Special Issue: Slavery, Everyday life, and Dynamics of Miscegenation in the Iberian World (16th-18th Centuries): Spaces, Mobility, Agreements and Conflicts

Presentation

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Apresentação

Escravidão, cotidiano e dinâmicas de mestiçagens nos mundos ibéricos (séculos XVI-XVIII): Espaços, mobilidade, acordos e conflitos

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The idea of order was central to the articulation of the Iberian worlds of the medieval and modern centuries. These societies were thought of and represented as an ordered whole of autonomous and unequal but hierarchical parts. The quality and legal status of their members

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Varia Historia, Belo Horizonte, v. 41, e25037, 2025
http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0104-87752025v41e25037

constituted fundamental elements. Not surprisingly, the difference consisted of a political inequality that defined a position and a function in that world (Hespanha, 2010). Therefore, the institution of slavery, while presented as "la más vil et la más despreciada cosa que entre los homes puede ser",[1] had a place in the social and cultural imaginary and in the juridical-political practice of the Iberian monarchies.

Unlike the Crown of Aragon, whose ports were more connected to the flows from the Black Sea, the slavery phenomenon in the kingdoms of Portugal and Castile during the late medieval centuries was basically related to the capture and sale of Muslim slaves from war and horseback riding (Armenteros Martínez, 2012). However, the oceanic expansion of the Portuguese and Castilians from the mid-15th century led to the progressive mobilization of slaves of different origins and ethnic-linguistic groups. Thus, together with the survival of the enslavement of the infidel, that is, of *"moriscos"* from the kingdom of Granada, *"berberiscos"* from North Africa and Ottoman *"turcos"*, there was also the massive arrival of black African slaves and also, although to a lesser extent, of natives from the Canary Islands, America and the Asian coasts of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The cultural, social and demographic scaffolding of the Iberian Peninsula and the New World, therefore, could not remain unchanged. Quite the contrary. The presence of *"mulatos"*, *"loros"* and *"membrillos cochos"* in the city of Seville constituted one of the "most visible consequences of the frequency of miscegenation" since at least the last third of the 15th century (Franco Silva, 1979, p. 152-153). Biological and cultural mixtures between Indians, Europeans and Africans were even more expressive in America, with the emergence of groups of *"mestizos"*, *"mulatos"*, *"zambos"*, *"pardos"*, *"cabras"* or *"mamelucos"* from the beginning of the conquest (Bernard; Gruzinski, 2005).

1 "the most vile and the most despised thing that can be among men". Las 7 Partidas, de Alfonso X, el Sabio (1121- 1284). Partida IV, Title V. Available at: http://www.dominiopublico.gov.br/download/texto/bk000005.pdf. . Access on: 16 Dec. 2024.

The methodological renewal generated by historiography in recent years has helped to deepen this field of study. Iberian societies, especially in the more urbanized environments, constituted a cultural universe characterized by

> by a wide range of differences and differences, in constant movement, mixing, but also clashing, antagonising, overlapping, in rhythms that are sometimes slow and sometimes fast, harmonious and/or conflicting, depending on the times and regions, the protagonists and their objectives. Fusions, superimpositions, and the recrudescence of differences, everything is processed, of course, in a kind of double sense [...] this process does not run in a single direction, but is constituted from the interventions of various social groups that continually influence each other, although one or some of them impose themselves, more frequently from their greater power, over the others (Paiva, 2022, p. 86).

In this sense, the concept of miscegenation dynamics allows us to approach the phenomenon as complex and multifactorial processes of biological and cultural mixtures, and not only as a final product resulting from inequality and legal dependence (Paiva, 2015). Then, knowing the spaces in which these populations developed, and the forms of sociability developed in them is fundamental. Roads, ports and ships. Dwellings, streets, squares, avenues and fountains. Workshops, market gardens, scribes' shops, mines and markets. Churches and chapels, brotherhoods and religious services. Inns, taverns and brothels. Judicial institutions and prisons... These are some examples of spaces in which relationships could develop between social agents of different qualities and legal conditions, in an infinite range of circumstances and possibilities (Pérez García, 2018; González Arévalo, 2022). In them, friendship and love, hostility and detachment were forged. Situations of learning the language and cultural codes, of reworking clothing, cuisine, dances,

songs, music... but also of reaffirming identities and socio-cultural practices took place in these spaces, laboratories of the mestizos. In these spaces, laboratories of miscegenation, one's own and other people's experiences could be exchanged, expanded, transformed or repelled.

This dossier brings together specialists from several countries to delve into the everyday life of the slave societies of the Iberian worlds. The aim is to delve into the spaces and forms of sociability that developed there. Thus, the challenge proposed is to address the episodes of negotiation and conflict, the situations of mobility, coexistence and superimposition, as well as the discourses and representations that served to distinguish or hierarchise those societies. To this end, articles are presented which, framed in the territories of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies between the 16th and 19th centuries, incorporate lines of research such as the reconstruction of individual and family trajectories, the constitution and typology of miexed-race families, the world of work and economic activities, the formation of networks of sociability and solidarity on a regional and global scale, forms of access to freedom, participation in civil and ecclesiastical lawsuits, political discourses and representations, devotions and religious life, material culture and cultural and artistic dimensions, and connected-comparative perspectives.

The original and unpublished contributions are based on a solid documentary base, a methodological-conceptual body that tries to recover, use and situate in time the words and their meanings in order to understand them historically and avoid falling into anachronisms, simplistic and stereotyped visions and moral prejudices, and a critical apparatus that dialogues and problematises the results obtained with the historiographical debates on the issue. The inclusion of distant geographical spaces and in a far-reaching temporal arc enriches the dossier, as it enables an approach to the everyday life of the Iberian slave societies from different times and spaces. Because these, despite being part of global processes, had their own local and regional specificities.

Beginning with the Iberian Peninsula, Javier Fernández's article analyses a means of liberation used by slaves and their families, such

as the legal actions brought before the civil courts in the south of the Crown of Castile, a territory characterised in the 16th and 17th centuries as home to a significant part of the slave population on the Iberian Peninsula. The freedom processes collected in the judicial sources constitute an example of the social integration of the slaves involved in them, as well as showing the tensions that existed in their daily lives, especially about their relations with their masters.

On the other side of the Atlantic, and without abandoning conflict, Claudia Rodrigues and Anderson José Machado de Oliveira examine, mainly through parish sources, the disagreements that arose between the Brotherhood of *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* and the *Santa Casa de Misericórdia* in Rio de Janeiro during the 17th and 18th centuries over privileges related to funeral processions. As the authors indicate, the religious associations of blacks were not indifferent to the litigation between brotherhoods present in the societies of the Iberian worlds.

Continuing with the study of slavery through parish sources, the article by Roberto Guedes and Moisés Peixoto delves into the analysis of the baptism and death registers of the Parish of Our Lady of the Pillar of Iguaçu throughout the last decades of the 18th century and the early years of the 19th century. With a study centred on the figure of Captain Luciano Gómes Ribeiro, owner of a sugar mill with 155 slaves under his charge, the authors present an example of how members of the slave-owning elites present in agricultural areas could be freedmen who went on to occupy their own space of power within the community.

In this universe of social mobility marked by freedom, Eduardo Corona's article delves into the socio-demographic characteristics of Vila Rica de Ouro Preto in the first third of the 18th century. Through an exhaustive analysis of parish and municipal sources, the author provides information on the social and labour structure of the town, highlighting the role of slaves in the framework of family sociability and the dynamics of miscegenation.

Returning to the 19th century, and continuing with slave emancipation, Alex Andrade Costa's article analyses the various strategies

employed by slaves in the coastal regions of Bahia during the first decades of the century. The prolixity of detail often found in judicial documentation is reflected in this study in the multiple testimonies of slaves presented throughout the study, which show the tensions, struggles and resistance experienced by some people to overcome a reality they considered fateful.

In this way, we hope that the dossier, which aims to deepen and offer a more complex vision of slavery, everyday life and the dynamics of miscegenation in the Iberian worlds of the 16th-18th centuries, can become a reference for specialists and for new generations of historians.

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Received: 16 Dec. 2024 / Revised by the author: 9 Jan. 2025 / Accepted: 6 Mar. 2025
Responsible editor: Ely Bergo de Carvalho

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Varia Historia
vol. 41, e25036, 2025
Pós-Graduação em História, Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais,
ISSN: 0104-8775
ISSN-E: 1982-4343

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1590/0104-87752025v41e25036