

JUSTIFYING NOBILITIES

Old and new colonial elites 1750-1807

Justificando nobrezas. Velhas e novas elites coloniais 1750-1807

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ABSTRACT

Between 1750 and 1807, 259 overseas subjects of the Portuguese monarchy used the justification of nobility process to receive coats of arms. This article uses quantitative methods to analyze their petitions and trace their social profile, especially of the Luso-Brazilian elites, noting that the new elites, particularly the officers of the militia, were the predominant social category. The study also found that the old elites were hardly representative in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro and very present in Pernambuco and Maranhão.

Keywords: Nobility; Elites; Military; Overseas; Colonial Brazil.

RESUMO

Entre 1750 y 1807, 259 súditos ultramarinos da monarquia portuguesa recorreram à justificação de nobreza para receber brasões de armas. Ao analisar o acervo, o artigo empregou o método quantitativo para traçar o perfil social sobretudo das elites luso-brasileiras e assim constatou que os oficiais das tropas auxiliares e das ordenanças era a categoria social mais predominante. O estudo ainda detectou que as antigas elites eram pouco representativas na Bahia e Rio de Janeiro e muito presentes em Pernambuco e Maranhão.

Palavras-chave: Nobreza; Elites; Militar; Ultramar; Brasil colonial.

In the Ancien Regime,¹ honor was not merely a value, an ethereal and subjective distinction. It was materialized in privileges, exemptions, and liberties which adapted the individual to the social hierarchy. Honor without titles or the benesse of the monarchy mattered little. As a recognition of honor, the sovereign granted privileges, positions, ranks, and titles, which made the social position of the subject visible. Honor, thus, stopped being just an epithet and became materialized, turning into a social reference. With royal recognition, the individual was apt to hold noble positions, count on a special court, be exempted from determined certain taxes, receive *tenças* (pensions) or large commanderies, hold positions restricted to the second estate, enter the best environments, and enjoy the sociability of their peers (MARAVALL, 1989, p. 11-146; MONTEIRO, 1987, p. 15-51).

Since the beginning of colonization, the residents of the Americas were restricted to just three types of honors: the *foros de fidalgos* (a charter which made someone a *fidalgo*), the *comendas* (commanderies), and the habits of the Military Orders. It is worth mentioning that the titles of the high nobility were forbidden to those living overseas. These three remunerations commonly resulted from military services, for this reason the distribution of royal mercies became intense after the wars against the Dutch. Residents of the captaincies of Pernambuco and Bahia submitted 439 petitions for the granting of habits between 1640 and 1680. Of these, only 116 were refused and did not enter the Portuguese military orders. *Foros de fidalgo* were also granted to those living in Brazil as a reward for their services in war. At the time there existed two types of *fidalgos*: in the first, with more prestigious *foros*, were the *fidalgo cavaleiro* (knight), *fidalgo escudeiro* (squire) and *moço* (youth) *fidalgo*; in the second rank were *cavaleiro fidalgo*, *escudeiro fidalgo* and *moço de câmara* (literally chamber boy) who was at the bottom of this hierarchy. Between 1641 and 1681, 244 subjects received the title (or *foro*) of *fidalgo* for military services in the State of Brazil or the State of Maranhão. Second rank *foros*, particularly the *cavaleiros fidalgos*, accounted for 69% of all these grants. Among the *fidalgos* of the first rank, only 18% were sons of *fidalgos*. Among the 244 new *fidalgos*, only 11% were knights of the Orders of Christ and Santiago. However, among the 27 knights, 18 received the most prestigious *foro*, that of *fidalgo cavaleiro*.²

Luso-Brazilian studies have also investigated the Military Orders in the Pombaline period (1750-1777) when overseas subjects came to receive the title of knight through the purchase of military services of third parties and the royal pardon of any 'defects' related to the manual trades. Notable for entering the ranks of the lower Portuguese nobility were the military, miners, and rich merchants willing to spend large amounts of capital. Those wishing to do so had to acquire 10 shares of the Company of Grão-Pará and Maranhão or of the Company of Pernambuco and Paraíba; or submit eight *arrobas* (approximately 90 kilos) of gold annually to the foundries (Casas de Fundição) of the Captaincy of Minas Gerais.

In Portuguese America, the rank of knight ensured pensions, privileged jurisdiction in the courts, and purity of blood. Those graced with this rank had to be judged by knights or

bishops. They could not be arrested or punished in the public square. Their goods could not be confiscated in the event of war or other possibilities. Before the restoration (1640), *comendadores*, knights of the military orders, judges of appeal, *fidalgos*, military officers, and familiars of the Holy Office, amongst others, were exempt from tithes. However, the new government ended this privilege, although the *nobreza da terra* (local nobility) tried to resist the royal orders (RAMINELLI, 2015, p. 23-25).

Studies of the privileges received by the overseas elites still need greater detailing. Although there are some works about the knights of military orders in the seventeenth century in Pernambuco and Bahia, there is a lack of knowledge about the other captaincies. In relation to the century of the Enlightenment, investigations are still even more incipient, nor do we not have a general overview of the knights of military orders resident in Brazil, Grão-Pará, and Maranhão. The concession of *foros de fidalgo* and Luso-Brazilian *fidalgua* are almost unexplored topics. Even more incomplete are studies of processes relating to the justification of nobility and the concession of coats of arms, although there is ample documentation stored in Torre do Tombo in Lisbon.

This article intends to explore the justification of nobility processes held in the *Feitos Findos* collection in Torre do Tombo and the concessions of coats of arms registered in the *Arquivo Heraldico-Genealogico* by Viscount de Sanches de Baena (BAENA, 1872). Both these sources are complementary, since to obtain the coats of arms it was necessary to prove nobility. However, the focus will be on the records of the justification of nobility and not on the coats of arms. This study aims to trace a sociological profile of the colonists who wished to prove their nobility. Certainly, the supplicants were rich and honored men, but did they come from the first families or were they consolidated as elites during the eighteenth century? Were they new or old elites? Were the old families interested in having a coat of arms? It should be mentioned that this article intends to analyze the quantitative results and will have limited conditions to explore the subject in greater depth.

Coats of arms and their judicial process

Since the Middle Ages, the Portuguese monarchy had sought to preserve the old coats of arms and control the granting of new ones. D. Fernando (1367-1383) ordered a rich embroidered tapestry to be made with the arms of Portugal to preserve its coats of arms and names, "only wanting those who had them by right to be honored with them. For this he ordered the King of Arms, to paint in his books the insignia of all the lineages of the Kingdom" (FARIA, 1740, p. 109-110). From then on, the *reis de armas* (kings of arms) were charged with analyzing justifications of nobility, as well as preparing and recording the coats of arms. Control over insignia became relevant because this actually represented royal recognition of the nobility of families. D. Afonso V (1438-1477) thus sought to reform the dynamics of the concession of coats of arms with the purpose of repressing abuses and intervening in a more effective manner in the composition of the nobility. At this time a

book was created to record the arms of all the old *fidalgos* and those directly descended from them (FRANCO, 1989, p. 453).

In 1476, the monarchy refused to let anyone carry arms on their shields, except nobles hierarchically above the rank of *fidalgo* of arms (SÃO PAYO, 1927, p. 21). Breaching this rule resulted in a fine of a silver mark paid to the king of arms. The sovereign thereby reinforced the powers of his agents responsible for the coats of arms. Years later, D. Manuel (1495-1521) had two books prepared with the arms of all the families of the kingdom, to be kept in different locations: the first in Torre do Tombo (Royal Archive) and the other in the power of the *armeiro-mor* (the royal armorer). The king also ordered all the tombs in the kingdom to be inspected to verify the arms and images found there. Furthermore, all shields were to be painted with his colors and tones, something which was done in the palaces of Cintra (SÃO PAYO, 1927, p. 21; BAENA, 1872, p. XII-XIV). Moreover, the same sovereign created an institutional and functional structure in the form of a corporation capable of reinforcing the attributes of the above mentioned royal official.³ The *Regimento da Nobreza dos Reis de Armas* (1512) established a career and nominated representatives for each kingdom: Portugal, the Algarve, and India. Heraldic art thus became the responsibility of the king of arms, *arautos* (heralds), and *passavantes* (*pursuivants*), called the officers of arms.⁴

According to Portuguese heraldic law, charters of coats of arms were not attainable by all nobles, rather those *fidalgos* who were hierarchically superior to the *fidalgo* of arms. In other words, only high status *fidalgos* could ask for the distinction, namely the *fidalgos de solar* (*fidalgos* who were the direct successor of an old noble house), *fidalgos* by lineage, 'notable *fidalgos*,' and *fidalgos* entered in the King's Books, who were called the 'principal *fidalgos*' or the 'principal nobility of the kingdom.' Also included in this select group were the *fidalgos* of the council, *fidalgos cavaleiros*, *fidalgos escudeiros*, *fidalgos capelães* (chaplains) and *moço fidalgo*. Although they could have coats of arms, the *fidalgos* of arms were of the second rank, along with nobles by lineage (with four grandparent nobles), *cavaleiros fidalgos*, the judges of the High Courts, the knights of the Military Orders, and those granted the title of *Dom*. Finally, the third order was composed of 'people of ordinary nobility,' such as those who were educated, people with degrees, royal professors of Latin and Greek grammar and rhetoric, squires, and 'homens bons' (city councilmen) (SÃO PAYO, 1927, p. 12-13).

As can be seen from the above rules, the coat of arms was considered an emblem of the high ranking nobility. All the descendants of men with arms, whether by the paternal or maternal line, inherited the distinction. In granting arms, the monarch ennobled the recipient as reward for services rendered. When commoners were ennobled the concession was called new arms, but when they referred to the modification of already existing or used arms, it was called the confirmation or adding of arms (SEIXAS, 2011, p. 230). Over time the principles became more flexible, since the concession of charters of arms did not only occur through the proof of descent from certain families (the coat of arms of succession). The

monarch could grant arms to subjects who had rendered services, above all in war, granting loyal vassals the title of *fidalgo* of arms, in other words the lowest position among the *fidalgos* who could receive the charter of arms. As time passed, the rules were loosened and the concession of *fidalgua* and a coat of arms became generalized to reward diplomatic, judicial, financial, and palace services, amongst others. To receive these rewards supplicants had to prove relevant services to the monarchy. According to the Marquis of São Payo, the coat of arms by succession or the confirmation of the coat of arms were obtained through the justification of nobility. The investigation of the ancestry of the supplicant began with one of the four civil magistrates of the Court and the *Casa de Suplicação* in Lisbon, or with an ordinary judge in the other municipalities of the monarchy. The process was aimed at proving, based on witnesses and documents, the affiliation, nobility, and *fidalgua*, or at least the title of *fidalgo* of arms.

However, the norms stipulated in the regulations were not always obeyed, especially in relation to documentary proof. It was not rare for the civil magistrates and judges to overlook documentary proof and to be satisfied with witnesses who proved that the four grandparents of the petitioner were nobles, sometimes located below the *fidalgos* of arms. In fact, the law was disrespected when the judges and the kings of arms contented themselves with deficient evidence, since "*fidalgua* by lineage had to be proved by genealogical trees approved by the king of arms, according to the Law of 11 May 1607" (SÃO PAYO, 1927, p. 22). In other words, the authorities could not stick to the proof of the nobility of the father, they also had to investigate the grandparents. In this sense, it was perceived how *fidalgua* differed from nobility, since having the privileges of nobility was not synonymous with *fidalgua*. For the former, parents and grandparents had to be nobles or *fidalgos*.

In the reign of D. João V, the abuses of the kings of arms continued, and the monarch appointed Friar José da Cruz the *Cartório da Nobreza* (the Office of Nobility), followed by Friar Manuel de Santo Antônio. The reform sought to investigate the truth of allegations made by those requesting insignia. According to Viscount Baena, the reformers tried to improve heraldry in Portugal. However, their efforts were lost during the Lisbon earthquake which completely destroyed the *Cartório da Nobreza*. In this tragedy, 13 in-folio books with the records of three thousand charters of coats of arms were lost. All that was left were 150 letters copied in a private book and some transcribed documents kept outside the office by the reformer Friar Manuel de Santo Antônio. New records commenced in 1764 and were improved and more than one copy was kept from the following year. Much later, in order to improve the process even more, the 1807 provisions established the need to demand documentary proof for all information provided at the moment of petitioning for coats of arms for succession. However, this requirement did not prevent abuses, since doubtful cases, such as those mentioned by the viscount (BAENA, 1872, p. XVI; SÃO PAYO, 1927), multiplied in the charters referring to the residents in Brazil, as will be shown below.

Falsifications were recurrent and lead us to ask why the rules were subverted. Was it

worthwhile forging a noble past, paying genealogists and witnesses to create ancestors from the high ranks of the *fidalgua*? Certainly, coats of arms gave families prestige and facilitated the social ascension of the *nouveaux riche*. In addition to becoming a *fidalgo* and belonging to the most distinct order of the kingdom, the family granted arms had the privilege of connecting the arms to the majorat (*morgado* in Portuguese), of having their followers use liveries in the various colors of their arms. Family members could use them on harnesses, seals, and banners during battle, in the field, and during skirmishes, exhibiting them in their homes, tombs, chapels, and other buildings (SÃO PAYO, 1927, p. 24).

The process of obtaining the charter of arms of succession began with the opening of an administrative process with the Judge of the Nobility, consisting of the king of arms of Portugal, as presiding judge with full jurisdiction, and a clerk. Behind closed doors, the justification documents were investigated, and finally the king of arms ordered the clerk to draft the charter with the indication of the respective arms. Nevertheless, the entire process started with the judicial decision about the justification of nobility of the petitioner, in other words, judicial recognition that the latter possessed a state of nobility in accordance with the ordinances of the kingdom. In the case of Portugal's overseas dominions, I found a manuscript in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* (AHU) which mentioned the *auto* (or process) of proof of nobility. It began with magistrates (*Ouvidoria Geral* of Maranhão) and was afterwards sent from São Luís by the clerk José Manuel dos Reis to the Overseas Council or to the Secretary of State for Overseas Territories.⁵

To prove the nobility of descent, i.e., *fidalgua*, the supplicant had to present a 'train of life' according to the customs of the nobility, with horses, servants, and nursemaids for the children. They could not have exercised the "manual trades or [been] a judicial attorney, and also had to be descended from the families with coats of arms whose arms the petitioner intends to use [...]" Although the documentary proof was of greater importance, in the justification processes sometimes all that could be found were baptism certificates, especially of the petitioners themselves and sometimes of their parents and grandparents. Equally presented were letters of *foro de fidalgo* (*fidalgo* privilege or jurisdiction), some certificates for services, occasional testimonials from genealogists, and transcriptions of printed works. Few, therefore, followed the requirements, disregarding instead the exhaustive proof of the alleged nobility and *fidalgua* (SÃO PAYO, 2001, p. 7-8; 2001a).

Nevertheless, it is worth analyzing the concession of charters of arms to see how the monarchs distributed these over time. Based on the enormous survey carried out by Viscount Sanches de Baena, I analyzed the number of charters of arms granted in the reigns of D. José I (1750-1776) and D. Maria I (1777-1807).⁶ Unfortunately the concessions prior to 1755 cannot be assessed, due to the destruction of the *Cartório da Nobreza* during the earthquake (CABRAL, 2001). In the reign of D. José, we can find 521 charters of arms of succession, compared with 864 under D. Maria. The difference between the two administrations can be perceived most clearly in the way annual concessions were calculated: be-

tween 1750 and 1776, there were 19.3 concessions per year; while between 1777 and 1807 the annual average rose to 27.8. Similar proportions can be found among the concessions granted to overseas residents. It also appears that coats of arms were particularly granted to people from Portugal, although the residents of Brazil, Grão Pará, and Maranhão were the main recipients in the Portuguese overseas territories – the *ultramar*.

Fidalgos, nobles and the Ultramar elites

The coats of arms of overseas residents have never received their due attention from historians, although the documentation has been accessible, as I mentioned above. Among those listed by Viscount Baena are 239 grants of arms to overseas residents – in the Americas, Africa, and India. In addition to the above mentioned *fidalgos*, I found in the Feitos Findos Collection in Torre do Tombo 20 acts of justification of nobility referring solely to residents of Portuguese America. Various processes were mentioned in Baena's book, others, however, do not appear in the Viscount's list and for this reason they were included in the research. The universe of analysis of this article thus consists of 259 processes of overseas subjects, dated between 1750 and 1807 (BAENA, 1872).⁷

It is worth noting again that this study is not concerned with the coats of arms, but rather with the profile of subjects interested in obtaining royal recognition of their nobility and *fidalgua*. In the cases referred to by the Viscount I have no doubt about the granting of the charters of arms, but this certainty does not apply to the 20 acts from the Feitos Findos Collection. In fact, as this is not a study of coats of arms, the results of the justification process are actually of little relevance, in other words, whether or not royal approval was obtained shall not be analyzed. Actually I am not aware of any documentary collection which holds the petitions denied by magistrates or the kings of arms. I will thus not make any distinction between the information obtained from the Viscount and from the records of the Feitos Findos. This procedure will be clarified below.

To deal with the 259 processes I created an Excel database with the following columns: process number, name of subject, positions and titles, affiliation, positions and titles of father, positions and titles of ancestors, place of residence, place of birth, date of concession or date of document. In this universe, 224 residents were found in the captaincies of Portuguese America; 28 subjects living in Africa and Asia, amongst whom only three settled in Portugal afterwards; and 7 had no precise identification of residence.

According to the research of Viscount Baena, between 1750 and 1807, the Portuguese monarchy granted 1385 charters of arms: only 17% of these (239) referred to the overseas territories, 16% (219) to Portuguese America.⁸ Compared to those granted arms from Portugal, those from Brazil had a very reduced presence, a fact that once again proves that ennoblement occurred massively in the metropole (RAMINELLI, 2015; MONTEIRO, 2009, p. 65-82). Analyzing the geography of those granted arms in the Portuguese overseas territories, the elites from Bahia are most important: Bahia 21% (54 individuals); Pernambuco 14% (37);

Rio de Janeiro 13% (35); Maranhão 6% (16), and São Paulo 6% (15). In the other Portuguese conquests, Angola stands out with 4% (11). Even in Rio de Janeiro, despite being a large port and the economic center of the overseas dominions at the turn of the nineteenth century, the elites asked for or received a reduced number of coats of arms when compared to Bahia. The latter captaincy counted on honored families dating back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a fact which perhaps explains the predominance of the old capital.

Figure 1 – Coats of arms and justifications, annual incidence per region



Source: BAENA, 1872; Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Feitos Findos, Justificação da nobreza.

Figure 1 was based on the analysis of the justifications of nobility per year. It shows the enormous incidence of charters of arms and justifications during the Joanina regency (1792-1807), a period much troubled by the revolutions in France and Haiti. The numbers are as follows: between 1750-1776, 73 records were found, or approximately 2.7 per year; between 1778-1791, 67 or 5.1 per year; between 1792-1807, 119 or 7.9 per year. Certainly wars and political instability can explain the concession of rising numbers of coats of arms. On the other hand, during the Pombaline period the incidence was much lower. Unfortunately, there are no studies about the concession of habits of knights in the military orders which coincide with this chronological focus. It is fundamental to compare and assess the incidence of graces, above all in the *Joanina* regency.

It is worth mentioning here that the Secretary of State for the Navy and Overseas Dominions, D. Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho, was concerned with maintaining harmony among

the provinces of the Empire and had plans to neutralize the revolutionary forces which prowled the metropolises and the colonies during the regency of D. João. He believed that Lisbon and its overseas territories had to obey the same laws and customs and receive the same honors and privileges, since only the sacrosanct unity would permit the subjects of the monarchy, based in the most distant places, to see themselves just as Portuguese. His words sought to strengthen the integrity of the empire under the command of the monarch, a union based on exchanges and interdependence between colonies and the metropole. The defense of a single identity would be responsible for uniting the inhabitants of the different provinces of the empire. D. Rodrigo also intended to prevent anti-Portuguese feelings, that had possibly spread amongst educated people in Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, or the poorer classes in Bahia. Among his plans were fiscal reform and the increased participation of young Brazilians educated in Coimbra in administrative decisions (RAMINELLI, 2008, p. 177-178; MAXWELL, 1978, p. 254). In summary, Figure 1 reflects the policy aimed at integrating colonial elites in the lower stratus of Portuguese nobility.

Among the men who tried to justify their nobility many were from the military, 52% (134) of the total. With a very reduced presence, clergy (presbyters, canons, priests, and vicars), were the second most numerous category, though only accounting for 8% (22), followed by bureaucrats (agents of local authority and magistrates) with 6% (15). Although they had a leading role in colonial society, mill owners (2) and merchants (1) were almost completely absent. The first because the possession of mills and lands was certainly considered of lesser value than military rank. The almost complete absence of merchants could be due to the preference of wealthy men to indicate military rank, instead of a humble past as a shop assistant and a trajectory of social ascension.

Surely, towards the end of their lives men of commerce presented military service and titles to obtain their honor. Not rarely was the military experience very recent and lacking in achievements; the rank was more honorific than effective. The trajectory of the rich Portuguese merchant José Gonçalves da Silva, also called '*o barateiro*', clearly demonstrated how his financial contributions to the Crown allowed him attain the rank of coronel, the habit of the Order of Christ, *foro de fidalgo* from the Royal Household, and the charter of arms in 1797.⁹ He began to use the rank as a symbol of social distinction, although his military career was very recent. Only a profound and prosopographic study, worthy of a book, would allow this hypothesis to be confirmed. Nevertheless, this is a possible explanation for the significantly reduced number of merchants listed among the supplicants.

The socio-professional profile becomes more complicated when the absences in justification of nobility processes are perceived. 20% (52) of subjects did not provide information about their activities. Documentary imprecision is flagrant, as pointed out by Marquis São Payo (1927, p. 22-24; 2001, p. 7-8). Moreover, in addition to proving their *fidalgos* lineage, supplicants were also supposed to live as nobles, with horses, servants, and nursemaids. They further had to prove that they had never exercised manual trades or been attorneys.

The lack of data only proves the weakness of the processes.

In addition to this absence, the strong presence of the military is also due to the accumulation of activities. Among the Luso-Brazilians who desired arms can be found 46 officers who were also bureaucrats, university graduates, mill owners, councilmen and merchants, while 43 had titles: knights of the military orders, *fidalgos*, and nobles. In Bahia, of the 54 subjects, 22 were military officers (41%); in Pernambuco, 37 out of 16 (43%); in Rio de Janeiro 35 out of 20 (57%); in Maranhão 16 out of 10 (62%); in São Paulo 15 out of 10 (67%). Clergy were important in Pernambuco (6), while in Bahia there were only two, and in Rio de Janeiro only one. Nevertheless, in the distribution of the military in the overseas territories, the predominance of Rio de Janeiro, Maranhão, and São Paulo can be perceived.

Throughout the overseas dominions, there were only 12 high-ranking officers¹⁰ (4,6%). Included in this computation are the ranks of brigadier, colonel, lieutenant coronel, and sergeant-major. It is worth noting that there did not always exist references about the troops commanded, whether they were regular, auxiliaries, or *ordenanças* (a type of militia or territorial force). In addition to the ranks cited, the most representative among the supplicants were: *capitão-mor* (captain-major), *capitão de Fortaleza* (captain of a fortress), captain, *alferes* (ensign), and lieutenant. Among the parents of the officers mentioned to prove *fidalgua*, only five were of high rank. In Bahia in particular, property owners and merchants had no interest in integrating with regular troops. In addition to the constant exercises, the leading families and their children saw the military career as being badly paid, which also did not produce any privileges or prestige (KENNEDY, 1973, p. 429).

To assure their nobility, 63 subjects presented their titles of knight and *fidalgo*; the distinction was assured in only 24% of cases. Of the 63 titles, 57 were of knights from Military Orders, the others were knight *fidalgos* (14) and only one was a *comendador* – Pedro Dias Paes Leme, called a *fidalgo*, *comendador* of the Order of Christ and *guarda-mor geral* (head guard) of Minas Gerais (BAENA, 1872, p. 544). According to the determinations of the Portuguese heraldic laws, the charters of arms were destined for *fidalgos* hierarchically superior to the *fidalgo* of arms. If this principle had been enforced, few overseas subjects would have been granted the distinction. However, the titles of supplicants were not questioned at the moment of proving the nobility of lineage. It is thus worth looking at the profile of their parents and grandparents.

The paternal profile was not very different from that of their children, since of the 259 petitions 111 indicated that the father was a military officer (43%), while 16 showed that they were bureaucrats (6%). The incomplete nature of the documentation appears again, since 97 petitions (37%) do not indicate paternal social position. It is also worth mentioning that 37 knights of the Order of Christ are registered here, notably cavaleiros *fidalgos*, i.e., *fidalgo* of the second rank. However, the wealthy merchant, *fidalgo* cavaleiro, knight of the Order of Christ, Fernando Carneiro Leão (BAENA, 1872, p. 166), a resident of Rio de Janeiro, stated that his father, Braz Carneiro Leão, was also a *fidalgo* cavaleiro. In general, the lack of rigor

in the justification of nobility could be assessed not only in the 97 petitions out of a total of 259 without paternal references, but also in the 50 subjects (19%) who named neither a father nor any other relative.

As proof of the status of descent, grandfathers were only mentioned in 77 petitions, of whom 83% (64) were military officers, while only 14 had habits of military orders or *foro de fidalgo*, though there were no *fidalgos* of the first rank. Nevertheless, the results of the research fit well with the endogamy of the military families, in accordance with the study of John N. Kennedy (1973, p. 428). In relation to the most remote kinship, various references were found to the high Portuguese nobility, since subjects indicated as ancestors the Duke of Cadaval, the Earl of Prado, and Marquis of Minas, the Earl of Galveas, the Earl of Pombeiro, the Earl of Aveiras, and the Earl of Quinzal (BAENA, 1872, p. 63, 78, 216, 427). This kinship appears to us to be quite dubious because in the process illustrious lineages are not always duly assured with documentary proof. Often oral testimony or hearsay information was enough.¹¹

Many supplicants (67) informed the magistrates about their genealogical trees, stating that their families went back to the wars against the Dutch in Pernambuco and Maranhão, at the beginning of the colonization of Brazil or the Portuguese medieval past. It is worth mentioning here that the sergeant-major and *cavaleiro fidalgo* of the Royal House Antônio Borges da Fonseca who was a descendent of the Bandeiras de Mello, a family of valiant soldiers from the wars of Pernambuco. He was the fifth grandchild of Pedro Bandeira de Mello who arrived in Olinda in the company of the donator Duarte Coelho Pereira. Before the American adventure, Gonçalo Peres Bandeira had fought in the battle of Toro, in 1476, when he recovered the standard from the hands of the enemy. Among his illustrious ancestors was D. Rodrigo de Mello, *comendador* of Pombeiro.¹² On his mother's side, he was the grandson of Antônio Borges da Fonseca, coronel of the regiment of infantry of Olinda and governor of the captaincy of Paraíba. To the contrary of data given by the Viscount, Antônio was the grandson of Antônio José Vitoriano da Fonseca, captain of Ceará between 1765 and 1781, genealogist and author of *Nobiliarquia Pernambucana* (BAENA, 1872, p. 32; VARNHAGEN, 1981, v. 3, t. 5, p. 268; FONSECA, 1925). Did the error originate in the documentation or the work of Viscount Baena? Unfortunately, I have not yet located this nobility justification process in Torre do Tombo.

Perhaps the imprecision of the acts of justification of nobility allowed some supplicants to create resounding genealogies, such as Fr. Ignacio Teixeira da Cunha, presbyter and abbot of the Parish of São João da Cova in Braga, from the *freguesia* of São Gonçalo da Cachoeira in the archbishopric of Bahia. According to his papers, he was a descendent of D. Isabel Pereira, "sister of the constable D. Nuno Álvares Pereira, all descendants of the first and most illustrious *fidalgua* and nobility of these kingdoms." The same descent justified the *fidalgua* of the supplicant Luiz Teixeira da Cunha Coutinho Carvalho e Abreu, from São Gonçalo dos Campos, Vila da Cachoeira, in the archbishopric of Bahia (BAENA, 1872, p.

267, 457). Certainly he was a relative of the presbyter Ignacio da Cunha, mentioned above. Whether or not these subjects had such illustrious ancestors cannot be proven. It is worth mentioning that charters of arms were not granted due to their own heroic deeds, nor due to the titles of their parents and grandparents. Their nobility was based only on the deeds and fame of the constable.

The lack of written testimony to prove nobility is repeated in many processes. Instead of trying to demonstrate genealogical inventions, this article will now analyze whether the traditional Brazilian elites were represented in the petitions for coats of arms. In other words, even when supported by tradition, conquests, the founding of *vilas* and cities, in martial deeds in the wars against the French, Dutch, Indians, and *quilombolas*, did the Brazilian elites see their honor increased by coats of arms?

Old and new Brazilian elites

In the database there exist two columns dedicated to the descent of those asking for charters of arms. The first is for parents and the second for grandparents and more distant ancestors. 39 supplicants failed to provide any data about parents or any other ancestor. In other words, 15% of the petitions did not need to provide ancestry to submit the request for the aforementioned benesse. Sometimes these processes are related to others from the same family who received coats of arms and for this reason do not fulfill the requirement to list relatives. 47 (18%) do not provide any data about the father, but did about other ancestors, while 49 only provide information about the father. 113 (44%) were more careful, supporting their petitions with data about the 'status' of the father and other ancestors. In this article, the strategy of distinguishing the father from ancestors sought to identify the old and new elites. In fact, some supplicants (67) mention deeds and titles of ancestors going back to the Pernambuco Wars, to the high Portuguese nobility, and even to Constable Nuno Álvares Pereira. I have called this type of data 'distant ancestry.' In principle, I was not concerned with determining its veracity, although in some cases I raise doubts about the spectacular genealogy.

The 49 supplicants who only provided paternal data were conceived here as recent nobility, while the 113 who provided information about titles and positions of parents and ancestors tended to be older nobility. I, therefore, tested this hypothesis with the data provided by Viscount Baena and the 20 acts of justification located in the Feitos Findos Collection, as mentioned previously. To make the investigation feasible, I did not use all the processes, but only those of supplicants in the following captaincies: Bahia (54 acts), Pernambuco (37), Rio de Janeiro (35), Maranhão (16) and São Paulo (15). The choice of these captaincies was based not only on the relevance of the numbers, but also the support conceded by the published genealogies.¹³

Table 1: Elites per captaincy¹⁴

CAPTAINCY	TOTAL NO OF SUPPLICANTS	PATERNAL DATA	ANCESTRAL DATA	DISTANT ANCESTRY
BAHIA	54	25 (46%)	32 (59%)	15 (28%)
PERNAMBUCO	37	29 (78%)	28 (75%)	13 (35%)
RIO DE JANEIRO	35	20 (57%)	19 (54%)	05 (14%)
MARANHÃO	16	12 (75%)	11 (69%)	07 (44%)
SÃO PAULO	15	12 (80%)	07 (46%)	03 (20%)

Source: Baena, 1872; Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Feitos Findos, Justificação da nobreza.

Without any great surprise, the Pernambuco supplicants present themselves as the oldest nobility due to the high rates of paternal references and to illustrious ancestors, as shown in Table 1. Of importance here are the eight subjects from the Albuquerque family and the services they rendered in the Pernambuco Wars, although two of the supplicants did not make references in the acts to the deeds of their lineage. It is worth mentioning the son of the captain of grenadiers in the auxiliary infantry, José Mariano Albuquerque Cavalcante, whose nobility justification process was simplified because his relative, José Joaquim Cavalcante de Albuquerque Lino, a *bacharel* (a university graduate) and secretary of the captaincy of Mato Grosso, had received a coat of arms in 1782 (BAENA, 1872, p. 406, 338). Nor were the deeds of his ancestors necessary for Manuel de Mello Albuquerque to receive a coat of arms. He was actually a descendent of the Mello e Albuquerque family and held the position of captain of regular infantry from the regiment of Olinda (BAENA, 1872, p. 497). Perhaps in this process, his lineage and personal qualities did not have to be proven to obtain the grace. In summary, in some cases the lack of data did not refer to recent social ascension. I will now analyze these case by case.

The Maciel Monteiro family does not appear in the Borges da Fonseca genealogy unlike the Albuquerques, but Viscount Baena recorded four brothers with the coat of arms between 1794 and 1802. The above mentioned lineage arose out of the marriage between the professed member of the Order of Christ and the captain commanding the auxiliary forces of the captaincy of Pernambuco, Antônio Francisco Monteiro, and D. Joanna Ferreira Maciel, granddaughter of the captain of *ordenanças* and councilman of Olinda, Braz Ferreira Maciel. These are the parents of the four brothers granted arms who petitioned for this separately, which was not common. The brothers included: Antônio Francisco, lieutenant coronel of the auxiliary cavalry of Pernambuco; José Francisco, a graduate from the faculty of law and a candidate for the chair of letters in the university; Luis Franco, an infantry cadet in the Recife regiment; Manuel Francisco, a graduate in canon law from the University of Coimbra and captain commanding linked to the auxiliary forces of the captaincy of Pernambuco (BAENA, 1872, p. 49, 382, 450, 478-479). Certainly this family was rich and honored enough to send two children to Coimbra and also to put two more in the troops of the captaincy. Nevertheless, none of the brothers resorted to the military services

of their ancestors in the Pernambuco Wars. The family had become notable more recently, as can be seen in the trajectory of those granted arms.

In the AHU papers, the records about the brothers become frequent after 1794. That year, when he received his arms, Manuel Francisco was appointed by the governor D. Tomás José de Melo (1787-1798) as administrator of the funds of the extinct *Companhia Geral*. In 1798, Antônio Francisco asked the queen for confirmation of his rank as lieutenant coronel of the regiment of cavalry of the *vila* of Sirinhaém. In 1800 he also asked to retire with the rank of colonel of militia. It is also worth mentioning that Manuel Francisco, entitled lieutenant coronel of the Militia Regiment of Nobles of the *vila* of Recife, asked the regent D. João to be promoted to the rank of coronel of the Old Militia Regiment in 1802.¹⁵ At the turn of the nineteenth century, it appears that the Maciel Monteiro family seems to have had enough prestige and quality to receive coats of arms, even though its lineage was not so old.

Also among the Pernambucanos, I found two descendants of the Fonseca Galvão family not included in *Nobiliarquia Pernambucana* (1748) by Borges da Fonseca, although they state that their ancestors had fought against the Dutch. Numerous references can be found to military and clergy with this surname in the miscellaneous Pernambuco documents in the AHU. However, the most remote document refers to the captain of regular infantry of the captaincy of Pernambuco, José Lopes da Fonseca Galvão, dating from 1726. In the justification processes, the oldest ancestor is Manuel Lopes Galvão, *mestre de camp* of the infantry of Olinda, a name not located in the AHU records.¹⁶ In summary, the Maciel Monteiro and the Fonseca Galvão families were not among the descendants of the liberators of Pernambuco, but became part of the leading families during the second half of the eighteenth century.

Immortalized in the genealogy (FONSECA, 1925, p. 52, 66, 142, 184, 199), members of the Albuquerque, Cavalcanti, Borges da Fonseca, Carneiro da Cunha, and Bandeira de Mello families took advantage of the military deeds of their ancestors to petition for arms. However, the supplicants of the traditional families Campello, Uchoa, and Paes Barreto did not resort to their antiquity. It is worth mentioning that, with the exception of the Albuquerques, the other families have only one representative in the database. Thus, the coats of arms granted to the illustrious residents of Pernambuco were to a large extent supported by tradition, in the heroic deeds in the wars against the Dutch and in later military service. Nonetheless, a renewal of the leading families can be seen, evidenced by the Maciel Monteiro and Fonseca Galvão families.

Maranhão is represented by a restricted number of families. Due to the small number (16 petitions), two groups appear to dominate coats of arms during this period. Most important are the descendants of Diogo Campos Moreno with six representatives and of Lourenço Belfort with four. The origins of these lineages go back to different scenarios. The former to the conquest of Maranhão and the fight against the French, to Sergeant-Major

Diogo Campos Moreno, born in Tangier and a soldier with experience in the wars in Flanders. In 1602, he went to Pernambuco during the administration of Diogo Botelho (1601-1608), afterwards participating actively in the conquest of Maranhão. In addition to military services, he wrote two important works: *Livro da Razão do Estado do Brasil* and *Jornada do Maranhão* (VARNHAGEN, 1981, v. 1, t. 2, p. 55).

The second family descends from Lancelot (Lourenço) Belfort, an Irishman born in Dublin and resident of Lisbon. He settled in Maranhão around 1736 and became a rich landholder and founder of the Kelru mill. He participated in the senate of the council of São Luís in various legislatures between 1744 and 1759. In 1758, the monarch granted him the habit of the Order of Christ (COUTINHO, 2005, p. 97-98; MOTA, 2007, p. 21-45). In the justification of the nobility of his descendants, it appears that the patriarch of the family held the rank of *mestre de camp*. His formal enlistment in the auxiliary troops occurred late, when he was around 60 years of age. He thus became a soldier after building an important estate, since he was a prosperous landholder, owner of a mill, and a rich agricultural producer. Certainly, Lourenço became a military officer not due to those deeds in war, but because of the honor and wealth accumulated during his lifetime.

In addition to these two families, among those granted arms in Maranhão was the lieutenant of grenadiers of the São Luís regiment, the *fidalgo* and Knight of Avis, Francisco Xavier de Miranda. As well as his long military career, he was also the son of Captain-Major José Machado de Miranda, a citizen of São Luís, Crown and Treasury attorney and third grandchild of captain-major Manuel Pita da Veiga,¹⁷ an officer active in the 1640s. Shortly after receiving the charter of arms, the lieutenant asked the Overseas Council for the privilege of having his family included on the role of nobility of Maranhão and petitioned for the habit of the Order of São Bento de Avis.¹⁸

Without the support of lineage, but with a letter of recommendation from the Secretary of State D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho and a fabulous estate, the Portuguese merchant based in Maranhão, José Gonçalves da Silva, known as '*barateiro*', as mentioned above, had much prestige in court. Due to his numerous financial contributions during the French invasions he received the habit of the Order of Christ and a coat of arms at the age of 50 (BAENA, 1872, p. 385). Once again the rank of coronel of militia in the city of São Luís functioned as an honorific title, since the merchant had not followed a military career before receiving the rank.

Except for the above mentioned wealthy merchant, all those who received coats of arms in Maranhão were from the captaincy,¹⁹ born in São Luís and Alcântara. Of the 13 supplicants, four received arms between 24 and 29 years, all descendants of Diogo Campos Moreno or Lourenço Belfort. Of a more advanced age, between 40 and 60, were the six descendants of new and old families. In summary, the results from the captaincies of Pernambuco and Maranhão allow me to doubt that coats of arms were hereditary royal gifts. I am sure that the parents could not transmit their coats of arms to their children and

grandchildren, otherwise so many justifications of nobility would not be necessary. Was this specific to overseas territories? If a brother or close relative had a charter of arms, why the need to prove nobility? Why did the Albuquerque family, awarded titles and ranks since the middle of the seventeenth century, have to prove its nobility to obtain a coat of arms?

Mentioned in Friar Jaboatão's genealogy, the most traditional lineages of Bahia are generally absent in the acts of justification of nobility. Neither the principal landholders and mill owners, nor the rich merchants petitioned for coats of arms (KENNEDY, 1973; BORGES, 2015, p. 141, 237, 247). The supplicants from Bahia were officers from the auxiliary troops and the *ordenanças*, whose status can be assessed by their resorting to the habits of the military orders, even knowing that these titles, according to heraldic law, were insufficient to obtain a coat of arms. Only 11 knights from Bahia presented the insignia to support their requests, in other words only 20% of petitions counted on habits. Although Bahia had the highest number of request of justification of nobility, 29 processes (54%) provided no information about parents, while 15 (28%) mentioned the military activity of the progenitor. In relation to the distant ancestry, grandparents and other ancestors, 55% of *Baianos* followed the norms and mentioned them. Paternal and maternal grandparents were notably high-ranking officers (*mestre de camp*, sergeant-major, lieutenant coronel, coronel, and governor) and knights of the Military Orders. When more distant relatives were mentioned, four supplicants resorted to the high Portuguese nobility, to the Duke of Cadaval and Constable Nuno Álvares Pereira.

The clerk of the council of Salvador, Antônio José da Rocha Sousa Dormondo, considered himself a great-grandson of the Earls of Prado and the Marquis of Minas. In his genealogy, Friar Jaboatão stated that his family was from Madeira Island, but did not allude to earls or marquises (BAENA, 1872, p. 63; CALMON, 1985, p. 651-664). The supplicant Francisco Leonardo Carneiro da Rocha de Sousa Meneses mentioned his "descent by the male line from the Adornos, Venetian *fidalgos*" (BAENA, 1872, p. 202). Finally, Hilário de Carvalho Resende mentioned the coat of arms granted to his father in 1751 and to an ancestor in 1519.²⁰ Also worth citing is the Melo e Vasconcelos family, descendent of a certain Manuel, who had fought at the battle of Alcácer Quibir (also known as Alcazar or Ksar El Kebir) and who became a knight of the Order of Christ and settled in Bahia at the end of the sixteenth century (BAENA, 1872, p. 206-208; CALMON, 1985, p. 345-346), the Siqueira e Bulcão family with three descendants (BAENA, 1872, p. 289, 838, 876); CALMON, 1985, p. 181, 594); and Brito Freire with one representative (BAENA, 1872, p. 874; CALMON, 1985, p. 224-226).

In 10 petitions, references were found to the military service of ancestors. Of these, five supplicants referred to the wars in India and Pernambuco, one in Maranhão, and another in Galicia. In addition to the clerk of the council, two supplicants worked in local administration: Antônio de Sousa Castro Meneses, knight of the Order of Christ, *provedor da saúde* and councilman of the senate of Salvador, and Francisco Gomes de Sousa, general accountant of the Royal Treasury (BAENA, 1872, p. 86, 193).

From the above, it is clear that the Bahian supplicants provided insufficient data about their status. This absence is even made more evident by the finding when it is seen that around 25% of processes did not provide data about either parents or ancestors. The principal families of the captaincy and high ranking officers were rare among the supplicants. Perhaps the oldest elite in Bahia did not give the same importance to arms that the best families in Maranhão did. Among the Bahian supplicants were only two sergeant-majors (from the cavalry and from the *tercio* of the city's garrison), whereas the others were captains and officers, but all from the auxiliaries and the *ordenanças*. While 41% of Bahians were military officers, the others were merchants, graduates, sons of officers, and wealthy men without a defined social position. This still unidentified contingent were able, in some way, to receive the charter of arms without providing information about their quality of the origin of their ancestors. Another fundamental piece of information which escapes us is the age of those who received arms. In these processes, the date of birth of the supplicant is not always recorded. The lack of data also leads us to consider the possibility of rich men and those with a background in the manual trades buying a positive report from the local authorities and presenting this to the kings of arms. Nevertheless, it will be fundamental to search for the Bahian supplicants in other documentary collections: in wills, registers of graces, and in the AHU correspondence.

For now, I will mention an emblematic case. The Santos Marinho e Castro family is absent from the Jaboação genealogy, but there exist four representatives among those given arms: Dona Anna Quitéria do Nascimento e Castro was the wife of the wealthy merchant, Francisco Marinho e Castro, and maternal grandmother of Anna Constança Marinho e Castro, Antônio Cardoso dos Santos Marinho, and Pedro Antônio Cardoso dos Santos Marinho e Castro, who all received arms (BAENA, 1872, p. 23-24, 34). The last three were the children of Antônio Cardoso dos Santos, coronel, knight of the Order of Christ, treasurer of the Bull of the Holy Crusade, general treasurer of the Royal Treasury and wealthy merchant.

In September 1799, Pedro Marinho e Castro sent a petition to the prince regent to receive the habit of the Order of Christ and mentioned that his deceased father had established in Salvador "one of the largest Houses of Commerce in all the Americas which created large amounts of assets for the ports of Europe and Africa with which he paid the Royal Treasury an immense sum of Rights [...]". Due to his high status, the rich merchant occupied various positions in the administration and always lived in accordance with the law of nobility. The governor Manuel da Cunha e Meneses (1774-1779) had created a regiment of auxiliary infantry and appointed Marinho e Castro's father as lieutenant coronel. After five years in the position, he became coronel linked to the regiment.²¹

Pedro Marinho's petition for a grace reveals the extraordinary social ascension and ennoblement of merchants. Wealth permitted not only the control of prestigious and powerful posts in the administration, but also allowed titles of knights and arms to be received. It also demonstrates how wealthy men came to control soldiers and disputed with

career officers the high ranks of the auxiliary troops. In this case, uniquely in this set of documentation, there exist two women (a grandmother and granddaughter) granted arms. Between 1790 and 1802, four members of the family received the grace to exhibit their arms, demonstrating the rapid trajectory of ennoblement propelled by merit and vast assets (RAMINELLI, 2015, p. 103-132).

The petitions (15) referring to the captaincy of São Paulo are notable for their paternal references, especially due to military services and being involved in the council. In compensation, the other ancestors did not become relevant at the moment of justifying nobility. In principle, the hypothesis can be put forward that among the *Paulistas* the new elites predominated. It is nonetheless worth mentioning the various descendants of Captain-Major Amador Bueno (c. 1584-c.1649) who still kept the memory of this illustrious ancestor. According to Pedro de Taques, he occupied "the honorable position of the republic of his patria, having held the reins of its government repeated times [...]" (LEME, 1980, p. 75-110). In addition to this kinship, it is worth highlighting that those given arms were also linked to the genealogist Pedro de Taques and stated this in the justification. Four supplicants were part of this family: Francisco Leandro de Toledo Rendon, José Arouche de Toledo Rendon,²² Diogo de Toledo Rendon, and João Ferreira de Oliveira Bueno.

The first three were affiliated with the Rendons, a family mentioned in the *Nobiliarchia Paulistana*, living in the captaincies of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but coming from the Kingdom of León in Spain. The first three members of the Rendon family who came to Brazil were the children of the *hidalgo* D. Pedro Matheus Rendon, a *regidor* (judge in the county) in the town of Ocaña. On royal service the *fidalgos* D. João Matheus Rendon, D. Francisco Rendon de Quebedo, and D. Pedro Matheus Rendon Cabeza de Vacca landed in the Bay of Todos os Santos with the Castilian general D. Fradique de Toledo Ozorio in 1625 (LEME, 1980, II, p. 249-290).

As a representative of the principal families from São Paulo, I found Luiz Rodrigues Pacheco de Godois e Alvarenga de Moraes who claimed to be descended from the two families mentioned by Taques: Godoy and Alvarenga. The former came from Balthazar Godoy, a Castilian knight based in São Paulo at the time of the Iberian Union (LEME, 1980, III, p. 141-170). The Alvarengas came from Lamego and were descendants of Antônio Rodrigues de Alvarenga, a family of *fidalgos* with a coat of arms. According to Taques, in June 1681, Captain Estevão Ribeiro de Alvarenga, also from Lamego, received arms, granted by the clerk of 'generation' and the king of arms of Portugal. The captain's charter must have been lost in the earthquake as it is not part of the set published by Baena. It is also worth mentioning that Pedro de Taques found this record in the papers of the council of São Paulo (LEME, 1980, p. 253-282), a practice not found in the other captaincies. Not rarely did the nobility justification processes begin in the *ouvidorias* (parts of judicial system). What is novel about this is the registration of charters of arms by municipal authorities, in other words the results of a decision taken in Lisbon were returned to São Paulo.

Apparently, only five of the *Paulistas* granted arms were from the old nobility. The others did not mention their lineage. Moreover, there remain 10 supplicants who did not provide any data about their more remote ancestors but took advantage of paternal status to obtain arms. Nine were officers, sergeant-majors, captains, and ensigns, generally officers from the *ordenanças*, based in São Paulo or in Jundiaí.²³ Five were children of officers, and two sons of citizens of São Paulo. In fact, the last two were brothers, both sergeant-majors. In summary, 67% of those granted arms in São Paulo did not belong to the old families, they were officers and gave little information about their family. Nonetheless, they all received the charter of arms.

The supplicants from the captaincy of Rio de Janeiro stand out due to the high number of officers 22 (57%) and due to the presence of six high ranking officers from the regular troops. In Bahia there were only two, in Pernambuco one, while in Maranhão and São Paulo there did not exist any high ranking officers among the supplicants. Although this distribution of military officers was predictable, since Rio de Janeiro was the capital of the state of Brazil, there is no evidence that their predecessors had joined the nobility. Of the 22 officers only seven had military parents and grandparents. In fact, in the justification of nobility acts, the officers from Rio de Janeiro do not present a distant ancestry, in other words ancestors prior to their grandparents. They thus belonged to families who had joined officialdom in the previous fifty years. Nor had they served in the wars against the Dutch in Pernambuco, Angola, and Bahia, against the French in the capture of Guanabara Bay at the beginning of the eighteenth century, or against the Castilians on the southern borders.

The other supplicants presented even more fragile proof of nobility, with 43% not providing any data about their parents and 51% not mentioning other ancestors. In just three petitions are there references to illustrious relatives. It is thus worth mentioning Antônio Justino de Brito Lima, whose father had received arms in 1772.²⁴ His ancestors, in the paternal and maternal line, were knights of the military orders, familiars of the Holy Office, *cavaleiros fidalgos* of the Royal Household. Finally, he was the fourth grandson of João Novais de Campos, interim governor of Angola (BAENA, 1872, p. 65).²⁵ The doctor in canon law in Coimbra, Ignácio Rodrigues Mascarenhas stated that his family was from the house of the Earl of Palma, and the captain of regular infantry of Rio de Janeiro, João de Oliveira Barbosa, stated that he was the grandson of the *alcaide-mor* (city councilmen) from the city of Bahia and also, albeit in a very vague manner, that his ancestors were nobles and obeyed the law of nobility (BAENA, 1872, p. 255, 315).

With the help of João Fragoso, I was able to find two supplicants from the Amaral Gurgel family (BAENA, 1872, p. 188, 427; SANTOS, 2015) who did not resort to the deeds of ancestors to justify their nobility, although the family had been of greater importance since the beginning of the eighteenth century. The first was the captain-major of the *vila* of Parati, Francisco Carvalho da Cunha Amaral (Gurgel), who indicated his father as coronel and mother as member of the above mentioned family, but who dropped the Gurgel from her

name.²⁶ The second was the knight of the Order of Christ, José Viana do Amaral Rocha, not cited by Rheingantz (1967, v. 2, p. 324-340). He claimed to be a descendant of Captain João Batista Jordão and his wife Ângela Arã do Amaral, daughter of Touvem Gurgel (Toussaint Grugel), from the kingdom of France. From his surname Rocha, he claimed descent from the French *fidalgos* Monsieur de la Rocha who had gone to Portugal “in the wars that were there at that time” and called himself the Earl of Quinzal. It has to be investigated why both did not exalt the wealth and power of the family in Rio de Janeiro to justify the nobility.²⁷

In summary, as in Bahia, many applicants from Rio de Janeiro were officers from the auxiliary troops and the *ordenanças* and some belonged to the most traditional families of the captaincy. It is also worth registering the presence of the powerful wealthy merchant Brás Carneiro Leão and his son Fernando Carneiro Leão who received coats of arms and accumulated titles and military ranks in the Rio de Janeiro militia. Nevertheless, the former was the only one of the list of 17 wealthiest merchants mentioned by Fragoso (BAENA, 1872, p. 116, 166; FRAGOSO, 1998, p. 361). The Carneiro Leão family was very rich, but it did not have the honor inherent to the families of the first residents.

Table 2 – Lineage of supplicants*

JUSTIFICATION	INCIDENCE	PERCENTAGE OF 158
SON AND GRANDSON OF MILITARY OFFICERS	53	33,6%
OLD HOUSES	46	29,1%
MILITARY OFFICERS WITHOUT LIEGE	15	9,5%
MERCHANTS	9	5,7%
IBERIAN NOBILITY	15	9,4%
SUPPLICANTS WITHOUT KIN	20	12,7%

Source: Baena, 1872; Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Feitos Fintos, Justificação da nobreza.

The data from Table II shows the lineages of the 158 supplicants from the captaincies of Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Maranhão, and São Paulo. Once more military officers stand out (68 supplicants), notably those who presented as ancestors military fathers and grandparents (53). In the general computation, the old houses are well represented, but it is worth noting that the ‘principal families of the land’ were of old origin and served in the ordinary regiments and militias and, therefore, a large part were military officers. In fact, the genealogies provide evidence of the economic and political survival of these families, formed between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the above mentioned captaincies, although this was a phenomenon more evident in Pernambuco and Maranhão. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that in the acts of justification of nobility, the first and principal houses were not always indicated, meaning genealogies had to be used to identify them. In summary, coats of arms were desired by the ‘local nobility’ by the nobles and the military officers.

Conclusion

Before concluding, the specificities of the quantitative analyses have to be drawn attention to again. The results presented here are very promising, but not always does the serial documentation resolve the problems revealed in this type of study. In the next stage of the investigation, I will resort to other documental funds, such as wills, administrative correspondence, and records of graces. It would be impossible to take into account all of this in one article. With these reservations, I move on to the conclusions.

In Portuguese America, those from Portugal rarely received coats of arms. The supplicants were born overseas, had served as military officers and received with greatest intensity the charter of arms in the *Joanina* regency, a period of enormous instability in Portugal and in Brazil. Therefore, the decoration of officers from the auxiliary forces and the *ordenanças* points to the royal recognition of their services, to the need to valorize the subjects charged with maintaining internal order and protection against external threats in the different captaincies. Since our military history still needs further study, I consider it probable that the troops were concentrated in Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco. The incidence of military officers in these captaincies explains the greater number of supplicants.

I found even more evidence that Portuguese heraldic norms were not followed. It is worth mentioning the most notorious, the heredity of coats of arms. According to Portuguese norms, heredity nobility was transmitted from fathers to sons, or even from grandparents to grandchildren (OLIVEIRA, 1806, p. 15-32). Following the same principle, the charter of arms was a royal grant of a public and heredity nature, perpetuating itself "until the end of times" (SEIXAS, 2011, p. 230). In the research, this maxim is contradicted by three pieces of evidence. The first refers to the 65 supplicants, 46 fathers and 19 grandparents who presented themselves as *fidalgos* or knights of the Military Orders. Although inserted in the second estate, they had to prove their nobility, to the contrary they would not have received arms. The second piece of evidence shows that to obtain coats of arms, the descendants of the principal families of the captaincies, notably those decorated with honors since the seventeenth century, did not have guarantees of their nobility and individually sought to prove them. The third establishes that various members of the same lineage or family personally resorted to the justification to assure their insertion in the second estate. If the first family member received a coat of arms, inheritance guaranteed to the others the same grace, without through any sort of qualification. In general, this research has found that the norm of heredity was not applied to overseas subjects. As a result, the supplicants had to ask for the justification of their nobility, even if their ancestors had been *fidalgos* or nobles.

In accordance with Portuguese heraldic law, in the noble hierarchy, only *fidalgos* with arms upwards had the necessary status to receive arms. Actually few residents of Portuguese America were *fidalgos cavaleiros*, *fidalgos notáveis*, or *fidalgos de solar*, in short *fidalgos* of the first rank, but not even for this reason did they remain without arms. Was this the explanation to individually submit to the justification of nobility? Unfortunately, the heraldic

norms did not respond to this type of questioning, nor did the historiography. Nevertheless, there were *fidalgos* of the first rank who justified their nobility.

If the principle of heredity did not apply to the supplicants of Portuguese America, it can be concluded that all those who received arms had to have justified their nobility to receive the grace. In other words, those absent from the list were not granted the arms. The principal families, with assets and an old lineage, did not have arms for reasons that went beyond the absence of status and of possessions.

Resorting to genealogies, I found evidence that the oldest families had the lowest incidence in Bahia (20% of total supplicants), Rio de Janeiro (11%), and São Paulo (33%), but in Pernambuco (51%) and Maranhão (43%) they had an important presence. In general, the quantitative results indicated that in the first captaincies the justifications of nobility were based on more recent services and deeds, since the military officers of the auxiliary troops and *ordenanças* rarely based their petitions on their ancestors of the seventeenth century or even the first half of the eighteenth. Perhaps the social hierarchies had suffered greater alterations there than in Pernambuco and Maranhão, where the supplicants descended from the old families still valorized the arms and had political and economic conditions to ask for them. As in the overseas territories the justification of nobility was individually required and was not based on heredity, these became more convincing, therefore I do not consider it probable that the coats of arms of the seventeenth century were still of value in the second half of the eighteenth.

The analysis of Tables 1 and 2 shows that the supplicants of Pernambuco and Maranhão belonged to an older elite, while in the other captaincies the traditional elites either did not have the power to request arms or did not consider them something capable of increasing their own honor. This last hypothesis is well proven for Bahia, since based on various studies, I found that the most important families did not appear in the list of those who received arms.²⁸ In principle, the absence of the 'first and principal families' could indicate their decadence, but this was not the case of Bahia. In general, a large part of supplicants were part of emergent groups, which resorted to insignia to add honor to their material and political assets. As they were nobles without lineage, they resorted to arms, exhibited in houses and clothes, to compensate for their recent nobility.

The qualitative analysis seeks to explain why the oldest families were more absent among the supplicants from Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. Only a study of the various social strata can provide an answer to the question coming from the quantification. Similarly, I still do not understand the reason why some individuals did not mention their illustrious ancestors when they requested the justification of nobility. Why did they omit the antiquity of lineage in the acts of proof of nobility? For this investigation, I had to go from case to case and to reconstruct the trajectory of their progenitors. Nevertheless, the quantitative study raised questions of greater importance, the dynamics between the old and new elites in colonial society.

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Notes

1 I would like to thank Nuno Monteiro, Thiago Krause, Alexandre Pelegrino, and Giovane Albino for their reading and criticism. João Fragoso and Nuno Monteiro also helped me with the sources and bibliography.

2 In relation to the habits of the military orders and the *foros de fidalgos*, see: (KRAUSE, 2012, p. 94-96,133-152; RAMINELLI, 2015, p. 23-59, 132). For the venality of the habits in the Pombaline period, see: (OLIVAL, 1988-1989, p. 73-97; 2001, p. 202-217; STUMPF, 2014, p. 265-360). In relation to the concession of *foros de fidalgo* in Portugal, I indicate the decennial averages presented by (OLIVAL, 2001, p. 176). The citation can be found on p. 177.

3 In relation to the king of arms, I found various studies, see: (SÃO PAYO, 2001, 2001a; CABRAL, 2001; CUNHA, 1963, p. 367-383).

4 Only much later would Brazil get a king of arms, since in the 1500s it was only the land of Brazil wood (FRANCO, 1989, p. 453-454; CUNHA, 1963, p. 367-383).

5 AHU, Maranhão, doc. 8047.

6 It is worth explaining the chronological focus here. The reign of D. José ended in February 1777, but for the quantitative effects I took 1776 to be the end point. In this research, the government of D. Maria is taken to end with the establishment of the court of Rio de Janeiro.

7 It is worth emphasizing that various brothers requested the grant of arms in the same process. In these cases, I only counted one of the brothers.

8 Due to the incomplete information about overseas coats of arms listed by Viscount Baena, I sought to complement the data by resorting to the nobility justification processes in the Feitos Findos Collection, above all when the subjects were in both documentary sources. In a sample of around 50 records, I realized that the precariousness of the data did not originate in insufficient research by the Viscount, but in the records themselves.

9 In relation to the financial aid of a rich merchant, see the various documents found in AHU, Lisbon, Maranhão, docs. 7720, 7750, 8191, and 8222. In relation to the titles and the rank of coronel of the militia of Maranhão, see:

AHU, Maranhão, doc. 8395; (BAENA, 1872, p. 385).

10 For the military hierarchy, see the chart of regiments of regular troops: AHU, Pernambuco, doc. 9235. I would like to thank Giovane Albino for the indication and the transcription of this document. Unfortunately, I do not have sufficient space to make reference to studies about military history.

11 In relation to genealogical falsifications in Pernambuco see (MELLO, 1989). I should also mention the various forms of falsifying nobility studied by (SORIA MESA, 2007, p. 261-318).

12 This *comendador* ancestor is not mentioned in *Nobiliarquia Pernambucana* (FONSECA, 1925, p. 184).

13 In this phase of the research the consultation of works dedicated to genealogy became fundamental: (CALMON, 1985; FONSECA, 1925; 1926; RHEINGANTZ, 1965-1967; COUTINHO, 2005; LEME, 1980).

14 It is worth mentioning the numbers of the captaincy of Minas Gerais, although they will not be analyzed in this article: total number 29; paternal data 62%; other ancestors 72%; distant ancestry 31%. With these numbers the profile of supplicants from the captaincy is similar to those of Maranhão and Pernambuco. Nevertheless, a more detailed analysis is fundamental to make this approximation.

15 I encountered various references to the family in AHU, Pernambuco, docs. 12915, 13735, 13934, 14827, and 15965.

16 The supplicants are Canon Cypriano Lopes Fonseca Galvão and the Presbyter José Bernardo da Fonseca Galvão (BAENA, 1872, p. 133-4, 369); the two have the same lineage. In relation to the members of the family, see the following documents: AHU, Pernambuco, docs. 3639, 4022, 4841, 5419, 6621, 7330, 7375, 7972, 8325, and 8404.

17 The references to the *capitão-mor* date from the 1640s, see the following documents: AHU, Maranhão, docs. 188, 189, 229, 230, amongst other.

18 AHU, Maranhão, doc. 8352.

19 I now cite data from 13 *fidalgos* based on the biographies produced by Coutinho (2005). As a result, three supplicants are outside the computation.

20 The coat of arms of the father did not appear in the list of Baena (1872), nor was there any proof in the justification of nobility, see: Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Feitos Findos, Justificação da nobreza, 12, 21.

21 AHU, Bahia, doc. 15094.

22 In relation to life and work, see: (RODRIGUES, 1979, p. 157-159). According to Rodrigues, the Rendons were *mestiços* having intermixed with Guaianá Indians.

23 In relation to the military ranks of these officers, see various documents: AHU, São Paulo, doc. 648, 699, 714, 978, 1031, 1075, 1064, 1084, 1131, 1183, amongst others.

24 Viscount Baena mentioned the charter of arms of the father, Antônio Aniceto Brito de Lima, a native of Villa Nova de Cerveira (BAENA, 1872, p. 27).

25 He was known to the governor of Angola, Paulo Dias Campos (1575-1588).

26 There are various records of graces in his name: ANTT, Registro Geral das Mercês de D. João V, li. 8, f. 290; Registro Geral das Mercês de D. José liv. 3, f. 318.

27 In this investigation I found Francisco Carneiro da Cunha Amaral not mentioned by Baena and Rheingantz. Although it is necessary to read the process, I am almost certain that it is one more person from the Amaral Gurgel family. ANTT, Justificação da Nobreza, Feitos Findos, 10, 29.

28 The list of principal families, large landholders, and wealthiest merchants assures the lack of interest of the group for coats of arms, see the following studies: (KENNEDY, 1973, p. 429; BORGES, 2015; SOUSA, 2003).

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