people” that had merely changed location.

The obligation to settle was linked to the fact that the destination was avoided by many. On the other hand, even the governor of the state, João Pereira Caldas, demanded from Lisbon the right of free movement for the Mazaganists: “if it seemed convenient to His Majesty, it could be facilitated for these people the freedom to settle wherever they wanted within the Captaincy.”⁴⁹ This expression of concern was aimed at “avoiding greater expenses” for the state in supporting immigrants in the early years of Vila de Nova Mazagão and in the construction of the village itself—an activity that, in 1772, had employed more than two hundred people, including carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, and sawyers.⁵⁰ The building costs were constantly mentioned, especially as they were paid for by local resources. Pereira Caldas himself had estimated that the construction of each house would cost \$2,000 to the state treasury.⁵¹ Francisco de Souza Estrela and Joaquim Antônio, respectively the master carpenter and the mason responsible for the construction work in the village of Nova Mazagão, made it clear that the wooden houses covered in straw

48 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 5th, 1779, cx. 82, doc. 6.720.

49 *Ibid.*

50 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, January 5th, 1773, cx. 69, doc. 5.933.

51 In 1772, for reference, an *arroba* [15kg] of cocoa, the state’s main export product in the 18th century, cost \$1,500. Cf. AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, August 31st, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.627. An enslaved man, in the same year, was sold for \$80,000. Cf. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Companhia Geral de Comércio do Grão-Pará e Maranhão, Livro 50, loading dated June 22nd, 1772.

would have a very short lifespan: “while some properties are being completed, the weather has ruined others, as the many thunderstorms experienced in the winter and the harsh winds and the continuous rains have caused them to be demolished.”⁵² These tensions over the fate of the Mazaganists show that, although the Crown had envisioned the settlement of the immigrants, the implementation of this idea was the responsibility of the treasury of the government of Grão-Pará and Maranhão, which could mean local resistance to Lisbon’s project.

But Pereira Caldas had not been listened to and the obligation for the Mazagans to settle in the town continued, despite a great many other complaints. In addition to the residency requirement, the Mazagans who settled in Nova Mazagão complained about the quality of the soil, which they said was insufficient to support its dwellers. In a letter sent directly to the queen, representatives of the Mazaganists complained that the land had already been “populated by the national Indians of the country, and by the same helpless people.”⁵³ Residents constantly complained about the “fruitlessness of the land on which they are situated.” In a document sent to the district clerk, the Mazaganists again stated that “any work would be useless due to the weakness and situation of the land, and that is why the people live in an oppressive and deplorable state [...] the village is in a state of helplessness or death from hunger.”⁵⁴ The village surgeons, still trying to convince people of the difficulty of surviving in the region, stated that they acquired many diseases because they were “continuously working in very rough and swampy lands.”⁵⁵ To the precarious state of the soil, we must add the lack of experience in farming and, even more so, in planting on the banks of the Amazon River and its floodplains.

As Pereira Caldas pointed out: “these people, even if alive, are very suitable for the exercise of the Arms in which they were raised, and are not suitable for farming; and for this reason they were raised for a different purpose.”⁵⁶ The governor was making it clear that the Mazaganists’

⁵² AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 5th, 1779, cx. 82, doc. 6.720.

⁵³ AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

present was compromised by their past, by the tradition they had been forged in, which was war. In 1769, before the transfer and still living in the fortress, we found 615 individuals declaring their occupations, with the vast majority categorized in military functions, but it was not possible to find any farmers—though we point out that there was some timid planting in the vicinity of the fortress.⁵⁷ However, in 1778, in Vila Nova de Mazagão, this picture saw a major alteration: of the 175 heads of households who declared their occupation, 129 were categorized as farmers, some of whom combined two occupations, such as carpenter and farmer, surgeon and farmer, bleeder and farmer, tailor and farmer, or gunsmith and farmer. One example of a household dedicated to farming is that of Antônio Loureiro, the owner of Quitéria's husband, who produced one hundred *alqueires* [roughly 2,420 hectares] of rice in 1778. Rice farming in the Amazon River delta was encouraged by the Portuguese Crown (Ravena 1998).

On the basis of this initial data, two conclusions can be drawn: despite the complaints made by the residents of Nova Mazagão and by Governor Pereira Caldas, the village's main activity was agriculture. This is related to the second conclusion: by cross-referencing information on the departure and settlement of these Mazaganists, a change in the immigrants' occupational profile can be observed through the conversion of military personnel into farmers. This was more than a formal classification and included changes in the horizon of daily activities, which were no longer linked to repairing walls or trading with Islamized peoples but to dealing with rice fields and learning from the indigenous people about the rainy seasons and the flooding of the Amazon River. There was a change in day-to-day demands and the need to adapt of a population educated in war.

Another point complained about by the newcomers to Nova Mazagão was the small number of enslaved people, which also marks a turning point in the composition of the Mazagan population. Even in the fortress of Mazagão, among enslaved people such as Quitéria, it was not very common

56 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, February 5th, 1779, cx. 82, doc. 6.720.

57 "Outside the walls, there was a small agricultural area, surrounded by ditches, trenches and revegetation that protected the crops, served as an obstacle to the Moorish cavalry and as protection for the infantry of the square, who collected our cavalry there when the enemy force forced them to do so" (Curado 2002, 3).

to find women; there were only twenty-nine of them and twenty male slaves. Data that serves as a parameter to consider the weight of slavery participation in Mazagão's economy, show that the exploitation of captive labor was neither common nor the main means of support for these families. While living in Mazagão, Quitéria is unlikely to have imagined that one day she would be an owner of slaves.

Years later, for the immigrants in Nova Mazagão, slavery became an essential condition for survival. Slavery was not limited to captives from Africa, but included a significant number of indigenous people, as the Governor of Macapá, Lobo de Almada, pointed out: "people from the descent of Monte Alegre [...] distributing to each of them [Mazaganists] two Indians and one for others [average]."⁵⁸ Governor Pereira Caldas, who we are already familiar with, also emphasized the presence of indigenous labor distributed among the residents of the new town: "the laborious and heavy tasks that farming in this country requires and undoubtedly cannot be achieved by another very inferior quality of settlers without providing them with the means of the precise workers that, apart from the indigenous people, must be the slaves [enslaved Africans]." It is not hard to imagine Vila Nova de Mazagão being the scene of constant interactions between indigenous populations, enslaved Africans, and Mazagans, which meant not only a new productive organization but also the exchange of knowledge, values, and perspectives on work. For those who came from the fortress of Mazagão, the other was no longer the Muslim but the indigenous, the enslaved Africans, and the old inhabitants of the captaincy—identity also changes when confronted with a "new other."

In the new world, the Mazaganists were part of a slave society. In 1778, the residents' representatives claimed to have seventy-one underage slaves, "who only serve to increase poverty in the daily expenditure of livelihoods," and stated that they owed seventy-four captives to the General Company of Commerce of Grão-Pará and Maranhão, a debt that was difficult to repay, as many had died⁵⁹. They stated that there were still 257 enslaved people left, including Quitéria's husband, and that their pur-

⁵⁸ AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, April 25th, 1782, cx. 88, doc. 7.193.

⁵⁹ AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

chase price had been excessive—they had been received as payment for debts owed by the “Almoxarifado da Extinta Praça de Mazagão” [Warehouse of the former Mazagão Square]. In the same year, the population of Vila Nova Mazagão totaled 1,591 people spread over 310 households, with 395 enslaved people constituting 22% of the total population—almost a quarter of the population made up of captives⁶⁰.

In addition to the exponential increase in this population when compared to the forty-nine captives who left the fortress, the meaning that slave labor took on for the Mazaganists is striking. There are indications that the livelihoods of the Mazagans were represented by the immigrants themselves as being linked to the ownership of slaves. Diogo Serrão de Abreu, for example, asked to leave Nova Mazagão with his family, giving reasons including the fact that he lived “very poorly because he did not have any slaves.”⁶¹ Maria Alves Macedo also claimed something similar, saying that she could go up to “forty-eight hours without eating” because she had “no slaves and not even a man with her, since she was a young maiden.”⁶² Even among those Mazaganists who still lived in Belém, such as Quitéria, the ownership of captives was seen as an important economic component, as it forced those who were enslaved to “earn a living” for their masters. For example, José Veloso, a forty-year-old man who had been an artilleryman in Mazagão and went on to become a shoemaker in Belém, lived off the labor of two slaves. Luiz Valente Cordeiro, who had been a soldier in the fortress, and his family made a living in Belém from sewing and from the work of two underage slaves.⁶³ Other examples could be cited, but suffice it to say that among the 114 families of Mazaganists in Belém in 1778, 187 slaves were owned. There was certainly a survival strategy among the Mazaganists in taking advantage of the supply of enslaved people via the Companhia Geral de Comércio [General Company of Commerce], which cemented them within a society where captive labor was the rule—Quitéria herself adhered to this sense of social place and material survival.

60 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, June 22nd, 1785, cx. 94, doc. 7.509.

61 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

62 *Ibid.*

63 AHU, codex 1.790.

If the village of Nova Mazagão represented the final destination of the Mazagans, this fate was not accepted passively by the immigrants; many lived or wanted to live elsewhere. At the same time, the natural environment was an obstacle to this settlement. The new reality of these immigrants was associated with the ownership of slaves, a trend they immediately adopted. In a new natural environment and a new world of work, these immigrants reinvented themselves, gradually ceasing to be the “Mazagão people.”

Closing remarks

Stuart Hall, when discussing Caribbean cultural identity in terms of its diasporic movement, helps us to think about the Mazaganists after their compulsory displacement to the Amazon. He does so mainly by highlighting how part of national identity is constituted in the relationship with the other, in contact with difference and in the reinforcement of origin as an identifying category, and at the same time cannot be summarized in a binarism between inside and outside (Hall 2016). It would be foolhardy to attribute a “national identity” to the Mazaganists in the middle of the 18th century. However, in a short period of time (1769–1778), we saw tensions between claiming a place of origin and the different survival tactics adopted by this group of immigrants.

On the one hand, the Mazaganists claimed a series of rights associated with the origin of a group that was isolated in Africa, fighting in the name of the Portuguese king and the Catholic God, “an ever-faithful People” to the Empire and to the Church. Not without reason is the reference to the “obedience and loyalty of the ancient progenitors of that People” to King João IV, who in 1640 had freed the Portuguese throne from the Spanish domination – a period known as the Restoration.⁶⁴ The idea of “progenitors” also appears in the documentation more than once, for example, when the magistrate of the Mazagans recalled “those people who violently/ after seeing the blood of their progenitors spilled in the square of Mazagão when they surrendered it after hard and valiantly fighting the

64 AHU, captaincy of Grão-Pará, October 8th, 1778, cx. 80, doc. 6.639.

enemy/ were transported to this state [of Grão-Pará and Maranhão).”⁶⁵ In a direct line, the word “progenitors” is related to “ancestors”; the Mazaganists were claiming the memory of common ancestors who had fought on behalf of Portugal. The argument was subtle but had a degree of efficiency, because within an Old Regime society, providing services to the king had to be paid for with royal favors (Olival 2001). Mazaganist representatives claimed an identity forged in a history of battle and loyalty to the kingdom and therefore liable to be rewarded, while at the same time claiming through a tradition that linked the past, present, and future of the Mazaganists in an unbroken line (Hall 2003, 29).

But in this case, the outside world was not the stage for the construction of the “Mazaganist” identity, even though (we remember once again) they claimed a shared origin in providing services to the king and fighting the enemy of the Catholic faith. In the Amazon, these immigrants sought different paths. Some became local administrators, others became traders, enslavers, and farmers. In practice, they reinvented themselves, following the capillarity of the rivers and the opportunities they came across. They reinvented their lives and, with each day that passed, stopped being “Mazaganists” and stopped being soldiers. There was resistance to the Crown for treating them as a unit, as a “Mazagão people,” and this struggle materialized in the effort not to settle in their destination village: a village designed to continue the life of the abandoned fortress. Not wanting to stay in Vila Nova Mazagão meant wanting not to be seen as a “Mazaganist,” but to be seen in their multiple possibilities of existence. Thus, Quitéria’s life across the ocean no longer fits in Nova Mazagão and no longer fits with being a slave. Quitéria, and many others like her, left part of themselves behind on the ocean and rebuilt themselves in the Amazon.

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