



RECENSÃO

Creole Societies
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de Philips Havik and Malyn Newitt (eds.),
por Jane Landers

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This useful volume results from a conference held at King's College, London in 2004, to honor the late Charles Boxer, world renowned historian of the Portuguese Empire, Chair of Far Eastern History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and Camões Chair of Portuguese

at King's College, London. All scholars of the Portuguese colonial empire, including, of course, the authors of these essays, are indebted to Boxer for his life's work. The proceedings of the 2004 memorial conference were published in 2007, but the volume subsequently went out of

print and Cambridge Scholars Publishing has done an important service in re-publishing the collection.

The volume opens with an introductory essay by the editors, Philip J. Havik and Malyn Newitt presenting themes that tie some of the quite disparate essays together. These include the cycles of Portuguese diasporas that from 1499-1974 saw millions leave Europe for the Atlantic Islands and Africa and then beyond, the elusive nature of identity, and the creation of new ethnicities in Portugal's far-flung creole societies. These societies developed as Portuguese merchants, government officials, or military men married local women from a dizzying array of ethnic groups. Religious identities played a larger role in the early diasporas as Jews and "Moors" were expelled from Portugal or emigrated as always suspect "new Christians", while Portuguese missionaries embarked, intent on converting diverse local populations.

Creolization was not, however, a uniform process across the Portuguese empire. In the Atlantic islands and West Africa arose generations of black Portuguese and new creole languages. As the Portuguese became "Africanized", their local wives developed significant social and economic power. Some of these patterns are also evident in the Portuguese colonies of Brazil and Angola. In the Northern Province of India, as in Goa, however, the Hindu caste system impeded intermarriage with Portuguese newcomers and their cultural influence was never as great in those colonies. Meanwhile in Madagascar and in nineteenth-century

Luanda, the authors argue that distinct new identities evolved. In the former, the Betsimisaraka were the product of intermarriage of local populations and pirates of various European origins and in the latter, the Ambakistas developed via generations of Luso-African relations in Angola.

Of the additional essays in the volume, four focus on the Atlantic islands (Cape Verde and São Tomé), four on West and Central Africa, two on Brazil, one on Madagascar, one on Goa, and one on the Northern Province of India. The topical focus varies.

Toby Green's opening essay analyzes the development of slave trading networks that Portuguese merchants organized on the coasts of "Guinea" and Angola in the seventeenth century. At these trading posts, some Portuguese *conversos* or "new Christians", freed from the oversight of the Inquisition, returned to Judaism. Their very success, however, brought them to the attention of the Inquisitions of Lisbon, Cartagena, Lima, and Mexico, from whose trial records Green extracts their accounts. Green makes a valuable contribution in linking Africa and the Iberian Atlantic.

Philip J. Havik also examines Afro-Atlantic connections in revisiting Charles Boxer's early work *Mary and Misogyny*. He respectfully argues that in failing to include the Guinea Coast and Cape Verde in his otherwise expansive study, Boxer also failed to recognize the actual autonomy and social, cultural, and economic power of Luso-African women, who did not fit the European or Latin American models. He urges a new reading of

published sources and further archival studies to unearth the agency of women Boxer failed to see. He also argues that given the small number of Portuguese men actually living on the Guinea Coast, their African partners or *tungumá*, whom Havik considers the “key pillars” of their communities, exercised unrecognized political and economic importance that deserves further study.

José Lingna Nafafe’s following chapter focuses on the few Portuguese merchants who helped form the creole societies of the Guinea Coast and Cabo Verde. After analyzing the various historic usages of the terms, *lançados* or *tangomãos*, found in several centuries of Portuguese chronicles, Nafafe concludes that these intermediaries between Portugal and Africa lived as guests of African rulers and adopted much of the culture of their host communities, thereby creating creole cultures and identities.

Luis Batalha’s chapter discusses evolving views of Cape Verdean Creole, arguing that it and other creole languages are not imperfect models of European languages, but languages in their own right. Despite this agreement among linguists, however, contemporary Cape Verdeans still view the various island Creoles as languages of informal exchange, while Portuguese remains the national language of postcolonial elites and of the educational system.

The fifth chapter in the volume, by Gerhard Siebert, analyzes three different theories for the origin of the Angolares of São Tomé, each with a political origin of its own. The first, now largely debunked,

was a nineteenth century story of shipwreck survivors; the second, one of autochthonous islanders who battled the Portuguese until 1693 and then lived relatively autonomously in the south; and the third, that Angolares are descendants of runaway slaves who formed maroon communities in the mountains of São Tomé. Citing linguistic, historic, and genetic data and analyzing the geography of the region, Siebert convincingly supports the maroon origins of Angolares, and explains the political reasons why it has not been accepted by modern islanders. He also calls for historians of maroons to incorporate the Angolares in their comparative studies.

Beatrix Heintze, to whom scholars are indebted for her translations of German archival treasures, offers a detailed study on an important Luso-African family from the Ambaca region of Angola in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Over generations, the largely literate and “Europeanized” Bezerra family had gained fame as translators and guides for European slave traders, regional merchants of ivory, cattle, cloth, and other goods and products and in the process also developed into regional powerbrokers. Heintze further argues that these important families actually became a sort of regional identity of Ambakistas.

Rosa Williams next tracks the evolving narrative of “whiteness” in Angola among Portuguese descended settlers proudly designating themselves “filhos da terra” or “naturais” to challenge the metropolitan idea of colonial subjects as mixed-race and corrupted “degregados.”

The late A. J. R. Russell-Wood's chapter carefully explicates all the sometimes counter-intuitive ways in which race and status were categorized in colonial Brazil. He argued that while ethnicity, language, cultural practices, and religion all marked people, so did place of origin. He showed how persons of African descent born in Brazil sometimes adopted the same negative stereotypes of African-born individuals that some Portuguese-descended persons held. Thus he argued, the Atlantic both united and divided Brazil and Africa.

The chapter by Arne Bialuschewski describes how the establishment of European pirate havens on the east coast of Madagascar over the course of the seventeenth century, gave rise to powerful mixed-race families known as *malata* and of a local confederacy known as the Betsimisaraka in the eighteenth. Neither gave rise to a royal lineage for the island. While one can see connections between this case study and that of Heintze on the Bezerras of Angola, the level of detail and the frequent use of unexplained foreign terms makes this chapter less accessible and probably of primary interest to other scholars of Madagascar.

Similarly, Teotónio R. de Souza's chapter analyzes passages from Orlando Ribeiro's 1956 study of Goa, which lamented that unlike other Portuguese colonies such as Brazil or Cabo Verde, Goa showed no great admiration of the metropole or its language. De Souza attributes this lack of "Lusophilia" to the cultural disrespect the Jesuit missionaries and Portuguese administrators displayed

toward the local Konkani-speaking and largely Hindu population.

The essay by the late Glenn R. Ames also examined Portuguese failure to win over local populations in the Province of the North in India. Capitalizing on inter-group conflicts of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were granted a foothold in the region. They quickly built fortified cities on the coast from which to conduct what grew to become a very valuable sea trade for the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*. By the seventeenth century the Portuguese had built impressive northern cities such as Diu, Damão, Baçaim, and Chaul, boasting elaborate houses and churches manned by priests from a large and diverse number of Catholic orders. Ames also notes the "reinóis" or metropolitan disrespect of locals, and especially of Hindus, against whom a series of restrictive laws were passed.

In summary, this edited volume is a very valuable contribution for scholars of the Portuguese Empire that has relevance also for scholars studying other creole societies. Many similar patterns can be detected in Spanish, English, and French colonialism and this volume permits more comparative studies.

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