

Early Printing in Brazil¹

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*“There is no education without books.
—Frei José Mariano da Conceição Veloso.*

“Early Printing in Brazil” may appear to be an impossible subject to write about. A more accurate title might be “Books without a press: a history of early printing in Brazil, mostly from abroad,” or “The non-history of printing in Brazil during the colonial period,” or even “The history of the absence of early books printed in Brazil.” One might even ask: “What is early printing in Brazil, exactly?” There were practically no early Brazilian imprints, if we understand “early” to mean the colonial period which, in the case of Brazil, was a little over three centuries. It is not a common history compared to other colonies. The European discovery (or arrival) by the Portuguese navigator Pedro Álvares Cabral was in 1500; the first official printing press was installed in 1808.

In spite of this, the subject can be approached in other ways, leaving aside actual printing *in* Brazil. Encounters, flora and fauna, geography, slavery, literature and the short life of the literary academies in the eighteenth century, sciences in colonial Brazil, are a few possibilities, almost all involving travelers, writers, scientists, or men of politics, the vast majority foreigners. However, I opted for a more general approach in which the starting point is my own handling of books as a rare-book catalog librarian, as well as the reading of the literature.

There are two phases in the history of printing in Brazil before the country became independent in 1822. The first can be categorized as one in which books about the country were printed mostly in Europe, from the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500 to 1808. The latter date marks an enormous change in the history of book production in Brazil, as a result of the transfer of the

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1. This paper was originally drafted for presentation at a colloquium in Brazil, sponsored by the Association internationale de bibliophilie. I am grateful to Norman Fiering for his close reading of the later written version. I want also to thank my colleagues at the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional and at the John Carter Brown Library for their help with the images shown in this paper.

Portuguese king, family, and court to Rio de Janeiro, and the introduction of official printing presses in Brazilian territory that came with this relocation. It is during this first phase that Antonio Isidoro da Fonseca unofficially published a few pamphlets in Rio de Janeiro in the middle of the eighteenth century (including one printed on silk).

A second phase begins in the years following 1808, continuing until 1822, during which many books were printed by the royal press in Portuguese America. We might also speak a little about a third phase, after independence, when censorship ended and there was considerable growth in the book industry, but that era is beyond my present research endeavors.

Two Centuries with few Books and Libraries

Brazil, unlike the Spanish and English American colonies, did not establish a printing press within a few decades after the first settlement. Comparing the arrival of printing in Portuguese America with the progress in other countries we note that in Spanish America a press was introduced in Mexico before 1540 and in Peru by 1584. In British North America, the Puritans had begun printing in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1640. The lag in Brazil is unique in the Americas.

If “Brazilians” had any interest in books, there would have been a readership for the fruits of a press based there. Europe was taking the first steps of the scientific revolution that would blossom in the second half of the seventeenth century and, after all, Brazil was a source of raw materials for research in European academies and scientific societies from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and beyond. One could imagine that the exotic descriptions of plants, animals, and peoples of this country were, by themselves, sufficient reasons to create conditions for spreading the word in the Brazilian territory by means of a press, along with the interest in Europe. However that may be, it is true that Portugal itself joined the scientific revolution relatively late and, as our most famous bibliographer Rubens Borba de Moraes said in 1979, the first half of the sixteenth century, in terms of books, can be referred to as the Brazilian Middle Ages.¹

Despite Portugal’s lag in the area of the sciences in the 1700s, the country pioneered in ocean navigation from the end of the fifteenth century, to the point that the royal Infant Henrique, known as The Navigator, has been called “the midwife of sciences.”² Caravels, compasses, and cartography all contributed to that distinction. Soon after the Portuguese arrival in Brazil, the news spread

1. Rubens Borba de Moraes, *Livros e bibliotecas no Brasil colonial*, 2nd ed., Brasília, DF, Briquet de Lemos Livros, 2006, p. 4.

2. Hookayas [n.d.], in Valeria Gauz, “História e historiadores de Brasil colonial, uso de livros raros digitalizados na comunicação científica e a produção do conhecimento, 1995-2009”, PhD diss. in information science,

and first-hand accounts from a variety of places appeared on the European book market. Many books are examples of that interest which, as I have noted, both reflected and contributed to the advancement of the sciences. In Europe, the ever-increasing, faster dissemination of information after Gutenberg; the plants and animal specimens brought to Europe from the Americas; the challenging new ideas and the amassing of scientific proofs; the foundation of scientific academies, and the support research scientists received from wealthy patrons were all part of the transition from the Renaissance to the modern era. The authority of the ancients, such as Aristotle's texts, was no longer enough; empirical evidence and critical examination were the new requirement.

A year after the arrival of Cabral in 1500, Gonçalo Coelho was commissioned to sail a small fleet from Portugal to Brazil, which included on board as an observer the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci. Coelho reached Cape São Roque and then coasted south, reconnoitering the Bay of All Saints (at Salvador, Bahia) and Guanabara Bay (at Rio de Janeiro). Vespucci's descriptions of the Amerindians in his work *Mundus Novus* (1502?) were the first to be published after the reports of Columbus himself. The book caused a sensation and was reprinted in numerous editions in several languages.¹ Thus, the first printed document known to mention Brazil was, at the same time, the letter announcing a newly discovered continent, America, the new world. The Dutch edition of *Van de nieuwer Werelt oft landschap nieuwelicx ghevōden* (Antwerp, 1507?), which survives in only one known copy at the John Carter Brown Library, in Providence, Rhode Island (USA), is noteworthy for its woodcut illustrations. A translation of the German title reads: *About the new region that might be called a New World, marvelously discovered by the Christian King of Portugal*. It is still controversial whether Vespucci or Columbus is to be credited with the first use of the phrase "New World."

Many travelers from Europe came to Brazil in these early centuries, a subject deserving separate treatment. From Hans Staden in the sixteenth century (*Historia und Beschreibung eyner Landschafft der Wilden Nacketen, Grimmigen Menschfresser-Leuthen in der Newenwelt America gelegen*, or *True Story and Description of a Country of Wild, Naked, Grim, Man-eating People in the New World, America*, Marburg, 1557), for instance, to John Luccock, in the 1800s (*Notes on Rio de Janeiro, and the Southern Parts of Brazil; Taken During a Residence of Ten Years in that Country, from 1808-1818*, published in 1820), various writers left some contribution about a country that was not much investigated by the Portuguese for its potential to reveal new scientific and ethnographic knowledge. An exception must be made for the

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1. *Annals of colonial Brazil, 1500-1822*, an exhibition at the John Carter Brown Library, Providence, RI, September 8 to December 15, 2000, unpublished.

first chronicles by the Portuguese Jesuits Manoel da Nóbrega (*Carta do Brasil*, 1549) and José de Anchieta (*De gestis Mendi de Saa*, 1563 or *Arte de grammatica da lingua mais usada na costa do Brasil*, 1595), the latter famous for his lyrical style. The existing colonial Brazilian collections in libraries tell a history of Brazil mostly from the viewpoint of Europeans and, in many cases, these are the only sources available. José Mindlin and other authors refer to the travel literature as a rich collection for historiographical studies, which it is, but the perspective of those reports was based naturally on the culture to which the traveler belonged — quite different from what they found in the American colony.

The first phase includes a sub-category in the book history of early Brazil, namely events that occurred before 1808 but were not documented in print until centuries later, major events that somehow remained out of the hands of printers or publishers in Portugal or in Brazil. To cite four examples: (1) The birth certificate of Brazil, a letter written in 1500 to the King of Portugal by Pero Vaz de Caminha, announcing the discovery, was published only in 1817, in Rio de Janeiro, as part of a note, not as part of the main text, in *Corografia brazilica*, a book by Manuel Ayres de Casal. (2) The *Diario da navegação da armada que foi à terra do Brasil em 1530*, a diary of a trip to Brazil, written by Pero Lopes de Souza, recognized as an important book on Brazil's history during the years that followed the discovery, was not published until 1839, in Lisbon. (3) The Jesuit Fernão Cardim's *Tratado da gente e da terra do Brasil*, a treatise on the peoples and lands of Brazil, written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, first appeared in a complete version only in 1885, published by Capistrano de Abreu. Similarly, (4) Gabriel Soares de Souza's *Tratado descriptivo do Brasil ou Notícia do Brasil*, written in 1581, was not published in a complete edition until 1851. The Biblioteca Mindlin has a manuscript of this book dated 1587. It was this year that Souza unsuccessfully presented the text to the Spanish court for publication. These are all essential books for the understanding of the first century of Brazil's settlement.

Manuel I (1469-1521), the Portuguese king known as “Manuel, The Fortunate,” is closely associated with the golden era of Portuguese history. His principal concern was developing and protecting the spice trade route to the East and in guaranteeing that the lands reached would remain part of the Portuguese economic network. It was during his reign that the navigation of a sea route to India around the Cape of Good Hope was achieved and the beginnings of the Portuguese empire in the Far East established. As part of the king's plans, the Portuguese Jesuits were responsible for converting the locals in the new colonies. For that, they introduced presses in Goa (India), Macau (China), Japan, and also in South America, in the Guarani missions in Paraguay. Would one not imagine the same for Brazil, especially because education in this country was

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an ecclesiastical responsibility and strongly Jesuitic for almost three centuries?¹ However, for reasons unknown, the Jesuits seem not to have had permission to print in Brazil. So far no documents have surfaced that prove the existence of presses in Brazil before the work of the unauthorized secular printer Antonio Isidoro da Fonseca in 1747, although the priest Serafim Leite,² who between 1938 and 1950 wrote a history of the Jesuits in Brazil, states (with regard to the renovation of the Jesuit school library in Rio de Janeiro): “It was the beginning of a campaign against termites and moths. There were lines of recent books on their shelves, some printed in-house around 1724, for the private use of the school and priests.” However, when later in the eighteenth century the Jesuits were expelled, no evidence was found of the possible existence of a printing press at the school. Yet the inventory of Jesuit property took years to be compiled, so it is possible that if there was a press there it disappeared before its existence could be recorded.

Isolated attempts occurred to install printing presses in Brazil that we know more about. The Dutch, who occupied a vast territory in the Northeast between 1630 and 1654, seem to be the very first who tried to introduce printing in Brazil, under the government of Prince Maurits of Nassau in Pernambuco, but without success. On February 28, 1642, the Dutch in Brazil asked the Western India Company to send a press from Holland, a request that was granted, but the printer assigned to travel to Pernambuco, Pieter Janszoon, died shortly after arriving, in 1643.³ This ambition of the Dutch was not as anomalous as it may sound, since Prince Maurits was determined to establish in Brazil not only commerce in sugar, but a European cultural outpost and brought with him a remarkable assemblage of artists and scientists.

The Dutch presence did result in a slew of invaluable books about early Brazil, especially in the area of natural history, such as Willem Piso’s *Historia naturalis brasiliae* (Amsterdam, 1648), later used by Linnaeus. But after the Dutch were driven out, no major descriptions of Brazilian flora and fauna appeared in print until the late eighteenth century. The medical value of many plants in Brazil, some of which the Dutch scientists recognized, did not become widely known until the nineteenth century.

The Dutch, of course, were not publishing in Portuguese. As a curiosity, we should mention that the first book printed in the Portuguese language in the Americas was *D.O.M. Luzeiro evangelico: que mostra à todos os christãos das Indias*

1. Beginning in the sixteenth century, religious orders, such as the Jesuits, the Franciscans, the Benedictines, and the Carmelites, established schools in Brazil. They were also responsible for the formation of the first libraries in the main cities in the country.

2. Serafim Leite, *História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, Lisbon-Rio de Janeiro, Portugália-Civilização Brasileira, 1938-1956, vol. 6, p. 26.

3. Lawrence Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil (sua história)*, São Paulo, T. A. Queiroz Ed., 1985, p. 13.

Orientais o caminho único, seguro & certo da recta fé, para chegarem ao porto da salvação eterna, ou, Instrução dos principais artigos da religião cristão [sic] convertidos, os quais se explicão com claridade, which was printed in Mexico, in 1710. A work of more than 500 pages, it was written in the city of S. Thome (India Oriental) in 1708, by the Philippine missionary Juan Baptista Morelli, whose goal was to combat the spread of Protestantism in India. The Biblioteca Mário de Andrade in São Paulo holds the only recorded copy in Brazil, in its original vellum binding.

The Jesuit schools played a central role in education in Brazil, as said before. After studying in these schools, “Brazilians” were usually able to enroll in European universities, Coimbra, in particular. Moraes mentions some of the figures: in the seventeenth century, 353 people of Brazilian origin graduated from that university; in the eighteenth century, 1,752. Some would not return to Brazil, finding better work opportunities in Europe, but many did come back. A number of native “Brazilians”, particularly in the 1700s, deserve to be cited for their contributions to society. Three examples are: Luiz Antonio de Oliveira Mendes, João Manso Pereira, and Bartolomeu Lourenço de Gusmão.

Luiz Antonio de Oliveira Mendes, born in Bahia, invented an extension ladder for firemen. After a fire in Lisbon in 1787, many people died due to the lack of a proper apparatus. The expanding and contracting machine invented by Mendes is described in detail in his book *Memoria analitico-demonstrativa da maquina de dilatação, e de contração* (Lisbon, 1792). In the same book, the author describes other useful inventions, such as a kind of plow and a water pump for wells.¹

João Manso Pereira, born in Minas Gerais, was a famous chemist in the colonial period of Brazil. He became known for the quality of his porcelain, varnish, and lacquer, as well as for his writings and chemical studies. He also built a machine for a distillery, of which a drawing can be seen in his book, *Memoria sobre a reforma dos alambiques* (Lisbon, 1797). Because he never had the opportunity to study abroad, his works are supposedly faithful to the techniques in use in the colony.²

It was in the first years of the 1700s, though, that the still young Bartolomeu Lourenço de Gusmão, the Flying Priest, born in Santos (São Paulo), successfully launched his hot air balloon in Lisbon. The ascent was observed by King João V, his family, the court, and the future Pope Innocent XIII. Although Gusmão mostly overcame the prejudices against science at the time, he was the target of satire and was also persecuted by the Church, probably for his friendship with New Christians in Rio de Janeiro or because of his association with scientific

1. Rubens Borba de Moraes, *Bibliographia Brasiliana: Rare Books about Brazil Published from 1504 to 1900 and Works by Brazilian Authors of the Colonial Period*, Los Angeles-Rio de Janeiro, UCLA Latin American Center Publications-Livraria Kosmos Editora, 1983, p. 588; Valeria Gauz (ed.), *Portuguese and Brazilian Books in the John Carter Brown Library, 1537 to 1839; with a Selection of Brazilian Printed in Countries other than Portugal and Brazil*, Providence, RI, The John Carter Brown Library, 2009, p. 337.

2. Moraes, *Bibliographia Brasiliana*, p. 658; Gauz, *Portuguese and Brazilian Books*, p. 657.

experimentation. His balloon (fig. 1) was comically called “Passarola”.¹ As is well known, the French Montgolfier brothers received the glory for building a manned hot air balloon in 1783 and history connects them to Gusmão. A facsimile reproduction of the “Passarola” drawing was published in Lausanne in 1917. Its preface reads: “*Bartholomeu Lourenço de Gusmão fut le premier inventeur des aérostats qui s’éleva dans les airs en partant d’un point donné pour atterrir à un autre endroit.*”² This French edition includes Gusmão’s biography and manuscript annotations in Latin between pages 14 and 15. There is also a petition addressed to the king in French.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the first book printed in Brazil with moveable type appeared. The well-regarded Portuguese printer Antonio Isidoro da Fonseca succeeded in publishing four works in his *oficina* in Rio de Janeiro, with the permission of — and maybe after an invitation from — the governor Gomes Freire de Andrade and the local bishop, despite the Crown’s implicit prohibition. Fonseca knew he lacked the necessary and proper civil and religious permissions. The local bishop could only attest that the book was not against the Faith — which was not enough. Moraes describes the required procedure for gaining permission to print a work: after sending the first proofs to the authorities based in Lisbon and receiving them back approved, it was still necessary to send printed copies of the book back to the authorities for comparison with the originals. Only then could the work bear the “Com todas as licenças necessárias”, or “with all needed licenses”. Obviously complying with such rules for a printer in Brazil would take too much time and be too costly.³

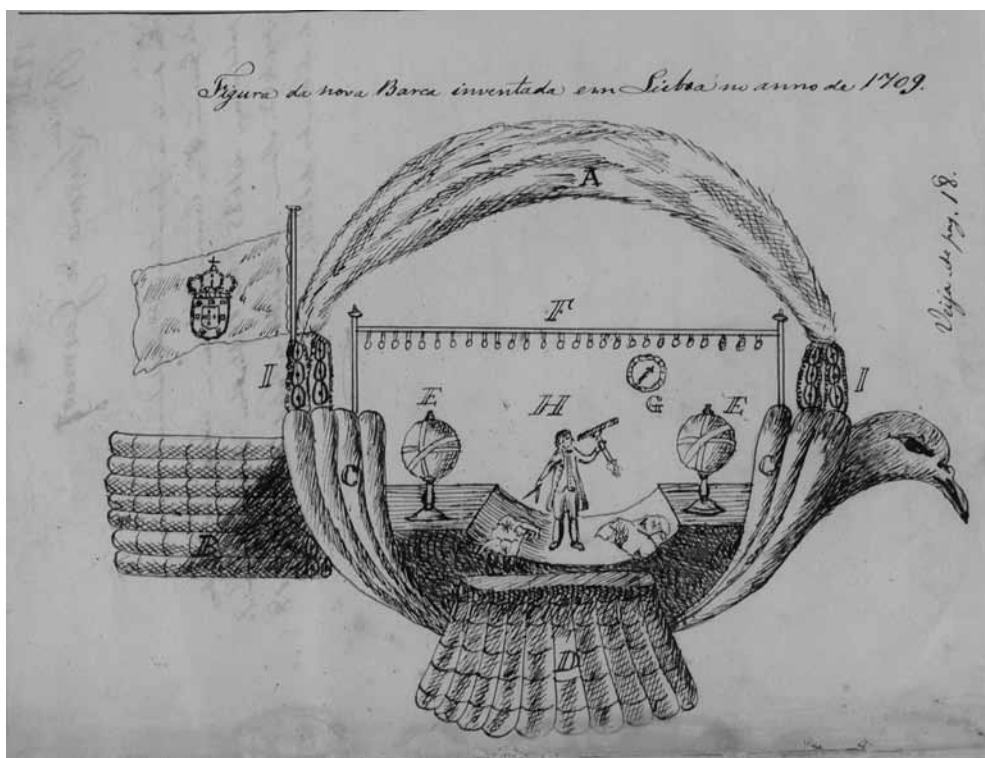
What it was that led a well-established printer in Portugal to move to Brazil in the mid-eighteenth century is still a subject of research. It is possible that Fonseca wanted to keep a distance from the Inquisition; after all, he had been the publisher of some of the plays of the Brazilian “New Christian” dramatist Antonio José da Silva, who was in trouble with the Inquisition throughout his life and was eventually executed in an auto-da-fé. According to Cavalcanti, the literary academy founded in 1736, the Academia dos Felizes, promoted the idea of a printing shop in Rio de Janeiro, which may have motivated Fonseca.⁴

1. *Bartolomeu Lourenço de Gusmão, o padre inventor*, Rio de Janeiro, Andréa Jakobsson, 2001, p. 49.

2. 11. *Vicomte de Faria, 8 août 1817. Reproduction fac-similé d’un dessin à la plume, de sa description et de la pétition adressée au roi Jean V (de Portugal) en langue latine et en écriture contemporaine (1709) retrouvés récemment dans les archives du Vatican, du célèbre aéronef de Bartholomeu Lourenço de Gusmão “l’homme volant” portugais, né au Brésil (1685-1724)*, Lausanne, Imprimeries Réunies, S. A., 1917, p. [7]. Available at: <<http://purl.pt/706/1>>.

3. Rubens Borba de Moraes, *O bibliófilo aprendiz*, 3rd ed., Brasília, DF / Rio de Janeiro, Briquet de Lemos / Casa de Palavra, 1998, p. 155.

4. Nireu Oliveira Cavalcanti, *O Rio de Janeiro setecentista: a vida e a construção da cidade, da invasão francesa até a chegada da Corte*, Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar Ed., 2004, p. 150; Augusto Victorino A. Sacramento Blake, *Dicionário Bibliográfico Brasileiro*, Rio de Janeiro, Typographia Nacional, 1883, vol. 1, p. x-xi. Sacramento



1. A drawing of the Passarola. In: Pedro de Azevedo Tojal, *Foguetário – Poema heroico oferecido ao doutor Martim Facua*, Lisboa, 1727 (manuscript), p. 111.
(Fundação Biblioteca Nacional-Brasil.)

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The best known work from Fonseca's press in Brazil is a report about the arrival of a bishop in Rio de Janeiro, *Relação da entrada que fez o excellentissimo, e reverendissimo senhor D. Fr. Antonio do Desterro Malheyro Bispo do Rio de Janeiro* (1747), which is considered to be the first book printed in Brazil. Whatever the case, Fonseca's shop was immediately suppressed and the little that has survived of his output is now exceedingly rare. After he was back in Portugal, he tried to officially return to Rio de Janeiro as a printer, but the king, João V, denied his petition.¹

Attempts to install printing presses in Brazil were not fruitful for quite some time, as we have seen. There are no doubt a number of reasons why Brazil lacked this vital means for disseminating information. One of them may have been a deliberate policy in Lisbon to limit knowledge of the resources and attractions of Brazil.

As a matter of fact, the practice of suppressing books in order to avoid the spread of information considered important by the government was also true for Spain. The entire edition of Christoval Acuña's *Nuevo descubrimiento del gran rio de las Amazonas* (Madrid, 1641) was confiscated so that the Portuguese government could not gain access to that knowledge. That happened just a year after Portugal was no longer under the rules of the Spanish Hapsburgs, a period called the Iberian Union (1580-1640).

Some books printed in Portugal about Portuguese America were suppressed by the regime if they exalted Brazilian riches. Such was the case with Pero Magalhães de Gândavo's *Historia da Provincia de Santa Cruz (The History of the Province of Santa Cruz)* (Lisbon, 1576). This is the first book printed in the Portuguese language about Brazil, proclaiming its beauties. The work was almost an invitation to emigrate from Portugal to Brazil, which was possibly an incentive to the government to confiscate the edition. Whatever the reason, there are only six copies known today.²

As a matter of fact, another sub-category could be introduced in the story of printing in Brazil in the colonial period, that of "suppressed books". At the beginning of the eighteenth century André João Antonil's *Cultura, e opulencia do Brasil por suas drogas, e minas* (Lisbon, 1711) was published, teaching how to prepare sugar from sugar cane; profit from planting tobacco; and extract gold and silver from the mines. These were the sources of the country's wealth,

Blake affirms that the literary society was the Academia dos Selectos (1751-1752), but that cannot be possible because Isidoro da Fonseca had already returned to Portugal by then.

1. Moraes, *Livros e bibliotecas no Brasil colonial*, p. 72; Anibal Bragança, "Antecedentes da instalação hipertardia da tipografia ao Brasil (1747-1808)," in *Floema*, ano III, n. 5 A, out. 2009, p. 122; Jerônimo Duque Estrada Barros, "Impressões de um tempo: a tipografia de Antonio Isidoro da Fonseca no Rio de Janeiro (1747-1750)" (MA's thesis in social history, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói [RJ], 2012), p. 19.

2. Moraes, *Bibliographia Brasiliana*, p. 344.

knowledge of which was to be kept under wraps for the Crown and not widely divulged to just anyone. The entire edition was seized and destroyed soon after being published, although it bore the necessary licenses. In this case, too, only six copies are known to have survived.

Soon after Antonil's book, Francisco Tavares de Brito published a work that is also now extremely rare, because the Portuguese government suppressed whatever copies it could find. *Itinerario geografico: com a verdadeira descrição dos caminhos, estradas ... que ha da cidade de S. Sebastião de Rio de Janeiro* (Seville, 1732), is a travel guide to the mining region of Brazil, disclosing, in effect, state secrets. The printer attempted to conceal the origins of the work by falsely indicating the place of publication as "Sevilha"; he also concealed his own identity since it seems there was no Antonio da Sylva with a press in Seville. Was it a coincidence that immediately after the publication of Tavares de Brito's *Itinerario*, the Portuguese government issued a law (October 27, 1733), prohibiting the opening of new trails or roads in the state of Minas Gerais, where most mines were located?

Apart from confiscated editions, it was also in the first half of the eighteenth century that the first published history of Portuguese America written by a Brazilian appeared, Sebastião da Rocha Pitta's *Historia da America Portuguesa, desde o anno de mil e quinhentos de seu descobrimento, até o de mil e setecentos e vinte e quatro* (Lisbon, 1730). Besides his detailed account of the history of the mining regions (Minas Gerais), Pitta also recounts the history of the runaway slave community called Palmares which, for a century, resisted attacks from both the Dutch and the Portuguese. Located deep in the interior of the northeast, that settlement remained unconquered by the Portuguese until 1694. The final siege required a 6,000-man army and 42 days. Quite an achievement for the slaves. It seems that the only image of the Quilombo dos Palmares made at the time is in *Rerum per octennium in Brasilia* (1647), by the Dutch author Caspar Barlaeus, who was never in Brazil but was closely connected to Prince Maurits's project there.¹

The Brazilian context started to change during the eighteenth century, mainly in Minas Gerais, thanks to the profuse amount of gold and precious stones found there that made the area more prosperous than ever. Although less known in the popular imagination, the gold and diamond mines of Brazil exceeded in value the gold produced from the Spanish empire. The Portuguese monarchy became so rich that the king could dispense with the Cortes (the state legislature), since he did not need the goodwill of the leading nobility and merchants to finance the government. No assembly was called in Portugal until 1820. However, England's

1. R. K. Kent, "Palmares: An African State in Brazil," *The Journal of African History* 6, no. 2, Cambridge University Press, 1965, p. 166.

control of the trade and markets of the Luso-Brazilian empire was such that, in the end, England was the greatest beneficiary of Brazilian mines and mining.¹

Vigorous cultural development followed the new wealth, marked by an efflorescence of art and literature. The influence of both the French Enlightenment and the revolution for independence in the British North American colonies also had an effect. Books previously forbidden could then be found in Brazil, although smuggling existed. According to Bragança, booksellers in the late eighteenth century were trying, without success, to form an association, in order to gain the same privileges as their colleagues in Portugal.² It is said that at that same time there were over 200 taverns, 52 beauty shops, and only two bookstores in Rio de Janeiro. Cavalcanti lists twenty-three people in book-related trades in Rio de Janeiro between 1754 and 1807, most of them conservators, binders, and dealers without a store.³

This was as well the time of the emergence of literary academies. The Academia dos Esquecidos, in Bahia (1724); the Academia dos Felizes (1736-1740), the Academia dos Seletos, (1751-1752), the Academia Fluviense (or Scientific Society) in 1772,⁴ and the Academia Literária (1787, re-organized in 1794) in Rio de Janeiro; and the Academia dos Renascidos, in Bahia (1759) are examples.⁵ Kantor investigates, in particular, the academies in Bahia, in which the goal was to collectively write the history of Portuguese America.⁶

In Portugal, a significant change took place in 1750 when King José I claimed power. His new administration was dominated for more than twenty-five years by one of the greatest statesmen (and benevolent despots) of eighteenth century Europe, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, later named the Marquis of Pombal. To every facet of the Portuguese empire he brought fresh thinking and reform, also recognizing that the development of Brazil depended upon the investment of more capital and more manpower. Pombal's prohibition of new convents and his expulsion of the Jesuits changed the school system in Brazil, too. As a consequence, with time, the original religious libraries were destroyed by insects, humidity, and disdain. The Jesuit school in Rio de Janeiro, for instance, resisted the Dutch and the French attacks in the 1600s and the 1700s respectively, but not Pombal's decision. Unfortunately, Cavalcanti reminds us,

1. Annals of colonial Brazil, 1500-1822, unpublished.

2. Bragança, "Antecedentes," p. 119.

3. Cavalcanti, *O Rio de Janeiro setecentista*, p. 147.

4. José Carlos de Oliveira, *Chegada da corte abre as portas para a ciência*, in Ulisses Capozzoli (ed.), *História da Ciência no Brasil 1: abertura para o conhecimento, de 1500 a 1920*, São Paulo, Dueto, 2009, p. 31. The author gives 1771 as the foundation date of the scientific society in Rio de Janeiro.

5. Cavalcanti, *Antonio Freire Ribeiro: médico ilustre do Rio de Janeiro*, [n.d.], p. 1. Available at: <<http://www.portcom.intercom.org.br/pdfs/1a3d6179cd871ead453fef301eeab8b.PDF>>.

6. Íris Kantor, *Esquecidos e Renascidos. Historiografia acadêmica luso-americana (1724-1759)*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 2004.

Pombal's advanced ideas for education were delayed in their arrival in Brazil. Until 1760, the shortage of teachers and long distances favored private classes at home.¹

Referring to Brazilian libraries visited by travelers in the nineteenth century, Cavalcanti (2004) and Silva² mention that private libraries belonged, most of the time, to clergy people (the most erudite) and to liberal professionals who depended on books for their work, usually related to the administrative area. In the same article, Silva also comments on the general lack of interest in books by the inhabitants of Brazil. As both George Gardner and Elizabeth Agassiz, who were travelers to Brazil in the nineteenth century wrote:³ “Books are not seen as objects of constant use in a house; they are not part of the current necessity”. These authors found only “a few people with a taste for reading and the few books they own are small prayer books.” Yet, even for the illiterate, owning books raised one's social status.

At the invitation of the Marquis of Pombal, the Italian naturalist Domenico Vandelli, after some years of living in Portugal, assumed the chair of Philosophy at the University of Coimbra. Vandelli not only published his celebrated *Florae Lusitanicae et Brasiliensis specimen* (Coimbra, 1788), he would also be responsible for appointing one of his Brazilian students, Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, as the leader of the first scientific expedition to Brazil authorized by the Portuguese Crown. Scientists were also sent to Africa and Asia for the purpose of compiling a vast natural history of the colonies that became known as “philosophical voyages”. Ferreira traveled thousands of miles in pursuit of his research, visiting the captaincies of Grão-Pará, Rio Negro, Mato Grosso, and Cuiabá, in the north and central west parts of Brazil, between 1783 and 1792. He collected a great number of samples, produced maps and precise land drawings, inventoried the fauna and flora, and documented the peoples he encountered (fig. 2). Raminelli⁴ points to a controversy in the literature about the quality of scientific aspects of the expedition: “Beyond the polemics, the naturalist did not always follow the required scientific standards then used for the collection and description of materials. ... For over a century, the specimens were not studied by Ferreira or any other Portuguese, and remained unknown.” Ferreira dedicated the rest of

1. Cavalcanti, *O Rio de Janeiro setecentista*, p. 164-165.

2. Cavalcanti, *O Rio de Janeiro setecentista*, p. 150; Luiz Antonio Gonçalves da Silva, *Bibliotecas brasileiras vistas pelos viajantes no século XIX*, in *Ciência da Informação*, Brasília, DF, 39, no. 1 (jan./abr., 2010), p. 76. Available at: <<http://eprints.rclis.org/17552/1/Luiz.pdf>>.

3. Jean Louis Rodolph Agassiz, Luis Agassiz, and Elizabeth Cary Agassiz, *Viagem ao Brasil, 1865-1866*, Brasília, Senado Federal / Conselho Editorial, 2000; *George Gardner, Viagem ao interior do Brasil. . . (1836-1841)*, Belo Horizonte, Itatiaia, 1975. Both books are cited by Silva, *Bibliotecas brasileiras*, p. 79. See also Lawrence Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil: sua história*, 2. ed. rev. ampl., São Paulo, Edusp, 2005, p. 80-82.

4. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira by Ronald Raminelli / Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil. Available at: <<http://bndigital.bn.br/projetos/alexandre/historico.htm>>.



2. During his nine-year trip, Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira produced a vast collection of diaries, maps, and drawings.
(Fundação Biblioteca Nacional-Brasil.)

his life to administrative services, says Raminelli, and he also cites Paulo Vanzolini, who considered the main purpose of Ferreira's travels to be strategic for Portugal, that of securing the borders of Brazil, which at the time were disputed by other European nations.

One specific enterprise in Lisbon at the end of the eighteenth century that is of great importance to the publishing industry in both Portugal and Brazil was the foundation of the *Oficina Tipográfica, Tipoplástica e Calcográfica do Arco do Cego* under the direction of Friar José Mariano da Conceição Veloso (also known as José Veloso Xavier). Veloso was a Brazilian naturalist who transformed his monk's cell in Rio de Janeiro into a museum and herbarium while taking small trips to collect specimens for study. That gave origin to his *Florae Fluminensis*, a publication made possible only after he moved to Lisbon in 1790 (fig. 3).

During twenty-eight months of intense activity at the Arco do Cego print shop there was a steady production of books aiming at Brazil's economic development (Veloso, 1798),¹ such as *O Fazendeiro do Brasil*. The knowledge from those books brought innovation to Brazil, but not as much as was needed. Over 80 titles were published in the *oficina* plus 57 printed by other presses,² some of them translations of useful books published elsewhere in Europe, such as Abraham Bosse's famous manual of etching, *Traité des manières de graver en taille douce sur l'airain par le moyen des eaux-fortes* (Paris, 1645), reprinted in Portugal as *Tratado da gravura a agua forte, e a buril, e em maneira negra com o modo de construir as prensas modernas, e de imprimir em talho doce* (Lisbon, 1801), a publication that utilized the skills of Portuguese engravers like Romão Elói de Almeida and Paulo dos Santos Ferreira Souto, who would later work in the *Imprensa Régia* in Rio de Janeiro.

The quotation from Friar Veloso that I used as an epigraph for this paper is a confirmation of his (and others') worries about a country that was suffering the consequences of so many years of backwardness. In fact, he had an indirect role in the history of printing in Brazil even before the installation of the royal press. After the move of the royal family to Rio de Janeiro in 1808, Veloso would come back to Brazil to work for the *Imprensa Régia*. However, right before the first official printing with movable type began in Brazil in 1808, printing from copper plates was introduced in Minas Gerais, in 1807. The priest José Joaquim Viegas de Menezes produced an eighteen-page poem (the fonts inspired by Didot, the famous French letter designer), *Canto ao Illmo. e Exmo. Snr. Pedro Maria Xavier de Athaide e Mello governador e capitão general da capitania de Minas Geraes*

1. José Mariano da Conceição Veloso (org.) et al., *O Fazendeiro do Brasil...*, Lisbon, na Regia Officina Typografica, anno MDCCXCVIII [1798], vol. 1, p. [3], dedication leaf. The electronic copy available at the Biblioteca Brasileira Mindlin website bears Rubens Borba Alves de Moraes' ex-libris on the inside cover. At: <<http://www.brasiliana.usp.br/bbd/handle/1918/03894100#page/12/mode/1up>>.

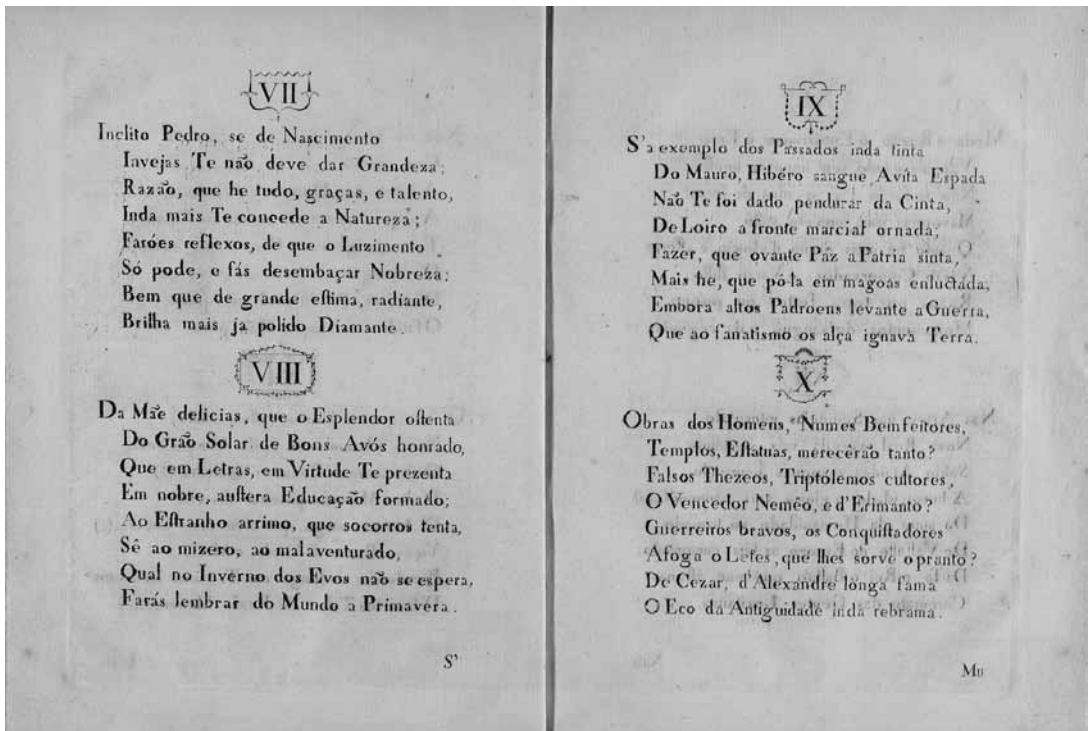
2. Fernanda Maria Guedes Campos et al. (org.), *A Casa Literária do Arco do Cego (1799-1801). Bicentenário "sem livros não há instrução"*, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional / Casa da Moeda / Biblioteca Nacional, 1999.



3. The *Flora fluminensis*, describing over 1,600 species of flora, was Friar Veloso's major work. He was also an editor, a naturalist, zoologist, mathematics teacher, and a translator. (John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

no seu dia natalício (fig. 4), also known as *Canto encomiástico* in Brazil, by Diogo Pereira Ribeiro de Vasconcellos. It was Friar Veloso who had taught Menezes the technique of copper engraving years before in Lisbon.

Four copies of this pamphlet have survived, two at the Biblioteca Nacional (Brazil), one at the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, also in Rio de Janeiro, and one at the Arquivo Público Mineiro, in Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais). The copy at the Arquivo is the only one with the illustration of the governor and his wife, but it lacks the title page. The other three copies lack that portrait. Thus, no single complete copy survives. However, a facsimile edition of the *Canto* was published by the Biblioteca Nacional in Brazil in 1986. This is a case of a facsimile with no original, bibliographically speaking.



4. The importance of the *Canto encomiástico* resides in its place in the history of graphic arts in Brazil. The Priest Viegas de Menezes used fifteen copper plates to make the book. It is not clear if the plates came from Portugal or if he used the ones available at the Royal Mint. (Fundação Biblioteca Nacional-Brasil.)

The Move of the Royal Family (and Press) to Rio de Janeiro

The invasion of Portugal by Napoleon Bonaparte at the very end of 1807 precipitated the astonishing relocation of the entire Portuguese Crown and court to Rio de Janeiro and with them came the royal press. The ruler of the empire was the prince regent, later João VI (1767-1826), who since 1792 had been the *de facto* king because his mother, Queen Maria I, was mentally incapable of ruling. Dom João was accompanied by his difficult Spanish wife, Carlota Joaquina. Also in this migration was their young son, Pedro, Duke of Braganza (1798-1834), ten years old and eventually to be the first emperor of Brazil. The move completely changed the character of Rio de Janeiro. Virtually overnight the city became the center of an empire, an important place in the world, and development occurred not seen before.

In no other circumstance in history, to my knowledge, did an imperial colony suddenly become the metropolis of that empire, and no other European crown relocated to America. The situation could be seen as absurd: the center of empire located in a country that was still officially a colony.

Not surprisingly, one of the very first books printed in Rio de Janeiro by the royal press was José Caetano da Silva Coutinho's *Memoria historica da invasão dos francezes em Portugal no anno de 1807* (1808), an account of the French invasion of Portugal and a justification of the flight if the Crown was to be saved.

The arrival of Dom João and the court to Brazil was the beginning of a new era in almost every respect in Brazil. According to the predominant mercantilist theory of the time, for an empire to be economically beneficial to the mother country, the role of colonies was to supply only raw materials, something Brazil had been doing on an immense scale. Manufacturing and processing were to be done in the metropolis and these goods were then exported to the colonies. The prince regent was quickly persuaded that the trade restrictions and monopolies established by the mother country were strangling the development of the Brazilian economy. So, within weeks after his arrival, Dom João opened the ports of the country to friendly nations, with any sort of goods being importable, after payment of proper duties, to meet the needs of the colony.¹

It also became imperative to create schools to fill the demand of the court for competent personnel in the new land. For that purpose, the Academia Real da Marinha (1808) was founded, followed by the Academia Médico-Cirúrgica da Bahia (1808) and a similar one in Rio de Janeiro a year later, and the Academia Real Militar (1810). Correspondingly, books were published on mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural history, war techniques, geometry, medicine, law, and

1. Annals of colonial Brazil, 1500-1822, unpublished. Brasil. Leis, decretos. *Carta regia ao Conde da Ponte abrindo os portos do Brasil ao commercio directo estrangeiro* [. . .]. Available at: <http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/CB/1808_docs/L01_p01.html>.

public health¹ and, due to such demand, in 1809 a press was built in Brazil for the first time. However, with regard to the school system, it was not until 1827 that the imperial government ordered the creation of elementary schools in the most populated villages and cities in Brazil.²

One of the first royal orders³ made it “legal for anyone in any area in which they live to establish any kind of manufacture . . . to make goods in large or small quantities as best suits them.” That edict meant an enormous shift for Brazil, considering that, until then, all the above improvements were prohibited. The goal of replicating in Rio de Janeiro the institutions in Lisbon led to the creation of a public library — today the national library —, the botanical garden, the military academy, the Brazil bank, a fine arts academy, and many other institutions.

Reflexões sobre alguns dos meios propostos por mais conducentes para melhorar o clima da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, by the physician Manoel Vieira da Silva, is considered the first book printed in Brazil by the Imprensa Régia.⁴ In 1808, immediately after the arrival of the Portuguese, it became urgent to investigate the diseases in Rio de Janeiro, to study the geography of the city in relation to public health, such as illnesses caused by the swamps (and the need to drain them), and to review such old deleterious practices as the custom of burying corpses at the churches, among other concerns.

The most popular work of fiction in Portugal during the colonial period by a “Brazilian” was Tomás Antonio Gonzaga’s *Marília de Dirceu*, first published in Lisbon in 1792. A best-seller, it was a story of unfulfilled love told in verse. Gonzaga was white and upper-class, one of a number of poets from the mining district of Minas Gerais. He was born in Portugal, but of Brazilian parents. It is easy to understand why *Marília de Dirceu* was the first literary work printed by the new royal press in Brazil, in 1810, given the success of the first edition.

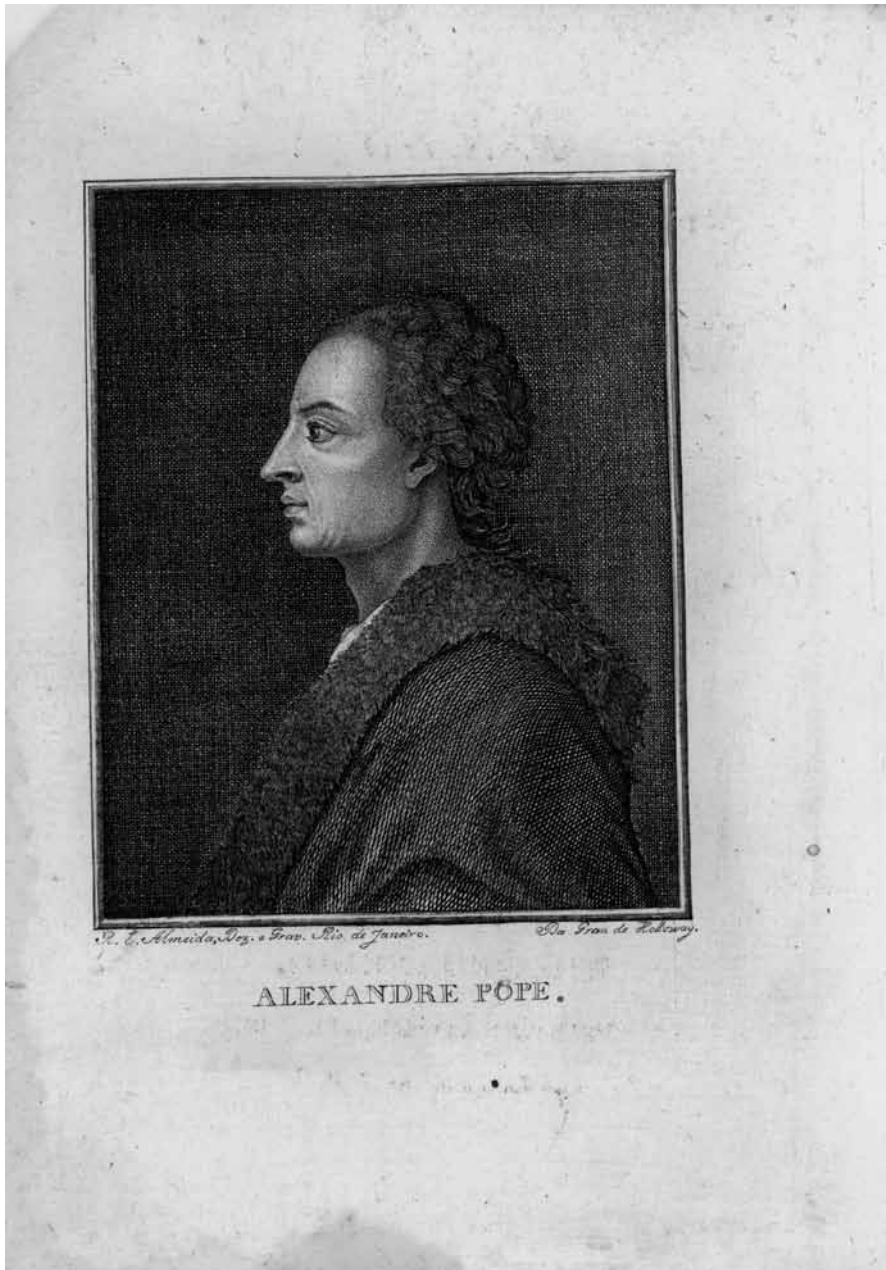
Important books by authors from other countries in Europe also demanded a version in Brazil by the Imprensa Régia. One early production of the new royal press was a three-volume edition of Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* in

1. Simone Cristina Mendonça de Souza, *Primeiras impressões: romances publicados pela Imprensa Régia do Rio de Janeiro, (1808-1822)*, Campinas / São Paulo, 2007, p. 42. At: <<http://www.caminhosdoromance.iel.unicamp.br/estudos/teses/pdfs/simone.pdf>>.

2. Silva, *Bibliotecas brasileiras*, p. 81-82.

3. Brasil. Leis, decretos. *Alvará, porque Vossa Alteza Real He Servido Revogar toda a proibição, que havia, de Fabricas, e Manufacturas* [. . .]. Available at: <http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/CB/1808_docs/L05_p01.html>.

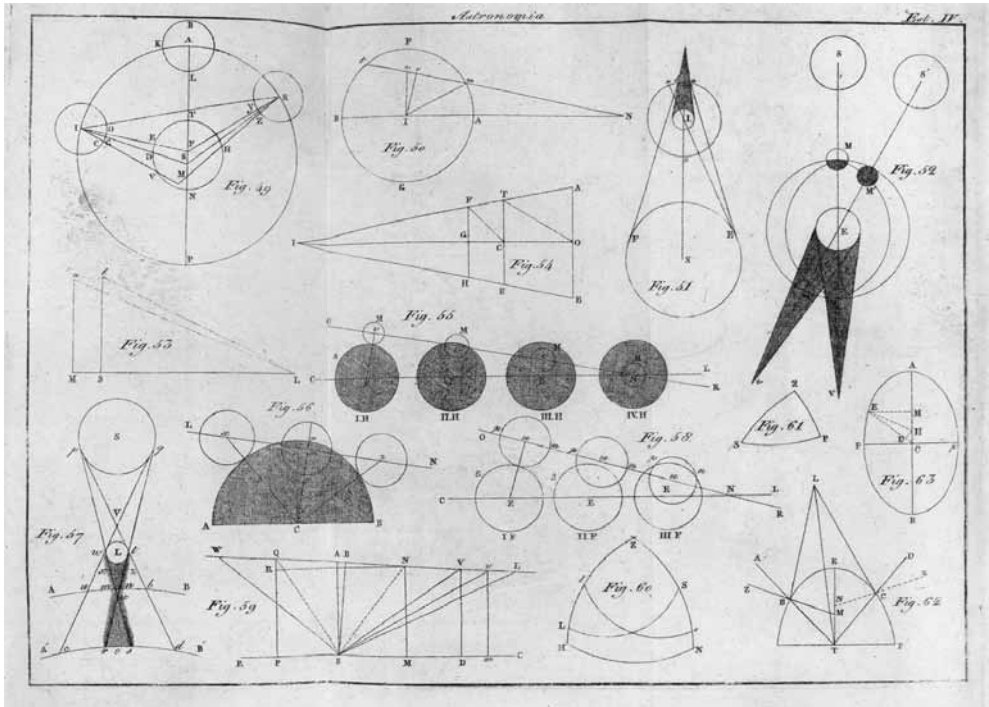
4. As a curiosity, the Imprensa Régia had several names: Real officina Typographica, Tipographia Nacional, Tipographia Imperial, Imprensa Nacional, Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, and, again, Imprensa Nacional. In: Brasil. Imprensa Nacional. A Imprensa Nacional. Available at: <http://portal.in.gov.br/novo/ascom/imprensa1/a-imprensa-nacional>; Moraes, *Livros e bibliotecas no Brasil colonial*, p. 119, registers *Observações sobre o commercio franco no Brazil* (Rio de Janeiro, 1808) by José da Silva Lisboa, as the first book printed in Brazil.



5. Pope's portrait is considered the best work of Romão Elói de Almeida in Brazil.
It was based on the British original by Thomas Holloway.
The text is both in Portuguese and English on opposite pages.
(John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

Portuguese translation, *Compendio da obra da riqueza das nações* (Rio de Janeiro, 1811-1812), obviously important for economic policy. Also in 1811, an *Essay on Man*, by Alexander Pope (*Ensaio moraes*) appeared in Portuguese (fig. 5).

Practical sciences were not neglected by the Imprensa Régia as indicated by the publication of *Elementos de Astronomia para uso dos alumnos da Academia Royal Militar* (1814), a compilation of the best texts in astronomy by Manuel Guimarães for the students at the Royal Military Academy in Rio. The high quality of the engravings is a notable feature of the work (fig. 6).



6. Manuel Guimarães, at the Academia Real Militar in Rio de Janeiro, created a model for teaching the sciences in Brazil. (John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.)

Among the almost forty publications in 1808 alone of the new royal press in Rio de Janeiro, many were government books and pamphlets, some were religious items, and a few books related to commerce. Between 1808 and 1822,

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the press would print nearly 1,500 books and over 700 laws, decrees, *alvarás*, royal letters, etc., as reported by Ana Maria Camargo and Borba de Moraes.¹ The bilingual website Codigo Brasiliense² is a compilation of these perishable government documents and is intended to facilitate research. Compared to the royal press in Lisbon (both presses existed under the same name), the output of the Imprensa Régia em Rio de Janeiro, during its fourteen years as a separate publishing house, exceeded in number that of the Imprensa Régia in Portugal.

Brazil had its own printing presses now, but censorship persisted. This fact induced a growth in the Portuguese language book industry in England and Paris. A major example is the *Correio Braziliense*, published in London, where the political opposition took refuge between 1808 and 1822. It was an impressive organ for denouncing the misconduct of Portuguese politicians in such matters as bribery and nepotism, and for publicizing abuses of power by both the secular administration and the church. But the periodical also contained news from around the world and essays on literature and culture. Its editor was Hipólito José da Costa, a bright native of Brazil who from his London base planted ideas and fostered ideals of freedom and development in the minds of the inhabitants of Brazil. So disturbed was the king by the *Correio* that its importation into Portugal and Brazil was prohibited, an edict that was renewed several times until 1817 (although some authors say that there was a tacit agreement between Costa and João VI whereby the *Correio* would not openly criticize “your Majesty”). Predictably, the ban was useless. So much prestige did Costa have in Brazil that after independence in 1822 he was appointed special Brazilian ambassador to the British court.

Censorship and the printing monopoly ended around 1822. As a consequence, other publishing houses appeared. By then there were different presses operating throughout the country. Politics was a major impetus behind the expansion of the book industry in Brazil, especially in Rio as can be seen by the variety of pamphlets published at the time about current issues. During the transitional period of the new empire (after independence), we also find new ways that the book world entered into society, such as the popularity of book stores as meeting places. A good example is the bookseller Evaristo da Veiga, sometimes called the Brazilian Benjamin Franklin, a moderate and influential journalist who also founded the *Aurora Fluminense*, an important political journal during the first empire.³

1. Ana Maria de Almeida Camargo and Rubens Borba de Moraes, *Bibliografia da Impressão Régia do Rio de Janeiro*, São Paulo, Edusp/Kosmos, 1993, 2 vols.

2. The Codigo Brasiliense at the John Carter Brown Library and other similar documents. Available at: <<http://www.jcbl.org/CB>>.

3. Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil* (2005), p. 122.

The main population centers in the states or captaincies remained mostly isolated culturally; a sense of national identity in Brazil was still in its infancy. As the capital, Rio profited from its function as a center of commerce, and it attracted the best people involved in intellectual and cultural life. It is not a surprise that Brazil was the most lucrative colony in the Portuguese empire since before independence, a wealth built in large part by African slaves who continued to be imported in vast numbers during the nineteenth century.

The second city to be blessed with a printing press was Salvador, in Bahia, which had been the capital of Brazil until the middle of the eighteenth century. The Portuguese printer Manuel Antonio de Silva Serva, who opened his shop in 1811, was also responsible for the first library catalog produced in Brazil. More than that, he founded the first private newspaper, *Idade d'Ouro* (of course, "with permission from the government").

Precisely speaking, the first newspaper was started in Rio de Janeiro, the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro*, but it was entirely devoted to the printing of official acts and to representing and defending the Crown in all matters, in direct opposition to the *Correio Brasiliense*. The *Idade d'Ouro* also defended the government, but it was at the same time a vehicle for spreading news of the first debates about the campaign to end the slave trade after the cessation of censorship. Another early project of Silva Serva was a plan to establish a public library in Bahia. The two initiatives, a library and a newspaper, are reminiscent of the events that had taken place already in Rio de Janeiro, with the creation of the royal library and the Imprensa Régia. Silva Serva died in 1819 after publishing 176 titles, mostly about religion, law, and medicine, some history and politics, but almost nothing of literature. Many of his publications were translations and some were reprints of works that had originated at the royal press in Rio. His wife continued his business and the printing shop survived until 1846.¹ By then, several other provinces had presses, such as Pará, Maranhão, Pernambuco, and Minas Gerais.

After the independence in 1822, Brazil came to be considered a good home for immigrants. In the book market, Pierre François Plancher is an example of those who moved to Rio and published periodicals and books mainly on politics. Rio had branches of foreign bookstores, such as Garnier, this one for almost a century. Among the famous bookstores, there were Villeneuve, Crémière, Didot, and Louis Mongie. From those names, we can see something of the French cultural influence in Brazil, even without French colonization. The list also reflects a certain monopoly. Until 1863, less than a fifth of all businesses in Rio belonged to Brazilians. The French influence was present in all aspects of Brazilian literary life, as noted. The British were the bankers and importers; the slave market and the basic commerce belonged to the Portuguese (but the

1. Moraes, *Livros e bibliotecas no Brasil colonial*, p. 140-160.

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market in expensive luxury items belonged to the French); native white Brazilians dominated agriculture and positions in the government.

The market for fiction was still limited, Hallewell notes, but in the 1830s, it was possible to see writers, politicians, and the elite of that time meeting in the most famous bookstore in the city, Paula Brito's, who then had six presses. Paula Brito was a kind and strong character. His success was notable for a poor, humble, self-taught, mixed-blood man whose store was located outside the fanciest neighborhoods of Rio. Romantic writers, musicians, composers, artists, actors, and members of the elite, as well as ministers, senators, journalists, and physicians, from 1840 to 1860, would regularly gather at Paula Brito's. Recognizing the emergence of a new body of readers, Brito published novels and books for women, even though, in some quarters, female illiteracy was seen as something noble.¹ With him, for the first time, a poet or any other writer could aim to be published and be paid for his work. By the mid-nineteenth century, Brito's fortunes would change, but that is another story, far from early Brazilian imprints.²

Brazil has always been a magnet for European travelers, artists, and scientists who were able to make the long trip. From Hans Staden, André Thévet, and Jean de Léry in the sixteenth century to Cristóbal de Acuña (*Nuevo descubrimiento del gran río de las Amazonas*) and Richard Fleckno (*A Relation of Ten Years Travels in Europe, Asia, Affrique, and America*) in the seventeenth century, to Martin de Nantes (*Relacion succinte et sincere de la mission du père Martin de Nantes*) and René Du Guay-Trouin (*Memoires de Monsieur Du Guay-Trouin*) in the 1700s, and Thomas Lindley (*Narrative of a Voyage to Brasil*) or Lady Maria Callcott (*Journal of a Voyage to Brazil*) and many others in the 1800s, a fascinating descriptive literature was amassed, and I have not mentioned the French artistic mission to Brazil in 1816 nor the expedition undertaken by Iohan Baptist von Spix and Karl Friedrich Philip von Martius (between 1817 and 1820). All made a contribution to the understanding of the country.

We are still left with the question of how it could be that the printing was introduced in Brazil 300 years after the land was colonized by the Portuguese in an era when it was recognized how important the press was to development. Was the matter never taken up by the Crown or was there an intentional — but not officially declared — prohibition? It is natural to wonder whether printing was just treated as any other business, let's say a manufacturer, that could not

1. According to Marcia Abreu, after investigating documentation regarding book importation and license requests in Brazil, novels were among the most popular genres since the eighteenth century (in Souza, *Primeiras impressões*, p. 45); Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil* (2005), p. 154-155 and 160.

2. Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil* (2005), p. 161.

have a license to exist in the colony or whether it was singled out because of its power to influence opinion.

The poor educational system and a “group of inter-related circumstances” in Brazil’s first two centuries of existence undoubtedly discouraged the local production of books — a thesis defended by authors such as Melo¹ and Hallewell. To illustrate, books from the Arco do Cego shop, for instance, sent to Brazil from Portugal at the end of the eighteenth century, many times did not find readers and remained warehoused until they deteriorated.

The argument sometimes heard that it was too expensive to maintain a printing shop in Brazil has little validity also in my opinion, especially in the eighteenth century, when mining and sugar production brought new wealth to the country. Another factor that may have limited the demand for books in Brazil in that century, which has greater plausibility, is that most of the best educated “Brazilians” moved to Portugal to advance their careers, or were elsewhere in Europe.

Although we cannot affirm that there was specific legislation forbidding presses in Brazil, “prohibition” may have existed in a subtle form (or books about Brazilian riches would not have been suppressed at different times). Or maybe Fonseca’s press, in 1747, the only one with an official document prohibiting typography and books, was confiscated for the sole reason that it was installed without a license. Both secular and religious administrations in many countries used the press for their own interest and also imposed censorship.

Clearly much remains to be investigated about the history of books and printing in Brazil during the colonial period, although research on the subject in Brazilian universities has grown considerably since the 1980s and the 1990s. Perhaps the question with which we began this paper will eventually be satisfactorily answered.

Résumé

Les premiers imprimés au Brésil

L’histoire des premiers imprimés au Brésil est un sujet qui nécessite une recherche rigoureuse. Il n’y a eu pratiquement aucune impression au cours des trois premiers siècles du pays, de la découverte en 1500 à 1808, année où la famille royale et la cour s’installèrent à Rio de Janeiro, ce qui amena des changements importants.

1. José Marques de Melo, *Sociologia da imprensa brasileira. A implantação*, Petrópolis, Vozes, 1973, p. 97 and p. 110; Hallewell, *O livro no Brasil* (2005), p. 80.

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La médiocrité du système éducatif brésilien ne doit pas être sous-estimée lorsqu'on essaie de comprendre les raisons de cette situation étrange due principalement au manque d'intérêt de la population pour les livres. Le fait que le Brésil ait été isolé ou trop protégé par la métropole a pu contribuer également au retard dans le développement culturel de la colonie. Il y eut l'initiative, sans lendemain, des Hollandais qui installèrent une imprimerie pendant la colonisation du Nord-Est du pays; quelques livres furent imprimés à Rio de Janeiro en 1747, mais la tentative échoua et fort peu de ces livres figurent dans les bibliothèques de nos jours.

Après 1808, cependant, la publication de livres connut un essor significatif à Rio de Janeiro, et peu à peu dans les autres États. L'intérêt pour les livres fut encore plus grand lors de la marche vers l'indépendance, quand l'effervescence du mouvement révolutionnaire favorisa la publication de nombreux pamphlets politiques.

Beaucoup d'ouvrages consacrés à la magnifique flore et faune du pays et aux différents peuples qui y vécurent furent publiés en Europe; cette production qui constitue en elle-même un vaste champ de recherche doit être bien distinguée des livres publiés au Brésil, un sujet qui demeure aujourd'hui un vaste champ d'études.