

The 12th Annual Gilder Lehrman Center International Conference at Yale University
Co-sponsored with the Council on Latin American and Iberian Studies at Yale

American Counterpoint: New Approaches to Slavery and Abolition in Brazil

October 29-30, 2010
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

*A Culture of Colors: Representational Identities and Afro-Brazilians
in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Minas Gerais.*

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The intention in this paper is to address certain issues relating to representational identities and to a possible process of racialization in Minas Gerais during the second half of the eighteenth century and nearly the entire nineteenth century. Aside from scrutinizing a particular strand of current Brazilian historiography, the basic focus here will concentrate on preliminary findings of ongoing research that examines the Parish of São José do Rio das Mortes and involves Prof. Afonso de Alencastro Graça Filho of the Universidade Federal de São João del Rei, Prof. Zephyr Frank of Stanford University, Prof. Clotilde de Andrade Paiva and Prof. Tarcísio Rodrigues Botelho, both of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, even though these colleagues do not necessarily agree with all aspects of the analysis which follows. At any rate, from this point on the usage of the first person plural implicitly includes them in the text. Most of our efforts have been aimed at the development of an ample data base extracted from nominal lists, such as the *Rol de Confessados* – a 1795 count of the parish population –, some aggregate censuses taken around 1808, nominal lists from 1831 and 1838, parochial registers from 1752 on, a large set of notary papers – including inheritance records –, official correspondence produced at various levels of government, as well as local private and public documentation.

What most interests us here are the representational identities referring to slaves, freedmen and freedwomen, and to the native free-born of color or what contemporaries referred to in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documents as the “*qualidade*” of

individuals. We subscribe to the notion that such identities could carry meanings more indicative of social standing than of racial labeling. On the other hand, careful attention must be paid to possible variations in the terminology employed over time and through space, some of which seem to have continued to be steeped in concepts of color, race,¹ or ethnicity. In the event, a recent observation by Sílvia Hunold Lara strikes us as particularly on the mark:

[The] ambiguities are quite revealing. They indicate that, in general, skin color was associated with the condition separating freedom from slavery. (...) it was seen, both in the mother country and Portuguese America, as one among many symbolic marks of social distinction. Incorporated into the language that visually translated social hierarchies, whiteness could function as indicative of the distinction of freedom, while a darker skin tone indicated a direct or indirect association with slavery. Even though it was not possible to claim that all negroes, *pardos*,² and mulattoes were or had been slaves, color was an important element of identification and social classification.

In that sense, denominating people as negroes, *cafuzos*,³ *pardos*, *pretos*,⁴ and *crioulos*⁵ was a way of distancing them from whites. In various situations, not a few *pardos* and mulattoes, both free-born and freed, were in the same way kept on the fringes of freedom and not admitted into the world of slaveholders. They might have been born free and even own slaves, but were, in a certain way, identified with the universe of slavery.⁶

As Lara suggests, it is important to recall that these representations did not stand on their own since they were almost universally associated with the legal condition of individuals. If, at first glance, the classification based on condition seems to have been almost predetermined, dividing members of society into those born free, freedmen – in Portuguese *forros* or *libertos* – and slaves, historical reality was a good deal more complex. As recent research reveals, the practice of *coartação*, or the purchase of manumission by way of payments over time, constituted a sort of sub-condition of semi-freedom situated along a continuum between slavery and freedom.⁷ Findings such as these clearly suggest that there is a need to reflect on the probable existence of differentiated forms of bondage, but those are reflections that go far beyond the scope of this paper. At any rate, as was shown earlier, at least in Minas Gerais the *forro* and *liberto* labels tended to disappear from documents from much earlier on than the so-called “silencing of the colors,” most especially following the independence of Brazil.⁸ Indeed, we came across a number of individuals who, although identified as freedmen in the 1750s and 1760s, were seldom or never again qualified by their

legal condition throughout the rest of the eighteenth century and beyond. At the time, that lack of qualification was undoubtedly seen as an indication that they were free-born. There are examples that point in the opposite direction, meaning that the terms *forro* or *liberto* could be transmitted to new generations.⁹ Although it is perfectly clear that, in strictly legal terms, the condition of freedman could never be inherited, the imposition of labels such as *forro* and *liberto* beyond a single generation obviously constituted a representation aimed at identifying links to slave ancestry. We suspect that, in Minas, any such examples could only be found in the first half of the eighteenth century and that the phenomenon which might be dubbed the “silencing of condition” seems to have begun at mid-century and consolidated a bit later. It is significant that nearly all these individuals who ceased being labeled as freedman were identified as *pardos* – without a doubt, the most complex of native representational identities. It is equally significant to note that, at some point towards the end of the century, most of those same individuals began to tout military patents, almost certainly connected to local “colored” militias.

A rapid survey of documentation dating from the second half of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century and focusing on the partial trajectories of seven individuals from the Parish of São José do Rio das Mortes outlines the tendency which saw labels identifying ex-slaves as such fall into disuse. In the event, all seven appeared inscribed, along with their respective patents, in the *Rol de Confessados desta Freguezia de S. Antonio de S. Joze, Comarca do Rio das Mortes, deste prezente anno de 1795*.¹⁰ As earlier shown in considerable detail,¹¹ the elaboration of the *Rol* was marked by an extraordinary concern with identifying the color (or origin) of each individual. Captain Antônio da Silva Abreu, 60, his wife Theodora Moreira, 50, and their five children were registered as *pardos*, but no mention was made as to their condition, the implication being that they were all free-born. Twenty-nine years earlier, however, the same Antônio da Silva Abreu, then single and without a militia rank, stood as godfather at a baptism and in the register was described as a *pardo forro*.¹² Between 1766 and 1802, Antônio figured at least thirteen times in the São José parish registers but never again was any mention made of his color or condition, although the title of Captain appeared systematically from 1774 on.¹³ It can be posited that the social ascension represented by that militia rank often contributed to the omission of any reference to color, but did not carry enough weight for the clerics charged with elaborating the *Rol*. Around 1772, Manoel Dias de Oliveira requested confirmation of his position as captain of the “Infantry militia of *pardo* freedmen of the district of Lage.”¹⁴ In the 1795 *Rol* Captain Manoel, his wife Ana Hilária, and their five

children appeared merely as *pardos*. Nevertheless, also in 1772, Manoel e Ana Hilária were registered as *pardos forros* when they baptized their daughter Marcelina.¹⁵ From 1781 to 1784 the couple continued to be identified as *pardos forros* as they baptized three additional children,¹⁶ but as of 1786 neither of the two would be described according to color or condition when listed in the parochial registers.¹⁷

Second Lieutenant Romão Dias Pereira Cardozo, his wife Ângela Maria da Conceição, and their son Manoel were listed as *pardos* in the *Rol*. In the baptismal registers of two of their children, dated 1772 and 1773, however, Romão and Ângela were described as *pardos forros*.¹⁸ In 1783, Romão was once again labeled as a *pardo*, but not as freedman while, from 1787 on, neither the color nor the condition of Romão or Ângela were included when they appeared on parochial registers.¹⁹ Residents of the hamlet of Bichinho in 1795, the couple Antônio de Matos and Joana de Souza Dias, plus their four children, were listed in the *Rol* simply as *pardos*. When sponsoring two slave infants in 1758, Antônio was identified as a *pardo* freedman.²⁰ In the baptismal registers of the couple's children, however, the clergymen did not label Antônio and Joana by color or condition.²¹ When listed along with the other parishioners who worshiped at the chapel of Nossa Senhora de Oliveira, Second Lieutenant Leandro Gonçalves Chaves, his wife Roza Maria, and their two children were qualified simply as *pardos*. Nevertheless, when their first son was baptized in 1782, Leandro and Roza Maria were described as *pardos forros*.²² In baptismal registers dating from 1783 to 1789, the Second Lieutenant and his wife were identified as *pardos*, while in the period 1792-1807 Leandro and Roza Maria were not labeled according to color or condition in an additional five registers.²³

The case of Lucas Dias and his wife Pulchéria Maria is still more complex. Residents of Bichinho, Captain Lucas, Pulchéria, and their nine children figured in the 1795 *Rol* as *crioulos*, but no mention was made of their legal condition. In the baptismal acts of a daughter and son dating respectively from 1783 and 1785, Lucas and Puchéria were identified as *crioulo* freedmen.²⁴ In 1789, however, the baptismal register of another daughter made no mention of color or condition.²⁵ Yet, in 1792 and 1794, the baptismal records of another two sons described Lucas and Pulchéria as *crioulos*, but did not qualify them in terms of condition.²⁶ At the turn of the century – more precisely in December of 1799 – Captain Lucas stood as godfather of the infant son of Second Lieutenant Manoel da Costa Cunha and Isabel Ignácia Luz, *crioulo* freedmen and, on this occasion, the Captain was once again labeled as a *crioulo forro*.²⁷ Finally, the clergymen responsible for elaborating the *Rol de Confessados* qualified Captain Silvestre Pereira Grilo, his wife Ignácia Gonçalves da Cruz,

and their five children merely as *crioulos*. In the baptismal registers of two of the couple's daughters, however, Silvestre and Ignácia were identified as *crioulos forros*.²⁸

This kind of evidence points to a clear trend in which, over time, the qualification of freedman or freedwoman was “forgotten” by society, especially from the late eighteenth century on and in relation to socially well-placed individuals. As already mentioned, it is possible that some of these individuals were, in fact, not actually manumitted, but, during a certain period of time, inherited the *forro/liberto* label by force of traditional practices that insisted upon underscoring the slave ancestry of people of color. On the other hand, it is perhaps even more likely that, for at least some, the weight of this intermediate qualification of condition – neither free nor slave – diminished through the years, sometimes simply disappearing. Moreover, as argued earlier, after the turn of the century, the terms *forro(a)* and *liberto(a)* became increasingly rare in all types of records, largely because the distinction lost its importance. It also appears that the frequency of manumissions themselves substantially decreased during the early decades of the nineteenth century,²⁹ although there is room for debate here.³⁰

Let us now examine evidence relating to color designation during the period under study here. Given the trajectories we have just elaborated, could it be concluded that the term *pardo* was more imbued with indications of slave ancestry – whether remote or not – than with signs of some degree of miscegenation?³¹ That is what is suggested by Mattos when the author reiterates the notion of “the colors of silence:”

The emergence of a free population of African ancestry, not necessarily miscegenated, but necessarily and for several generations disassociated from any direct experience with bondage, consolidated the category of ‘free *pardo*’ as a requisite linguistic condition for expressing this new reality. Although free of the stigma of slavery, this categorization did not totally erase the memory of bondage or of the restricted civil rights it implied.³²

As Sheila de Castro Faria would have it: “...what was *pardo/a*? I would say that the term meant the child of an African, born into freedom, that is [the child] of a freedwoman, never having been a slave.”³³ In the event, the author offers no empirical evidence to back up her supposition. Mattos, on the other hand, limits herself to referring to “free *pardo*.” As we have just seen, in general that condition was implicitly expressed by the use of the *pardo(a)* term by itself. As Roberto Guedes has cogently recalled, the term “free *pardo*” was basically never employed in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documentation, while both *pardo* freedman and *pardo* slave were very common indeed.³⁴ At the very least, such systematic

findings as these suggest that the *pardo* representational identity may have been still more complex than what has thus far been claimed and that it may be unwise to simply discard the possibility of a strong and persistent connotation of color or racial mixture, in and of itself always implicitly denoting some slave ancestry.

A brief, but important, digression is in order here. It has to be recognized that only very occasionally and usually in connection with situations of war or pacification did eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documentation mention Native Americans or those of indigenous ancestry. At least until the passage of special Indian affairs legislation in 1846, that was certainly the case in Minas Gerais and in pretty much all of colonial and provincial Brazil. Nevertheless, we now know that in Brazil and, indeed, in the Americas as a whole, miscegenation clearly included unions involving the indigenous, whites, Africans and Afro-descendants. In point of fact, the possible combinations of individuals of American, European, African, or mixed origin were so numerous that they literally rendered impossible any viable scheme of classification or description. Historically, the trend was to cover up indigenous ancestry under the guise of more generic designations referring to people of mixed origin, particularly the terms *pardo* and *cabra*,³⁵ as well as *crioulo/crioula*. Little by little, research efforts have managed to begin recuperating indigenous presence in Brazilian history, but there is still much work to be done.³⁶ As Jack Forbes has written:

[Today] persons may 'look' African but have Native American ancestry, or 'look' indigenous American but have African ancestry and not only may individuals lean in one direction or the other, but the population of entire regions may seem to fall into one category or another.

The ancestry of modern-day Americans, whether of 'black' or 'Indian' appearance is often (or usually) quite complex indeed. It is sad that many such persons have been forced by racism into arbitrary categories which tend to render their ethnic heritage simple rather than complex. It is now one of the principal tasks of scholarship to replace the shallow one-dimensional images of non-whites with more accurate multi-dimensional portraits.³⁷

Be that as it may, let us once again turn to some recent findings from our ongoing research efforts. Without rejecting the notion that it could also be indicative of social hierarchy, in Minas Gerais from the second half of the eighteenth century, the terminology employed to designate Afro-descendants born in Brazil above all referred to different skin tones or to diverse degrees of miscegenation. At some point before 1750 the ex-slave Rosa, a *mina* from West Africa, began to give birth to a series of seven children whose father was

Antônio Moreira de Carvalho, a wealthy white and probably a native of Portugal. In a variety of documents, such as the *Rol de Confessados de 1795*, parochial records, and notarial registers – including the last will and testament of the couple’s only son, Francisco Moreira de Carvalho, notarized in 1810³⁸ – the children were identified as *pardos*. As already seen, one of the daughters, Theodora, married Antônio da Silva Abreu and both the couple and their five children figure in the *Rol de Confessados* as *pardos*. Moreover, and again as already seen in the examples of an additional four *pardo* couples, the *pardo* identity was systematically passed from parents to children. It can be concluded, therefore, that designations obviously referring to skin tones passed from generation to generation. This practice was repeated hundreds of times in the *Rol de Confessados* and, as will be seen shortly, the same can be said for the nominal lists of the Vila de São José dating from 1831 and 1838. In all three cases the data unequivocally demonstrate that the color of parents of a common designation was bequeathed their children. Thus we reiterate that, during the second half of the eighteenth century and a good part of the nineteenth century, representational identities in Minas continued to be steeped in references to color or racial mixtures.

It should be emphasized that, as just noted, we do not consider the term *pardo* simply as an equivalent of mulatto. The designation *pardo* was multi-colored since it covered diverse shades of skin, but it always referred the some degree of miscegenation (and, therefore, almost always to an ancestral link to slavery). The oldest daughter of Antônio and Rosa Moreira de Carvalho, Vitoriana Moreira Rosa, married a white man named Manoel Fernandes dos Santos. This couple’s five children figured in the *Rol* as *pardos*.

Mariza de Carvalho Soares has gathered some interesting evidence that in early eighteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, the term *crioulo* referred only to the children of African mothers born in Brazil – that is to say, the term was not used beyond the first generation of Afro-descendants. According to the author:

Born in the colony, a *crioulo* is the slave child of an African mother. The term thus corresponds to the first generation born [in Rio de Janeiro] and which supposedly, at least during infancy, remains tied to the mother and consequently to maternal culture and language. Perhaps that is why the *crioulo* is identified simultaneously in terms of birth on colonial soil and his [African] ancestry. Madalena Costa, a *crioula forra*, is the daughter of Josepha da Costa, a *mina*, and the mother of Custódio, a slave infant baptized in 1745. This brief genealogy allows us to perceive that being a *crioulo* is a

provisional condition affecting only a single generation of [African] descent, which may explain why *crioulos* do not constitute a stable group with common interests.³⁹

Wisely, Mariza de Carvalho Soares does not claim that her findings extend beyond the period or the region she studies. In the future we intend to investigate the meaning(s) of the term *crioulo* during the early decades of the eighteenth century, specifically in the parochial registers of the Comarca do Rio das Mortes region. At any rate, we now know that, as of the mid-eighteenth century, **in Minas** the definition of *crioulo* became quite clear: it referred to negroes born in Brazil, whatever the origin of the parents – African, native, or both – and irrespective of legal condition. Among the many examples to be found in the *Rol de Confessados*, the following will suffice. Among the slaves belonging to José Gomes Pinheiro were the *angola* Sebastião and his *benguela* wife, Rosa; the couple's little boy, Manoel, was designated as a *crioulo*.⁴⁰ Manoel Joaquim Martins and his wife Antônia Moreira da Silva were listed as *crioulos forros*: the couple's three children figured as free-born *crioulos*. Hilário Batista and Ignácia de Oliveira were described as free-born *crioulos*, a classification passed on to their six children. We can confidently assert that, at least in Minas Gerais, the *crioulo* designation did not apply only to a single generation born of African parents/mothers, nor, following Hebe Mattos⁴¹ and together with the term *preto*, can it be considered as equivalent to the condition of slavery. Once again and above all, the term constituted a reference to “pure” African/slave ancestry and it would seem to have remained unchanged over several generations throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is precisely by way of examining successive generations of families appearing in our diverse sources that we hope to be able to discern the existence of patterns of representational classification which may or may not suggest a kind of racialization of Minas society.

The term *cabra* constituted a third designation of African ancestry regularly used in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Minas Gerais. Generally it referred to issue of parents of mixed origins: one a *pardo* and the other a *crioulo* or African, for example. At times, however, it was marked by a certain ambiguity. According to the *Rol de Confessados*, Antônio Ramassa do Sacramento was a *pardo* and his wife, Maria Antônia de Jesus, a *crioula*. Their boy Manoel was listed as a *cabra*. Residents of the district of Lage, the *pardo forro* José Pereira and his *crioula forra* wife Maria Tereza had five children from eight to twenty years of age, all of whom were identified as *cabras*. On the other hand, in 1795, Salvador Cardozo de Souza was listed as a *cabra forro* and his wife, Theodora Maria, as a *crioula forra*. The five children of Salvador and Theodora Maria were described as *cabras*,

perhaps suggesting that preferences lay with underscoring their mixed – and partially European – ancestry.

As just noted, identification of the mother, much less the father, of slave children listed in the *Rol* is next to impossible. Certain situations, nevertheless, invite exercises in speculation. The slave Anna was identified as an eight year old *cabra*, in the midst of a holding of only seven slaves. The other slaves included three adult African males, an adult African female, an adult *crioula* and an adult *cabra* female (the six ranged in age from 26 to 34). A twenty-nine year old *pardo forro*, João Rodrigues, also resided in the household. It is quite probable that this João was the *cabra* Anna's father, but, in fact, there were numerous other possibilities, since the actual father may not have even resided on the same property.⁴²

Ambivalence made itself felt in several forms. The marked flexibility of the term *pardo*, for example, is clear when observing that the three children of the *cabra*, Manoel Dias Cruz, and his *parda* wife, Francisca Maria de Jesus, were listed in the *Rol* as *pardos*. It is interesting to note that we have never come across the terms *quaterão* (quadroon) or *oitavão* (octoroon) in the documentation studied thus far. Indeed, it would seem that these terms were virtually unknown in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Brazil. This suggests that the miscegenated of lighter skin tones were either considered *pardos* or were simply not subject to color description, in which case they would have been considered white. And, in these latter cases, it seems quite obvious that the position occupied in the social hierarchy very often decisively contributed to the formulation of representational identities.

In reflecting on the terminology referring to color and skin tones, two final and irresistible examples come to the fore. The widow and *crioula* freedwoman, Ignácia Gomes Ribeiro, headed a rather complex household. The *Rol* listed Ignácia's five children: four *pardos*, ranging from 16 to 36 years old and a 37 year old *cabra*. At the ripe old age of 85, Ignácia's also widowed mother, a *mina forra*, was accompanied by another two adult children: Maria Joaquina do Espírito Santo, a 45 year old *parda*, and Agostinho Álvares dos Santos, a *cabra* aged 40. In 1795 the *crioula forro* Francisca Moreira was a 55 year old widow. Her children, apparently all free-born, were registered in the *Rol* in the following fashion: Juliana, 32, *parda*, João, 26, and Roque, 24, *cabras*, José, 14, and Joaquina, 11, *crioulos*.

As has been pointed out several times already, the use of terms of qualification, whether indicative of legal condition or relative to color/origin, was optional. It is not at all uncommon for researchers to come across references to the same individual in which he or she is here described as manumitted and there appears without any label indicating condition.

In the same fashion, it was relatively easy for an individual to “lose” his/her color, although, at least in our empirical experience, such losses did not necessarily follow the chronology of the colors of silence posited by Hebe de Matos.⁴³ The parish registers we have been examining, for example, are replete with fathers, mothers, godfathers, godmothers and even slave owners who at some point were inscribed as *pardos*, *crioulos*, *cabras*, or as belonging to one or another African grouping, only to appear later with no color or origin whatsoever. Moreover, no discernable pattern of usage emerges: we are dealing here with a seemingly random set of qualifiers, further complicated by the fact that individuals did not necessarily remain “colored” or “discolored” from one moment to the next. To make things even worse for scholars of the slave past, even African origins could change over time: a slave labeled as *benguela* in 1798 could be described as an *angola* in 1802 or an *angola* could turn into a *cassange*. Fortunately, such transformations usually were restricted to Africans and, therefore, can be ignored for present purposes.⁴⁴

A pause for reflection is necessary when dealing with terms referring to natives of Brazil. When individuals or entire families went from being described as *pardos* to consistently appearing without any reference to color there can be no doubt that the transformation is an example of racial whitening, and therefore, of upward social mobility. On the other hand, it is also possible to encounter examples of “colorless” individuals who suddenly became *pardos* or even *crioulos*, consistently remaining so qualified from that point on. In the end, it must be recalled that social mobility worked in both directions, some were able to scale the ladder, others were forced to descend. In his studies of early nineteenth-century Porto Feliz in São Paulo, Roberto Guedes makes significant strides in advancing our understanding of how color qualification functioned during the period. The saga of Second Lieutenant Joaquim Barbosa Neves included the whitening and subsequent retransformation into a *pardo* of the patriarch Barbosa Neves, a son who, upon becoming permanently involved with a slave woman, went from *pardo* to *crioulo*, and the apparently permanent whitening of the rest of the children.⁴⁵ Stories such as this one obviously demonstrate the potential flexibility that characterized schemes of representational identity present in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Brazil. We entirely agree with Guedes when the author warns that the trajectories of identity of individuals and families can only be understood through studies focusing on the complex webs of social relations that emerged within the community in question.

Notwithstanding, it should be recalled that the vast majority of Afro-descendants was never able to take advantage of this kind of social mobility. A good deal more typical was

the story of Quitéria *mina* and her many descendants. Quite probably, Quitéria arrived in Brazil at about the same time as Rose Moreira de Carvalho, i.e. sometime before 1750. In the São José ecclesiastical documentation Quitéria appears as the slave of Antônio Moreira de Carvalho, the father of Rosa's children. After obtaining her manumission sometime around 1758, Quitéria assumed the family names Moreira de Carvalho and a decade later began purchasing the freedom of three of her children.⁴⁶ The evidence suggests that she may also have contributed to the purchase of the freedom of her husband, the *mina* freedman José Fernandes da Silva, who we suspect had belonged to a different slaveholder. We have located the marriage registers of one of the couple's sons and the baptismal records of four grandchildren born to their youngest daughter, dating from the last quarter of the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ On 4 November 1806, the then widow Quitéria stood as godmother of her great grandson, Joaquim, grandson of her daughter Antônia Moreira da Silva and son of here granddaughter, Esméria Martins dos Passos.⁴⁸ Esméria and her husband, João Patrício Lopes, had three additional children: Bárbara, born in 1802, Roque, baptized in 1805, and José from 1808.⁴⁹ All of the individuals belonging to the first and second generations of Quitéria's descendants were indentified as *crioulos* in the sources consulted up to 1810, although the color of Esméria and João Patrício's children remained undeclared.

In the 1827 marriage register of José Vieira Lopes, another great grandson of Quitéria and son of Esméria, and his bride, Maria José Cupertina, the couple was not described according to color.⁵⁰ Inscribed in the 1831 nominal list of residents of the Vila de São José were Esméria and Joaquim, the latter identified as a tailor, along with two of their sons: Roque, a twenty-eight year old shoemaker, and Joaquim Simões, a carpenter of 24. All four were labeled as *crioulos*. Likewise, the goldsmith José Vieira Lopes and the seamstress Maria José Cupertina, plus their son, José, appeared in the 1831 list as *crioulos*. Furthermore, Quitéria's great granddaughter and Esméria's daughter, the *crioula* Bárbara Patrícia [Lopes] resided along with her maternal aunt, the *crioula* Quitéria Maria [de Souza], in a household headed by the *crioulo* cleric and Quitéria Maria's brother, Manoel Martins Coimbra. What most interests us here is that these data from 1831 demonstrate that four successive generations of Quitéria Moreira de Carvalho's descendants were labeled as *crioulos*.⁵¹

Further documentation corroborates these findings. The 1838 nominal list of the Vila de São José, for example, included the *crioulo* widow, José Vieira Lopes, who resided along with his three *crioulo* children, ranging in age from four to eight.⁵² In 1852, the daughter of José Vieira Lopes and Maria José Cupertina, the *crioula* Maria Madalena Vieira, was married to Joaquim Marcelino Almeida, also a *crioulo*.⁵³ In the baptismal registers of two of their

children, dating from 1853 and 1855, Maria Madalena and Joaquim Marcelino were identified as *crioulos*, but when they baptized a third child in 1857 their color was not mentioned.⁵⁴ Although, from roughly the mid-century on, the color designation of the baptized became increasingly common, no reference was made to the color of Maria Madalena and Joaquim Marcelino's children in their respective registers. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that they were considered to be *crioulos*.⁵⁵ Indeed, in June of 1868, their "colorless" daughter Maria José de Jesus married a *crioulo* second cousin from both sides of the family.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the story of Quitéria Moreira de Carvalho's great granddaughter, Bárbara Patrícia Lopes, is a good deal "racier" and serves as a reminder of just how complex and flexible eighteenth- and nineteenth-century representational identities in Minas could be. In the 1838 nominal list Bárbara Patrícia once again appears residing together with her aunt Quitéria Maria de Souza – at that point the head of the household. Although the list did not spell out the relationships involved, six of unwed Bárbara's children, ranging in age from four month to fifteen years, also resided in the household. In the event, everybody – aunt, mother and children – was designated as *pardo*. In 1836 and 1838 Bárbara gave birth to the two daughters appearing in the nominal list,⁵⁷ while a large set of baptismal and marriage registers make it clear that she had given birth to five *pardo* boys and, later, to another *parda* girl.⁵⁸ The boys had been put out as foundlings (although sponsored either by their grandmother, Esméria Martins dos Passos, and/or by maternal uncles and aunts) and in their respective marriage registers they all appeared as the *pardo* sons of unwed Bárbara Patrícia. We suspect that, in fact, this *crioula/parda* single mother maintained a stable relationship with an unnamed white partner, although any hard evidence of such a relationship has so far proved difficult to come by.⁵⁹ We can also speculate that Bárbara and, indirectly, her aunt, Quitéria Maria, "became *pardas*" in 1838 because, in some way, her consensual union was rendered acceptable in the local community when she publically assumed maternity of four of her foundling boys. Such acceptance seems even more plausible when hypothesizing that Bárbara Patrícia's partner was likely Silvestre Albino da Fonseca, in 1838 the Municipal Judge of São José. At any rate, this *pardo* branch of the fourth generation of Quitéria Moreira de Carvalho's descendants went on to marry only *pardo(a)* spouses⁶⁰ and the fifth generation – born from 1844 to 1862⁶¹ – was composed exclusively by infants considered *pardos* at baptism. Thus, even moving well into the second half of the nineteenth century color designations continued to pass from generation to generation.

Aggregate data, available for several moments of the period under examination, allow for a broader approach to the scheme of color designations employed in describing natives of Brazil and can point to both continuities and ruptures through time. Table 1, for example, includes all individuals listed in the 1795 *Rol de Confessados* who were identified as the children of parents, a mother or a father, also residing in the respective household. These children are divided according to basic color designations – white, *pardo*, *crioulo*, and *cabra* – used in the elaboration of the *Rol* to identify the native-born population. It was also possible to distinguish between the offspring of racially endogamous unions and the offspring of parents of different colors. As can be seen in Table 1, in late eighteenth-century São José whites – by definition, the issue of ethnically “pure” unions – made up 37.5 percent of the sample and comprised the largest of the color groups. Nevertheless, as could be expected in the context of colonial Minas, whites were a minority in the face of the “colored” population.⁶² Moreover, the sum of the *pardos* and *cabras* amounted to 38.7 percent of the sample, clearly demonstrating the weight of miscegenation in the turn-of-the-century Minas society. *Crioulo* children – once again, the offspring of *crioulo* and/or African parents – made up almost a quarter of the sample (23.8 percent). Perhaps the most salient feature of Table 1 is the fact that better than two thirds of *pardo* children (68.3 percent) were the offspring of endogamous couples, i. e. couples, widows/widowers and single mothers designated as *pardo(a)*. This finding suggests that, although still substantial during the last decade of the eighteenth century, the process of miscegenation was apparently becoming less intense. To put it another way, the large mixed segment of *pardos* and *cabras* inscribed in the *Rol de Confessados* appears to have originated in miscegenated unions dating from earlier generations. In that case, it could be concluded that the so-called golden age constituted a conjuncture particularly propitious for miscegenation.

Tables 2 and 3 follow the same format as Table 1 and were elaborated using data from the 1831 and 1838 nominal lists of the Vila de São José. It should be noted that the Vila was considerably smaller than the Parish as a whole.⁶³ Furthermore, these lists did not mention family relations within the households. It was therefore necessary to deduce which members of each household were children of its head or, occasionally, of other adult residents. Although time-consuming, this exercise in deduction results in fairly accurate reconstitutions of past reality since children regularly were inscribed immediately below their parents in population rolls of the period. That is not to suggest that these samples are perfect, but they can be considered as good estimates. At any rate, the data show that the proportion of white

children appears to have considerably diminished through the years: 20.8 percent in 1831 and 25.9 percent in 1838. Meanwhile, the participation of *pardos* increased significantly, reaching 47.8 percent in 1831 and 53.1 percent in 1838. Taken together in 1831, the *pardos* and the *cabras* comprised 52.3 percent of the total. The participation of *crioulo* offspring seems to have varied over the period, but, while there was a tendency toward decline, the fall was not nearly as marked or abrupt as that of whites. The picture that emerges when looking at the color designations of children in these two 1830s nominal lists reflects the predominance of the mestizos, above all the *pardos*, and, therefore, the triumph, in Minas Gerais, of a secular process of miscegenation. A parallel process of “*empardecimento*” may very well have been under way, at least in part fueled by the already discussed malleability of representational identities by way of which individuals virtually changed colors.⁶⁴ This apparent preference for labeling people of varying skin tones as *pardo/a* – a tendency that shows up clearly in the 1838 nominal list in which not a single *cabra* appeared – could have been merely a passing fashion or something peculiar to São José. We suspect, however, that we are dealing here with one of the diverse linguistic transitions related to denominations of color, ethnicity, race, and condition that marked the end of the colonial period and the Empire, but which, in our view, have still not been adequately studied.⁶⁵

Despite the growing predominance of *pardos* evident in the sources, the data also point to a decrease in the number of individuals whose parents were of distinct ethnicity or color. In 1795, 36.2 percent of *pardo* and *cabra* offspring resulted from mixed unions, in 1831 28.5 percent, and in 1838 a mere 6.0 percent. Although this abrupt decline between 1831 and 1838 is of doubtful validity, a slowdown in the process of miscegenation seems quite clear. For the justice of the peace responsible for elaborating the 1838 nominal count of the Vila de São José colors appear to have blurred and all mestizos were judged to be *pardos*. In the event, the justice was anticipating a simplification of the scheme of representational identity which would mark the rest of the nineteenth century. This phenomenon, however, cannot be considered as a silencing of the colors, but rather as classificatory practices grounded in “basic” skin tones – by then reduced to white, *pardo*, and *crioulo*⁶⁶ – and that increasingly molded couples into what were considered endogenous unions. These practices included flexibility in color labeling as already suggested and, by all indications, resulted in an over-count of *pardos* and, consequently, an undercount of *crioulos*. What most interests us here, nonetheless, is not this step by step process of whitening, but rather the apparent need, increasingly characteristic of nineteenth-century Minas Gerais, to identify parents and children as sharing the same color. If, on the one hand, miscegenation was becoming less

frequent and presumably less acceptable, on the other hand, society was organizing itself into closed color groupings or groupings perceived as racially endogamous. In other words, we are looking at yet another sign of the racialization process.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 contain data regarding the color designations of husbands and wives appearing in the 1795 *Rol de Confessados*, in infant slave baptismal registers dating from 1780 to 1810, and in the 1831 and 1838 nominal lists. As already seen, the *Rol* carefully identified free and freed couples married according to Church norms, but formal slave unions were not clearly registered. The baptismal records were investigated precisely because they did identify married slave couples. The nominal lists identified all types of couples who celebrated the sacrament of matrimony. Thus, in elaborating these tables no exercise in deduction was necessary. Table 4 shows that at the turn of the century some 58.8 percent of formal unions were endogamous.⁶⁷ In the São José of 1831, racially endogamous unions made up better than three fourths (76.3 percent) of all registered marriages. According to the 1838 nominal list, no fewer than 92.4 percent of all unions recognized by the Church involved spouses of the same color. Once again, these figures from 1838 look somewhat dubious and certainly resulted from the insistence of the justice of the peace in classifying a huge block of the population simply as *pardo* metizos. Even so, the trend towards color endogamy is undeniable. The issue here is to what extent that insistence would have been reflecting certain anxieties present in local or Minas society, anxieties that were a part of a larger, elitist project aimed at “civilizing” the general population.⁶⁸

Going beyond the evidence from São José, Mirian Lott’s recent work on marriage registers in the Parish of Nossa Senhora do Pilar de Ouro Preto (part of the provincial capital) uncovers a set of records from the 1840s in which color homogamy was absolute.⁶⁹ That is, whites married whites, *crioulos* married *crioulas*, and *pardos* married *pardas*. In his undergraduate research paper, Bruno Pugschitz found virtually total color homogamy in the matrimonial records of the Parish of Santa Luzia during the decades of 1830, 1840, and 1850.⁷⁰ Clearly, findings such as these strongly suggest that in nineteenth-century Minas the prevalent scheme of identity by color was marked by racialization. If some documents point to a silencing of the colors, others reveal a society that, in a rigid fashion, was dividing itself into racial segments or grouping based on representational identities grounded in color and race.

It is too early to say whether or not this racialization was peculiar to Minas Gerais. It seems likely that similar evidence will turn up for other regions of Brazil. Work has not even begun on tracing the origins this tendency. Perhaps a good starting point would be the

correspondence of colonial câmaras dealing with their obligations regarding foundlings. As Renato Franco shows in his recent work, because no Santa Casa hospitals were founded in Minas until the nineteenth century, from the mid-eighteenth century on metropolitan authorities insisted that the câmaras fulfill those obligations. Complaints lodged with authorities in Lisbon or in the Colony itself insisted that local administrations should not have to bear the costs of bringing up negro or *pardo* foundlings, since such infants could have been born of slave mothers hoping to liberate their offspring.⁷¹ In fact, references to these “colored” foundlings became increasingly virulent and included explicitly racist terms.⁷² Could these be signs of an incipient racialization of Minas society?

Table 1
Color of children, by color/origin of parents*, Parish of São José do Rio das Mortes, 1795

White children of white parents	<i>Pardo</i> children of <i>pardo</i> parents	<i>Crioulo</i> children of <i>crioulo</i> /African parents	<i>Cabra</i> children of <i>cabra</i> parents	<i>Pardo</i> children of mixed parents**	<i>Cabra</i> children of mixed parents***
1115	725	708	11	336	82

Source: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Tiradentes. *Rol dos Confessados desta Freguezia de S. Antonio da Villa de S. Joze, Comarca do Rio das Mortes, deste prezente anno de 1795*, manuscript.

*Includes couples, widows/widowers and single mothers. Excludes 89 children with no color designation, 1 *caboclo* e 27 “*mestiços*” (a designation still undefined, although it probably signified some degree of indigenous ancestry).

** Includes couples composed by various color combinations (for example, white and *pardo*, white and *crioulo*/African, *cabra* and *pardo*), as well as widows/widowers and single mothers of all color designations, except *pardo*.

*** Includes couples composed by various color combinations (generally, *pardo* and *crioulo*/African), widows/widowers and single mothers designated as *pardos*, *crioulos*, or Africans.

Table 2
Color of children, by color/origin of parents*, Vila de São José do Rio das Mortes, 1831

White children of white parents	<i>Pardo</i> children of <i>pardo</i> parents	<i>Crioulo</i> children of <i>crioulo</i> /African parents	<i>Cabra</i> children of <i>cabra</i> parents	<i>Pardo</i> children of mixed parents**	<i>Cabra</i> children of mixed parents***	Others****
238	455	299	17	92	34	8

Source: Arquivo Público Mineiro, *Seção Provincial*. Listas nominativas da década de 1830, organized in data bases by the Núcleo de Pesquisa em História Econômica e Demográfica do Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional/UFGM.

* Includes couples, widows/widowers and single mothers.

** Includes couples composed by whites and *pardos*, by *crioulos*/Africans and *pardos*, by *cabras* and *crioulos*/Africans, and by *cabras* and *pardos*, aside from widows/widowers and single mothers of all color/origin designations, except *pardo*.

***Includes couples composed by *crioulos*/Africans and *pardos* and by *pardos* and *cabras*, aside from widows/widowers and single mothers of all color/origin designations, except *cabra*.

**** Includes 4 *crioulo* children of couples composed by *crioulos* and *pardos*, 2 *crioulo* children of a couple made up of a *cabra* and a *crioula*, a *crioulo* child of a *cabra* single mother, and a *crioulo* child of a *parda* single mother.

Table 3

Color of children, by color/origin of parents*, Vila de São José do Rio das Mortes, 1838

White children of white parents	<i>Pardo</i> children of <i>pardo</i> parents	<i>Crioulo</i> children of <i>crioulo</i> /African parents	<i>Pardo</i> children of mixed parents**	Others***
279	541	214	31	12

Source: Arquivo Público Mineiro, *Seção Provincial*. Listas nominativas da década de 1830, organizadas em banco de dados pelo Núcleo de Pesquisa em História Econômica e Demográfica do Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional/UFMG.

* Includes couples, widows/widowers and single mothers.

** Includes couples composed by whites and *pardos*, by *crioulos*/Africans and *pardos*, by *cabras* and *crioulos*/Africans, and by *cabras* and *pardos*, aside from widows/widowers and single mothers of all color/origin designations, except *pardo*.

*** Includes 4 white children of a couple composed of a *pardo* husband and a white wife, 3 *crioulo* children of a *pardo/crioula* couple, 1 *crioulo* child of a *parda* single mother e 3 *preto* children of *preto* parents.

Table 4
Color designations of spouses, Parish of São José do Rio das Mortes 1780-1810

Husband/Wife	N	%
White/White	293	16,3
White/ <i>Parda</i>	45	2,5
<i>Pardo</i> /White	4	0,2
<i>Pardo</i> / <i>Parda</i>	180	10,0
<i>Pardo</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	12	0,7
<i>Parda</i> / <i>Cabra</i>	7	0,4
<i>Pardo</i> /African	16	0,9
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Parda</i>	8	0,4
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	140	7,8
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Cabra</i>	7	0,4
<i>Crioulo</i> /African	46	2,6
<i>Cabra</i> / <i>Parda</i>	6	0,3
<i>Cabra</i> / <i>Cabra</i>	3	0,2
<i>Cabra</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	9	0,5
African/ <i>Parda</i>	6	0,3
African/African	440	24,5
African/ <i>Crioula</i>	430	24,0
African/ <i>Cabra</i>	16	0,9
<i>Crioulo</i> /Unidentified	3	0,2
African/Unidentified	20	1,1
Unidentified/ <i>Parda</i>	1	*
Unidentified/ <i>Cabra</i>	2	0,1
Unidentified/ <i>Crioula</i>	8	0,4
Unidentified/African	9	0,5
Unidentified/Unidentified	38	2,1
Total	1794	100,0**

Source: Adapted from Douglas Libby & Zephyr Frank. "Exploring Parish Registers in Colonial Minas Gerais, Brazil: Ethnicity in São José do Rio das Mortes, 1780-1810," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 14:3 (Summer 2005), p. 234-5.

* Less than 0,1%

** Owing to rounding, the percentages do not total 100.0%.

Table 5
Color designations of spouses, Vila de São José do Rio das Mortes, 1831

Husband/Wife	N	%
White/White	50	18,2
White/ <i>Parda</i>	5	1,8
White/ <i>Crioula</i>	1	0,3
<i>Pardo</i> /White	2	0,7
<i>Pardo</i> / <i>Parda</i>	88	32,1
<i>Pardo</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	8	2,9
<i>Parda</i> / <i>Cabra</i>	2	0,7
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Parda</i>	4	1,5
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	47	17,2
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Cabra</i>	1	0,3
<i>Crioulo</i> /African	7	2,5
<i>Cabra</i> / <i>Parda</i>	1	0,3
<i>Cabra</i> / <i>Cabra</i>	3	0,3
<i>Cabra</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	1	0,3
<i>Cabra</i> /African	1	0,3
African/African	21	7,7
African/ <i>Crioula</i>	31	11,3
African/ <i>Cabra</i>	1	0,3
Total	274	100,0*

Fonte: Arquivo Público Mineiro, *Seção Provincial*. Listas nominativas da década de 1830, organized in data bases by the Núcleo de Pesquisa em História Econômica e Demográfica do Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional/UFMG.

* Owing to rounding, the percentages do not total 100.0%.

Table 6
Color designations of spouses, Vila de São José do Rio das Mortes, 1838

Husband/Wife	N	%
White/White	58	25,7
White/ <i>Parda</i>	6	2,5
White/ <i>Crioula</i>	1	0,4
<i>Pardo</i> /White	1	0,4
<i>Pardo</i> / <i>Parda</i>	109	48,2
<i>Pardo</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	1	0,4
<i>Crioulo</i> / <i>Crioula</i>	35	15,5
<i>Crioulo</i> /African	3	1,3
African/ <i>Parda</i>	1	0,4
African/African	7	3,1
African/ <i>Crioula</i>	4	1,8
Total	226	100,0*

Source: Arquivo Público Mineiro, *Seção Provincial*. Listas nominativas da década de 1830, organized in data bases by the Núcleo de Pesquisa em História Econômica e Demográfica do Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional/UFMG.

* Owing to rounding, the percentages do not total 100.0%.

¹ Terms such as “race” and “racial” are employed here in accordance with their traditional and, therefore, outdated definitions, i.e. based on the notion of a common and, above all, pure ancestry.

² An ambiguous term, roughly, but not necessarily, equivalent to mulatto. It will be discussed in detail below.

³ Usually used as a reference to mestizos of indigenous and African descent.

⁴ In Minas at least, up to the early decades of the nineteenth century the term served as a generic reference to Africans.

⁵ Again, the term will be further discussed below. We argue that, in Minas, it referred to native-born blacks.

⁶ Sílvia Hunold Lara, *Fragmentos setecentistas: escravidão, cultura e poder na América portuguesa* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2007), pp. 143-144.

⁷ Eduardo França Paiva, *Escravos e libertos nas Minas Gerais do século XVIII: estratégias de resistência através dos testamentos* (São Paulo: Annablume, 1995).

⁸ Douglas Cole Libby & Afonso de Alencastro Graça Filho, “Notarized and Baptismal Manumissions in the Parish of São José do Rio das Mortes, Minas Gerais (c. 1750-1850),” *The Americas* 66:2 (October 2009), p. 240.

⁹ Márcio de Souza Soares. “A remissão do cativo: alforrias e liberdades nos Campos dos Goitacazes, c. 1750 – c. 1830,” (Tese de doutoramento, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2006).

¹⁰ Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de Tiradentes. Manuscript. The *Rol* is not paginated so that it is not possible to make specific references to examples taken from it.

¹¹ Douglas Cole Libby & Clotilde Andrade Paiva, “Manumission Practices in a Late Eighteenth-Century Brazilian Slave Parish: São José d’El Rey in 1795,” *Slavery & Abolition* 21:1 (April 2000), pp. 96-127.

¹² Centro de Documentação da Arquidiocese de São João Del Rei, Arquivo Paroquial de Santo Antônio de São José do Rio das Mortes [hereafter, APSASJRM]. *Livro 7*, 219, manuscript.

¹³ APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 219, 250, 432, 443; *Livro 8*, 127, 159, 196; *Livro 9*, 461, 463, 491-491v, 567; *Livro 24*, 147, 160, manuscript.

¹⁴ Caio C. Boschi, coord. *Inventário dos manuscritos avulsos relativos a Minas Gerais no Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisboa)*. vol. 2. (Belo Horizonte: Fundação João Pinheiro, Centro de Estudos Históricos e Culturais, 1998), p. 62 (entrada 7966). In the original, the quote reads: “ordenança de Pé dos Homens Pardos Libertos do distrito de Lage.”

¹⁵ APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 388, manuscript.

¹⁶ APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 44v, 92, 119, manuscript.

¹⁷ APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 172, 176, 238, 252v., 320v, 322v; *Livro 9*, 389, 445v.; *Livro 10*, 248, manuscript.

¹⁸ APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 345, 429, manuscript.

¹⁹ APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 92, 292; *Livro 9*, 345, manuscript.

²⁰ APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 115, manuscript.

²¹ APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 86, 192, 222, 264, manuscript.

²² APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 66, manuscript.

²³ APSASJRM, *Livro 9*, 358, 386, 470; *Livro 10*, 343, 344, manuscript.

²⁴ APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 112, 196v, manuscript.

²⁵ APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 306v, manuscript.

²⁶ APSASJRM, *Livro 9*, 353, 434, manuscript.

²⁷ APSASJRM, *Livro 9*, 637v manuscript.

²⁸ APSASJRM, *Livro 8*, 74, 146, manuscript.

²⁹ Libby & Graça Filho, “Notarized,” Notwithstanding the probable undercounting of the freedmen category in all three documents, we know that in the 1795 *Rol forros* amounted to 12,9 percent of the total population of the Parish of São José, in 1831 2,8 percent of the total population of the urban seat of São José, while no freedmen whatsoever appeared in the 1838 nominal list (even though there were fifteen Africans whose condition was not mentioned, but who could only have been manumitted). Aside from the *Rol de Confessados*, two nominal lists were used here: Arquivo Público Mineiro, *Seção Provincial*. Listas nominativas da década de 1830, organized in data bases by the Núcleo de Pesquisa em História Econômica e Demográfica do Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional/UFMG.

³⁰ As the just cited article demonstrates, notarized letters of manumission became increasingly rare in the first half of the nineteenth century, although manumissions at the baptismal font continued at the same pace until the 1840s when they all but ceased. Prof. Afonso de Alencastro Graça Filho is currently examining records from neighboring São João for the 1820-1850 period. Property transfer taxes known as *sizas* record a substantial number of purchased manumissions (for which no notarized letters of liberty have been found). It is very likely that these records simply replaced notarized registers and that suggests that rates of manumission may not have been declining as rapidly as earlier thought, despite steep rises in slave prices from about 1826 on.

³¹ We would be much more comfortable using the Portuguese term *mestiçagem* with its broader connotation of dynamic mixtures, including multiple cultural aspects which go far beyond race.

³² Hebe Maria Mattos, “A escravidão moderna nos quadros do Império português: o Antigo Regime em perspectiva atlântica,” In *O Antigo Regime nos trópicos: a dinâmica imperial portuguesa, séculos XVI-XVIII*, ed. João Fragoso, Maria Fernanda Bicalho & Maria de Fátima Govêa (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001), p. 155.

³³ Sheila de Castro Faria, “Damas mercadoras: as pretas minas no Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII-1850,” In *Rotas atlânticas da diáspora africana: da Baía do Benim ao Rio de Janeiro*, ed. Mariza de Carvalho Soares (Niterói: Editora da Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2007), p. 116.

³⁴ Roberto Guedes, “De ex-escravo a elite escravista: a trajetória de ascensão social do pardo alferes Joaquim Barbosa Neves (Porto Feliz, São Paulo, século XIX),” In *Conquistadores e negociantes: histórias de elites no Antigo Regime nos trópicos. América lusa, séculos XVI a XVIII*, org. João Luís Ribeiro Fragoso, Carla Maria Carvalho de Almeida & Antônio Carlos Jucá de Sampaio (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2007), pp. 347. See also his *Egressos do cativo: trabalho, família, aliança e mobilidade social* (Porto Feliz, São Paulo, c. 1798 – c. 1850) (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad; FAPERJ, 2008).

³⁵ Roughly meaning darker skinned mulatto, but, as well soon be seen, its usage was more complex than implied here.

³⁶ Cf. Hal Langfur, “Frontier Formation and the Origins of the Botucudo War in Late Colonial Brazil”, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 82:2 (May 2002), pp. 215-256; Maria Leônia Chaves de Resende, *Gentios brasileiros: índios coloniais nas Minas do século do ouro* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 2008); Márcia Amantino, *O mundo das feras: os moradores do sertão oeste de Minas Gerais – século XVIII* (São Paulo: Annablume, 2008).

³⁷ Jack D. Forbes, *Black Africans and Native Americans: Color, Race and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 270-271.

³⁸ Museu Regional de São João Del Rei. *Livro de Testamentos n° 14*, folha 3 (22/10/1810), manuscript.

³⁹ Mariza de Carvalho Soares, *Devotos da cor: identidade étnica, religiosidade e escravidão no Rio de Janeiro, século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2000), p. 100.

⁴⁰ The fact that this slave couple was indentified as such in the *Rol* was quite unusual, as was the identification of their son. In general, slaves were listed by gender and in alphabetical order, rendering the identification of slave families difficult, if not impossible. The same holds for almost all nominal lists from the period, although the normal ordination was by gender (males, then females) and age (from the oldest to the youngest).

⁴¹ Mattos, “A escravidão moderna,” pp. 154-155.

⁴² In this case, the union of João with any of the holding’s three female slaves would have produced *cabra* children. On the other hand, the union of any of the three African males with the *cabra* slave woman could also have resulted in issue denominated as *cabra*.

⁴³ Hebe Maria Mattos de Castro, *Das cores do silêncio: os significados da liberdade no sudeste escravista – Brasil século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1995).

⁴⁴ As Hall points out, changes in designation of African origins may have resulted from the process of acculturation of recently arrived Africans. As they became more fluent in the local language, Africans were able to indicate more precisely the designation of their origin that they considered more accurate, thus shedding the more generic labels often used (for example, *angola, benguela, mina, congo, cabinda*). See: Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 42-44.

⁴⁵ Guedes, “De ex-escravo.”

⁴⁶ Escritório Técnico do Instituto do Patrimônio Histórica e Artístico de São João Del Rei. *Livros de Notas do 2° Ofício de São José*, folhas 10, 11, 126. manuscript. The baptism of four of Quitéria and José’s five children were located: APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 34, 92, 131, 205. manuscript.

⁴⁷ APSASJRM, *Livro 7*, 544, 630; *Livro 8*, 88, 196; *Livro 24*, 13V. manuscript.

⁴⁸ APSASJRM, *Livro 10*, 229. manuscript.

⁴⁹ APSASJRM, *Livro 10*, 48, 162, 281. manuscript.

⁵⁰ APSASJRM, *Livro 27*, 7, manuscript.

⁵¹ Arquivo Público Mineiro, *Seção Provincial*. Listas nominativas da década de 1830, organized in data bases by the Núcleo de Pesquisa em História Econômica e Demográfica do Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional/UFMG.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ APSASJRM, *Livro 27*, 151v, manuscript.

⁵⁴ APSASJRM, *Livro 16*, 94v, 143v e 182, manuscript. In fact, in the first two registers, the clerics also described the couple as *forros*, almost certainly indicating that Joaquim Marcelino was a freedman and that his wife, Maria Madalena, assumed the same condition, even though she clearly was free-born. This could simply have been an error on the part of the clerics, but the repetition of the error is significant.

⁵⁵ In a reversal of earlier practices, particularly from the 1850s on, clerics became more concerned with designating the color of the baptized, while color labels of parents became much less frequent.

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- ⁵⁶ APSASJRM *Livro 28*, 45, manuscript. The marriage register includes the following observation: “...*dispensados do impedimento de consanguinidade em 3º grau misto de 2ª linha transversal.*” We located a single and very late baptismal Record for the couple’s daughter Maria who was not qualified according to color. APSASJRM *Livro 17*, 50v, manuscript.
- ⁵⁷ APSASJRM, *Livro 14*, 150, 173v, manuscript. In these registers Bárbara’s color was not mentioned, but the second daughter, Bauduina, was labeled as *parda*.
- ⁵⁸ APSASJRM, *Livro 12*, 137; *Livro 14*, 9v, 127, 223; *Livro 15*, 60, 109; *Livro 27*, 110, 141v, 165, 176v; *Livro 28*, 13v-14, 33v. manuscript.
- ⁵⁹ It is, however, suggestive that in the marriage registers just cited all of Bárbara Patrícia’s sons bore the family name Albino and some the family name Fonseca, whereas the daughters all bore the Fonseca last name.
- ⁶⁰ See note 58.
- ⁶¹ APSASJRM, *Livro 14*, 284-284v; *Livro 15*, 256v-257; *Livro 16*, 22, 47, 55, 70v, 86v, 98-98v, 148v-149, 161, 165v, 172v, 175, 198, 222, 223, 226, 247v, 248v. manuscript.
- ⁶² Indeed, slaves comprised 48.7 percent of the overall parish population and 60 percent of those slaves were Africans. The rigors of slavery, not least high sex ratios, naturally rendered the formation of stable unions difficult, at the same time that the manner by which slaves were enumerated in population counts during the period usually makes it very hard to detect family ties among slaves. Thus, Table 1 is inevitably characterized by an undercounting of slave children, a fact which particularly affects the *crioulo* and *cabra* groupings and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the *pardos*. See Libby & Paiva, “Manumission Practices.”
- ⁶³ In the *Rol de Confessados*, the Matriz (the equivalent to the Vila or urban seat) was home to 36.6 percent of the total parish population. By the 1830s, the Vila’s proportional share of the parish population would surely have decreased given the robust growth of rural areas and because the urban center appears to have entered into an economic and demographic decline from the 1820s on. See: Libby & Graça Filho, “Notarized,” p. 212.
- ⁶⁴ The example of Bárbara Patrícia Lopes and of her aunt, Quitéria Maria de Souza, illustrates very well this phenomenon.
- ⁶⁵ Aside from Guedes, *Egressos*, Mattos, *As cores*, thus far represents the most serious and systematic attempt at discussing this question. The notion that the colors were gradually erased owing to “popular” pressure, however, does not hold up in the face of our evidence, nor does it lend itself to tracing linguistic transformations such as the gradual conversion of the term *preto* from a generic reference to individuals hailing from Africa to an equivalent to the condition of slavery.
- ⁶⁶ The term *preto* also appeared a few times in the 1838 list and was still being used as a generic designation of Africans.
- ⁶⁷ By endogenous here we mean marriages uniting only whites, only *pardos*, only *crioulos*, only *cabras*, or only Africans. The sample of slave couples is larger than that of free and freed couples and, given the prevalence of exogamy among slave, it is probable that the tendency toward endogamy displayed in Table 4 is underestimated. On the exogamous behavior of São José slaves see: Douglas Libby & Zephyr Frank. “Exploring Parish Registers in Colonial Minas Gerais, Brazil: Ethnicity in São José do Rio das Mortes, 1780-1810,” *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 14:3 (Summer 2005), pp. 212-244 and Afonso de Alencastro Graça Filho, Fábio Carlos Vieira Pinto & Carlos de Oliveira Malaquias, “Famílias escravas em Minas Gerais nos inventários e registros de casamento – o caso de São José do Rio das Mortes, 1743-1850,” *Varia Historia* 23:37 (jan/jun 2007), pp. 184-207.
- ⁶⁸ For a discussion of the “civilizing process” taking place in nineteenth-century Minas Gerais, see: Regina Horta Duarte, *Noites circenses: espetáculos de circo e teatro em Minas Gerais no século XIX* (Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP), 1995.
- ⁶⁹ Mirian Moura Lott, *Na forma do ritual romano: casamento e família, Vila Rica (1804-1839)* (São Paulo: Annablume; Belo Horizonte: PPGH/UFMG, 2008), p. 109.
- ⁷⁰ Bruno Pugschlitz, “O casamento na Paróquia de Santa Luzia, 1829-1858,” (Monografia de Bacharelado, Departamento de História/Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2006).
- ⁷¹ By law, foundlings were considered free, regardless of their color.
- ⁷² Renato Júnio Franco, “Desassistidas Minas – a exposição de crianças em Vila Rica, século XVIII,” (Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 2006).