

Biographies of Triumph: Portuguese *Requerimentos* in Seventeenth-Century Brazil

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1. Introduction

In 1654, a soldier named Antonio Dias Marques sat down and composed a petition to send to both the *Conselho Ultramarino* (Overseas Council) and, by extension, to King João IV of Portugal. Born in the small Portuguese town of Covilha, Antonio Marques was part of an entire generation of men in Portugal and its empire who sought fame and fortune by fighting against the Dutch in Brazil from 1630-1655. Antonio served for over twenty years in the main theaters of war in Bahia and Pernambuco, where he witnessed and participated in several of the conflict's notable battles, as well as many not-so-notable battles. The thousands of men who, like Antonio, traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to fight in Brazil were instrumental in helping the new Bragança dynasty maintain its grip on Portugal's sprawling empire. To encourage men to fight, João IV often promised lucrative rewards in the form of pensions, knighthoods, and positions in the imperial bureaucracy, with varying degrees of success. As a junior officer, Antonio's contributions thus placed him at the forefront of a group of men who not only fought in Brazil but survived the experience long enough to seek their promised rewards.

Marques petitioned for a knighthood in the *Ordem de Cristo* (Order of Christ), one of Portugal's three prestigious military-religious orders. Following a series of reforms in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, military orders became associated with exemplary military service overseas (Olival 2001; Dutra). Thus, Marques's petition was formatted and presented to the Overseas Council as a professional biography designed to extol his virtues as a soldier and Marques's importance to the Portuguese imperial project. In early modernity, the petition for favor was an important textual creation, and the soldiers and artisans of the Iberian Peninsula, among others, contributed significantly to its development (Amelang). In particular, *vidas*, *memorias*, *requerimentos*, and *relaciones de méritos y servicios*, among others, circulated widely among the various councils in Portugal and Spain. In every instance, these professional biographies disguised as requests, extensive examples of a kind of life writing, were the main evidence that the supplicant merited special favor. Soldiers were active participants in this scene, penning thousands of petitions from across the empire to participate in an "economy of grace" (Olival 2000, 24) with the Portuguese crown and its administrative bodies. The extent of this literature, which includes not only successful but also unsuccessful or "loser" petitions (Hillman) thus allows historians to probe soldiers' writings deeply.

The *requerimento* Marques composed represented a distinct type of petition, one that emerged as a response to Portuguese struggles in North Africa. Certainly, *requerimentos* existed well before the seventeenth century. The practice of composing such documents constituted such a widespread feature of everyday administrative life that most individuals and corporate bodies could expect to submit at least one at some point (as evidenced by the thousands of simple requests still accessible at the Arquivo Nacional in Lisbon, some dating back to the fourteenth century). However, it is the style of soldiers' *requerimentos* that made them unique. Perhaps no one has done more to uncover the relationship between soldiers, their writings, and the military orders in the Portuguese world than Fernanda Olival, who notes that the Habsburg ascendancy in Portugal along with military defeats in North Africa forced a major rethinking of the military orders (Olival 2001, 2002, 2004). Beginning at the end of the sixteenth century, and at the behest

of the crown, inductions into the military orders were to privilege men who could demonstrate military service overseas. Initially, this was meant to encourage men to fight in Africa but following the capture of Salvador de Bahia in 1624 the focus shifted decidedly to Brazil. This emphasis on overseas service would be strengthened continuously during the Habsburg administration of Portugal and would continue under João IV (Andrade e Silva, 70). In the case of Brazil, Thiago Krause carefully examined the use of such petitions to create what he termed a Bahian nobility during the Dutch Wars. From the end of the sixteenth century onwards, the registers and minutes of multiple royal councils became dominated with soldiers' *requerimentos*, all of which sought to recount enough military glory that they could convince the appropriate institutional body, usually the Overseas Council, that they should be forwarded to the Board of Conscience. In short, military realities in the wider Portuguese empire, coupled with the ascension of the Habsburg Phillip II to the Portuguese throne, produced a reconfiguration of soldiers' *requerimentos*.

During Habsburg rule of Portugal *requerimentos* from soldiers serving abroad resembled Spanish *relaciones de méritos y servicios* in many respects. There is a brief introduction to the document, listing the supplicant's name, age, and other biographical details to start. Following which, the soldier typically made grandiose claims about how their service was instrumental in maintaining the empire's defenses and, therefore, made them worthy of special consideration. The most important part of these documents are the lengthy narratives, sometimes proceeding year by year, of their military service. These narratives, more often than not, relied on supplemental testimonies written by commanding officers who could personally attest to the events in question, usually as the supplicant was in their company. While older, simplified, *requerimentos* still existed in form, the dominant presentation among the armies of Portugal was that which attempted to mimic the Spanish *relación de méritos y servicios*.

When read closely, soldiers' petitions reveal a deep process of collaboration between soldiers of all ranks to craft a compelling vision of an individual soldier's life in the army. A *requerimento* was by its very nature cumulative and collective. Portuguese legislation that governed these documents stipulated that soldiers were required to gather testimony from former commanding officers in the presence of a notary or *Mestre de Campo* (Field Marshal), who would transcribe what these men said about the supplicant. For Marques, sixteen different officers composed *certidoes* (certifications or testimonies) detailing his career and deeds in the army. This feature of petition writing is hardly surprising, as life writing in early modern Europe was often a collaborative venture, especially in spiritual biographies and other forms of devotional literature (Hillman, 12-13). Antonio Marques's petition was one of these co-authored productions, written by both himself, and the men he gathered testimony from, providing a new venue for an old form for soldiers to express ideas and values otherwise hard to discern.

In addition to its collaborative nature, Antonio Marques's petition is notable for another reason. It reveals the extent of how soldiers' petitions, as biographies, were repositories of soldierly values vis-à-vis the stories they told about themselves and each other. One of the underappreciated aspects of soldiers and their world was the extent to which they participated in a vibrant, transnational tradition of storytelling. Miguel Martínez has even situated Hispanic soldiers within their own "republic of letters" demonstrating that telling tales was a key feature of camp life in both Europe and the New World (1). Storytelling remained a feature of military life, and indeed an important tool through which they made sense of their experiences (Hopkin, 188). In Marques's case, the stories his fellow soldiers presented to the Overseas Council toed the line between truth and fabrication. In fact, these stories closely resembled the fictions Natalie

Davis so famously uncovered in sixteenth century French pardon letters. Like sixteenth-century French pardon tales and their composers, soldiers also told fictions, stories that stretched the truth to emphasize certain aspects of an individual's life in the army. In writing these fictions soldiers in turn revealed the values that they, and by extension the Overseas Council, thought mattered most in a military life. Marques was cast by his fellow soldiers as someone who was daring enough that he willingly sacrificed his body for the crown, aspects of his personality that incidentally reflect certain gendered conceptions of proper soldierly behaviors.

When reading soldiers' *requerimentos* we can see how power dynamics are organized in gendered language and stereotypes. According to Joan Scott's influential two-part definition, "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (1067). Thus, the soldiers who crafted fictionally-inflected testimonies for their colleague's benefit were also articulating a power relationship that existed among officers and their subordinates.

Recent scholarship on armies in the early modern world has, to the benefit of us all, become more attuned to gendered readings of soldiers' writings. As Crouch argued, these power relationships between officers and their subordinates within imperial armies, especially the information networks officers relied on to gather information about their subordinates, rested upon ideas about what proper, manly, soldiering constituted (Crouch, 98). In a similar vein, Berkovich invited scholars to broaden their understanding of military masculinity. That is, he asks us to appreciate that such nebulous concepts as honor and courage were not the center of military masculinity but rather two pieces of a wider relational notion among men about what exactly soldiering in a manly fashion entailed (181-182).

Where does that leave us then vis-à-vis the *requerimento*? We can say a few things, perhaps the most obvious thing to say is that the *requerimento* was primarily about telling stories. It is the function of those stories, however, that concerns me here. The goal of the stories that soldiers told was monetary and social gain, to earn a handsome financial reward as well as earn a form of social capital for themselves. In doing so, soldiers articulated a series of gendered and power relationships. The first, and clearest was a form of gendered understanding of soldierly values. Men like Antonio Marques sought to portray themselves as the ideal soldier. What "ideal" meant in this case was relational, that is, it denoted the ways in which soldiers constructed, and in some cases altered, understandings of acceptable and desirable conduct among one another. Second, that the form of the *requerimento* accentuated power and gender dynamics among soldiers. Men like Antonio Marques were required by law to submit testimonies from superior officers for their requests. Or, to put it another way, the *requerimento* demanded the soldier validate himself by drawing on his relationships with other men in the army.

Ultimately, we must be conscious of the fact that the stories soldiers like Marques composed emerged during a particular time and place, and with specific goals in mind. The daring and sacrificial qualities of Antonio Marques as demonstrated in his *requerimento* came into being partly thanks to the gendered dynamics of army life. We may even go so far as to say gendered norms and expectations represent a foundational piece of soldiers' storytelling cultures, but this is not the whole story. As Harden argued, the social and textual identities of soldiers are intimately linked (15). In this light, the stories of Marques the brazen hero with a sense of duty emerged to fill a desire among the broader soldiery to parlay their experiences into social capital, represented in this case by a desire to enter the hallowed ranks of the *Ordem do Cristo*.

2. Bizarria or Daring

On 18 May 1638 Antonio Marques and his entire regiment faced an intimidating Dutch offensive along the coast of Pernambuco. Duarte Albuquerque Coelho's *Memorias Diarias*, a printed account of the Dutch occupation during the 1630s described the force as so large, three thousand men on forty ships, that the Brazilians simply fled (Coelho, 1638, 335). The Dutch doggedly pursued the retreating Brazilian defenders until the latter decided the best course of action was to turn and fight. Marques was present at this battle, and Captain João Lopes Barbalho's affidavit provides more detail on the battle than is found in Coelho's *Memorias*. According to Barbalho, the men, "were soon surrounded once they saw us. Nevertheless, we fought them without assistance for three-quarters of an hour until help arrived."¹ Of Marques, Barbalho said, "throughout this entire encounter, he took up positions of the greatest risk with his customary valor, for which he deserves all honor."² The result of the battle was a resounding defeat for the Dutch and the averting of disaster for the Brazilians. As noted by Barbalho, Marques's contribution was "taking positions of greatest risk." We have no clear picture of what Barbalho meant by "positions of greatest risk," but the language indicates the unusual daring involved.

Daring, recklessness, or risk-taking, stories of soldiers doing remarkable, even unbelievable things, often contrary to what discipline and common sense dictated, were common in early modern armies and the literature about said armies. Iberian armies, especially those fighting outside Europe, however, had their own word for noteworthy daring, referring to it as *bizarria*. Soldiers as storytellers commonly drew attention to noteworthy feats of daring in their petitions, yet how they described *bizzaria* reveals much about the broader understanding of daring in the soldiers' world. Marques's petition detailed the specific instances that distinguished him as a brave hero and a man of action; evidence from other soldiers supported his case. So, we must ask, how did daring become *bizarria*, and what role did it play in soldiers' petitions?

Together, the language of risk-taking and daring formed a significant component of the soldier's narrative repertoire, aided, in part, by contemporary military theory. Across the early modern world, armies and military theorists probed the limits of daring. The point of such probing was to distinguish between bravery and stupidity, fearlessness and recklessness. In the Low Countries and the German lands, caution prevailed as commanders and theorists alike strongly criticized recklessness. There was a religious element to such criticism, as military theorists and commanders also believed recklessness with one's own life constituted disregard for God's creation (Bähr). Therefore, only German and Dutch military training emphasized proper tactical awareness for soldiers to teach them when to be brave and when to be cautious. Fortunately for Marques, no such qualms existed in Iberia or its empire under Phillip II, III, IV. Indeed, Spanish and Portuguese military culture seemed to encourage or at least tacitly support precisely the kind of overt risk-taking scorned in the Netherlands, Sweden, and the Germanies.

The soldier who lived up to ideals of exceptional bravery and sacrifice earned a special name in their armies, the *bizarro*. "Bizarro" derived from the broader concept of *bizarria*, which was "a mix of dash, proud daring, arrogant gallantry, and military discipline, all publicly displayed in a combination of gestural demeanor, verbal manners, and dressing habits." (Martínez, 48-49). The *bizarro* was a soldier unafraid to take grave risks, a man hell-bent on demonstrating his total lack of fear. Indeed, some scholars have argued that brazenly flaunting

¹Arquivo Historico Ultramarino (AHU), Conselho Ultramarino (CU), Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 465.

² AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 465.

their daring was, for soldiers, precisely the point (Berkovich, 183).

Marques's fearlessness and his willingness to plunge into great danger marked him as a *bizarro*.

The origins of *bizarria* as a representation of fearlessness and daring remain somewhat obscure, but its ties to a broader printed literature are strong. Miguel Martinez, for instance, identified *bizarria* in Bernardo de Vargas Machuca's treatise the *Milicia y descripcion de las Indias* (1596) (Martinez, 49). Examples of *bizarria*, however, can be found much earlier. In many older epics, poets often referred to *furiosi*, that is, warriors filled with rage or furor who stormed across the battlefield seeking glory for themselves. Homer's Achilles raged at Hector and Matteo Maria Boiardo repeatedly used Orlando and Rodamonte as examples of proper and improper furor in his own works. As new weapons and disciplinary regimes developed in early modern armies, being a *furioso* became somewhat of a liability (Murrin, 166-167). The man storming across the field, and breaking formation in the process, was as much a hindrance to his own forces as the enemy. Writers sought to incorporate the praiseworthy aspects of the *furiosi* without abandoning newer perceptions of proper military conduct. *Bizarria*, it would seem, was the answer. It stressed discipline, but it also helped inculcate the qualities of the *furiosi* among soldiers.

Bizarria's origins in Portuguese military society are murky, but a history of shared imperial entanglements offers some clues to its development. Portuguese and Spanish soldiers served together for over sixty years in various imperial ventures. In all likelihood, these six decades fostered some form of cultural transference. As Sanjay Subrahmanyam demonstrated, Portugal and Spain had a long and dynamic history of shared institutions, beliefs, and administrative cooperation. While exact numbers are missing, considerable evidence demonstrates how frequently Portuguese soldiers moved between the two Iberian empires. Soldiers routinely used Spanish and Portuguese military service interchangeably in their petitions to the Portuguese crown. Indeed, many Portuguese soldiers asked the crown for rewards based on their service in Spanish regiments. In one case, a soldier boasted of his extensive experience with Spanish armies. He related how his service included "embarking in the 1635 armada from Cadiz to Flanders . . . returning to Catalonia and serving as a Sargento Mor in 1640 before finally entering Portuguese service in August 1651."³ In another example, three captains who sought promotion in Portuguese regiments recounted their service in Flanders with the Spanish during the late 1630s.⁴ The illustrations are numerous, and all strongly suggest that at some point during their sixty years together, Portuguese soldiers adopted the concept of *bizzaria*, at least in part, from their Spanish colleagues and made it part of their cultural lexicon.

Soldiers and officials did not always need to mention *bizzaria* explicitly. As a concept, *bizarria* encompassed a set of behaviors that made it easy to spot, such as success in the face of overwhelming odds and extreme daring. Certainly, many army documents used the word *bizzaria*, but an almost equal number did not. Still, it was never hard to identify *bizzaria* in a soldier's account. A case in point was an account submitted by a general to the Portuguese Council of War in 1646. Writing of an attempted Spanish incursion in Tras os Montes in northern Portugal, the general related the story of an improbable Portuguese victory there to the Council of War. When a powerful Spanish force of six thousand men entered the territory where he was stationed and wrought devastation, he was forced to act: "I resolved to meet them . . . and could not wait for reinforcements." Moving swiftly at night with a small force of ninety-three horses and some infantry, the general came upon the enemy camp sleeping peacefully. After

³ Arquivo Nacional do Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Conselho de Guerra (CG), Consultas, Maço 13, n. 11.

⁴ ANTT, CG, Consultas, Maço 8, n. 18.

silencing the first sentinel, “we acted swiftly and with great fury until we destroyed their artillery, as well as the camp.” The victory was complete, and the Portuguese losses were small: six horses and one soldier.⁵ The Council of War quickly concluded in its opinion “His Majesty ought to understand that this victory would not have been possible without the valor and *bizarria* of our soldiers, for the enemy was far superior in number . . . yet we prevailed.”⁶ Although the general’s original letter never mentioned either *bizarria* or *bizarro* directly, the council understood what had not been spelled out. The overwhelming odds, the questionable decision to challenge those odds, and the improbable victory all spoke of a commander and soldiers possessing the requisite fearlessness or *bizarria*.

In Marques’s case, similar suggestions of *bizarria* as a descriptive tool appear again and again. In drafting their affidavits in support of Marques, his former comrades recognized how effective a rhetorical tool *bizzaria* could be. Francisco Lopes Mattos, a colleague of Marques, not only identified Marques’s personal *bizzaria* but located it within the company’s broader *bizzaria*. Mattos spoke of an excursion to the northern captaincy of Paraiba in 1646 and related how the Field Marshall Andre Vidal Negreiros ordered five companies to head to the Rio Grande to steal cattle from the Dutch. According to Mattos, they also captured over one hundred indigenous persons on the same expedition, even though their only mission was to capture cattle. Mattos continued,

During the whole journey, we knew not one minute of peace since the natives were all around us who harassed our group constantly. We suffered greatly on the journey because, it being winter, we quickly ran out of our supplies, and we risked our lives throughout the journey as the whole region was crawling with Dutch soldiers. Yet, we succeeded in bringing back all nine hundred heads of cattle to our lines.⁷

Marques, like the rest of the men, endured suffering with great constancy and brought “great spirit to everything he did.”⁸ Mattos set the scene well. The lack of food, the ever-present threat of fierce indigenous warriors, and fears for their very survival combined to constitute the opportunity to demonstrate a laudable *bizzaria*. Many commanders and theorists would have probably suggested that marching in winter, even a Brazilian winter, with few supplies while fighting an indigenous force of greater numbers, was suicide. Indeed, that was precisely the point. While the witness says nothing about any fighting, the endeavor itself was daring, even reckless, and testified to Marques’s *bizzaria*.

Another colleague, Paulo da Cunha Sotto Maior, offered the most extreme example of Marques’s daring or *bizzaria* in recounting a major offensive on Recife. According to Sotto Maior’s testimony, the Brazilian general staff sought to strike a definitive blow against Dutch defenses in 1647. Arriving outside Recife, Brazilian forces caught the Dutch unawares and took up strong positions, ostensibly cutting off the city. The assault began, and immediately the Dutch launched sorties to try and punch a hole through their opponents’ defenses, but to no avail. Finally, after twenty-three days, the Dutch defenses collapsed, unable to withstand the Brazilian offensive. Marques, according to Sotto Maior, fought with a ferocity that had “rarely been seen

⁵ ANTT, CG, Consultas, Maço 6, n. 356.

⁶ ANTT, CG, Consultas, Maço 6, n. 356.

⁷ AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 456.

⁸ AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 456.

before or since in this army.” In this fiction, Marques acted “without fear,” as demonstrated by his willingness to stand directly in front of the Dutch artillery, goading them to try and kill him. While mere mortals would have cowered, Marques never wavered and stood firm with his sword in hand and cutting down the enemy.⁹ When he finally submitted his petition in 1654, Marques claimed in the petition’s closing statement that he risked his life many times on behalf of the king. But without the extreme claims and evidence found in the testimonies of Barbalho, Mattos, and Sotto Maior, these successes may well have failed to convince those reading his petition.¹⁰

When Sotto Maior carefully described Marques facing down gunfire, the Overseas Council members understood what his careful description of Marques’s fearlessness in the face of gunfire meant. Such *bizarria*, or risk-taking, offered soldiers the chance not only to prove they were men of action, but also to situate their personal histories within the broader story of a major conflict. In 1654, when Marques submitted his petition, the war in Brazil was almost over. *Bizarria* was a crucial part of his self-presentation, but also made him part of the larger story of Portuguese victory and imperial history. Marques’s colleagues concluded that “the many risks to his life undertaken in Pernambuco and at the various encounters therein, were all done with zeal and love for Your Majesty’s service.”¹¹ Thus, Marques’s actions demonstrated not only his worth to the war effort, but also his valor in the eyes of his fellow soldiers and in the eyes of his nation.

Bizarria, then, spoke to the ways in which soldiers conceptualized daring and bravery and how they projected such ideals onto the page. In this respect, *bizarria* proved a useful rhetorical tool, something soldiers used time and again because it effectively convinced military authorities of how valuable their service was. From its likely origins among the Renaissance *furiosi* to its later deployment among the armies of imperial Portugal, *bizarria* and the *bizarro* worked effectively to cast petitioners as singular heroes, men obviously worthy of whatever reward the crown granted.

3. Sacrifice

Sacrifice also occupied a central place in soldier-fictions. More often than not, warfare left many men injured and crippled. Many of these men looked to turn their misfortune into a story of heroism. They had literally sacrificed their bodies for the cause and understandably felt that they should be able to demand respect from their colleagues and their king based on that sacrifice; they insisted that their scars, missing limbs, and illnesses proved their dedication to their homeland and their king. Sacrifice proved a particularly useful trope, especially because injuries happened frequently during the small, sordid skirmishes that constituted the bulk of a soldier’s existence, and not necessarily during the grand battles that captured the attention of their leaders or painters and poets reimagining heroism. Moreover, these stories of sacrifice, part and parcel of petitions like that of Marques, tell us much about the smaller conflicts that otherwise have vanished from the historical record. In these narrative petitions, soldiers turned sacrifice into an effective fiction by emphasizing the physical price they had paid for serving the monarch.

In 1637, Sebastião de Sotto contributed a testimony to the petition of Andre Gomes. De Sotto described a specific incident that demonstrated Gomes’s worth. In 1636, Sotto, supported by forty men and six Indians, was sent to reconnoiter Dutch forces in Paraiba. Despite being

⁹ AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 456.

¹⁰ AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 456.

¹¹ AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 6, D. 456.

from a different unit, Gomes accompanied them. As Sotto's men were destroying the trails leading from Paraiba to Itamarca, they were set upon by natives from a nearby village who were allied with the Dutch. After a fierce fight, the Portuguese drove them off. Gomes was in the thick of the battle and was "always at my side," Sotto testified. He fought bravely and with great valor but "suffered a severe stab wound in his stomach that put his life in peril," but that also "demonstrated the extent of his valor."¹² According to Sotto, Gomes's actions made it possible for them "to set fire to all the sugar cane in this region," thus robbing the Dutch of extraordinary profits and inflicting on them the worst material loss of the entire war.¹³

This was not a story of a daring raid, but rather revealed one soldier's sacrifice for the cause. In Sotto's testimony, Gomes's injury distinguished him as both courageous and deserving of special praise. The storyline contained many elements familiar to members of the Overseas Council and to soldiers serving on the colonial frontiers. Typical for these affidavits, Sotto recounted the date, the exact number of men, the commander who gave the order, and the location of the attack to provide verifiable details. Sotto's account, and the many others like it, correspond to how Natalie Davis and Roland Barthes have shown that texts, based on fictions, could be constructed to create a believable reality (Davis, 5). In this case, when Sotto had recounted the injury Gomes suffered, he included enough details to make it plausible. However, while specifics and accuracy mattered, the details also gave Gomes's injury more meaning, which was the ultimate motive behind Sotto's narrative. Following the concrete information on time, place, and actors came the more literary elements such as the mission's secrecy, the flight of the troops, the *bizarria* of Gomes's charge, and the ultimate victory, paid for with Gomes's wounds.

In the literature of both antiquity and the medieval world, injuries added a personal level of gravitas to battles large and small, especially for those injured and their supporters. Fictions of a soldier's scarred body, therefore, provided lasting testimony to the physical damage that war inflicted on soldiers (Hodges, 14). By recounting injuries, a soldier proved his involvement at battles, both important ones and smaller skirmishes. It helped soldiers to suggest also that *bizarria* brought on the injury. Many soldiers crafted tales of their injuries to unite several different fictions into a coherent whole. Soldiers often situated tales of their wounding within notable engagements that underscored their contributions to the broader war effort.

However, the problem with fictions that depended on the use of famous battles was the scarcity of such incidents. While major battles offered valuable frames in which to situate soldiers' injuries, it is also true that many small, lesser-known encounters and skirmishes occurred just as frequently. Soldiers were thus left with a dilemma: they could ignore these smaller skirmishes and the injuries they sustained in them, or they could try to extract some value from them as support for their narratives of sacrifice (Stoyle). Many chose the latter course, correctly deciding that the effect of suffering a wound in battle would outweigh the disadvantage of it not occurring during a well-known encounter. In sum, they made the most of nameless battles, stressing their heroism and the sacrifice of their wounds.

Disabled soldiers also frequently petitioned royal councils for relief from the financial difficulties that came with their wounds, reminding the Councils that courage and not cowardice had made it difficult for them to support themselves. This raises two questions: Did different wounds have different values? Did soldiers distinguish between wounds? The answers to both questions are, tentatively, yes. Soldiers used different language to differentiate between wounds

¹² AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 3, Doc. 223.

¹³ AHU, CU, Pernambuco, Cx. 3, Doc. 223.

that were temporary, or wounds from which they recovered, and wounds that lead to lifelong disability. Soldiers referred to frequent, non-life-threatening wounds as *feridos*, or, simply, injuries. Throughout the Atlantic, soldiers' writings almost never omitted a mention of their injuries. More interesting, and useful, however, were the descriptions of crippling injuries, identified by the term, *aleijado*, derived from the word for lame. Such wounds were most effective when seeking compensation for favors. In petitions for financial relief, disabled soldiers also argued that, considering their injuries, the war had never really ended for them. Crippling wounds, and the pain they caused, were permanent reminders of a soldier's courage and valor. Soldiers who could no longer serve explained their inability to fight because of the injuries received in acts of outstanding bravery.

Indeed, such was the effectiveness of sacrifice as a narrative device that Antonio Marques, like many soldiers before and after, framed his entire petition around his sacrificial actions in service of the crown. The petition Marques sent to the Overseas Council, the document composed in his own hands or with the help of a notary as opposed to the witness statements written for him, was economical in its language. As was typical of the genre, soldiers needed to make choices about what they did and did not include. So for the historian, no matter how tantalizing the petition may be, there will always be gaps in every soldier's imperial narrative. Fortunately, there is reason for excitement as well. For, stuck as they were with such limitations, what a soldier chose to include speaks volumes about what he valued in composing this petition and professional biography. Marques's petition reveals that he thought sacrifice would serve as the best conclusion to his life and career. Sacrifice ran through his notable actions and encounters, demonstrating his *bizarria* and his honor (discussed below) as we might expect, but it ended with his sacrifice to the crown.

Marques opted to end his petition with a brief retelling of his role in the capture, or recapture, of Recife where he found himself "severely crippled" because of his actions. Actions he undertook, so he said, out of a desire to serve the crown. By its placement at the end, Marques's story of injury and sacrifice for the crown was conspicuous. Marques chose to maximize the effect of his injury, to make sure it was the crown jewel of his petition. Indeed, immediately following the injury, the petition proceeds to outline the awards Marques felt he deserved, which included an induction into the Order of Christ and a generous pension. Indeed, when reading the petition, the last thing one sees before the request for financial compensation is the narrative of sacrifice, a clever tactic considering how effectively injury and sacrifice moved colonial authorities to support the soldiers.

Stories of war inevitably meant tales of the injured. Soldiers relied heavily on these tales, framing their physical wounds and disabling injuries in their petitions as evidence of the sacrifices they had made. Injuries were permanent reminders of what men had endured while on a campaign. It was a price they paid, however grudgingly, because, in the first instance, it meant they survived a violent event that probably left many other men dead, and, second, they understood the impact injuries could have when crafting petitions. Injuries also showed courage in a way that *bizarria* could only claim; an injury was an irrefutable record of courage carved into the soldier's flesh.

4. Conclusion

The soldier's petition sought to express early modern values of military society. When Antonio Marques, like so many of his colleagues before him, composed his petition with the help of his fellow soldiers, he tapped into a wellspring of ideas and perceptions about what constituted an ideal soldier. Petitions had one primary goal, and that was to convince its target audience of a

certain viewpoint. In this case, Antonio Marques sought above all else to convince the *Conselho Ultramarino* that his actions as a soldier and junior officer merited special consideration and they ought to induct him into the Order of Christ. Becoming a member of one of the three military-religious orders necessitated presenting desirable qualities, especially as they pertained to military activities. Six decades of shared interaction between Portugal and Spain and years of precedent set by former soldiers gave men like Antonio Marques a set of narrative tropes they could use - *bizarria*/daring and sacrifice, among others - to craft compelling narratives or fictions about their time fighting in Brazil and throughout the Portuguese empire's far-flung dominions.

Ultimately, soldiers' petitions and writings were structured in order to represent professional biographies. This structural organization, the act of synthesizing a soldier's life and career into neat, easily digestible episodes, proved exceedingly effective during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. On the one hand, Antonio Marques and his fellow Brazilian soldiers found themselves as the latest participants in the tradition of *vida* writing that encompassed many differing social and professional classes from high court judges in Brazil to religiously devout women in France (Hillman). Marques's petition differed only insofar as it required, some might say even necessitated, the willing participation of his former colleagues. Former soldiers able and willing to contribute to a group effort proved fundamental to the Brazilian *requerimento* as a genre. Men like Antonio were not trusted to give their own accounts *per se*. Rather, they needed explicit endorsement from the group, the society of soldiers, as a whole, before governing bodies considered them as worthy soldiers. The success of Antonio Marques and his biography, then, was as much a collective responsibility as it was an individual triumph.

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