WOMEN, LAND, AND POWER IN THE ZAMBEZI VALLEY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

EUGÉNIA RODRIGUES[1]*

ABSTRACT: This article examines the issue of gender, landed property, and power in the Zambezi Valley, in modern Mozambique, during the eighteenth century. In the context of the Portuguese empire, mixed-race women had access to land, often vast territories, through inheritance practices and grants from the Portuguese crown. The possession of landed states enabled them to acquire jurisdiction over local populations. Mobilizing kinship and social networks, these women managed to control significant economic, social, and political resources. Colonial records allow us to explore how women disputed the role of head of household, acted on different economic fronts, accumulated assets, and controlled free and enslaved African labor. Women's agency enabled them to build a remarkable power, the roots of which were founded in the structures of colonial and African societies. This article explores the social trajectories of three women who had to dispute the accumulation of wealth and power with their male relatives and negotiate their social and economic position with African and colonial authorities.

*Eugénia Rodrigues is a researcher at the Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa (CH-UL, UID/HIS/04311/2013). Her research focuses on the history of early modern East Africa and the Indian Ocean, namely on the agrarian and social history of the Zambezi valley, gender, slavery, intercultural representations, and the history of science. Her publications include *Portugueses e Africanos nos Rios de Sena: Os prazos da Coroa em Moçambique nos Séculos XVII e XVIII* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional–Casa da Moeda, 2013); *Moçambique: Relações Históricas Regionais e com Países da CPLP* (co-editor, Maputo: Alcance, 2011); *Ilha de Moçambique* (co-author, Maputo: Alcance, 2009); and *A geração silenciada. A Liga Nacional Africana e a representação do branco em Angola na década de 30* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2003).

ISSN 0145-2258 / E-ISSN 2163-9108

This article explores the experience of female landholders in the area of the Zambezi Valley during the eighteenth century. This territory, then called Rios de Sena, was part of the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, which in turn was integrated into the Portuguese State of India (*Estado da Índia*) until 1752. The mainly mixed-race women of the local elite had access to land, often vast territories, which allowed them to develop a multifaceted economic agency and construct a power base similar to that enjoyed by their male peers. Ownership of land was essential for controlling the labor of the local population (freeborn and slaves) and extracting tributes from them. By holding power over the land and its inhabitants, these women managed to gain control of economic, social, and political resources in a singular way.[2]

Research into land rights in Africa has revealed a gender inequality, particularly during the colonial and postcolonial period when women faced obstacles to land control and other forms of ownership, as indeed they still do today. However, scholars have emphasized how women's access to land in Africa varied considerably over time and space.[3] In fact, the limited land rights granted to women in the contemporary world should not be projected onto the past. In precolonial Africa patterns of land ownership and use were intrinsically bound up with kinship systems. In most of these societies land was not private property but belonged to a community, i.e., a kinship group, which claimed the rights to a territory that had been occupied or conquered by a founding ancestor. The chiefs of these groups, possibly assisted by other political and social institutions, ensured family and individual rights to land use and ownership of its produce.[4] Scholars have also shown how, in the context of the European expansion and the interaction between Africans and Europeans, African women acted as intermediaries and took on important roles in trade, often associated with the ownership of large or small tracts of land.[5]

As in other societies, land ownership and power in Africa are often considered together and are generally understood to be eminently male concerns. The question of power has historically been central to the construction of gender relationships, as Joan W. Scott has argued: "Significations of gender and power construct one another."[6] As recent studies have noted, the power of women and the control that they exerted over the institutions that distributed land ownership and use rights have changed over time. This research reveals women's forms of exercising power in the precolonial period that have been represented as exceptional in the memory of contemporary African societies dominated by male representations.[7] Scholars have attempted to analyze how women participated in the exercise of power in the precolonial period. In some cases, women

were rulers, such as Nzinga Mbandi in seventeenth-century Angola.[8] In other regions of Africa, women cogoverned states, the most common example of which is the role of the queen mothers, or held authority through participation in governing councils or by exercising power during interregnums.[9] The historical record indicates that, through these political roles, women also intervened in the definition of land ownership and use rights, though little is known about the way that these included or excluded women. Studies argue that the decline in women's power was related to historical changes already taking place in the precolonial period. These include the reshaping of political institutions following the Luba expansionism in East Africa, where forms of matrilineal succession ensured that women rather than their male relatives were the leaders,[10] and alterations arising throughout the continent from the expansion of trade and imposition of European colonialism during the course of the nineteenth century.[11]

As Philipa Levine observes, "The building of empires themselves cannot be understood without employing a gender perspective."[12] In the context of the interaction between Portuguese imperial practices and African societies in the Zambezi Valley, women, who were mainly mixed race though there were also some from Goa in India, acquired prominent positions as landowners. In this study I examine the fact that in this region, women, like men, had access to land, often large territories inhabited by Africans over whom they exercised jurisdiction. Land ownership gave these women autonomous agency in all economic activities, and enabled them to construct a significant power base. In fact, women not only exercised influence but also power, "the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons."[13]

Although the role of these women has not been overlooked by historiography on the Zambezi Valley, few studies have explored their individual trajectories; hence the analysis of these women's role has been largely based on generalizations.[14] In order to examine the relationship between land ownership, economic agency diversification, and the power constructed by these women, I discuss three examples of women that lived in the eighteenth century and whose lands were located in different districts of Rios de Sena (Quelimane, Sena, and Tete). Although these areas were connected by the Zambezi River, there were ecological and economic differences between them, which configured the type of agency wielded by these women. It is important to note that all three women were from the top echelons of the local elite within which a hierarchy existed; thus their experience, though not exceptional, may not be generalized to all women in the Zambezi Valley. Nevertheless, their history undermines the conventional

representation of women in Southern and East Africa as being generally dominated by patriarchal regimes.[15]

Precisely because these women belonged to an elite and due to the extent of their agency, their role is reasonably well documented by the colonial archive, unlike what occurred in other African societies and also to other women in the Zambezi Valley. Even so, it is important to point out that since married women's relationship with the Portuguese administration took place often but not exclusively via their husbands, who were officially recognized as the heads of households, these women's experiences are less well documented by the colonial repository during the years they were married. Documents dispersed over various archives, such as land titles, correspondence with colonial authorities, letters written by them or in their name, and accounts about the Zambezi Valley recount the story of these women.

Land, Colonial Society, and *Donas*

Beginning in the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese acquired control of the Zambezi Valley through alliances with African chieftains, sealed by vassalage treaties, or through the conquest of their lands. The region south of the river was controlled by the Karanga states of the plateau, particularly the Munhumutapa (*Monomotapa*), Manika, Quiteve, and Barwe, who had probably in the previous century conquered the populations of the right bank, the Tonga, structured into small chiefdoms. North of the Zambezi and east of the Shire river valley the Makua people, who had a similar political organization, were pushed toward the coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Maravi expansion and the formation of the great states such as the Lundu, Kalonga, and Undi. Although the Portuguese were predominantly interested in controlling the trade networks that linked the Indian Ocean to the interior of the African continent, the competition for resources in the region resulted in the control of a vast territory. The land under the formal sovereignty of the Portuguese monarchy was known as "Crown lands" (*terras da coroa*), with fluid borders that were reconfigured over time in accordance with the balance of power between the Portuguese and Africans. Until the end of the seventeenth century these lands stretched along the right bank of the Zambezi toward the plateau, broadening out to the north in the region of the delta. However, after the Karanga resistance, throughout the eighteenth century the Portuguese lost control of part of the territory south of the Zambezi in the area of Tete, instead expanding northward into the Maravi region.[16]

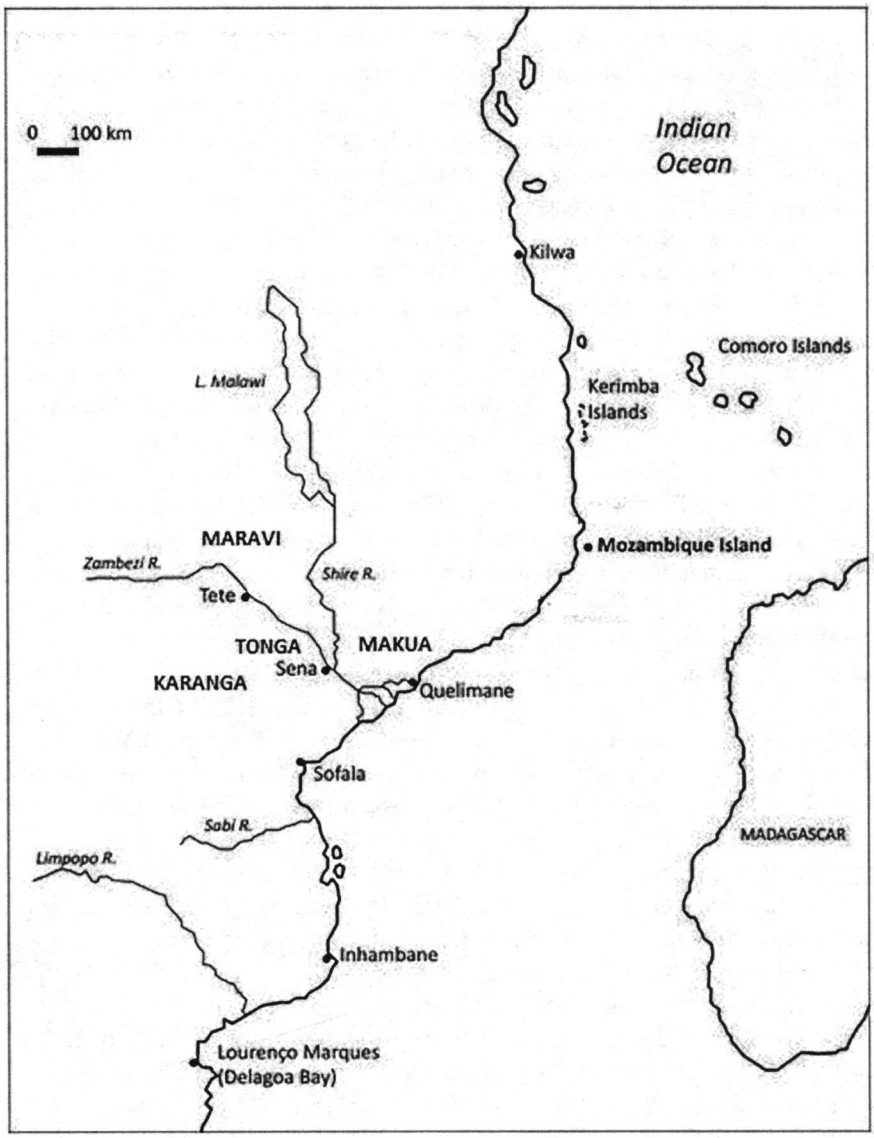

Figure 1. The Zambezi Valley in East Africa

In the context of the State of India, the model of colonization used in this region was the granting of Crown lands as *prazos*, a form of tenure that combined norms of emphyteusis (*enfiteuse, aforamento, emprazamento*)

with the donation of Crown assets (*concessão de bens da coroa*). These were two different legal systems, though they had certain principles in common. The process of transposing these norms from Europe to India and from there to Africa also implied adaptation to African institutions and to the need for imperial control. Thus a model developed that was governed by plural legal norms.[17] It was formally instituted in 1608, though there had already been land concessions, and changed over time. Emphyteusis, originating from Roman law, was a private contract in which the landlord (which could also be the Crown) retained direct control over the land but granted the right to usufruct, i.e., its exploitation, to another person, the landholder (*foreiro*), in exchange for the payment of quitrent. As for the donation of Crown assets, this was a way of rewarding services provided and obliging the beneficiaries to provide more. In East Africa, landholders had to pay quitrent in gold and fulfill other obligations toward the Portuguese Crown, and they would usually have tenure for three lifetimes, i.e., the life of three landholders, irrespective of generation, with the right to renewal. Like the concession of certain Crown assets, the granting of *prazo* usufruct also meant that jurisdiction over the African populations living in the lands was transferred to the *foreiros*. Thus landholders could demand taxes and services from them, a model that was familiar to the local population since it was based on taxation practices existing in the African chiefdoms.[18] Moreover, as with the granting of Crown assets, the landholders were obliged to defend the territory, a service that they provided using their private armies of African soldiers. The *prazos* thus constituted a way of administering the territory and the African populations subjugated by the Portuguese crown in East Africa. In practice, as Malyn Newitt argues,[19] they functioned much like African chiefdoms, with the landholders exercising jurisdiction over the Africans and levying taxes. In short, the European institutions transplanted to Africa were sufficiently flexible to accommodate African institutions.[20]

Alongside the *prazos* under Portuguese Crown control, the colonizers of the Zambezi Valley also acquired lands privately from the African chieftains. In the eighteenth century, though probably with earlier roots, a category of lands emerged called *terras de fatiota*,[21] located to the north of the River Zambezi, particularly in the area of Tete. This term could be applied to territories that were individually conquered and not formally integrated into Portuguese Crown lands, but it referred particularly to lands that the colonizers described as having been purchased from the African chiefs. Such transactions appear to have been common from the mid-eighteenth century. For example, one governor mentioned a settler who acquired land from the Maravi chief Bive, through "purchase and stipulated contract."[22]

These contracts, which included the transference of goods in exchange for land access, were clearly different from the situations of Europeans who lived in the territories of African sovereigns as their subjects, a common practice since the beginning of Portuguese colonization, or from the temporary permission to cultivate land that also occurred. We do not know the Maravi understandings of these property negotiations, but records indicate that the sale of land did not delete all of the community's rights to it since Maravi chiefs sometimes contested these transactions and tried to re-appropriate these lands.[23] Although these land transfers do not necessarily indicate the existence of private individual property, the assertion that people in Africa could not sell, rent, or alienate land must be reconsidered in the case of the Maravi north of the Zambezi.[24] From the perspective of Portuguese law, those holding lands under the *terra de fatiota* system fully owned their property, i.e., the lands did not belong to the Crown and could be freely transacted as private property.[25] The goal of holding land through both *prazos* and *fatiotas* was not the development of agriculture, which continued to be mainly practiced autonomously by Africans. The colonizers' main interest lay in the control of trade, particularly African ivory and gold that was then exchanged for fabrics and beads from India.[26]

Regardless of their legal status under Portuguese legislation, these lands were inhabited by Africans, both free men and slaves, and also in smaller numbers by individuals from Europe and Goa. Anyone residing on land held under the *prazo* system or belonging to an African chief had to pay the *musoko,* a capital tax in recognition of the lord's authority over the land. Free Africans, organized into villages with chiefs, thus had more autonomy with regard to their landholdings, but were obliged to pay other taxes and provide certain services. Slaves, who had various economic, military, administrative, and domestic functions as well as constituting a prestige asset for their owners, were fundamental for the construction of the landholder's wealth, social status, and power. Among them were soldiers, the *achikunda,* who made up the landholders' armies.[27] Except for work issues, the relationship between landlords and free and enslaved Africans who lived on these lands shared many features. Furthermore, as a rule the relations of domination established in these territories were based on local practices that were constantly under negotiation, partly due to interaction with perspectives brought by the colonizers.[28]

Like other forms of landed property, *prazos* possession must be seen as entangled with notions of wealth, status, and power. The *prazos* played an important role in configuring colonial society in the Zambezi Valley. The Portuguese Crown granted these lands as a reward in payment for services provided by the beneficiary or their relatives and aimed to structure a

colonial elite, recruited from Portugal or its empire (particularly Goa) and later, as the colonial society gradually formed, also from among the mixed-race descendants of those settlers with African women. During the eighteenth century the *prazo* holders were mostly individuals of African, Goan, and Portuguese mixed descent, known as "Portuguese sons" or "sons of the land" (*filhos da terra*) and Goans since there were few Europeans; they belonged to the upper echelons of this elite. The internal hierarchies within this group were defined by criteria such as the extent of their territories and the number of African inhabitants, as well as by the wealth acquired through trade and mining. In short, the *prazo* system created a distinctive elite in the Zambezi Valley whose members were called *muzungos* (a word that the Portuguese understood as lords) by Africans.[29]

The rules that governed European societies were reorganized in interaction with local societies when they were transposed to the Zambezi Valley area. This meant that women also managed to become *prazo* holders, not just temporarily as widows or guardians for their sons, but in their own right. Even when they were married, they kept the titles to the lands. Although women had held *prazos* before, with some playing remarkable roles, their position in charge of lands and slaves was affirmed at the turn of the eighteenth century. Within the system of free appointment that was long in force as a form of *prazo* succession, women could control land. In many cases they were widows that had had consecutive marriages, succeeding their husbands as title holders. In others they were appointed as part of a family strategy for forging alliances with new arrivals, who were usually men. These individuals tended to have social capital, mainly passive family capital,[30] through birth, political connections, or commercial relations, which made them interesting prospects for the Rios de Sena families. Portuguese administrators likewise adopted policies, first in Goa and then in Mozambique, that favored female landholders in the hope that they would attract European settlers. Some historians have argued that a royal policy existed of granting land according to gender, with female exclusivity regarding access to the *prazos*, and also "regulations whereby the prazos should pass to the eldest daughter on the death of the original grantee."[31] In fact, a 1626 royal decree stipulated that in the Northern Province of the State of India where *prazos* also existed, daughters would be given preference over sons with regard to land succession, but were also obliged to marry Europeans who could guarantee the defense of that territory. That legislation, revoked in 1648 through landholder opposition, was revived in 1672, 1682, and 1737 when military Marathi competition intensified in the State of India. Some land charters included obligatory female succession, but male succession tended to prevail in the North Province in regard to access to land.

The Portuguese Crown did not take a similar initiative in Mozambique, but some authorities in Goa extended that measure to East Africa where there was also a lack of soldiers to combat local resistance. Between 1692 and 1752, 31% of land grant titles contained a clause that made female succession mandatory, including 6.5% of titles made out to women, with the requirement of marrying Europeans. However, over this period men received most of the land granted by Portuguese officials. In 1752 Mozambique became directly dependent on the Lisbon government. In 1753 the Portuguese Crown ordered the daughters of landholders to marry soldiers who were sent to the colony at that time. This allowed the male children of these marriages to inherit the *prazos,* but did not establish female exclusivity in access to and succession of land as a rule. However, in 1798 women held 65% of the *prazos* titles registered by the Portuguese administration. It was not until 1799 that the governor of Mozambique established that *prazos* could only be attributed to daughters of the colony's settlers so that they would marry Europeans. This measure was taken in a context in which the *prazos* were under dispute, claimed by merchants from Mozambique Island who had grown rich on slave trafficking. Many women and girls benefited from these concessions without the introduction of any clause imposing female succession. For newcomers from Portugal and Goa, marriage with women from the Zambezi Valley families brought advantages, enabling them to control land and access local and regional trading networks. Thus, with the practices of succession shaped in Rios de Sena and the measures taken by colonial authorities, women had the opportunity to become landholders.[32]

As there were few European women amongst the settlers in Mozambique, these landowning women were mostly mixed-race, some originating from Goa.[33] European and Goan men tended to marry African women either because there were few European women available or because marriage to the locals formed part of a strategy of forging alliances, first with African chiefs and later with the elite of the territory.[34] The Mozambique Portuguese authorities, operating within the patriarchal framework that made men the heads of households, expected that the husbands of these women would govern these lands, but the female *prazo* holders often administered the households themselves and took an active part in the business even though their husbands were formally in charge. In this way, they were able to construct a power base. These women became known as *donas,*[35] a form of address in Portuguese that indicated their membership in the elite. This distinction, rare in seventeenth-century documentation, seems to have been consolidated only over the course of the eighteenth century. In 1735, for example, a confessional register of the residents of Rios de Sena used the term *donas* for only a few women.[36]

The administration of the *prazos* and households associated with them entailed Portuguese authorities' recognition of these women's power. In fact, acquisition of a *prazo* brought a political and bureaucratic process with the Portuguese authorities since it was necessary to obtain royal confirmation of the land entitlement. It also implied the negotiation of a series of duties that all holders of Crown assets, including women, contracted with the Portuguese monarchy, particularly for the defense of these territories. For example, in 1711 the Viceroy of India, D. Rodrigo da Costa, thanked Maria da Guerra, the landholder of several *prazos,* for her promptness in supplying slaves, food, and ships for the war that the governor of Rios de Sena was waging with neighboring African chiefs.[37]

Nevertheless, the *prazos* were inscribed into African space, which meant that their holders also had to negotiate the exercise of authority with local societies. Many men, including newcomers, managed to adapt to African norms and construct important chiefdoms. Still, women created a base of power that the colonial authorities had not foreseen when they recognized women's right to hold *prazos.* Having been born in the Zambezi Valley, they had in-depth experience of local cultures, which they generally shared. These women owed much of their socialization to African female slaves, either because they had been raised by them or because they lived in their company throughout their lives.[38] The *donas* knew how to exploit that knowledge to frame their own power base with the African chieftains, both inside and outside the *prazos,* and they were consequently able to serve as brokers for their recently arrived husbands. Most of the notable *donas* were widows, but many were married or maintained a remarkable autonomy when they remarried. Various observers have claimed that the Africans "respected" women more than men. For example, Francisco de Melo e Castro, who governed the Rios de Sena region in the 1740s, pointed out that the Africans had a "bad style . . . of recognizing only the lady, and never the lord."[39] This occurred because the *donas* were familiar with the local religious, social, and political practices and acted in order to be recognized as chiefs by local populations. In particular, they perceived the mechanisms for controlling slaves and their strategies for confronting their owners so that they could deal with them more successfully. It is likely that in the eyes of both slaves and free Africans the *donas,* whose families were rooted in the region, appeared to be invested with greater legitimacy than the newcomers.

As Malyn Newitt reminds us, the power of the *donas* "must . . . also [be] seen from its African angle."[40] In African societies from the Zambezi area, it was not unusual for women to control territories and exercise different forms of power. This occurred in some of the Karanga states to the south of

the Zambezi, where kinship was patrilineal. In Munhumutapa, the mother and wives of the *mutapa* chief controlled territories, acted as counselors, and assumed other functions such as serving as ambassadors for the Portuguese.[41] In Manika the sister of the *chikanga,* the main head of state, played an important role in the process of choosing successors and functioned as counselor. H. Bhila points out that in the eighteenth century the *chikanga* began appointing his female relatives as chiefs of territories, an innovation introduced in order to offset the secessionist tendencies of sons and centralize power. This gave rise to the institution of female rulers, known as *washe,* that continued to the end of the nineteenth century.[42] Further south in Quiteve, the council of "queens" held a similarly indispensable position in the choice of the *sachiteve* and assumed royal authority during periods of interregnum, which could be extended.[43]

In the Maravi and Makua societies north of the Zambezi women's power seems to have been greater and more dispersed throughout the society, perhaps due to matrilineal descent. As Marcia Wright argues, although chiefdoms were generally male "a woman had a potentially strong hand within matrilineal societies."[44] North of the Zambezi land rights passed through women, who managed the harvests and the granaries,[45] played important roles in religious worship, and even occupied political positions. Among the Maravi of the Kalonga state, the first wife of the *kalonga* ruler governed a territory in which she had her court and enjoyed "absolute authority,"[46] according to the Portuguese, and also played an essential role in choosing the successor. There were also women at the head of small chiefdoms, known as *fumu-akazi* in Portuguese sources.[47] In Makua societies *mwene* led the chiefdoms, a role that was filled by a woman in some cases. Scholars have also emphasized the role of the *apwyamwene* in performing religious duties and counseling the *mwene.*[48] Although more historical studies are needed on the role of women in such societies, these women seem to have achieved more power than in the south of Mozambique in the same period.[49]

The evidence suggests that despite the normative Portuguese framework regarding access to land, the power of the *donas* was constructed more in interaction with this African context than with the European institutions transplanted to the Zambezi Valley. In Portugal, as António Hespanha points out, women were excluded from the "universe of possible holders of political prerogatives"[50] due to their perceived lesser dignity, which meant they were considered ill-suited for positions of authority. The *donas* did not occupy roles in the Mozambique colonial administrative structure; nevertheless, along with the other *prazo* holders they exercised jurisdiction over the local populations in the name of the Portuguese Crown, generally by accommodating themselves to African practices. From there, they traced

out their own power among the Africans, other landowners, and the colonial government. During the eighteenth century the role of these women thus differed from in other parts of Africa. In the Cape Colony the land was basically handled by European elite.[51] In the region of the Coast of Guinea the *nharas* or *signares,* who controlled the relations between the Europeans and African chiefs, became important commercial leaders and had great political influence. However, they did not occupy vast territories like the *donas* of the Zambezi area, and though they kept slaves they had no authority over free populations.[52]

The Economic Agency of the *Donas*

D. Catarina de Faria Leitão, D. Ana Maria de Selas Falcão, and D. Francisca Josefa de Moura Meneses were three of these *donas* who made their mark on eighteenth-century Zambezi Valley society. In their personal trajectory we can observe familiar strategies of social climbing, but also individual options that illustrate their economic agency. Their lands were located in three Rios de Sena districts—Quelimane, Sena, and Tete—that had certain dissimilarities. This diversity was reflected in the variety of economic undertakings that these women entered into.

D. Catarina de Faria Leitão was born in Quelimane, a port on the Zambezi delta that gave access to Rios de Sena. Described by a governor as a "mulatta,"[53] she was a mixed-race woman of obscure origins, the god-child and heir of another famous woman, Maria da Guerra, and probably the illegitimate daughter or goddaughter of one of her husbands, Henrique de Faria Leitão. Maria da Guerra, not yet called a *dona* herself, accumulated a vast landed estate consisting of nine *prazos* and controlled large areas in the district of Sena and almost all the district of Quelimane, including much of the urban land in the town. Around 1714 D. Catarina succeeded her in controlling four *prazos* located in the area of the delta—Quelimane do Sal, Mirambone, Inhassunge, and Anquaze—and was the heiress of the large *terra de fatiota* Bororo.[54] Although Maria da Guerra had named various successors for her *prazos,* D. Catarina was recognized by both colonial and African society as the heir to her household.[55]

D. Catarina married five times, always to Europeans who occupied posts in the colonial administration. In 1734, now widowed, she married Manuel Gomes de Oliveira, who had traveled from Goa to wed the mistress of the "main household in that land [Quelimane]."[56] Oliveira thus acquired enough wealth to be appointed captain and overseer of royal trade in Quelimane. However, during his last post he incurred serious debts to the Royal Treasury. Faced with having her property confiscated to pay off that debt

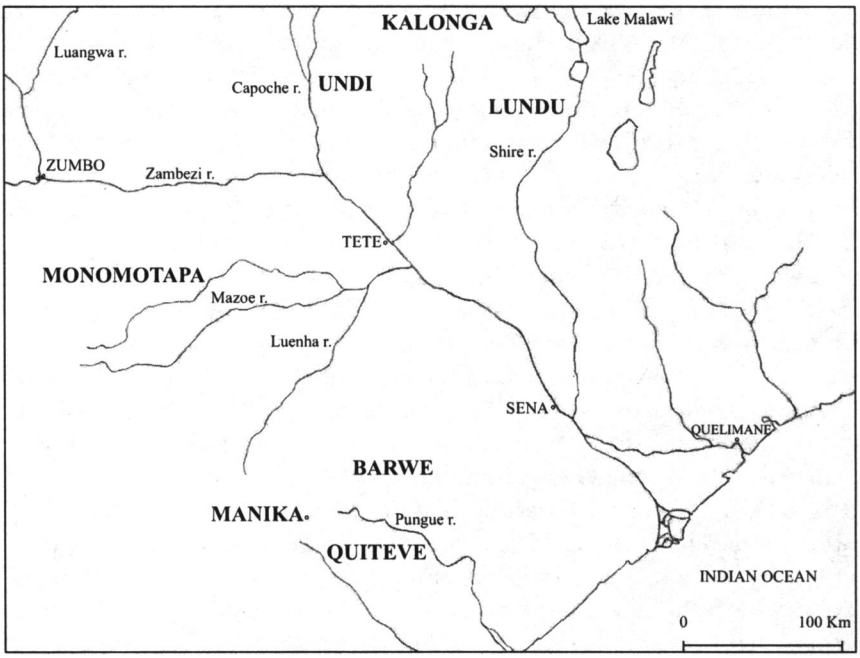

Figure 2. The Zambezi Valley

when he died in 1749, D. Catarina used the strategy of falsifying the inventory of the household assets.[57]

In order to protect her property D. Catarina remarried in 1754, this time to Bernardo Caetano de Sá Botelho, the main resident of Sena who held various positions, including interim governor of Rios de Sena. The couple drew up a nuptial agreement, a dowry contract, that stipulated the separation of the spouses' assets and a pledge (*arras*) for D. Catarina, i.e., an annuity in the event that her husband should die. This type of contract was not common in Portugal where the custom was that each member of the couple would hold half the couple's assets. Under Portuguese law the woman's assets under dowry contract and *arras* goods could not be pledged to pay for debts incurred by the husband.[58] The records indicate that these securities were a way of safeguarding the assets (money, credit notes, and utensils) that D. Catarina put up to save in her husband's house.[59] The *dona* thus used her marriage, which lasted till Sá Botelho's death in 1760, to continue to defend her property from confiscation. That strategy did not put an end to the threat, which depended on how the colonial authorities viewed her debt and the advantages of conserving her household. In fact,

it was the foremost house in Quelimane and one most able to withstand the assaults by the Makua chiefs, given the recognition that she enjoyed among the Africans. In 1766 D. Catarina, supposedly now over eighty years old, married again, this time to Inácio de Melo e Alvim, then administrator of the Royal Treasury, who was appointed governor of Rios de Sena the following year. Linking ownership of land with other economic undertakings, D. Catarina's household remained the most powerful in Quelimane right up to her death in 1775. However, she died without leaving descendants.[60]

The second woman studied here is D. Ana de Selas Falcão, a resident of Sena, capital of the Zambezi Valley until 1767 when the seat of government was transferred to Tete. Born in the 1740s, she was the daughter of D. Úrsula de Távora de Sampaio, descendant of a prestigious family from Rios de Sena whose roots in the region dated back to the early seventeenth century, and the Goan Francisco de Selas Falcão, presumably a recent arrival.[61] With the death of her grandmother in 1749, D. Francisca Laborinho de Sá, D. Ana inherited while still a child the *prazo* Psinta and Terere, which had previously belonged to Maria da Guerra.[62] Upon her marriage she litigated with her stepfather the ownership of two *prazos,* Santa and Manga, that had been the property of her mother, who had died in 1766. D. Ana managed to recover those lands in 1770, after which they were combined into the same entitlement as a single *prazo.*[63]

D. Ana married three times, always to individuals from Goa who appear to have been Luso-Indian. Her first husband, Eugénio da Silva de Vasconcelos, transferred to East Africa in the 1760s, summoned by his uncle who was then D. Ana's stepfather. This marriage illustrates the prospects for social mobility available to new arrivals, who sought to make alliances with Zambezi Valley families. As Vasconcelos himself explained, he hoped to succeed to the household of D. Úrsula by marrying her only daughter.[64] From this marriage D. Ana had at least one child, who died before her. Her subsequent marriages were to individuals that were already living in Mozambique. Around 1774 D. Ana married Colonel Filipe Caetano de Sousa,[65] and in 1788 she married again, this time to Colonel Jerónimo Pereira.[66] Through these last unions D. Ana expanded her landed estate. In fact, her husbands became the lessees of the important Luabo *prazo,* whose grantee, transgressing the norms that obliged landholders to live in the districts of their lands, resided in Goa.[67]

The last two men occupied posts in the Rios de Sena administration, thus consolidating D. Ana's social prominence. Filipe Caetano de Sousa was overseer of the Royal Treasury and a member of the municipal senate of Sena.[68] Jerónimo Pereira was on the municipal councils of Quelimane and Sena,[69] and was captain of the fair of Manica; he also became interim

governor of Rios de Sena shortly before he died in 1803.[70] The governor-general justified his appointment to the post by pointing out that he was a "rich prudent man, owner of many slaves and very intelligent about things in these Rios."[71] Jerónimo Pereira's opulent lifestyle derived largely from his marriage to D. Ana, whose household, in the words of an observer, "was always taken as amongst the richest and most well endowed of Rios de Sena."[72]

The last case of a woman who amassed landed properties in the Rios de Sena is D. Francisca Josefa de Moura Meneses, born around 1738 in Tete. She was the first of three sisters, descendants of a landowning family but one with no particular renown among the local elite. Her upward social trajectory, though apparently helped along by her relatives, resulted largely from her own initiative. This woman owned a *prazo,* and upon her marriage her grandfather offered her a *terra de fatiota* as *bens parafernais,* i.e., a woman's property outside the nuptial dowry and which she could manage by herself in accordance with Portuguese law. This gift illustrates the families' strategies to ensure the future of their *donas*. D. Francisca was married twice, each time to Europeans: João Moreira Pereira and José Álvares Pereira. Both men held public office, including the position of governor of Rios de Sena. After the death of her last husband in 1787, this *dona* was determined to marry again in an attempt to maintain her position at the top of colonial society. She targeted individuals who had previously occupied the post of governor of Rios de Sena. In one case, the alliance was ultimately forged through the union of one of her nieces to that governor, Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida. Originally from Brazil, the governor had been tasked by the Portuguese Crown to cross the African continent from Rios de Sena to Angola.[73]

D. Francisca Josefa de Moura Meneses and her first husband sought to increase their landed estate in an extraordinary way. As the Tete residents moved northward to the fertile Maravi region,[74] they acquired new lands in various ways: through the concession of *prazos* confiscated from the Jesuit missionaries expelled from Mozambique in 1759, purchase from the Maravi chiefs, and participating in the conquest of their territory. After the death of her husband, D. Francisca had eight *prazos* and five *terras de fatiota*. At that time the *terras de fatiota* were auctioned by the Royal Treasury to pay the debts her husband had incurred. However, this *dona* managed to retain her property by offering to pay for the land in installments. Since her children had died early,[75] D. Francisca invested in the descendants of her sister, D. Filipa, and became the matriarch of the family. She raised various relatives, gave them land, chose their spouses, and organized their lives. By controlling the marriages of her kin, D. Francisca managed to establish

a kinship network with newcomers and with Rios de Sena families that enabled her to expand her alliances and enhance her power until her death around 1825.[76]

These women exercised economic agency analogous to that enjoyed by males of the colonial elite. Maintaining houses in the towns of Rios de Sena and in their *prazos*, the so-called *luanes*, they divided their attention among activities centered on different places. From an economic point of view, the *prazos* of different locations, sizes, and populations provided different kinds of income. D. Catarina's lands, located in the Zambezi delta, yielded coconuts, rice, sugar, salt, and ivory, and she commercialized a spirit called *nipa* made from coconut tree sap. D. Ana's property included a good deal of grain (*milho*),[77] probably sorghum, locally called *mapira;* millet, known as *mexoeira;* vegetables; cotton; and ivory. D. Francisca's lands produced predominantly the same grains as well as wheat, rice, vegetables, cotton, and ivory.[78] As mentioned previously, the *prazo* holders' main aim was not to increase agriculture, although they supervised the crops that their female slaves grew on small plots near the *luanes;* nevertheless, these women still showed initiative in this area. For example, D. Ana negotiated with a Saepá chief the use of an island in the Zambezi to grow crops.[79] She was certainly hoping to produce foodstuffs for her house in Sena since her *prazos* were quite a long way from the town. It was mainly through the taxes levied and judicial fines charged that the landholders appropriated African production of these foodstuffs. Thus the income obtained directly from the *prazos* depended on the number of inhabitants and also on the capacity of the landholder to collect it. Records indicate that D. Ana's and D. Catarina's lands, which were more extensive and populated, yielded more revenue than D. Francisca's.

It is difficult to determine the number of enslaved and freeborn people who were dependent on each of these *donas*. An account dating from after D. Catarina's death indicates the number of couples (i.e., families) living in her *prazos:* fifteen in Quelimane do Sal, five hundred in Mirambone, one hundred and twenty in Inhassunge, eighty in Anquaze, and an indeterminate number in Bororo.[80] As for slaves, around 1766 she owned 1,000 or more; as an observer commented, "The ones that are captive want to be, as she doesn't remember about most of them."[81] Another assessment indicates that there may have been as many as 3,000 or 4,000.[82] It is unlikely that D. Francisca's smaller lands had many free Africans living on them. In 1766 her slaves numbered around 1,000,[83] and in 1798, when she was already widowed, there were near to 2,000.[84] Information about D. Ana's dependents is also rather unclear. In 1788 Jerónimo Pereira declared that he did not know the number of free Africans living on their lands and

estimated there were over 600 slaves.[85] In 1811 the governor of Rios de Sena calculated that 6,000 free Africans and the same number of slaves lived on D. Ana's *prazos*.[86]

The number of people, free or slaves, that lived on these women's lands was important to the total amount of income extracted from the *prazos*. This income came mainly from the jurisdiction exercised over it, i.e., from the position of these women as landholders, while the slaves, who also paid the *musoko*, were particularly central to the profits obtained from commerce, mining, and warfare. Although on the west coast of Africa women managed to amass great wealth through trade with the development of the Atlantic economy, they only became important landowners from the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries.[87] The cases of D. Catarina, D. Ana, and D. Francisca show that in the eighteenth century women in East Africa controlled extensive lands, dominating their population, whether freeborn or slave, and following their predecessors in the previous century.

Noting that some women took advantage of land entitlement to gain independence, Malyn Newitt argues that "in practice the affairs of the *prazos* were often controlled by the husbands and the fathers of *donas*."[88] Several women became *prazo* holders as children and their lands were managed by their parents or other guardians. However, documentation suggests that most of the *donas*, such as those considered here, actively participated in the management of the *prazos* during their marriages, dealing with African chiefs, both slaves, and free men. First, this was because they, rather than the men, whose contingents were renewed with new arrivals, controlled the mechanisms of relating with the local population; indeed, there were cases when their husbands actually called on them to resolve conflicts.[89] Second, their husbands were often absent due to their administrative posts and business, spending most of their time in the towns of Quelimane, Sena, and Tete, and at the Portuguese fairs of Manika and Zumbo.[90] For example, D. Ana's lands were far from Sena and even further from Tete, where her husband, Jerónimo Pereira, held his posts. The men also traveled to the capital of the colony, Mozambique Island, in order to deal with bureaucratic, judicial, and commercial matters. Finally, it does not seem to have been unusual for the spouses to live in separate houses, particularly when they were also landowners. For example, D. Catarina and Sá Botelho maintained independent residences. While she resided in the port of Quelimane, her husband spent his time in Sena. D. Ana's mother, D. Úrsula de Távora Sampaio, never cohabited with her husband, Gil Bernardo Coelho de Campos, although they had a daughter together.[91] For some time D. Ana lived apart from her husband, Jerónimo Pereira, who for a period appears

as a resident in Luabo, the *prazo* on the delta of which he was a lessee.[92] The practice of maintaining separate households is also evidence of these women's great autonomy, even when married. This autonomy and agency led one observer to comment that the *donas* "governed their husbands, trusting in the control they exerted and respect they commanded among their subordinates."[93] For a European it must have been startling that these women were not passive actors subordinated to their husbands. They evidently assumed all responsibility in the administration of their households after they were widowed. In short, the gender distinctions promoted by the ideology of a male head of the household were not stable and could be contested and altered by women who not infrequently assumed the role or shared it with their husbands.

Using African labor, all these women were associated with local trade and the commercial networks that connected the Indian Ocean to the African interior, and acted as intermediaries, as happened in other regions of Africa.[94] Like other *prazo* holders, they handled the exchanges with the populations that inhabited their lands, extending their routes to the African states via the fairs of Manika and Zumbo, and by sending caravans to places further away. These trade networks involved the participation of *vashambadzi* (merchants), usually identified as slaves but who might have been free people. The configuration of these business dealings and their geographic amplitude depended on the district of Rios de Sena where each of these women resided.

The records indicate that D. Francisca not only continued the commercial agency of her husbands but actually enlarged it. It is not clear if she continued the trade that they conducted at the fair of Zumbo, whose routes connected both the Karanga states south of the River Zambezi but also the Maravis in the north. However, we do know that she sent caravans from Tete to the Karanga plateau as far as the region of Muzezuru.[95] At the end of the eighteenth century this *dona* was trading with the Kazembe in present-day Zambia,[96] negotiating with the caravans that arrived in Tete from there; she was also one of the few residents of Rios de Sena to send her *vashambadzi* to that state.[97] D. Francisca thus played a pioneering role in opening up new markets in addition to continuing the previous businesses of her family.

D. Ana and her husbands maintained the usual customs of the lords of Sena. They directed their caravans to the Barwe and Manika states bordering their lands, particularly to the Portuguese fair that existed in the latter state, thereby continuing the business of her ancestors.[98] Her last two husbands occupied the same post of captain of the fair, a position that brought commercial advantages.[99] When Jerónimo Pereira became governor of Rios

de Sena, he expanded and diversified the business. In Tete, the seat of government, he intervened in the slave trade with Zumbo at a time[100] when the traffic of enslaved Africans was expanding in East Africa.[101] D. Ana continued these affairs after she was widowed, moving into the ivory trade.[102]

There was no market fair in Quelimane like those in Manika and Zumbo. However, in addition to the business made in her *prazos,* D. Catarina had the opportunity to negotiate with the Makua chiefs bordering her lands. The agreement that she made with the Royal Treasury in the mid-eighteenth century for the payment of her husband's debt offers a glimpse of her commercial agency. She promised to supply the king's warehouses in Mozambique island with rice, which was abundant in the delta; ivory, then the main article of East African commerce; and finally *fumbas,* palm-leaf wrappings used in the transportation of merchandise.[103] Since her lands were near the port of Quelimane transportation was cheaper, making it easier for her to participate actively in the cereal market in Mozambique Island, in particular selling rice.[104] This was not possible for D. Francisca, whose lands were further away, or with the agricultural output of the family *prazos* of D. Ana.[105]

To be active in trade in this region of Africa it was necessary to obtain credit: credit made it possible to acquire fabrics and beads from India and later exchange them for gold and ivory in the interior of the African continent. For this activity women used credit acquired first from the Royal Treasury[106] and later from the merchants of Mozambique Island, many of whom were Banyans from Diu in northwest India.[107] Credit was an important element of investment for these merchants. For example, D. Francisca had the Banyan Lacamichande Motichande as a creditor.[108]

The hiring out of boats (*cochos*) to transport merchandise along the River Zambezi that served both merchants and the administration of Mozambique was another enterprise in which both D. Francisca and D. Catarina were involved.[109] D. Ana's business dealings do not seem to have included this business since her *prazos* were far from the river. However, those who lived close to the Zambezi River, such as D. Francisca, made extensive use of the riverine communication providing services to other merchants and colonial officials. D Francisca was also involved in gold mining and had as many as 300 enslaved women working in the mine of Machinga, which also operated as a market.[110] The Maravi territory north of Tete to the fair of Zumbo was the only one where residents of Rios de Sena managed to get African chiefs to agree to mining. These women's economic activities thus included all those in which their male partners were involved, thus contributing to the local economy. The differences in these women's agency have to do with the business opportunities that each was able to develop from

her own *prazos*. Like the women on the West African coast, they served as important commercial agents who also participated in the economy of the Indian Ocean.

Social Relations and the Construction of the *Donas'* Power

Although they did not hold posts in the colonial administration, the *donas*, like other landholders, exercised jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of their *prazos*. They needed to construct their authority over these populations and in relation to other powers, the Portuguese government, other landholders, and neighboring African sovereigns. The power of these *donas*, as with all Rios de Sena residents, depended a great deal on the local population, particularly the slaves that they controlled. This power was based not only on the number of dependents but also on their capacity to command them, or rather on the relationship that they had with them. These *donas* understood the mechanisms of slave control, and with this managed to impose their power and prestige. Like African chiefs, they constructed their authority through negotiation but also violence, using the slaves to create coercive forces in accordance with their will.[111] However, nothing indicates that they applied force in a distinctive fashion, as C. Boxer seems to suggest in his description of the actions of one of these women whom he called a "sanguinary Amazon."[112]

The cases of D. Francisca, D. Ana, and D. Catarina illustrate the way the *donas* constructed and exercised their power. In the 1780s, D. Francisca de Moura Meneses was involved in a confrontation with the governor of Rios de Sena, the details of which are unclear. Following that event, she took refuge in her lands, gathering her slaves around her and threatening to destroy the governor's house and the town of Tete.[113] Several years later the recently arrived governor of Rios de Sena, Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida, evoked this *dona*, without attention to her gender, as an example of the landholders' "despotic power" and insubordination with regard to royal authority, though he later forged an alliance with her:

> Dona Francisca Josefa de Moura e Menezes (who controls eight lands, all with abundant slaves) threatened him [the governor of Rios de Sena], and moving to the other side of the River Zambezi, intended to send the Kaffirs in such numbers that they would destroy the houses in which he lived and the whole of this town.[114]

The threat of ravaging the town must have been effective because the Rios de Sena houses were generally thatched and burned easily. This *dona* also confronted other *prazo* holders, generally to secure her possessions. For

example, in 1803 a resident that had acquired in an auction a piece of land (*terra de fatiota*) that had been seized from D. Francisca complained that she had dispatched "a troop of Kaffirs" and took over the property by force "as if it were her own, exacting revenues and annual pensions."[115]

Given her wealth and authority, D. Francisca had "amongst the Kaffirs and white men too, the well-deserved epithet of 'great.'"[116] She was also given an African name, as D. Ana and D. Catarina certainly would have as well—"Chiponda," or "the lady that tramples all underfoot," indicating the local population's recognition of her power. Her notoriety extended far along the commercial routes in which she engaged. An example of this was the delegation that the *kazembe* chief sent to her in 1797, together with another mission addressed to the government of Rios de Sena. She was perceived as a chief to such an extent that the *kazembe* asked her to send a "son," i.e., a subject.[117] In response to the request, D. Francisca supported the expedition of Governor Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida, which in 1798 tried to travel to Angola, informing the *kazembe* that he was the "son" that she was sending him. She thus played a crucial role in political relations between the Kazembe state and the Portuguese government of Rios de Sena. D. Francisca also provided enslaved men and women who were fundamental to the expedition; "as her slaves were the most obedient, only with her help could [the governor] have managed such a difficult journey."[118] In this way D. Francisca negotiated the marriage of her niece to the governor, who however died during the expedition.

D. Catarina de Faria Leitão was another *dona* that effectively directed her slaves, although she did not know how many she owned. In 1766 an observer commented that she "was highly respected by all"[119] her slaves, as well as by the free Makua. However, her authority was not based on prestige alone; like the other landholders, she used force to impose her dominion over the local populations. In 1774, for example, she was granted authorization from the governor of Rios de Sena to wage war against a local chief, though it is not clear if this was a chiefdom located on her lands or bordering them.[120] The extent of her authority gained more visibility after her death when her *prazos* were conceded to other residents. Many Makua, freeborn and enslaved, abandoned the lands,[121] while others refused to pay the usual pensions. The *mukazambo* (head slave, pl. *akazambo*) Inhembe even instructed all inhabitants, freeborn and slaves, to not pay the *musoko* and refuse to sell ivory to the new landholders, announcing that "Quelimane . . . is finished because D. Catarina de Faria Leitão, whom they feared, is dead."[122]

Of all these *donas,* D. Catarina acted most prudently with the colonial administration. However, she still had to negotiate her position with

representatives of the Portuguese crown. In 1763, in the context of a military uprising by the governor of Rios de Sena against the governor-general, she ignored the orders of the Mozambique administration to use her slaves to prevent rebel forces from Sena from disembarking in Quelimane to fight the army sent from Mozambique Island.[123] Instead of explicitly confronting the governor-general, the lady of Quelimane simply chose to ignore these orders.[124] She responded similarly on another occasion. The governor, not finding records of her *prazos* in the government archives, demanded that she produce them, convinced that she did not have them and that he could therefore dispose of some of her lands. D. Catarina, however, argued that her titles were lost and the originals were in Goa since they had been issued when Mozambique depended on the State of India government.[125] In short, instead of openly confronting the colonial authorities, D. Catarina used dissimulation to escape from the situation and maintain her position.

In fact, D. Catarina had to constantly discuss her position with the Mozambique administration, given the debts her household owed the Royal Treasury. She managed to do this without relinquishing her status as the main power in Quelimane; this enabled her to, for example, write directly to the governors-general to ask that her protégés be granted appointments to certain positions.[126] Conversely, the government of Mozambique also depended on D. Catarina and on the way she played her role as the main authority in Quelimane, after Maria da Guerra's death. For example, when the governors disembarked at the port en route to Sena and Tete, they stayed at her house.[127] That status led Governor Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque (1758–1763) to oppose the confiscation of her assets, alleging that it would ruin her household and make it impossible for her to pay the debt. His discourse reveals the material, political, and symbolic importance of D. Catarina's household: "My intention is such that if it were possible for me, this house will not fall. Rather, I will do everything in my power to ensure that it is this house that secures the port of Quelimane and serves as a refuge for all (as it did in other times), providing many utilities to His Majesty."[128] Negotiating her position in colonial society and before the African chiefdoms, D. Catarina maintained the most powerful household in Quelimane until her death, managing to control African threats and support the Portuguese authorities.

D. Ana Maria de Selas Falcão was another woman that did not hesitate to use force to impose her authority. The 1794 conflicts in which she and her husband were involved illustrate the role of the *donas* in controlling slaves and their importance in the administration of the *prazos*. At that time the couple was accused of imprisoning their Goan servant João Manuel Pereira in order to coerce him into giving an account of the commercial

activities undertaken by the African *vashambadzi*.[129] Private incarceration was prohibited under Portuguese law except as a way of punishing slaves, and so the denunciation triggered a major inquiry.

João Pereira recounted that after returning from a trip to Manika fair, he stayed overnight in the house of one of his slaves. There he learned that two of Jerónimo Pereira and D. Ana's slaves, the *achikunda* Inhamavrurume and Pizo, had besieged his village in the Santa *prazo* with 50 armed slaves as well as the assistance of two *akazambo* of the land, Langa and Chitambo. Neither the slaves nor the free men would let him enter the house "in any way, on orders of the landlord and their mistress."[130] On another occasion, replying to the commandant of Sena, he was clearer about who those people were following:

> This is the order that they have from their mistress, and they want me to go and ask the Illustrious Lady D. Ana Maria *manamucate* [*mwanamukati*, ambassador] to make them withdraw from my village but it doesn't suit me to do so, and they also say that if Your Lordship [commandant of Sena] would send some soldiers, without the *manamucate* of their mistress, then they will chase them.[131]

Reproducing the words of the slaves, João Manuel Pereira revealed that their loyalty centered on their mistress, D. Ana. This account particularly emphasizes D. Ana's authority over her dependents, a control that was based on old relations in place since the time of their ancestors. Like the other *donas*, she managed to establish strong ties of command and obedience with the slaves that were essential for maintaining her position.

After being widowed, D. Ana was also involved in another episode that demonstrates that these women were not passive and instead defended their position. In 1811 she was accused of ordering one of her dependents to assassinate Manuel da Silva Gonçalves, possibly in conjunction with her great-nephew António de Araújo Bragança. Gonçalves was a mixed-race individual who had been a servant in D. Ana's household and was then living at Gorongosa *prazo*. The ownership of this vast *prazo* was contested by the great-nephew of this *dona*, who had been dispossessed of land by the governor-general in favor of a representative of the merchant families of Mozambique Island who had grown rich on the slave trade. The new mistress of Gorongosa remained on the island and leased the land to José Francisco Alves Barbosa, a European freshly arrived in East Africa.[132]

The attackers killed Gonçalves' wife, young son, and eight slaves, and stole property and destroyed his village as well. Gonçalves and a daughter managed to escape. A group of residents denounced the events, among them José Francisco Alves Barbosa, the lessee of Gorongosa. He complained

that the local justice favored D. Ana "for being powerful in assets"[133] and demanded that she be expelled from Rios de Sena. Regardless of whether this *dona* had been involved in these murders, the subsequent denunciations constituted an attempt to contest her wealth and erode her power. D. Ana asserted her innocence and argued that the charge was related to old resentments between Rios de Sena families. She also linked this attack to the fact that she had ordered the commandant of Sena, António José da Costa e Almeida, one of the denouncers, to repay certain debts that he owed to her.[134] In her defense, D. Ana obtained attestation from 13 residents, including three *donas*, who testified on the points that she raised, namely her political loyalty to the Portuguese crown. They also claimed that D. Ana treated her slaves with "humanity", and supported her argument that the accusations sought to "ruin her household."[135] For example, João do Rosário Tavares declared that D. Ana had many enemies "who, unable to avenge certain grievances from the time of her husband," had taken advantage of these deaths in order to "settle accounts" with her.[136]

In the context of the great competition for *prazos*, it was clear that these actors wanted to redefine a social reality that recognized the wealth and power of the *donas*. The use of violence in episodes similar to this was common in Rios de Sena, as in most slaving societies.[137] D. Ana may have instigated these deaths, but records indicate that her enemies were aiming to annihilate her household, as she alleged. In a letter to another henchman José Francisco Barbosa recounted how he had manipulated the governor of Rios de Sena into issuing "orders that were very fortunate for our needs and I was authorized to command the expedition and more prisons than were necessary."[138] In fact, the governor began by opposing the seizure of D. Ana's assets demanded by her accusers, though he later felt that she "was the aggressor" and "accomplice," supporting the judicial decision to dispossess her of her property.[139]

D. Ana was detained in the fortress of Sena with her feet in irons, but was ultimately released on bail after she argued that she was old and ill.[140] That form of imprisonment was not unprecedented for members of the Rios de Sena elite.[141] The measure sought to prevent their slaves from freeing them from prison while presenting a high symbolic value since Portuguese law stipulated that privileged groups such as noblemen, knights of the orders, and doctors of law and medicine were exempt from the irons. Although D. Ana's imprisonment should not be viewed as a measure directed at her gender, it was particularly humiliating for a *dona* from the highest level of the local elite and a widow of a governor. However, the circumstances of her imprisonment reveal her power and how it was perceived by the colonial authorities. Before authorizing her imprisonment,

the governor ordered the commandant and the judge of Sena to make her sign a document "so that her slaves would not come at any time to that town and burn it and raze it, which would have been easy if they decided to do it."[142] The fear that D. Ana's African dependents would retaliate and burn the town of Sena also shows the power of this *dona,* and particularly her ability to control her slaves. This episode, like others from the lives of D. Francisca and D. Catarina, demonstrate that the *donas* had to defend their property and their status in Rios de Sena society and could do so by using violence. In fact, these women could collaborate with the colonial authorities or confront them in defense of their own position.

Conclusion

The stories of the women analyzed here have much in common from the point of view of their personal trajectories, and show the economic agency and political power of the *donas* of Rios de Sena. Their experiences show how women managed to control significant economic, social, and political resources in the colonial context of East Africa. However, since these women belonged to the upper echelon of the elite, their stories cannot be generalized to all women of this region of Africa. Women from intermediate groups of colonial society and most of the African women that lived on the *prazos* experienced very hard working and living conditions.

Coming from different social backgrounds, these *donas* constructed life paths that were socially equivalent. D. Ana, who had more-extensive family capital, managed to maintain and increase her wealth and power. D. Francisca, who apparently came from a lower level of the landed elite, became the most prominent woman of Tete. D. Catarina was probably an illegitimate daughter whose social rise, while not exceptional in the context of European societies, was facilitated by the flexibility with which European rules of succession were adapted to the colonial context. All of these women forged partnerships with newcomers, men that arrived from Portugal and Goa and who held or gained important posts in the colonial administration, thereby reinforcing their own social position. Although these *donas*' status was also a result of their relatives' strategies and husbands' initiatives, they themselves showed a remarkable dynamism in the construction of their wealth and affirmation of their authority.

These women's status came from their capacity to control the land and its inhabitants, from which they constructed positions of authority in the context of the interaction between Europeans and Africans. European models of social organization transposed to Africa ended up being redefined in accordance with the African context where women occupied positions of

authority. In fact, the Portuguese administration recognized, and at certain moments favored, women's entitlement to land through mechanisms of succession and direct concession of *prazos*. However, this entitlement meant that their husbands assumed the role of head of the household; thus for Portuguese authorities it was the men who managed the houses and exercised jurisdiction over the African population of the *prazos* transferred by the Portuguese Crown. The power acquired by the *donas* should thus be understood as a way of negotiating and contesting male norms of land ownership and authority. The *donas* recreated the European norms of land ownership, disputed the role of the male heads of households, and constructed a power identical to theirs. In becoming *prazo* holders these women exercised formal jurisdiction over the local population who lived in these territories and were recognized by the Portuguese crown, though they had to legitimize their own authority in the African context.

Of the various resources that the *donas* controlled, slaves were particularly significant since they not only provided the manpower used for multiple economic and domestic activities but were also the basis of their armies. These women controlled the mechanisms for disciplining their dependents and knew their strategies to try to improve their working and living conditions. It was difficult for landholders to impose forms of discipline used by Europeans and Goans in other social contexts since the mechanisms for disciplining slaves were based on local social norms and their transgression led to contestation and revolt.

The *donas* constructed partnerships with male newcomers, and by marrying them facilitated their insertion into East Africa society. As some fragmented information suggests, their knowledge of the local society made them valuable partners while married and participants in the management of the various undertakings of the households of Rios de Sena. When widowed they managed their households themselves, undertaking the administration of the *prazos* and business transactions in East Africa. Records indicate that they managed to find forms of participation in all economic activities. They were traders, conducting exchanges on their own lands and forming caravans of African merchants that they sent off to various states, reinforcing the theory that women engaged in commercial activities outside West Africa.[143] They worked gold mines using slave labor, and provided services to the merchants that used the River Zambezi route, such as hiring out boats, manpower, and houses. African women were also commercial leaders in other parts of Africa, but do not appear to have accumulated landed estate to the extent found in the Zambezi Valley during the eighteenth century.

The power of these *donas* was also constructed through processes of negotiation and confrontation with the Portuguese administration and with

other members of colonial society. They collaborated with colonial authorities or confronted them if their own position was at stake. They depended on the colonial bureaucracy to obtain recognition of their ownership of the land, legitimized by the issue of deeds or negotiated access to credit and the payment of debts. However, they did not hesitate to take up arms to protect their status when facing threats from colonial authorities and other members of the Zambezi Valley elite. In different ways and using different degrees of violence, all of these women had to negotiate power with the administrators of Mozambique at the same time that they reclaimed a Portuguese political identity. The experience of these *donas* is thus distinct from the binary relationship of colonizers and colonized through which the situation of women in Africa and other imperial contexts is often viewed.

Centro de História da Universidade de Lisboa

Notes

1. Research for this article was funded by FCT—Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, Portugal, under the project PTDC/HIS-HIS/113654/2009, *Lands Over Seas: Property Rights in the Early Modern Portuguese Empire,* coordinated by José Vicente Serrão, ISCTE/IUL. I am very thankful to Mariana Candido, Maria Bastião, and the anonymous referees of *African Economic History* for their commentaries on an earlier version of this text. I dedicate this article to the memory of my friend José Capela (1932–2014) and the happy moments in which we shared many stories on the history of Mozambique.

2. C. R. Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny: Women in Iberian Expansion Overseas, 1415–1815. Some Facts, Fancies, and Personalities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 80–84.

3. See, for example, Monna Etienne and Eleanor Burke Leacock, eds., *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Prager, 1980); Beverly L. Peters and John E. Peters, "Women and Land Tenure Dynamics in Pre-Colonial, Colonial, and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe," *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 9 (1998), 183–203; Lynne Muthoni Wanyeki, ed., *Women and Land in Africa: Culture, Religion, and Realizing Women's Rights* (London and New York: Zed Books; Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2003). In Mozambique women's access to land varies according to region. Some systems include women's inheritance and others exclude them. See Isabel Casimiro et al., *Maintenance Rights and Women in Mozambique: Case Studies in the Southern Region* (Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Women and Law in Southern Africa Project, 1992); Kathleen E. Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002); Ana Maria Loforte, *Género e Poder entre os Tsonga de Moçambique* (Maputo:

PROMÉDIA, 2000); José Negrão, *Cem anos de economia da família rural africana* (Maputo: PROMÉDIA, 2001); José Guilherme Negrão, "Sistemas costumeiros da terra," in Boaventura Sousa Santos e João Carlos Trindade, eds., *Conflito e transformação social: uma paisagem das justiças em Moçambique* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2003), v. 1, 229–258; Heidi Gengenbach. "'I'll Bury You in the Border!': Women's Land Struggles in Post-War Facazisse (Magude District), Mozambique," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24:1 (1998), 7–36; Liazzat J. K. Bonate, "Women's Land Rights in Mozambique: Cultural, Legal and Social Contexts," in Wanyeki, *Women and Land*, 96–133.

4. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 74–85.

5. The literature on these women is more numerous for Atlantic Africa. See, for example, Adam Jones, "Female slave-owners on the Gold Coast: Just a matter of money?" in Step Palmié, ed., *Slave Cultures and the Cultures of Slavery* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 100–111; Douglas Wheeler. "Angolan woman of means: D. Ana Joaquina dos Santos e Silva, mid-Nineteenth Century Luso-African Capitalist of Luanda," *Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies Review* 3 (1996), 284–297; George E. Brooks, "A Nhara of the Guinea-Bissau Region: mae Aurelia Correia," in *Women and Slavery in Africa*, eds. C. Robertson and Martin Klein (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997); George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa. Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth century* (Athens: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey, 2003); Arlindo Caldeira, *Mulheres, Sexualidade e Casamento em São Tomé e Príncipe (Séculos XV–XVIII)* (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1999); Philip J. Havik, *Silences and Soundbytes. The gendered dynamics of trade and brokerage in the pre-colonial Guinea Bissau region* (Münster: Lit Verlag Münster, 2004); Selma Pantoja, "A dimensão atlântica das quitandeiras," in *Diálogos oceânicos: Minas Gerais e as novas abordagens para uma história do império ultramarino português*, ed. Júnia Ferreira Furtado (Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, 2001), 45–68; Selma Pantoja, "*Donas* de 'Arimos': Um negócio feminino no abastecimento de géneros alimentícios em Luanda (séculos XVIII e XIX)," *Entre Áfricas e Brasis*, ed. Selma Pantoja (Brasília: Paralelo, 2001), 35–49; Selma Pantoja, "Women's work in the fairs and markets of Luanda," in *Women in the Portuguese Colonial Empire: The Theatre of Shadows*, ed. Clara Sarmento (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 81–94; Mariana P. Candido, "Aguida Gonçalves da Silva, une dona à Benguela à fin du XVIIIe siècle," *Brésil(s). Sciences Humaines et Sociales* 1 (2012), 33–54; Mariana P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela And Its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013). See also the articles of Philip Havik, Mariana P. Candido, and Vanessa Oliveira in this volume.

6. Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category on Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, 91:5 (1986), 1053–1075. Concerning gender epistemologies in Africa, see, among others, Oyérònkè Oyewùmí, *Gender epistemologies in Africa.*

Gendering Traditions, Spaces, Social Institutions and Identities (New York: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2011).

7. R. A. Sargent, "Found in the Fog of the Male Myth: Analysing Female Political Roles in Pre-Colonial Africa," *Oral History Forum d'histoire oral* 11 (1991), 39–44; Christine Saidi, *Women's Authority and Society in Early East-Central Africa* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2010). On gendered differences in the valuation of men and women roles in oral narratives, see Francesca Delich, "'Gendered Narratives', History, and Identity: Two Centuries along the Juba River among Zigula and Shanbara," *History in Africa* 22 (1995), 93–122.

8. Joseph C. Miller, "Nzinga of Matamba in a new perspective," *Journal of African History* 16:2 (1975), 201–216; Cathy Skidmore-Hess, "Queen Njinga, 1582–1663: Ritual, Power and Gender in the Life of a Precolonial African Ruler" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995); Selma Pantoja, *Nzinga Mbandi mulher, guerra e escravidão* (Brasília: Thesaurus Editora, 2000).

9. See, among others, Agnes Aidoo, "Asante Queen Mothers in Government and Politics in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally,* ed. Filomina Chioma Steady (Cambridge: Shenkman, 1981), 65–77; Tarikhu Farrar, "The Queenmother, Matriarchy, and the Question of Female Political Authority in Precolonial West African Monarchy," *Journal of Black Studies* 27:5 (1997), 579–597; Edna G. Bay, *Wives of the Leopard: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998); Holly Hanson, "Queen Mothers and Good Government in Buganda: The Loss of Women's Political Power in Nineteenth-Century East Africa," in *Women in African colonial histories,* eds. Jean Allman, Susan Geiger, and Nakanyike Musisi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Marcia Wright, "Gender, women, and power in Africa, 1750–1914," in *A Companion to Gender History,* eds. Teresa A. Mead and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 418–421; Rhiannon Stephens, A *History of African Motherhood: The Case of Uganda, 700–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

10. Saidi, *Women's Authority.*

11. See, for example, Hanson, "Queen Mothers."

12. Philippa Levine, "Introduction: Why Gender and Empire?" in *Gender and Empire,* ed. Philippa Levine (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

13. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 152.

14. Concerning these women, see Allen F. Isaacman, *Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution; the Zambesi Prazos, 1750–1902* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), 56–59; Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 217–232; José Capela, *Donas, Senhores e Escravos* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1995), 67–102; Luís Frederico Dias Antunes, "D. Ignez Gracias Cardozo: uma mulher de armas," in *O rosto feminino da expansão portuguesa. Congresso internacional* (Lisbon: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1995), v. I, 789–798; Eugénia Rodrigues, "Chiponda, a senhora que tudo pisa com os pés. Estratégias de poder das *donas* dos prazos do Zambeze no século

XVIII," *Anais de História de Além-Mar* I (2000), 101–132; Eugénia Rodrigues, "As donas de prazos do Zambeze. Políticas imperiais e estratégias locais," in *VI Jornada Setecentista: Conferências e comunicações,* eds. Magnus R. de Mello Pereira et all (Curitiba: Aos Quatro Ventos/CEDOPE, 2006), 15–34.

15. For studies emphasizing the domination of women in East and Southern Africa societies, see Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1992); Ritu Verma, *Gender, Land, and Livelihoods in East Africa: Through Farmers' Eyes* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001); Margaret Kinsman, "Beasts of Burden: The subordination of Southern Tswana Women, 1800–1840," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 10:1 (1983), 39–54; Pamela Scully, "Masculinity, Citizenship, and the Production of Knowledge on Postemancipation Cape Colony, 1830–1844," in *Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World,* eds. Pamela Scully and Diana Paton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 37–55.

16. Eric Axelson, *Portuguese in South-East Africa 1600–1700* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1969); Eric Axelson, *Portuguese in South-east Africa 1488–1600* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1973); Isaacman, *Mozambique;* Newitt, *A History;* S. I. G. Mudenge, *A political History of Munhumutapa ca. 1400–1902* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988); D. Beach, *The Shona and the Zimbabwe 900–1850* (London: Heinemann; New York: Africana; Gwelo: Mambo Press,1980).

17. For more on legal pluralism in colonial spaces, see Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures. Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

18. Mudenge, *A political History,* 188–193.

19. Newitt, *A History,* 225.

20. Concerning the legal regime of *prazos,* see Eugénia Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos nos Rios de Sena. Os Prazos da Coroa em Moçambique nos Séculos XVII e XVIII* (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional—Casa da Moeda, 2013). For more on the *prazos,* including different perspectives on the legal framework, see Alexandre Lobato, *Colonização senhorial da Zambézia e outros estudos* (Lisbon: JIU, 1962); Isaacman, *Mozambique;* M. D. D. Newitt, *Portuguese settlement on the Zambesi* (London: Longman, 1973); Newitt, *A history,* 217–242; William Francis Rea S. J., *The Economics of the Zambezi Missions 1580–1759* (Rome: Institutum Historicum S. I., 1976); Capela, *Donas, Senhores.*

21. The expression used in Zambezi Valley is an appropriation of the term existing in Portugal for perpetual land contracts: *terras de fatiota* or *fateusim.* In Mozambique the *terras de fatiota* therefore involve perpetual ownership, in contrast to the *prazos* that lasted for one or more lifetimes.

22. Proposal for *prazos* concession by the governor of Rios de Sena António Norberto Vilasboas Truão, 29 June 1807, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisbon; hereafter AHU), Moçambique (Mozambique, hereafter Moç.), cx. (box, hereafter cx.) 119, doc. (document, hereafter, doc.) 128.

23. Eugénia Rodrigues, "Os portugueses e o Bive: um caso de formação dos prazos da coroa no século XVIII," in *Actas do seminário Moçambique: navegações,*

comércio e técnicas (Lisbon: CNPCDP, 1998) 235–260. Regarding identical negotiations in Africa, see Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agraria Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 34.

24. For more on the purchase and sale of land in Mozambique, see Eugénia Rodrigues "Moçambique," in *A terra num império ultramarino,* ed. José Vicente Serrão (Lisbon: ICS, forthcoming).

25. Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 514–515; Newitt, *Portuguese settlement,* 94–95.

26. Regarding trade between Mozambique and India, see Luís Frederico Dias Antunes, "O bazar e a fortaleza em Moçambique. A comunidade baneane do Guzerate e a transformação do comércio afro-asiático (1686–1810)" (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2001; Pedro Machado, *Ocean of Trade. South Asian Merchants, Africa and the Indian Ocean, ca. 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

27. Concerning the *achikunda,* see mainly Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman, *Slavery and Beyond. The making of Men and Chikunda Ethnic Identities in the Unstable World of South-Central Africa, 1750–1920* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2004).

28. On these relations of domination, see Isaacman, *Mozambique,* 47–56; Newitt, *Portuguese settlement,* 169–203, Capela, *Donas, Senhores,* 189–209; Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 783–926.

29. Newitt, *Portuguese settlement,* 87–89, 131–153; Isaacman, *Mozambique,* 56–63; Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 735–780. The term *Muzungo* derived from the Swahili word *Mzungu* (pl.*wazungu*), and was European or Europeanized. See A. C. Madan, *Swahili-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 271. The term *mzungu* has spread among the peoples of the Zambezi Valley to designate the Portuguese and people related to them.

30. On passive family capital, see Laurence Croq, "Les frontières invisibles: groupes sociaux, transmission et mobilité dans la France moderne," in Anna Bellavitis, Laurence Croq, and Monica Martinat, dir., *Mobilité et transmission dans les sociétés de l'Europe moderne* (Rennes: PUR, 2009), 25–48.

31. Newitt, *A History,* 229. For similar approaches, see also Boxer, *Mary and misogyny,* 81; Newitt, *Portuguese settlement,* 97–102.

32. For a discussion on the legal framework and social practices of women's access to land in Zambezi Valley, see Rodrigues, "As donas de prazos"; Rodrigues, Portugueses e Africanos, 600–612, 774.

33. Rodrigues, "Chiponda," 103–105. On the participation of European women in Portuguese overseas expansion, see Timothy Coates, *Degredados e Órfãs: colonização dirigida pela coroa no império português. 1550–1755* (Lisbon: CNCDP, 1998), 191–274; Boxer, *Mary and misogyny,* 63–96.

34. Concerning these alliances, see Newitt, *A History,* 53; Malyn Newitt, "Mixed Race Groups in the Early History of Portuguese Expansion," in *Studies in the Portuguese Discoveries I,* eds. T. F. Earle and Stephen Parkinson (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1992) 35–52.

35. In Portugal *Dona* (D., female) and *Dom* (D., male) were forms of address reserved for the royal family, and later extended to noble persons. In the case of women, during the eighteenth century this distinction spread across local elites as well as in the Portuguese empire. Some authors refer to the *donas* of the Zambezia (*v.g.*, Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny,* 82). However, the toponym "Zambezia" applying to the whole Zambezi Valley only appeared in 1858 (Capela, *Donas, Senhores,* 17) and was only used for some time. Zambezia then came to only mean a district of the Zambezi Valley, called a province after the independence of Mozambique in 1975. The name refers to the region of the delta of the River Zambezi and the territory immediately north of it.

36. "Rol dos Freguezes desta See Matris de Senna," 19 June 1735, AHU, Moç., cx. 5, doc. 45.

37. Letter from the viceroy D. Rodrigo da Costa to Maria da Guerra, 16 January 1711, Historical Archives of Goa (Panaji, Goa, hereafter HAG), cód. 784, fl. 81.

38. Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, "The Prazeros as Transfrontiersmen: A Study in Social and Cultural Change," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8:1 (1975), 1–39; Eugénia Rodrigues, "Colonial Society, Women and African Culture in Mozambique, ca. 1750–1850," in Clara Sarmento, ed., *From Here to Diversity: Globalization and Intercultural Dialogues* (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 253–274.

39. Letter from the governor-general Francisco de Melo e Castro to the state secretary, 11 August 1756, AHU, cód. 1309, fls. 17v–20.

40. Newitt, *A History,* 230.

41. On women in the Munhumutapa, see Mudenge, *A political history,* 104–110; Florence Pabiou-Duchamp, "Être femme de rois karanga à la fin du XVI et au début du XVII siècle," *Revue Lusothopie,* XII:1–2 (2005), 93–107.

42. H. H. K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom. The Manyika and their African and Portuguese Neighbours 1575–1902* (Harlow & Salisbury: Longman, 1982), 13–23.

43. Andrew Hama Mtetwa, "A history of Uteve under the mwene mutapa rulers 1480–1834: A re-evaluation" (Ph.D. diss. Northwestern University, 1984), 265–281.

44. Wright, "Gender, women, and power," 416.

45. Regarding the Nyanja of the Shire lands, see Megan Vaughan, *The story of an African famine: Gender and famine in twentieth-century Malawi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 124–125.

46. Dionízio de Mello e Castro, "Notícia do Império Marave e dos Rios de Sena," (1763) in *Fontes para a Historia, Geografia e Comércio de Moçambique,* ed Luiz Fernando de Carvalho Dias *(Séc. XVIII)* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1956), 140. See also Harry Wells Langworthy III, "A history of Undi's kingdom to 1890: aspects of Chewa history in East Central Africa" (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1969).

47. A. C. P. Gamitto, *O Muata Cazembe e os Povos Maraves, Chevas, Muizas, Muembas, Lundas e outros da África Austral* (Lisbon: AGC, 1937), v. I, 37.

48. Christian Geffray, *Nem pai nem mãe. Crítica do parentesco: o caso macua* (Lisbon: Caminho, 2000); Bonate, "Women's Land Rights"; Liazzat J. K. Bonate, "Traditions and transitions: Islam and chiefship in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1850–1974" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cape Town, 2007), 57–59; Ivanna Marcela Arizcurinaga Zeballos, *Importância Actual da Apwiyamwene no Âmbito Tradicional e Político* (Nampula: Diname E. E., 2008).

49. Concerning women in Southern Mozambique, see Benigna Zimba, *Mulheres invisíveis: O Género e as Políticas Comerciais no Sul de Moçambique, 1720–1830* (Maputo: PROMÉDIA, 2003).

50. António Manuel Hespanha, "O estatuto jurídico da mulher na época da expansão," in *Actas do Congresso Internacional O rosto feminino na expansão portuguesa* (Lisbon: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1995), v. I, 53–64. On European gendered models of power, see also Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 20.

51. Wayne Dooling, *Slavery, emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2007).

52. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa;* Havik, *Silences and Soundbytes.*

53. Letter from the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago to the state secretary, 30 August 1775, AHU, cód. 1332, fls. 189v–191.

54. On the *prazos* succession, see Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 760–761.

55. Letter from the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago to the state secretary, 30 August 1775, AHU, cód. 1332, fls. 189v–191.

56. Letter from the viceroy count of Sandomil to the governor-general José Barbosa Leal, 25 January 1734, HAG, cód. 2323, fl. 55–55v.

57. Letter from the governor-general Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque to the captain of Quelimane João Crisóstomo, 3 October 1759, AHU, cód. 1314, fl. 93–93v.

58. *Ordenações Filipinas* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1985) Livro IV, Títulos XL e XLVII. The *Philippine Ordinances* (1603) compiled the existing legislation in Portugal, replacing the previous code of 1521. Concerning the dowry arrangements in Portugal, see Isabel Cristina dos Guimarães Sanches Sá e Maria Eugénia de Matos Fernandes, "A mulher e a estruturação familiar. Um estudo sobre dotes de casamento," in *A Mulher na Sociedade Portuguesa. Visão histórica e perspectivas actuais* (Coimbra: Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1986), v. I, 91–115; Jutta Gisela Sperling, 'Marriage, Kinship, and Property in Portuguese Testaments (1649–1650)' in *Across the Religious Divide. Women, Property, and Law in the Wider Mediterranean,* eds. Jutta Gisela Sperling and Shona Kelly Wray *(ca. 1300–1800)* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 158–174.

59. Letter from the governor-general Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque to the administrator of the Royal Monopoly of Beads (*Estanco Real do Velório*), 30 October 1761, AHU, cód. 1314, fl. 175; instruction to the intendant of the Royal Treasury Luís António de Figueiredo, 28 April 1762, AHU, cód. 1314, fls. 178–181.

60. Letter from the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago to the state secretary, 30 August 1775, AHU, cód. 1332, fls. 189v–191. Concerning D. Catarina, see also Capela, *Donas, senhores,* 80–81.

61. Letter from Eugénio Silva de Vasconcelos to the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago, 19 July 1768, AHU, Moç., cx. 28, doc. 72.

62. Title of tenure of lands Psinta and Terere and others attached to them, 4 December 1749, HAG, cód. 2828, fls. 169–170; cód. 442, fl. 122v.

63. D. Úrsula de Sampaio married two more times and died after childbirth. Her lands were given over to the baby, who also died; this meant the family *prazos* then passed to D. Úrsula's last husband, Gil Bernardo Campos.

64. Letter from Eugénio Silva de Vasconcelos to the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago, 19 July 1768, AHU, Moç., cx. 28, doc. 72.

65. Title of tenure of land Caia, 14 December 1774, AHU, Moç., cx. 89, doc. 33; List of Rios de Sena residents, n.d., AHU, Moç., cx. 266, doc. 85.

66. Description of the household of Jerónimo Pereira, 9 January 1788, AHU, Moç., cx. 56, doc. 2.

67. See, for example, letter from the governor-general Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque to the governor of Rios de Sena António de Melo e Castro, 27 May 1783, AHU, Moç., cx. 42, doc. 18; letter from the aide-de-camp António Vasconcelos e Sá to the governor-general D. Diogo de Sousa, 10 November 1795, AHU, Moç., cx. 75, doc. 62.

68. Letter from the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago to the governor of Rios de Sena João Moreira Pereira, 2 December 1773, AHU, Moç., cx. 35, doc. 17; letter from the Sena municipality to the governor-general José de Vasconcelos, 30 March 1780, AHU, Moç., cx. 33, doc. 56.

69. Letter from the councillor (*vereador*) of Sena João Caetano de Sousa to the governor of Rios de Sena João de Sousa e Brito, 1 March 1795, AHU, Moç., cx. 70, doc. 41

70. Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 970.

71. Letter from the governor-general Francisco Guedes Carvalho Menezes da Costa to the state secretary, 30 May 1799, Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro, hereafter, ANRJ), Negócios de Portugal, cx. 708, pac. 01.

72. Petition by Eugénio Cabral da Cunha Godolfim to the king, before 27 February 1817, ANRJ, Negócios de Portugal, cx. 699, pac. 1.

73. Rodrigues, "Chiponda", 114–120; Capela, *Donas,* 83–86.

74. On the expansion from Rios de Sena settlers to the Maravi lands, see Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos;* Newitt, *Portuguese settlement.*

75. D. Francisca and her husband João Moreira Pereira had two children, a boy and a girl. See letter from the governor-general David Marques Pereira to the governor of Rios de Sena D. Manuel António de Almeida, 16 April 1758, AHU, Moç. cód. 1314, fl. 57; Victor Courtois, *Notes Chronologiques Sur les Anciennes Missions Catholiques au Zambèze* (Lisbon : Imprimerie Franco-Portugaise, 1889), 27.

76. Rodrigues, "Chiponda", 120–125.

77. Regarding the different meanings of *milho* to Portuguese in Mozambique, see Paul E. H. Hair, "Milho, Meixoeira and Other Foodstuffs of the Sofala Garrison, 1505–1525." *Cahiers d'études africaines,* 17: 66–67 (1977), 353–363; Joaquim Lino da Silva, *O "Zea Mays" e a Expansão Portuguesa* (Lisbon: IICT, 1998).

78. António Pinto de Miranda, "Memória sobre a Costa de África," ca. 1766, in A. A. Banha de Andrade, *Relações de Moçambique Setecentista* (Lisbon: AGU, 1955), 289–299.

79. Description of the inhabitants of *prazo* Inhucarere, 23 January 1798, AHU, Moç., cx. 80, doc. 18.

80. List of the lands of Crown and Royal Treasury, n.d., AHU, Moç., cx. 267, doc. 52.

81. Miranda, "Memória sobre a Costa de África", 255–256.

82. Capela, *Donas, Senhores,* 81.

83. Miranda, "Memória sobre a Costa de África", 264.

84. Letter to António da Cruz e Almeida, n.s., n.d. [1798], AHU, Moç., cx. 81, doc. 92.

85. Description of the household of Jerónimo Pereira, 9 January 1788, AHU, Moç., cx. 56, doc. 2. In 1766, these slaves were about five hundred. Miranda, "Memória sobre a Costa de África", 261.

86. Letter from the governor of Rios de Sena Constantino Pereira de Azevedo to the governor-general António Manuel de Melo e Castro Mendonça, [1] April 1811, AHU, Moç., cx. 136, doc. 24.

87. See, among others, Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa;* Havik, *Silences and Soundbytes;* Candido *An African Slaving Port.*

88. Newitt, *A History,* 229. See also Newitt, *Portuguese settlement,* 98.

89. Eugénia Rodrigues, "Senhores, Escravos e Colonos nos Prazos dos Rios de Sena no Século XVIII: conflito e resistência em Tambara," *Portuguese Studies Review* 9:1–2 (2001), 289–320.

90. Concerning Manika, see Bhila, *Trade and Politics.* On Zumbo, see S. I. G. Mudenge, "The Rozvi Empire and the Feira of Zumbo" (Ph.D. diss., London University, 1972).

91. Letter from Eugénio Silva de Vasconcelos to the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago, 19 July 1768, AHU, Moç., cx. 28, doc. 72.

92. Letter from the councillor (*vereador*) of Sena João Caetano de Sousa to the governor of Rios de Sena João de Sousa e Brito, 1 March 1795, AHU, Moç., cx. 70, doc. 41.

93. Frei João de Santa Ana, "Escuridades Ethiopicas", 1786 [1767], Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (Lisbon), Reservados, Fundo Geral, cód. 11.550, fls. 16–17.

94. See, among others, Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa,* Havik, *Silences and Soundbytes;* Candido *An African Slaving Port.*

95. Decree issued by the interim government of Rios de Sena, 16 May 1799, AHU, Moç., cx. 82, doc. 62. Regarding the Muzezuru, in the karanga plateau, see David Beach, *The Shona and their Neighbours* (Oxford UK, Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 30–31.

96. Concerning the Kazembe, see Giacomo Macola *The Kingdom of Kazembe: History and Politics in North-Eastern Zambia and Katanga to 1950* (Hamburg: Lit, 2002).

97. Rodrigues, "Chiponda", 116, 123.

98. Letter from Eugénio Silva de Vasconcelos to the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago, 19 July 1768, AHU, Moç., cx. 28, doc. 72. On Manika fair, see Bhila, *Trade and Politics,* 1982.

99. Letter from the captain of Manika José Francisco da Fonseca to the governor-general José Vasconcelos e Almeida, 24 March 1781, AHU, Moç., cx. 35, doc. 89; minutes of the confession of João Manuel Pereira, 19 November 1794, AHU, Moç., cx. 69, doc. 40. For commercial advantages of the captain of Manika fair, see Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 287.

100. Letter from the captain of Zumbo Vicente Afonso Pereira to the governor of Rios de Sena Jerónimo Pereira, 29 May 1801, AHU, Moç. cx. 88, doc. 10.

101. On slave traffic in Mozambique, see Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory & Slaves in East Central Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1975); José Capela, *O tráfico de escravos nos portos de Moçambique* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2002); Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004); Benigna Zimba, Edward Alpers and Allen Isaacman, eds., *Slaves Routes and Oral Tradition in Southeastern Africa* (Maputo: Filsom Entertainment, 2005).

102. Letter from José Francisco Alves Barbosa to Subachande Sauchande, 29 March 1811, AHU, Moç., cód. 1381, fls. 50v–51.

103. Order to the intendant of the Royal Treasury António Caetano de Campos, 16 April 1760, AHU, cód. 1314, fls. 81–82v.

104. Letter from the governor-general Francisco de Melo e Castro to the overseer of Sena Manuel Lopes Ferreira, 9 December 1754, AHU, cód. 1310, fls. 77v–78v.

105. D. Ana's husbands used to sell the rice produced in Luabo. However, it appears that she did not lease the *prazo* when she was widowed.

106. Until 1763 in Mozambique, a royal monopoly of the trade was in force that was administered over time by different entities and focused on certain products.

107. Regarding the Banyans, see Antunes, "O bazar e a fortaleza em Moçambique"; Machado, *Ocean of Trade.*

108. Letter from D. Francisca Josefa de Moura Meneses to the governor-general Isidro Almeida de Sousa e Sá, 9 March 1800, in *Inventário do Fundo do Século XVIII,* ed. Caetano Montez, Separata de *Moçambique. Documentário Trimestral* 72–92 (1958), 252–256.

109. Concerning D. Francisca, see the balance sheet of the factory of Tete to the year 1800, 1 January 1801, AHU, Moç., cx. 87, doc. 1; letter from D. Francisca to D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, 10 March 1800, in Filipe Gastão de Almeida de Eça, *Lacerda e Almeida. Escravo do dever e mártir da ciência (1753–1798)* (Lisbon, 1951), 205–209. For D. Catarina, see order to the intendant of the Royal Treasury António Caetano de Campos, 16 April 1760, AHU, cód. 1314, fls. 81–82v.

110. Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida, "Instruções e diário da Viagem da Vila de Tete Capital dos Rios de Sena para o interior d' África," (1798) in *Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida: Um astrônomo paulista no sertão africano,* eds. Magnus R. M. Pereira and André A. Ribas (Curitiba: Editora UFPR, 2012), 588–589, 596; letter from D. Francisca to D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho, 10 March 1800, in Eça, *Lacerda e Almeida,* 205–209.

111. On military slaves in Africa, see John Thornton, "Armed Slaves and Political Authority in Africa in the Era of the Slave Trade, 1450–1800," in *Arming slaves from*

classical times to modern age, eds. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 79–94. On military slaves in the Zambezi Valley, see Allen Isaacman and Derek Peterson, "Making the Chikunda: Military Slavery and Ethnicity in Southern Africa, 1750–1900," in Brown and Morgan, *Arming slaves,* 95–119; Isaacman and Isaacman, *Slavery and beyond.*

112. Boxer, *Mary and Misogyny,* 83

113. Rodrigues, "Chiponda," 126–127.

114. Letter from the governor of Rios de Sena Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida to the queen, 22 March 1798, AHU, Moç., cx. 80, doc. 81.

115. Letter from Pascoal José Rodrigues to the governor of Rios de Sena João Filipe de Carvalho, 26 May 1803, AHU, Moç., cx. 99, doc. 33.

116. Almeida, "Instruções e diário," 604.

117. Almeida, "Instruções e diário," 604.

118. Letter [fragment] n.s., n.d. [1799], AHU, Moç., cx. 81, doc. 92.

119. Miranda, "Memória sobre a Costa de África," 256.

120. Order issued by the governor of Rios de Sena to D. Catarina de Faria Leitão, 24 September 1774, AHU, Moç., cód. 2127, fl. 156–156v.

121. Request from Silvestre Martins de Abreu to the governor-general Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque, 20 August 1783, AHU, Moç., cx. 43, doc. 33.

122. Letter from the commandant of Quelimane D. Diogo António Barros Souto Maior to the governor-general José Almeida Vasconcelos, 13 August 1780, AHU, Moç., cx. 34, doc. 35.

123. Letter from the governor-general João Pereira da Silva Barba to D. Catarina Faria Leitão, 30 August 1763, AHU, cód. 1328, fl. 29v.

124. By then D. Catarina Faria de Leitão was the widow of Bernardo Caetano de Sá Botelho, the father of D. Inês Castelbranco who was married to Marco António Coutinho Montaury, the insurgent governor. Eugénia Rodrigues, "'Em nome do rei.' O levantamento dos Rios de Sena de 1763," *Anais de História de Além-Mar,* IV (2003), 357.

125. Letter from the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago to the state secretary Martinho de Melo e Castro, 30 August 1775, AHU, cód. 1332, fls. 189v–191.

126. Letter from the governor-general João Pereira da Silva Barba to D. Catarina de Faria Leitão, 30 August 1763, AHU, cód. 1328, fl. 29v.

127. Request from Silvestre Martins de Abreu to the governor-general Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque, 20 August 1783, AHU, Moç., cx. 43, doc. 33.

128. Letter from the governor-general Pedro Saldanha de Albuquerque to the overseer of Sena José Caetano da Mota, 19 October 1762, AHU, cód. 1314, fls. 194–195. See also: letter from the governor of Rios de Sena Martinho Mendes de Vasconcelos to the state secretary, 27 December 1755, AHU, Moç., cx. 9, doc. 17; letter from the governor-general Baltazar Pereira do Lago to D. Catarina de Faria Leitão, 7 January 1767, AHU, cód. 1328, fls. 135v–136v.

129. Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 845–846.

130. Letter from João Pereira to Custódio de Araújo Bragança, 30 January 1795, AHU, Moç., cx. 73, doc. 87.

131. Letter from João Pereira to Custódio de Araújo Bragança, 22 February 1795, AHU, Moç., cx. 73, doc. 87.

132. For more on the disputes over *prazo* Gorongosa, see Rodrigues, *Portugueses e Africanos,* 720–724.

133. Letter from José Francisco Alves Barbosa to Subachande Sauchande, 29 March 1811, AHU, Moç., cód. 1381, fls. 50v–51.

134. Request from D. Ana Maria de Selas Falcão to the governor of Rios de Sena Constantino Pereira de Azevedo, before 3 April 1811, AHU, cód. 1381, fls. 48v–49.

135. Attestations, March and April 1811, AHU, cód. 1381, fls. 42–49.

136. Attestation of João do Rosário Tavares, 10 April 1811, AHU, cód. 1381, fls. 48v–49.

137. With regard to violence associated with slavery, see, among others, Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in slavery: A history of slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Pamela Scully, *Liberating the Family? Gender and British Slave Emancipation in the Rural Western Cape, South Africa, 1823–1853* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997).

138. Letter from José Francisco Barbosa to José Rodrigues Caleja, 27 February 1811, AHU, cód. 1381, fls. 40v–41v.

139. Letter from the governor of Rios de Sena Constantino Pereira de Azevedo to the governor-general António Manuel Melo e Castro Mendonça, [1] April 1811, AHU, Moç., cx. 136, doc. 24.

140. Request from D. Ana Maria de Selas Falcão to the governor of Rios de Sena Constantino Pereira de Azevedo, before 3 April 1811, AHU, cód. 1381, fls. 48v–49.

141. See, for example, the letter from the governor of Rios de Sena António de Melo e Castro to the judge of Quelimane Jerónimo Pereira, 7 July 1781, AHU, Moç., cx. 36, doc. 38.

142. Letter from the governor of Rios de Sena Constantino Pereira de Azevedo to the governor-general António Manuel Melo e Castro Mendonça, [1] April 1811, AHU, Moç., cx. 136, doc. 24.

143. On this issue, see Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 31–32.