



THE CHURCH AND  
CONVENT OF  
**SÃO FRANCISCO**  
IN BAHIA

Maria Helena Ochi Flexor  
Friar Hugo Fragoso, OFM  
Organizers

ODEBRECHT

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Translated by H. Sabrina Gledhill



CLARIVAL  
DO PRADO **PRIZE**  
VALLADARES  
**ODEBRECHT**

THE CHURCH AND CONVENT OF SÃO FRANCISCO IN BAHIA  
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Friar Hugo Fragoso, OFM

AUTHORS

Ana Palmira Bittencourt Santos Casimiro  
Friar Alfons Schomaker, OFM  
Friar Hugo Fragoso, OFM  
Friar Marcos Antônio de Almeida, OFM  
Friar Pedro Knob, OFM  
Luís de Moura Sobral  
Maria Helena Ochi Flexor  
Maria Vidal de Negreiros Camargo

TRANSLATED FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY  
H. Sabrina Gledhill

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MANAGING EDITOR  
Marcos Paulo Ferreira

GUEST PHOTOGRAPHERS

Almir Bindilatti  
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Rômulo Fialdini

TILE PANEL PHOTOS (PAGES 342-353)  
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Designmetro - Carina Flexor and Renata Kalid

LAYOUT, ARTWORK AND PHOTO TREATMENT

Daniel Silvany Tavares and  
Eduardo Vilas Boas

COPY-EDITORS (PORTUGUESE VERSION)

Maria José Bacelar Guimarães  
Sandra Pereira

STYLE STANDARDIZATION (PORTUGUESE VERSION)

Maria José Bacelar Guimarães

ILLUSTRATIONS

Luis Evangelista (based on models  
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## The Franciscans in a time of transition<sup>1</sup>

Friar Marcos Antônio de Almeida, OFM

*The natural movement of societies appears to be satellization around a center. Balance is practiced and thought from the basis of the center: it is the unifying factor.*

*If the center loses its unifying force, the system will dissolve and vanish.*

(DUQUOC, 1985, p. 114)<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Franciscan Order in Brazil is directly related to the process of colonization. This observation is primarily based on the data and concerns that drove the Portuguese establishment in Brazil. One of its best-known concerns was introducing missionaries as an integral part of the evangelizing enterprise in order to expand the Christian faith in Portuguese America. Essentially, the organization of Franciscans in colonial Brazil followed a basic line that was grounded on the dual dynamic underlying the entire agenda of the Province of St. Anthony: training and providing for friars. Other aspects of the link between these two dimensions were always part of negotiations between the Portuguese Church and State.

The period covered here – between 1779 and 1825 – is key to understanding a time that saw the decline and decay of the religious orders, not only in Brazil but throughout the Church in general, particularly regarding the missions associated with the traditions of Iberian Christianity.

In this chapter, I will seek to present the demographic situation of the Franciscan Province of St. Anthony of Brazil, of which the Convent of São Francisco in Salvador was the chapter house – a convent in which the provincial and his provincial vicar resided, along with the definitors. As a political and religious center, the convent was the hub of all the missionary work done in the northern part of Portuguese America, despite many internal disputes among the three groups in its human/geographic framework: Bahians and Pernambucans (often called Luso-Brazilians) and Portuguese. Thus, the idea here is to take a broader view, while paying special attention to the details that explain a wide-ranging process that went beyond merely local structures.

For the Franciscans, the 18th century was marked by the height of convent building. The Franciscan convent in Salvador was the focus of the research done by Friar Jaboatam (1858-1862) to produce his work *Orbe Seráfico, Novo Brasília*. In three Franciscan convents – those of Olinda, Salvador and João Pessoa – the paintings in the churches and lay buildings represent Franciscan thought in Brazil. The idea of a “Franciscanized World” influenced by the mysticism of Francis of Assisi seems to have driven a renewal of spirituality and the Franciscan mission per se (ALMEIDA, 2008).



#### IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROWN

On August 30, 1707, King João V of Portugal agreed to become the protector of the Franciscan Province of St. Anthony:

I, the King, hereby make it known that, taking into account the good example and virtues of the religious of the Province of St. Anthony of the state of Brazil, and their usefulness to the souls of those who reside there, in the missions they undertake, and in the expectation that they will not only continue but increase their zeal in the service of God, and for the good of souls, praying to God our Lord for the preservation and state of this kingdom: hereby see fit to place said province under my royal protection, through which I will show the effects of my good will, and the particular devotion with which I venerate the seraphic father St. Francis, and the glorious St. Anthony... (SOARES, 1942, p. 31).

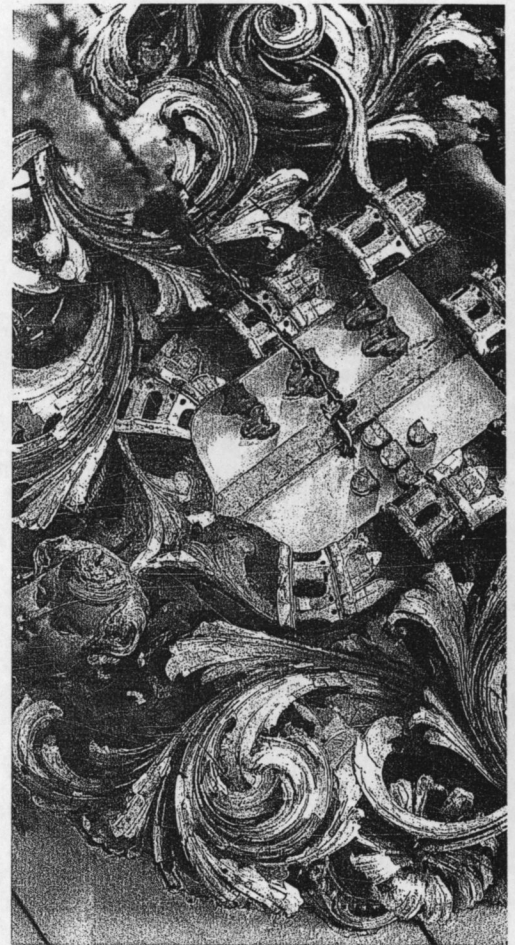
The first Synod of Bahia took place that same year, and the "First Constitutions of the Archbishopric of Bahia" were drafted under the command of Dom Sebastião Monteiro da Vide. The "good example" to which the king was referring was justified by the Franciscans' loyalty to the colonial agenda. Without this religious support, it would have been impossible to preserve and maintain the colonial

Friars at the  
construction of  
convent reached  
its height in  
18th century,  
as spirituality  
began to decline  
to intervention  
of the Crown, which  
removed religious  
from missions  
work and reduced  
their role in society.

enterprise. It was an exchange of interests: the king offered his protection, likely followed by benevolent gestures toward the institution; the Franciscans, to be worthy of such favor, continued to practice their "virtues" in order to receive "considerations of good example." However, the virtues to which the monarch was referring were not in any way related to the theological virtues, but rather to the colonial ethos of obedience, subservience and dependence on the Portuguese system. In colonial Christianity, being a good Christian also meant being loyal to the Portuguese Crown. Therefore, any disloyalty in the colony implied infidelity to Christianity. Here we see the importance of the Synod of Bahia as an attempt to ensure good performance by religious and lay clergy, which would otherwise be doomed to discredit and defamation in the life of the colony. The time required the Franciscans' total financial dependence on outside sources for the monumental project they had in mind: the construction of the Convent of São Francisco. Without such financial dependence, it would have been impossible to carry out that undertaking. Royal protection was bestowed, but the Franciscans' loyalty to the Crown seems to have waned over time.

In the Royal Charter of March 5, 1779, Queen Maria I placed all the regular priests – that is, religious clergy – under the authority of local bishoprics to avoid conflicts of jurisdiction between regulars and bishops in the overseas colonies:

I have had this matter examined by theologians and jurists, and having received reports from all those heard, and according to the most sound and true doctrine of the Church, the dispositions of the Council of Trent and the most recent Bulls that establish discipline on this subject: I hereby declare that the regular parish priests of any order whatsoever may not serve their churches or carry out their parochial duties in any way without the institution and approval of the diocesan bishops, subject to visitation, during which these same bishops may ask or inquire about their life and customs, [and] punish them for all faults committed in those same churches; the sentences must be executed without opposition from the regular prelates, who may not obstruct, inquire or judge the same infractions that the bishops may find. Similarly, no regular clergy may preach or hear confession without the express permission of the bishops without further restrictions, except authorization to preach in their regular churches, having asked leave, and if this is not expressly forbidden, and to hear the confession of the lay members, their brethren, who live in the same convent, and will support themselves, and have continuous practice there. There is no exception whatsoever on the farms, estates and plantations of the regular clergy, and their residents must be released from their parishes... (AHU, 1779a, cx. 177, doc. 13.311).



Detail  
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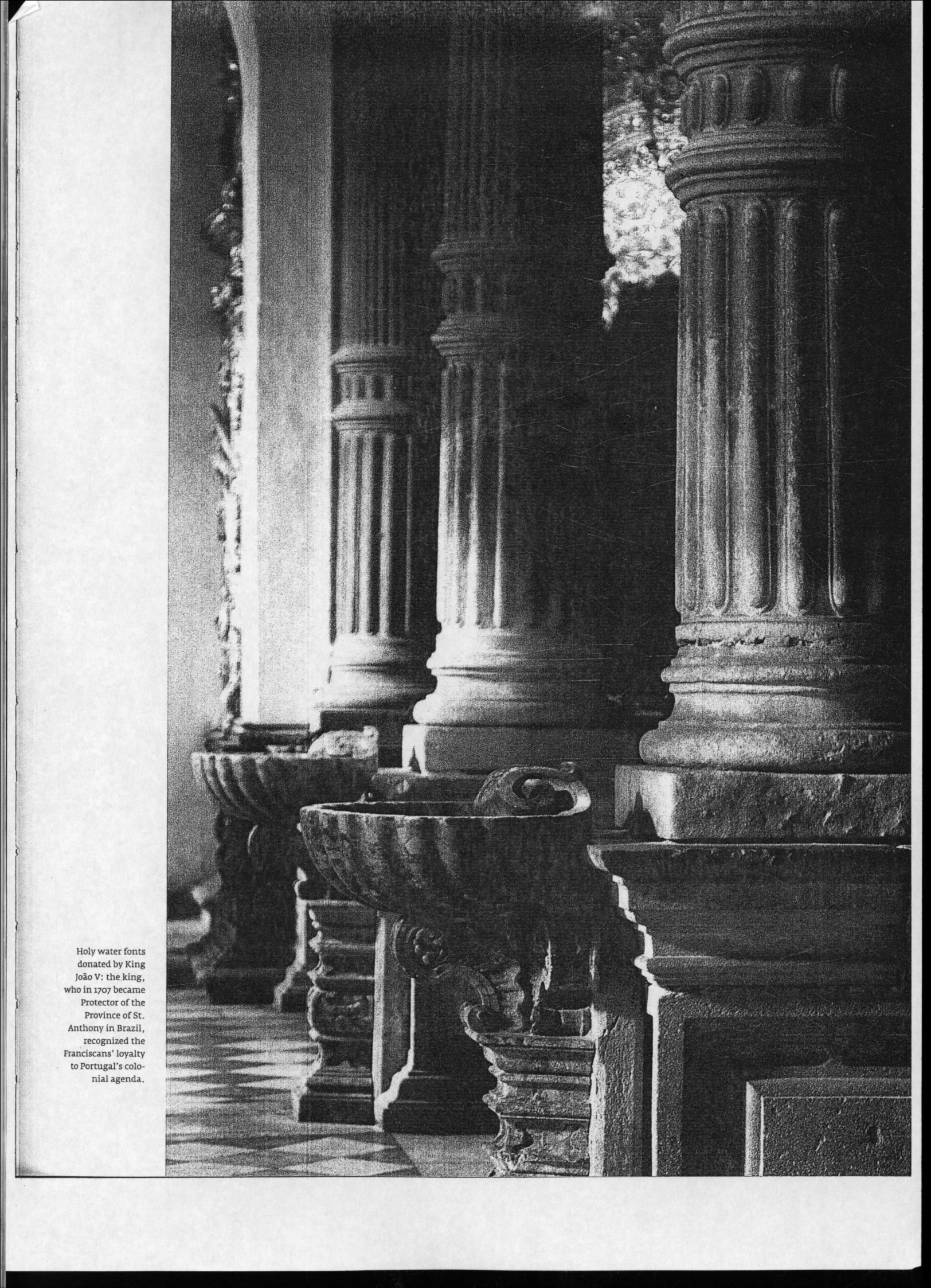
Friars praying in the church choir: tensions among Franciscans from Bahia, Pernambuco and Portugal sparked protests in Salvador's City Council and led to the restrictions imposed by Queen Maria I in 1779, assigning all Franciscans in Brazil to the bishoprics' administration.

The Portuguese queen's intention was to restrict the religious orders, which posed a potential threat – the Jesuit problem had not been erased from the royal memory – and restore the ecclesiastical authority of the bishops under the shadow and direction of the Crown. Underlying these royal concerns was the intention to carry out the decrees of the Council of Trent in the colony. Therefore, reading between the lines, the aim was to control the religious orders (SILVA, 1828). Maria I's measures resulted in the creation on November 21, 1789, of the Board on the Current State and Temporal Improvement of Regular Orders. Through this initiative, Maria I definitively placed the regular orders under the authority of the bishops and the Crown.

On October 18, 1780, a petition from the City Council of Bahia presented the queen with several complaints against the friars of the Franciscan Order. The councilmen particularly protested the admission of novices that were brought in from the City of Oporto, unjustly supplanting Brazilian-born candidates. The complaints were mutual and, on October 22, 1780, Friar Domingos da Purificação, the Provincial Minister, also sent a petition to the queen in which he complained that Chancellor Francisco da Silva Corte Real was interfering in the elections and business of the Franciscan Province (AHU, 1780, cx. 180, doc. 13.440).

This period has become important for understanding the decline of religious institutions, because it revealed the fragility of the link between Church and State. The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1759 marked a new phase in that relationship. The Church did not become stagnant after the Jesuits were banned from Brazil. Instead, an internal restructuring took place to devise a new ecclesiastical strategy



A black and white photograph showing a row of classical stone columns in a church interior. In the foreground, a large, ornate stone water font is visible, featuring a wide, shallow basin supported by a decorative base. The columns are fluted and have decorative capitals. The floor is made of a checkered tile pattern. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

Holy water fonts  
donated by King  
João V: the king,  
who in 1707 became  
Protector of the  
Province of St.  
Anthony in Brazil,  
recognized the  
Franciscans' loyalty  
to Portugal's colo-  
nial agenda.

that was no longer based on the regular clergy and their convents and missions. Following the expulsion of the Jesuits, the bishops and their clergy embarked on a new era in the Church of Brazil. Meanwhile, the religious orders experienced a prolonged crisis due to the Crown's policy limiting the acceptance of novices. A significant aspect of this crisis was linked to internal disputes for leadership positions that took place between Brazilian and Portuguese friars in the Franciscan Province.

The origins of the Portuguese friars in the Province of St. Anthony between 1779 and 1825 can be seen in Chart 1:

Chart 1 - Origins of Portuguese friars in the Province of St. Anthony (1779-1825)

ORIGINS OF PORTUGUESE FRIARS	NUM.
Bishopric of Braga	7
Bishopric of Viseu	3
Bishopric of Pinhel	1
Bishopric of Oporto	10
Bishopric of Coimbra	2
Island of São Miguel, Bishopric of Angra	6
Faro	2
Bishopric of Pus	1
Island of Faial	1
Bishopric of São Tego	1
Bishopric of Guarda	2
Bishopric of Lisbon	3
Bishopric of Évora	1
Bishopric of Lamego	1
Total	41

Source: Rutten ([ca. 1957]).

These figures are not satisfactory because they do not provide a sequential overview of the Portuguese friars' origins. According to the death records (RUTTEN, [ca. 1957]), 123 Portuguese entered the Franciscan Province between 1779 and 1825. The personal information on these friars does not always show where they came from, leaving gaps in the records, but it does offer a partial understanding of the situation.

The Bahia City Council's complaints in 1780 regarding the ban on accepting Brazilian novices were well founded. After all, these "native" vocations had always been viewed with disdain and mistrust. The daily life of the clergy was subject to commentary from all levels of society, although there was a certain tolerance, particularly with regard to the vow of celibacy, which the clergy did not always fully observe.

Table 1 shows the number of Portuguese and Brazilian friars who joined the Province of St. Anthony between 1779 and 1825.

**Table 1** – Number of Brazilian and Portuguese friars in the Province of St. Anthony (1779-1825)

YEAR	BRAZILIANS	PORTUGUESE
1779-1790	4	22
1791-1800	30	20
1801-1810	79	51
1811-1820	47	27
1821-1825	2	3
Total	162	123

Source: Rutten (ca.1957).

Although the myth of “good coexistence” and friendly relations prevailed, the documents show an altogether different situation. It is essential to address the problem in the Franciscan Convent of Salvador regarding the friars’ three places of origin: Bahia, Pernambuco and Portugal. This internal crisis should not be divorced from the development of anti-Portuguese sentiment in the colony. The dissatisfactions of Brazilians were strengthened by the nativistic ideas that had divided the Portuguese-born “reinóis” and natives of Bahia since the previous century. The complaints were well founded because, even in 1780, a lengthy Franciscan report on the excessive power wielded by Franciscans from the city of Oporto was presented to Queen Maria I (AHU, 1780, Cx 180, doc. 13.440). According to this report, the Portuguese faction had enjoyed special privileges throughout the 18th century and excluded Bahians and Pernambucans from holding provincial posts:

Since said Province was founded in the year 1656 until 1719, there had always been a loving alternation of European religious from Lisbon and those from Brazil, having a European Provincial for a three-year term, followed by a Brazilian; no one held the post of Provincial twice, nor that of Visitor General nor President of the Chapter nor Vice President who might become the Provincial. The virtues of said Province, which was known as the Holy Province of Brazil, grew and blossomed from that fraternal union: in this flourishing field of Jesus Christ the common enemy has sown so much discord that today there is such disorder and abuse and disconsolation because European Religious from Oporto take the government all to themselves (AHU, 1780, Cx. 180, doc. 13.440).

The situation devolved into a state of constant tension, as the report indicates an internal crisis among the Franciscans:

Since the year 1719 until the present, 1780, during which 61 years have gone by, there have been only four Brazilian Provincials in that Province, two natives of Pernambuco, and two natives of Bahia, [and] these Prelates were as if dead and [governed] in name only, because they only did as the Chief ordered, and because they were of that character, they were appointed as Provincials. Throughout those 61 years, the Chapter House, which is the Convent of the City of Bahia, has only had two Brazilian Guardians: this shameful situation would not be so sensitive if each Provincial only governed for three years in accordance with the Holy Council and Holy Laws, but the

ambition of the Priests of the prevailing party has blinded them so that many have governed until their deaths, and been Provincial twice, and as many Visitors General, and Chapter Presidents: How clearly we see their names in the Catalogue of Elections, which with sincere truth accompanies this missive to Your Majesty (AHU, 1780, Cx. 180, doc. 13.440).

According to Mattoso (1970), two basic problems shook up the political scene in the colony as of the last decades of the 18th century: the first involved disputes between the Portuguese and Brazilians; the second was opposition to the colonial Portuguese government, which culminated in the Independence of Brazil. Therefore, these two problems guided and provided the history of Brazil with

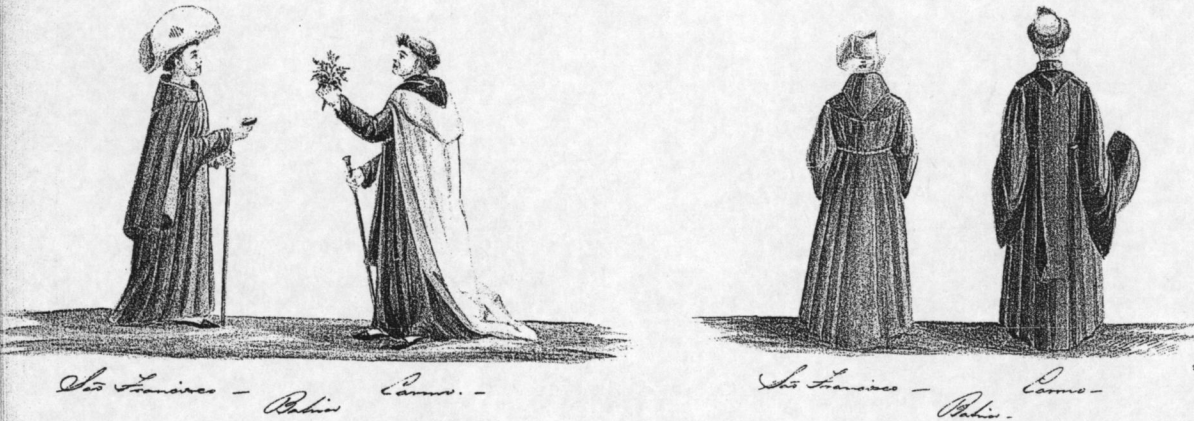
Watercolors by  
Maria Graham,  
ca. 1824: on this  
page, the habits  
of Franciscans and  
Benedictines; on  
the following page,  
Franciscan and  
Carmelite habits.



new internal dynamics for restoring the autonomy of all segments of colonial Brazilian society. This issue was driven by a subtle and complex power struggle that involved the financial aspect, set against the backdrop of a process of internal and external change as a result of the dynamics of the Marquis of Pombal's policies.

The religious situation was not unrelated to the political scene. The quarrels in communities with Brazilian and Portuguese members were ultimately based on these two hubs of internal discord. In fact, it seemed to be not just a rivalry between nations but, above all, the demand for the most sacred aspect of human relationships: the individual's freedom to exercise his rights and duties. However, in a colonial society that was strongly segregated and authoritarian, the basic problem was the role of the economic aspect of the development of the civil and religious powers. These determining factors have led to a basic conclusion regarding the understanding of this factor in the cycle of internal relations: Brazilian Franciscans could only play a leading role in Franciscan history in Brazil by removing the Portuguese Franciscans from power. This partly explains the degree to which the dispute between the Brazilians and Portuguese was exacerbated, specifically in this province.

This crisis was based on tensions created by religious obedience and the colonial agenda of submission. There were two sides to submission in this cycle of relations: dependence and subservience. These two elements were thoroughly etched on the individual and collective conscience and, when well organized and assimilated, they ensured an evangelical apathy towards the development of social and religious education. Religious obedience, the fundamental vow that represented the archetypical "true religious," was based on compliance with rules and regulations that were indisputable from the practical-moral-religious standpoint, thereby establishing a *modus vivendi* that was contradictory but consistent with the broader colonial enterprise.



In 1786 Friar Manoel do Monte do Carmo Lobato wrote to Martinho de Mello e Castro to complain that not a single religious born in Bahia had been appointed to the post of provincial for several years. Friar Antônio da Encarnação, who was Interim Provincial in 1797, made several enlightening observations:

This province of St. Anthony of Brazil founded by Europeans in the year 1585 with great work and the expense of the blood of some, according to the royal orders mentioned below, has and should have two bodies, one made up of Europeans and another of Brazilians. The latter have always begrudged the fact that the former have retained for themselves the government of the province for many years, although those said Brazilians are often admitted to the government, albeit not as the equals of Europeans: but the Brazilians have justified this manner of proceeding with the innate opposition they feel toward Europeans, which is expressed inside but also outside the cloister, as is evident to all. This same opposition is found between Bahians and Pernambucans, and even Bahians and Bahians, and Pernambucans and Pernambucans, because, verily, both in Bahia and Pernambuco, there are corporations composed solely of individuals from one or the other captaincy, with few exceptions, but the disorder I am experiencing is manifest and patent, as we saw in the last Chapter of religious from Carmo da Touronia in the Town of Recife, who are almost entirely

Brazilians and Pernambucans. With some exceptions, they divided themselves into two bands or two bodies and in different places and each of the two bands elected its provincial, of which one is still currently exercising his ministry. The Europeans did not take part in this disorder. Despite this example and many others which I will omit for the sake of brevity, the Brazilians of this province attempted once again, without hearing the Europeans, to introduce a tripartite plan, which few Europeans remembered, although it was always very strongly present in the memory of the Brazilians (ALMEIDA, 1914, v.3, doc. 17.437).

In the Province of the Immaculate Conception, based in the Convent of Santo Antônio in Rio de Janeiro, internal disputes were much more extensive and heated. The Law of Alternance in that province was introduced in 1723, but keener minds had discussed the issue of alternance since 1820 (SILVEIRA, 1964). One of the charges leveled by the Brazilians of that province was that the law would only benefit the Portuguese, who were in the minority. According to Silveira (1964), the Law of Alternance was one of the many causes of the decline of the religious orders in the 19th century, whose roots date back to the 1700s. The law was only abolished in the Province of the Immaculate Conception in 1828. Because the Alternance Law came into effect in the Province of St. Anthony in 1796, this leads us to suppose that it originated from the political strife in Rio de Janeiro.

The Brief on Alternance was accepted by the Provincial Chapter of December 1796, leading to the appointment of the Provincial Minister, Friar Matheus da Encarnação, with the permission of the Crown and the Apostolic See, as a possible solution to the Franciscan convents' internal strife. The Brief on Alternance was intended to be a law that favored Portuguese and Brazilians in the distribution of posts within the province. Each post would be held alternately by a Portuguese or a Brazilian, who took turns every three years.

Following the Independence of Brazil, all Portuguese friars were obliged to swear an oath of loyalty to the Government of Brazil, and there was no further justification for the Law of Alternance. Therefore, the Chapter of January 1824 abolished the law by Imperial decree, giving all friars the right to hold any post in the province, no matter what their nationality. The law had been intended to solve problems not only between Brazilians and Portuguese but also between Bahians and Pernambucans, who vied for the same rights within that institution.

The unrest following the Independence of Brazil was clearly and concisely reported by Jacques Guinebaud, then the French consul in Bahia. He had served as consul in Portugal since 1802, and during the Portuguese reaction to French occupation, he and his father were arrested and deported to England. After five months, they returned to France. Jacques Guinebaud arrived in Bahia to take up his consular post in early 1820, and witnessed the most significant political and social incidents leading up to Independence. His letters provide a fluent analysis of the conflict, not only in Salvador but also in the Recôncavo [the bay area], where movements were led by several segments of pre-Imperial society. His observations were particularly based on the economic relations controlled by the Portuguese (MATTOSO, 1970).



Friars in the  
convent refectory  
several of their  
predecessors  
defended the  
liberty of Brazil  
during the advent  
of independence  
in 1822

The Franciscan convents took different stands towards Independence. A Portuguese friar, José da Santíssima Trindade, emerged on the political-religious scene. The only Franciscan bishop during the colonial period, consecrated in the Royal Chapel of Rio de Janeiro on April 9, 1820, his nationality did not prevent him from siding with Emperor Pedro I, to whom he hopefully attributed the mission of defending the "Holy Faith." Other Franciscans also took sides in the struggle for the country's freedom, such as Friar Francisco do Sacramento Breyner, a native of Recife, who, as Guardian of the Convent of Penedo/Alagoas, provided housing for the troops from Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco and Paraíba who had arrived to restore Bahia's independence. In order to leave no doubts as to his patriotism, he gathered references from several military officials and other authorities. Another native of Recife who helped defend Bahia was Friar José de São Jacinto Mavignier. He accompanied the troops and fought the Portuguese in the Recôncavo. Friar João do Amor Divino, a Bahian religious, expressed his sympathy for the nationalist cause from the pulpit. For unknown reasons, Friar João

later left the order and became the chaplain of the Confraternity of Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos, the black brotherhood based in Pelourinho. He was named Bishop of Ceará, but turned down the appointment. Friar José de Santa Gertrudes, a Portuguese who opposed Brazil's Independence, was arrested on January 14, 1823 by order of the Interim Government of Bahia. These friars' political stands were associated with the internal rivalries among Pernambucans, Bahians and Portuguese within the provincial brotherhood (SILVEIRA, 1964).

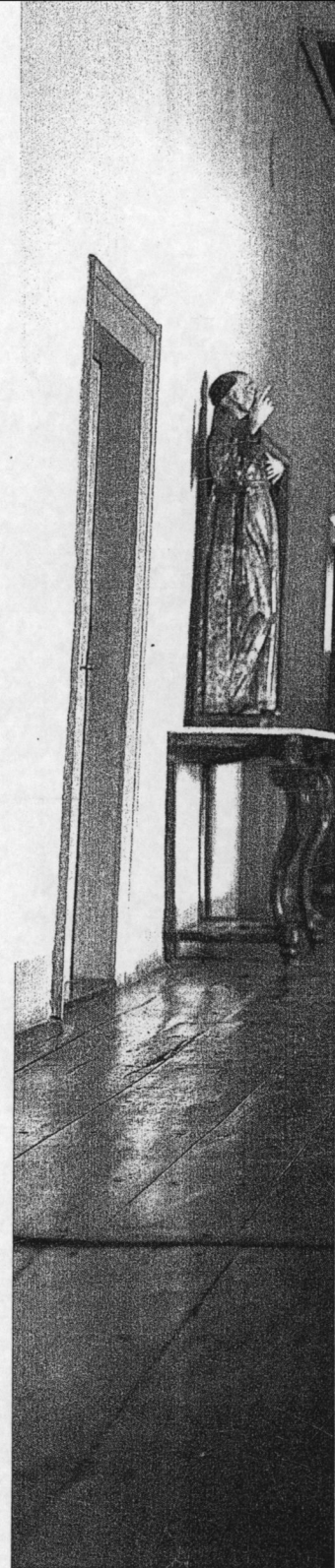
The Franciscan province based in Salvador felt the impact of outside influences. Political and social developments tended to create dissension within the cloister. Gradually, the number of members of the Franciscan Province of St. Anthony began to decline. Another reason for the dwindling number of friars was the high mortality rate. Death and the ban on accepting novices were the main reasons for the Franciscans' downfall. Unfortunately, it is impossible to provide an overview of causes of death among Franciscans, because the records only show that four deaths were due to apoplexy. In all the other cases, the causes of death are unknown.

Table 2 - Deaths of friars in the Province of St. Anthony of Brazil (1779-1825)

DEATHS	1779-1790	1791-1800	1801-1810	1811-1820	1821-1825
Province	72	34	33	23	12
Bahia	26	23	14	10	6
Portugal	2	4	1	-	4
Bahia Conv.	29	25	22	17	10
Angola	1	-	-	-	-
Total	130	86	70	50	32

Source: Rutten ([ca. 1957]).

The figures indicate that the province was gradually aging. They specifically show the number of deaths in Bahia, corresponding to friars from the region (Bahia and Sergipe) and the Convent of Bahia, as the place reserved in the province for housing sick and elderly friars who were sent there for treatment and care, and even as a place to achieve a "good death." It was believed that Salvador was the capital of medicine, so it would be better able to tend to the friars' health. However, according to Vilhena (1969), health conditions in the City of Salvador were far from ideal, because in addition to poorly managed medical services, the city was constantly exposed to all kinds of diseases.






#### CLERICAL EDUCATION: A RETURN TO THE CLOISTERED LIFE

The first step taken by the Custody of St. Anthony of Brazil in 1597 was the establishment of a teaching faculty to organize the intellectual and moral education of the friars with a view to setting standards and preventing disorder within the friaries. The Congregation of 1660 establishes some requirements for Franciscan aspirants and candidates:

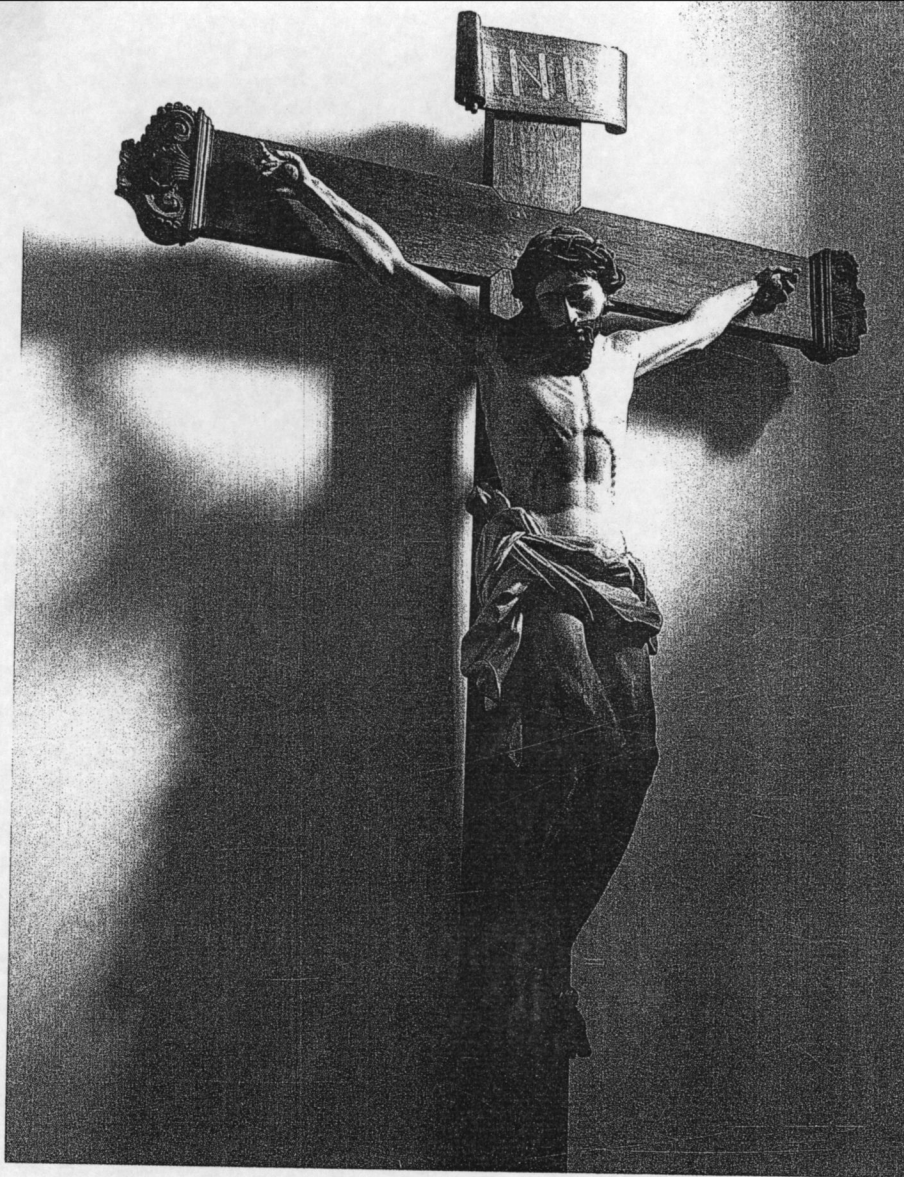
...students before beginning their study must all sign an agreement promising that they will not obtain or seek or use any privilege whatsoever or any title or rank bestowed by a superior that gives them permission to leave this Province, and if they should have them they must consider them worthless and renounce them (ATAS CAPITULARES, 1970, p. 102).

These requirements ensured that the friars would stay in the colony, given that other, equally important religious orders not only aspired to owning property but did so, thereby threatening and even competing with the colonial government, which found itself at a disadvantage when it confronted the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Another factor that led the directors of the Province of St. Anthony of Brazil to establish these restrictions dates back to 1603, when the custodian, Friar Antônio da Estrela, complained of having sent many Franciscans to Portugal from Brazil. We must view the basis for his complaint to obtain a better understanding of this phenomenon. The suspicion was that the religious life, specifically the Franciscan life, was being used as a way to achieve a higher social position in the Metropolis.

The main focus of the training of future Franciscans was the thorough, solid education introduced by the first friars in the Custody. As we have seen, that Custody was entrusted to the recently created Province of St. Anthony of Portugal, which resulted from the Alcantaran reform, and sought to restore the Order to its roots. This meant strict observance of the Rule, characterized by poverty and missionary work. The paradox of this lifestyle can be seen in relations with the social classes of the colony, on which the communities depended for their subsistence and material needs through donations and alms. The main donation required to maintain the convent was food. The mendicant orders lived off of alms and assets acquired through donations from the faithful and friends of the community. The only asset that had a community-related aspect was in fact the church, which was built with the help of local residents.



Friars walking in the corridor between the two wings of the convent: in the early days, the main goal of Franciscan clerical education was to prepare religious to follow the rule of poverty and engage in missionary work.



The crucifix that once occupied the church's main altar: the Franciscan way of living according to the Gospels garnered the sympathies of the humble for the Order.

There were two interests at work in the effort to educate future Franciscan friars: first, the friars themselves took pains to provide them with a solid intellectual background; second the graduates were supposed to repay the friars' efforts by joining the Order. The main goal of the curriculum was to prepare friars to serve the needs of the church and lead an impeccable moral life. Although the liturgy was not part of St. Francis' original plan, over the centuries it became the center of the Franciscan life. The way in which the Franciscan life made room for poverty and its Rule consisted of living according to the Gospels gained popular support. They began to introduce a less dogmatic and more picturesque lifestyle than that of the clergy from the schools. Their convents and churches were not closed, and their main objective was apostolic. Through confession and preaching they disseminated a religious ideal based on penance, the practice of the virtues and devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary.

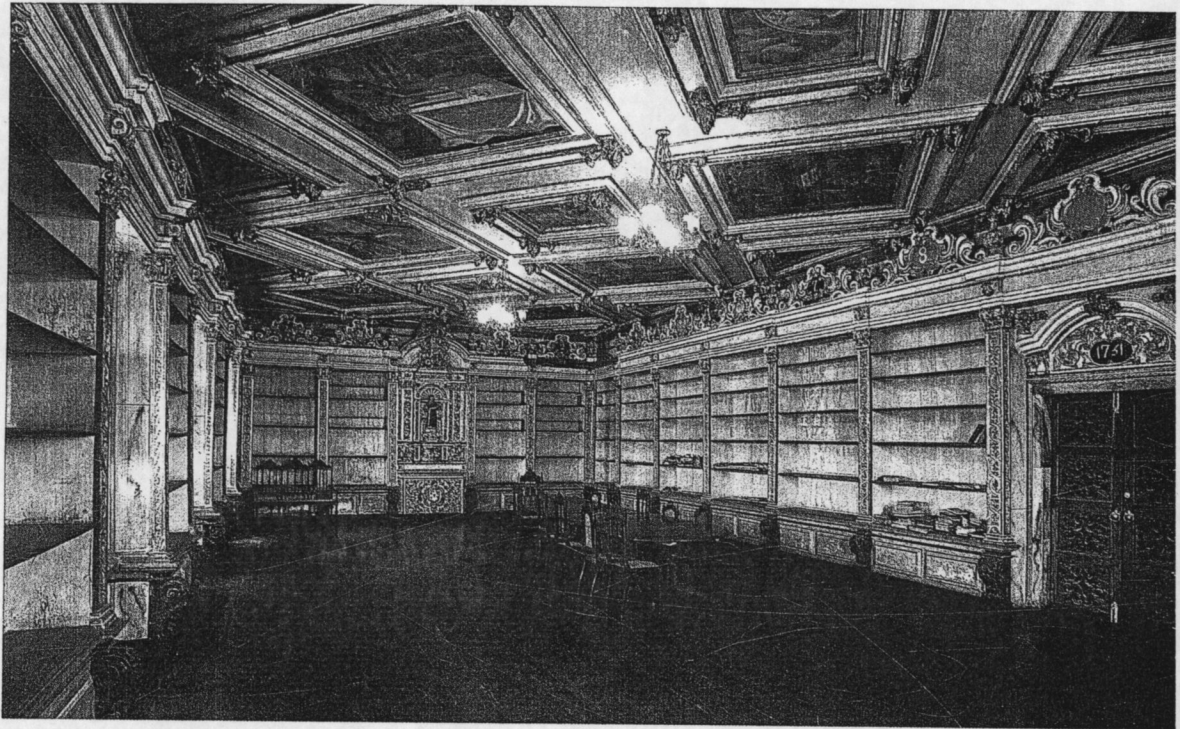
When the province published its statutes in 1709, the main concern was the education of its members (ESTATUTOS, 1709). Focusing its attention on intellectual education, the Franciscan convent of Salvador invested in the construction of its library, which owned a considerable collec-

tion of works, in addition to the paintings on its ceiling (APFSA, 1852). The books in its collection give precedence to medieval Franciscan thinkers. The works of theologian John Duns Scotus have a special place in this library because the General Chapter held in Toledo, Spain, in 1633, recommended that his theology be followed by the entire Order (SCHMUTZ, 2002). In the provincial Chapter of 1714, students — Franciscans in training — lived a cloistered life and were only allowed to leave the convent to take part in religious duties, go to church or beg for alms. These excursions always had to be accompanied by a respectable religious.

The focus on Franciscan education in the 18th century was concentrated on books. The library in the Convent of Bahia was gradually built up through the work of several guardians who took care to add to the collection through the acquisition of books. According to the chronicle of the guardians, many of them were purchased. However, the first records of these acquisitions were only kept during the guardianship of Friar Antônio das Chagas (1743-1746). That guardian added an 18-volume set of the works of Abulensis to the library. Another important collection was acquired during the administration of his successor, Friar Boaventura de São José (1746-1748), who purchased a total of 122 books on philosophy, theology, essays, sermons and history. The complete works of St. Anselm were acquired during the administration of Guardian Friar Feliciano de Jesus Maria (1764-1768), who also had many books restored. Over 65 new books by various authors and 35 used books were added to the library under the guardianship of Friar Ubaldo de Santa Ana (1782-1783). Friar Manuel da Conceição Rocha (1787-1790) ordered 50 volumes from Portugal. Friar José de Santa Inês (1790-1793) added four folio volumes by Houdry to the library's collection. According to the records, the last acquisition of books was carried out during the guardianship of Friar José da Santíssima Trindade (1808-1811), who added 39 volumes (LIVRO DOS GUARDIÃES, 1978).



Friar in the library: Franciscan education centered around books.

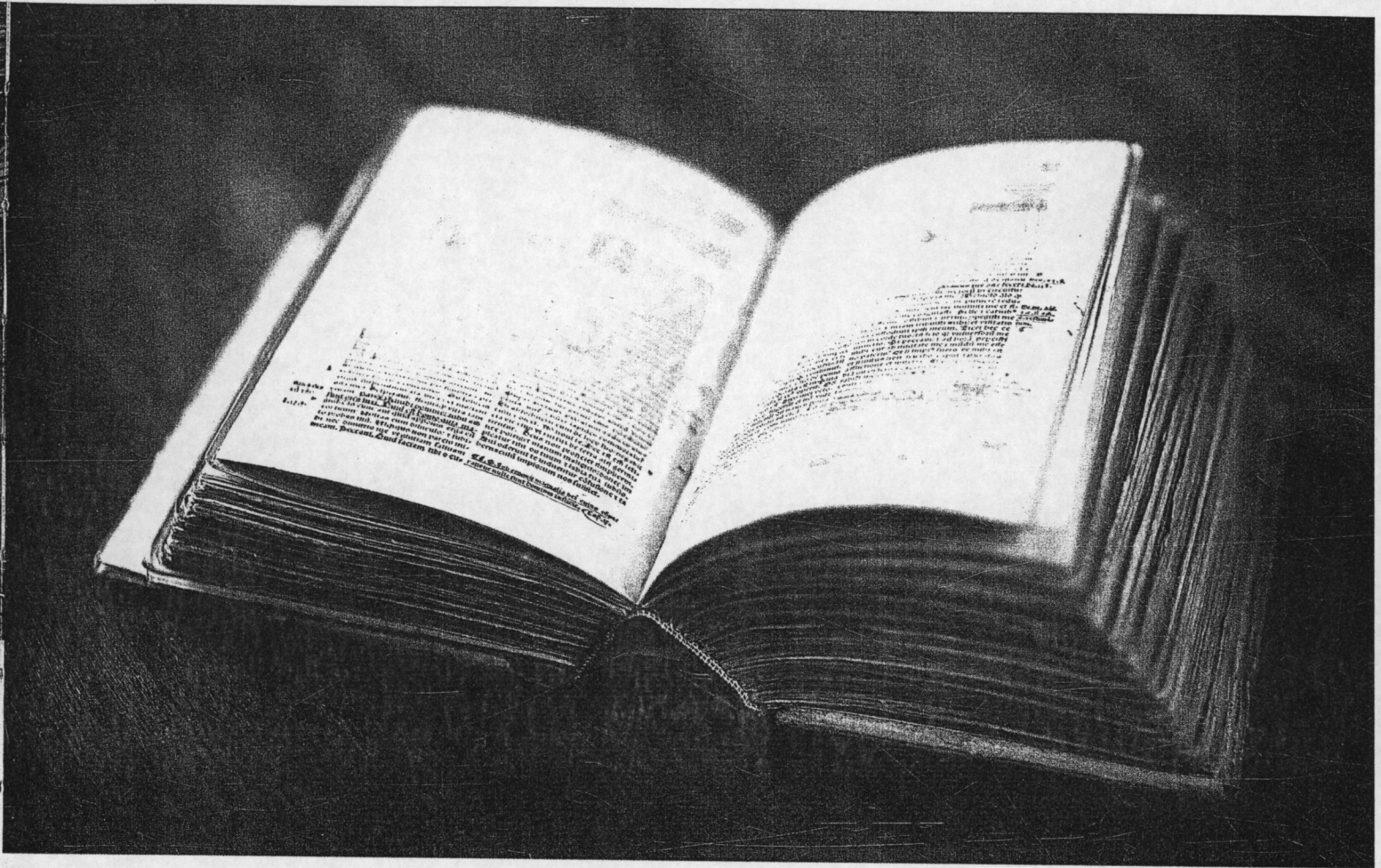


The guardians did not leave a record of important aspects of the period when the philosophy and theology schools were housed in the convent. The records only show the books acquired for the library in order to provide a basis for the intellectual training of religious students. Given the importance of this aspect of the daily life of that educational center we can conclude that this effort to provide the community with the books required for their education was directly associated with the convent's function as a center of theological study.

In Portugal, the political and cultural conditions surrounding education prior to the Pombaline reforms were characterized by the predominance of religious purposes over the interests of civil society. Colonial censorship, which banned the circulation of books without prior authorization, limited the development of historical thought in the colony, but this should not lead us to conclude, as did Hoornaert (1974), that Christianity without books would soon become a religion without a biblical basis, divorced from theology – the practice of devotions and ceremonies with no connection to life. Popular religious culture found ways to express its understanding and adherence to the sacred. Even if it did not reveal an eminently literate intellectual understanding, it externalized that which was most latent in the human soul in the most varied forms, rituals and symbols, which were filled with fundamental meaning that represented, in their own way, their concepts of man, the world and God. In a society where intellect predominated over servility, the positive side of this situation emerged due to a lack of access to book learning, because it enabled the colonized to play a basically creative role, renovating the colonial mentality with its marginal ways of understanding its circumstances. However, we must not underestimate the literate character of the colony, although it was restricted to the religious orders, with a specific

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direction: safeguarding the education of a clergy that would ensure morality and discipline – the pillars of the social order.

In a society markedly engaged in the process of social ascent, it is understandable that many of these students worked hard to achieve their goals. Colonial religious life was characterized by social climbing, not only by individuals but entire families. For a family that invested everything in the future of their son with a view to entering the nobility, it was important to maintain the status of the student who aspired to join the clergy by ensuring that he did well in school. This feeling intensified when the guidelines on Franciscan education produced by the Provincial Chapter of February 1702 indicated that there might be penalties for failing to meet the professors' expectations. Thus, those who failed would be expelled: "the students will be examined at the end of the first year, and if it is found that they are failing due to their own fault, they will be removed from study, the priests to the sacristies and postulants to the kitchens" (ATAS CAPITULARES, 1970, p. 113).

Even as ordained priests, the friars still went to school. The first extreme case took place in 1723, when some student friars were expelled: three because they could not continue their studies due to illness, but did not stipulate the disease; and another for restlessness and misbehavior.



The postulants were advised to take confession from other friars and not their teachers, because of the problems that could ensue. There was a more specific type of education for students who were studying for the ministry, and general education for the benefit of the entire religious community. The Provincial Chapter of 1787 (ATAS CAPITULARES, 1970) decided to appoint a friar for each convent to teach moral practice to each community from 7 to 8 p.m. twice a week. Everyone was supposed to attend, without exception.

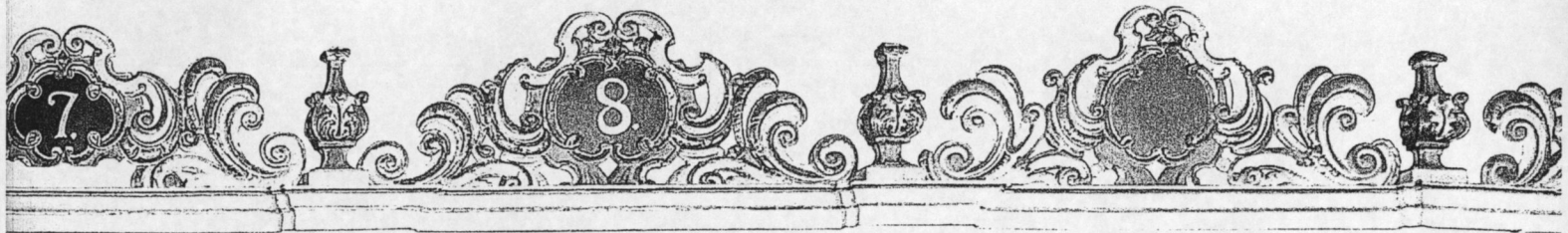
The regular course also continued in 1799, although the ministry and the entire movement was severely affected by the dwindling number of friars, which fell steadily between the beginning of the Pombaline persecution and the late 19th century. The internal crisis was more pronounced in 1801, and in 1810, the two schools of theology in Bahia and Pernambuco were closed for want of teachers. They were later reopened in 1825.

The Chapter of 1814 (ATAS CAPITULARES, 1970) contains the same regulations about moral instruction, insisting on the important role it plays in life, not only for those pursuing the path toward the confessional ministry, but for the entire community. Due to a lack of preachers, the decision was made in 1822 to close the school of theology in the Salvador Convent. The students would receive the title of preachers to fill the gaps in this supremely important office for the missionary life. The only schooling provided was moral practice lessons for postulants twice a week.

The Larraga manual was used to teach moral practice, and novices were obliged to read it. Friar Francisco Larraga belonged to the Order of Preachers, better known as the Dominicans, and was the regent at the University of Pamplona. Larraga sought to update the regulations of the Council of Trent regarding clerical education, particularly by providing the moral and sacramental instruction proposed by the Council. A change was made in the manual. By order of the Congregation of 1840, the moral theology manual came into effect, along with the new Monteg Compendium, adopted in the new episcopal seminaries in Brazil due to the excellence of its method.

Clearly, the morals being taught were more closely associated with a return to the discipline proposed by the Council of Trent, thereby strengthening the desire of the State to impose order on the internal disputes in the convents. This determining factor for Franciscan education leads us to consider the basic moral aspect of that institution, which was based on two pillars: respect, which underlay the legitimacy of the institution; and autonomy.

According to Duquoc (1985), when an institution ceases to be respectable and loses its credibility, whether because of its outdated rules or by masking private interests, it is no longer effective and can only seek to prolong its legitimacy by force. The same author defines autonomy as a process of socialization that makes the individual internalize commitments, leading to respectability. If an institution



Details of the Rococo numbers on the library shelves, ca. 1751.

does not follow the course that is necessary for the individual within the operations of the institution and society, causing him to play an active role in the process, that institution will become extraneous to the individual. By using force or violence to perpetuate itself, it loses its legitimacy. This observation by Duquoc (1985) fits in well with the Franciscan process of change. We must not lose sight of the fact that the structure of internal relations was based on a hierarchy of leadership and posts in which individual uniqueness gave way to the collective character, annihilating any and all personal creativity.

Beginning in 1800, the gaps in the ranks due to the small number of friars led to the distribution of students to hold offices in the convent and meet the new needs. The numerical destabilization of its members led to several chapter decisions to cancel and resume theological courses, both in Salvador and Recife.

Like no other part of the colony, Bahia cultivated a taste for the arts and letters. More and more, the enlightenment of Bahians was nurtured and invigorated by the Metropolis. In the 16th century, six of every thirteen Brazilians studying in Portugal were from Bahia; in the 17th century, 152 of every 354 were



German friar with his family before setting off for Bahia, 20th century.

from Bahia, and in the 18th century, 379 of every 1,418 were sons of Bahia. This situation was reversed with the advent of Independence, which gradually decreased the outflow of Brazilians to Portugal as a result of rising anti-Portuguese feeling. Between 1801 and 1821, 109 of the 304 Brazilians studying in Portugal were from Bahia, and between 1822 and 1832, only 13 of 183 Brazilians were from that province. Thereafter, there was a tendency for Brazilians to promote and provide education in their homeland (HOLANDA; CAMPOS, 1985, t. II, v. 2).

The economic dependence of the Franciscans on the Crown and the affluent classes of the colony historically restricted development. This made it impossible to preserve the autonomy of their institution, which was at the mercy of the agendas and decisions of the civil powers. However, this ecclesiastic model was intrinsically shaped by the lines of the colonial Church. It was an official Church on which the State imposed some constraints that evolved over time through consents and refusals. Nevertheless, the ecclesiastic discourse remained non-temporal.

The tithes that the people paid to the king were supposed to pay the allowances of the "high clergy," while the "low clergy" depended on the *conhecenças* (donations) and goodwill of the faithful. The first represented the interests of the system, and the second, the desires of people. The clergy did not always receive proper payment for services rendered, which caused dissatisfaction. The payment system was carried out through the ecclesiastical revenue paid to priests with benefices, who received them directly from the State; the *conhecenças* were personal tithes or small cash contributions from the faithful who kept the precepts of taking annual confession and Easter communion, when they paid "taxes" directly to the priests. And there were also the "stole rights" or "foot of the altar" payments, which were voluntary and personal offerings that the faithful made when the sacraments were administered. In short, the lower clergy lived on donations from the people, and the high clergy, from patronage. In any case, these were the facts of life for the secular clergy. And payments from the Crown were not always punctual; there were constant delays.

This line of reasoning leads to some obvious conclusions. For example, the Franciscans were dependent on this system, since, in addition to the military pay of 20\$160 for St. Anthony, they had the privilege of receiving an annual sum that in 1800 reached 82\$000 réis (VILHENA, 1969, v. 2). Other facts



Friar engaged in reflection: Franciscans have depended on tithes, especially those from the wealthy and the wealthy.



also reflect the Franciscans' fidelity to institutionalized power, but this aspect requires a more precise and documented approach. According to the Book of Accounts of the Convent of São Francisco (CONVENTO DE SÃO FRANCISCO, 1790-1825), these payments were made regularly until the early 19th century. After that, they could be delayed for up to four months, but they were always made.

#### SELECTIVE REQUIREMENTS: A LITERATE ELITE

Knowledge of Latin was essential for the admission of candidates to the Franciscan life, under the careful supervision and stewardship of their teachers. In 1779, the Visitor General rejected several candidates for admission to the novitiate due to a lack of Latin.

That same year, 1779, a report from the Province of St. Anthony of Brazil prepared by Friar Domingos da Purificação, the Provincial Minister, and sent the Queen of Portugal, requested the renewal of licenses granted in 1740 by King João V (MIRANDA, 1976). Regarding the number of professed friars in the same province, he justified his commitment to meeting the guidelines of the Crown, based on two requirements for the admission of candidates: lack of knowledge of Latin and the "taint of consanguinity."

This should not be viewed as a general rule, nor can it be stated that the Franciscans were flexible about the acceptance of black people in the "fraternity," because at the turn of the 18th to 19th centuries, racial prejudice by the white population against blacks was very strong, and purity of blood became a means of proving that one's lineage was free of ancestors with suspect pigmentation. Had the Franciscans in Bahia opened up the possibility of accepting blacks into the fraternity? There is no proof of this, although it is possible to consider that a black man could have been a lay brother, but probably not a priest. Friar Hugo Fragozo answers some questions pertaining to this matter in chapter 2 of this book.

German friars, 20th century; due to the reduction in the number of Franciscan religious in Bahia in the 19th century, friars from Saxony were called on to restore the convent.





Altar of St. Bonaventure, 18th century, in the convent library: highly educated in Theology and Scripture, this saint is the patron of the library and the Franciscan college, and considered one of the Doctors of the Church.

Table 3 shows data regarding the number of friars in each of the convents in Brazil, as well as the Procurators in the Portuguese cities of Oporto and Lisbon.

**Table 3** – Number of friars per convent in Brazil and procurators in Portugal reported by Friar Domingos da Purificação (1779)

CONVENTS	NUM. OF FRIARS
Convent of the City of Bahia	62
Convent of the Town of Cairú, Bahia	13
Convent of the Town of Sergipe do Conde, Bahia	23
Convent of the Town of Penedo, Alagoas	18
Convent of the Town of Alagoa, Alagoas	17
Convent of the Town of Sirinhaém, Pernambuco	17
Convent of the City of Olinda, Pernambuco	23
Convent of the Town of Igarassú, Pernambuco	12
Convent of the City of Paraíba, Paraíba	21
Convent of the Town of Paraguaçu, Bahia	14
Convent of the Town of Sergipe del Rey, Sergipe	15
Convent of the Town of Ipojuca, Pernambuco	15
Convento of Santo Antônio do Recife, Pernambuco	37
Boa Viagem Nursing Home, Bahia	2
Jacobina Mission, Bahia	2
Itapicurú Mission, Bahia	1
Massacará Mission, Bahia	1
Curral dos Bois Mission, Bahia	1
Juazeiro Mission, Bahia	1
Sahy Mission, Bahia	1
Aricobé Mission, Bahia	1
Procurators General in Lisbon	2
Procurator General in the city of Oporto	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>

Source: AHU (1779b, Cx. 135, doc. 10.107).

This report contains some inconsistencies as far as the numbers are concerned. The list in Table 3 shows that there were 300 friars. However, in the same report, the provincial gave the names of the religious and the amount of time they had spent in the religious life. According to this list, the number of friars stood at 305.

Therefore, in 1779, the Province of St. Anthony of Brazil had 300 or 305 religious living in 13 convents, one nursing home and 7 missions. The Convent of Salvador had the largest number: 62 religious. Of the 305 friars on the provincial's list, 25 were lay brothers, including 5 Brazilians, averaging 20 years in the religious life, and 20 Portuguese, with an average of 26 years, which enables us to estimate that this group was aged between 40 and 45 years. These data are important because they provide key information about the community's internal relations and the stratifications in the fraternity. Although it was the responsibility of the Provincial Chapter to transfer friars to make up the numbers of convents in

need, we can safely estimate that the number of members increased occasionally in certain convents due to these transfers, which were clearly not a strictly routine practice (VILHENA, 1969).

The effort behind the Portuguese Crown's directive to maintain the tradition of Latin scholarship alive to ensure its linguistic hegemony reinforces the theory of a nostalgia that remakes and crystallizes the value of communication, which is essential to maintaining the power of the Church, alongside the power of the State in the colony. However, Vilhena (1969) attributed it to the families' preference for the Jesuits, which was expressed by their aspiration to have one of their members join the Society of Jesus. According to him:

There is no doubt that the absence of the Jesuits led in part to the cessation of frequent obstacles raised by enthusiastic parents who believed there was nothing better in this world than to have a son who was a religious in the Society [of Jesus], and if not that, then one of the other orders, which were viewed as second rate. This is why even today we find remnants of families with four and five siblings who are monks and nuns, and some with as many clerics, and for that reason, vast fortunes have fallen into dead hands, doing untold damage to the State... (VILHENA, 1969, v. 1, p. 281).

Nevertheless, Vilhena also saw some changes in the colonial system of intellectual training and underscored its Enlightenment-influenced tendencies:

The lessons of the Seminaries are the most precious riches that any State can have, the richest, truest mine from which great men are extracted, without whom Empires, Monarchies, and Republics cannot subsist; without them the Church falters, the State is endangered, Justice deserted, disorder and iniquities rife; the pen renders more services to society in one day than thousands of swords for many years.... The lights that brighten nations enlighten peoples; the sciences and the arts with which the world is governed are due to letters, and their downfall and annihilation are due to arms (VILHENA, 1969, v. 1, p. 302).

Vilhena (1969) accurately perceived the essence of the Portuguese State's concerns: maintaining the colony through arms, to the detriment of intellectual training, which, for him, represented the development of society as a whole.

However, the conditions of the colonial Bahia clergy were never optimal. Dom Joaquim Borges de Figueiroa in 1774 reported to Lisbon that there were so many clergymen in this city that he believed "there is no need to ordain any more any time soon" (VILHENA, 1969, v. 2, p. 479). In the nine parishes in the city and suburbs, there were 251 priests, 6 deacons, 11 subdeacons, and 31 Minorites. Among the clergymen, 50 were unfit for duty due to infirmity, 40 were over 65, and 15 were elderly. The statistics are not entirely accurate, but the data corresponds to the census of 1775, which indicated that there were 277 clergymen in the Archbishopric of Bahia. By 1799, their number was said to have risen by almost 100%, reaching the dubious figure of 505. In any case, the later archbishops continued to obstruct ordinations, thereby retaining a certain control over the candidates' qualifications. This was not confined to the secular clergy. The religious were also in the archbishops' crosshairs.

In an attempt to maintain control over the Church and clergy, both secular and religious, Dom Joaquim Borges Figueiroa (1773-1780) expressed his dissatisfaction with the Franciscans' behavior, rejecting the province's entreaties to be allowed to accept novices (ALMEIDA, 1914).

The archbishop put it this way:

They have not ruled in favor of the pleas by the Franciscans of this province to be allowed the grace of increasing that province with 50 more friars; a grace they could not achieve even if they pled with the truth that the province still has 300 religious in all its houses; the Statutes of their province, published in Lisbon in 1709, fls. 228, forbid them to take to the said province more than 236 religious, being that now by this new grace they have 114 too many of their number, and this without any need, other than the convenience of the province or provincials, who send out at least 12 friars to beg for alms throughout the year from the convent of Bahia alone, and other convents in proportion, to different districts, even to the backlands of this archbishopric and Minas. And as these tend to be the youngest of them, we do not always hear good reports of them, nor do they fail to be costly to the residents... (ALMEIDA, 1914, v. 2, doc. 10.319).

At another point, the archbishop describes the situation that set him against the Franciscans:

The disorder in the Religion of which I speak lies in that no friar wants to live in the convent, because some, calling themselves mendicants, live continuously in the parishes where they have homes, as private individuals, others are overseers of relatives' farms, and some are Franciscan friars and planters at the same time: Finally, so as not to offend Your Excellency's ears, I will not report the result of friars not living in the community; and in the cloister; and conclude by assuring Your Excellency that in this part of the world, they are only religious because they sometimes wear the habit; for if they did not wear it, they would be no different from family men. And as all these lapses are diametrically opposed to religious modesty, to the Constitutions, the vows and monastic discipline and no less scandalous to the Church and the State, Your Excellency must provide assistance on the diocesan side that is required to suppress and banish them. The Franciscans send 10 to 12 friars out to beg every year, and their warehouse is the largest trader, all done under the pretext of obtaining food and clothing. Queluz Palace, September 10, 1779 (ALMEIDA, 1914, v. 2, doc. 10.319).

Archbishop Figueiroa's finding is an illustrative representation of Franciscan goals during that period: a) increasing the number of members depended on the convenience of the Franciscan province and provincials and not the local Church and its needs; b) a larger number of friars begging alms would generate a surplus in the system of accumulation, making them one of the largest traders in the region. The archbishop justified his observation with the fear that, if the Franciscans did not obey the archbishopric, they would become a threat to public morals and standards in the colony. He cited two trouble spots in the social fabric of the colony as threats: the first had to do with a lack of discipline, which resulted in the dispersal of religious to beg for alms in the backlands, and the second was the argument that, through those alms, they controlled a thriving trade in dry goods.

There are two reasons for the effectiveness and superiority of the religious orders and congregations over the secular clergy: their internal discipline and financial independence. The convents were located in cities and towns and functioned as centers of support for friars and missionaries. The latter went out into the countryside or to other cities, preaching and converting the Amerindians, giving religious assistance to the public, and fulfilling the many requests made to them. However, they always maintained their ties with their home convent, to which they returned after carrying out their pastoral duties. This allowed the regular clergy to diversify their activities without losing control over their members. In addition to this internal reason, they were financially independent. Aside from royal endowments, the convents received inheritances and pious donations from individuals and gradually built up large estates.

Due to a lack of documentary evidence, it is difficult to determine the accuracy of the archbishop's accusations. In any case, one should not underestimate them, because the accounting records of 1790-1825 suggest a double origin or source of income for the Convent of São Francisco in Salvador: rural and urban. The rural source was derived from pastoral visits and dispensations, accompanied by alms; the urban source was associated with the structure of internal services and bequests. Therefore, the crux of the controversy between the archbishop and the friars of Salvador was closely linked to two key means of control by the Church and State: morals and finance.

As of 1777, a close watch was kept on the number of convents and friars in the Franciscan province. The vicar general of the province always requested reports, ordering that the names, surnames, aliases and origins of all the religious be ascertained, along with the posts they held. The reports did not always meet those requirements, resulting in many gaps in our understanding of how internal events transpired.

Table 4 shows the number of priests, postulants, laypersons and lay friars in the convents and missions of Bahia in 1797:

Table 4 - Number of priests, postulants, laypersons and lay friars per convent and mission in Bahia (July 1, 1797)

CONVENTS AND MISSIONS	PRIESTS	POSTULANTS	LAYPERSONS	LAY FRIARS
Salvador da Bahia	39	10	7	2
Boa Viagem	3	-	1	-
Paraguaçu	8	5	-	2
Town of S. Francisco	5	-	3	3
Cairu	5	-	-	2
Sergipe del Rey	6	-	1	-
6 Missions	6	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: ALMEIDA (1914, v. 3, doc 17.418)

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Furnished by Friar Domingos da Purificação, this chart is derived from another report on Bahian convents produced in 1797. In 1779, Bahia's convents and missions housed a total of 137 religious, but by 1797, the number of Franciscans living in Bahia had fallen to 108. Although we lack statistics about the number of friars from other regions, particularly Pernambuco, it can be assumed that, even as far back as 1797, more than half the friars were concentrated in the Province of Bahia. This concentration of religious in Bahia would have led to major disagreements between Bahia and Pernambuco, not only because the Province of Bahia was privileged with a larger presence but also because the Pernambucans took second place to the Bahians in the administrative functions of the Franciscan Province, as we have seen. For this reason, both Bahians and Pernambucans took part in the administrative rotation mandated by the Alternance Law.

There is a gap in this comparison, because the 1797 report does not reflect the entire Franciscan Province of St. Anthony of Brazil. However, the figures do show a not very significant decrease compared to life expectancy in the colony as a whole, and natural deaths in a religious province that was doomed to die out, because the number of new members probably did not increase in the interim. During the 18-year period between one report and another, Bahia lost two friars per year, on average, which is a reasonable figure during a severe crisis, including requests for secularization, perpetual secularization and apostasy. Thus, between 1778 and 1825, the Franciscans lost 23 friars due to perpetual secularization, one due to secularization, 4 due to apostasy, and 33 who were transferred elsewhere, totaling 61 friars (RUTTEN, [ca. 1957]).

The priests were assigned the tasks of teaching, preaching and confessing. Outside the convent, the Franciscans worked to help the sick and dying, represented the poor in Bahia's prisons and assisted those who had been condemned to the gallows by the State.

The first thing these records reveal is that slave labor seems to have replaced the lay brothers in the workforce, because, traditionally, those brethren were always associated with and did the domestic work in the convent. Friar Basílio Röwer (1941) states that because the number of lay brothers was small, since the Metropolis deemed them to be useless, the friars of the Convent of Nossa Senhora do Amparo in the Province of the Immaculate Conception had a certain number of slaves to do the farm work and other heavy tasks.

#### LAY BROTHERN: A REPLACEABLE APPENDAGE

The fact that in 1779 there were just 25 lay brothers throughout the Province of St. Anthony already meant the beginning of a departure from the origins of the Franciscan Order. The numbers are enlightening regarding the significance of the lay state within the provincial fraternity: these 25 brothers included 20 Portuguese and 5 Brazilians. The figures shown in Table 4 are also symptomatic: 12 lay brothers in Bahia and a total of 87 clerics (priests and pos-



tulants) (AHU, 1779b, cx. 135, doc. 10.107). The data could indicate that the number of lay brothers was clearly falling. It is believed that these two statistics are linked by the concentration of Franciscans in Bahia and the decline of the lay vocation, an original feature of the Franciscan Order.

Clearly, of all the Brazilian vocations, the position of lay brother did not improve one's social standing. Gaining entry into a religious institution helped the individual acquire social prestige and respectability for himself, as well as for his family, through the status of being related to a cleric. However, even if a lay brother should eventually aspire to join the clergy, there were some caveats: the first was that those who had already worn the habit for over 10 years could not enter; if they were accepted, they would only be allowed to study if they had three years of higher education. Relying on Apostolic Bulls, Decrees of the Holy Congregation and the determinations of the General Chapter of the Order, the Provincial Chapter of December 1783 determined that any religious who was passing or had passed from the lay state to the clerical state would have their time in the religious life counted from the date of application and tonsure. This determination minimized the time served at the local community and provincial levels, and carried on a medieval tradition in which the tonsure was a sign of segregation. Therefore, the terms for rising from the status of lay brother to cleric were difficult to meet, *a priori*, because of the disparate levels of training in the two states of life within the community.

#### UTERINE BIAS

The question of vocations in the colony has always been "problematic" and is, to some extent, an unresolved issue. The life of the secular and regular clergy was constantly subject to inquiries and comments due to the suspicious behavior of many clerics, whether religious or secular. The Franciscans occupied a prominent place in the arena of moral behavior. According to Lima (1990), the number of cases of the crime of solicitation in colonial Brazil were distributed as follows: secular clergy (58.1%), Franciscan friars (39.89%) and Carmelite friars (26.40%). This situation was examined and assessed by the Jesuits in the 17th century, arguing that the sense of religious vocation was not firmly established among the Portuguese born in Brazil, and presenting eight factors that detracted from the consolidation of religious life in that colony: the influence of the climate, first nutrition, loose upbringing, miscegenation, morbid sentimentality, freedom of movement, depravity of morals, physical disability and social prejudice towards work. According to Vilhena (1969, v. 2, p. 457), some obstacles contributed to the lack of clerical reform in the colony:

This vigilant prelate [Dom Fr. Antônio Corrêa] is equally committed to reforming the clergy in his Archdiocese, but the results have not corresponded to his wishes; the excessive distances to a large number of villages and parishes make it unworkable to go there and investigate the behavior of some priests who are living in those places in the laxity of the country's own customs and ingrained from birth, which are of such a viscous nature that,

infecting with ease those who have come from Portugal, these are more scandalous than the natives, and therefore worthy of the correction that the zealous prelate deemed possible, because the actions and heinous behaviors of some, not excepting even the regulars, have become intolerable, like the liberties of rustic sailors, which they must contain as one of the duties of the religion, forgetting entirely what they are, and what appearances they should maintain.

The points listed by the Jesuits and observed by Vilhena (1969) support the above theories about Franciscanism. The Provincial Chapter of January 31, 1824 states: "We recognize a scandalous act in not accepting two blood brothers in the Province. Such a thing is a violation of the General Statutes of the Order and in all of the Provinces, scandalizing the learned and prudent" (ATAS CAPITULARES, 1970, p. 161).

This law was probably introduced to curb the influence of families and possible interference in the Province due to the prerogative of having two children in the same religious family or convent. In his study of the records, Rutten (1780-1893) found only one that mentioned two brothers: José Antônio da Silva Vieira in 1804 and Jacinto Heliodoro da Silva Vieira in 1812, both natives of Santo Amaro. Bahian vocations in the late 18th and early 19th centuries came from the Recôncavo and Salvador. Death records do not always show the friars' places of origin. Most only state that the friar was from Bahia or, at most, give his hometown.

The Death Registry (RUTTEN [ca. 1957]) shows the following places of origin for candidates to the novitiate: Sergipe del Rey, Santo Amaro da Purificação, Paraguaçu, Jaguaripe, Santo Antônio de Jequié, Parish of Nossa Senhora de Nazaré de Maragogipe, Cachoeira, the Parish of Santa Sé Cathedral de S. Salvador (the Holy See Cathedral of São Salvador) of the City of Bahia, the Parish of Santana do Sacramento, Santo Antônio Além do Carmo, and the Town of São Francisco do Conde. The predominant birthplace of Franciscan vocations was, without a doubt, Jaguaripe. Thanks to the promise of a burgeoning economy, the population of the Recôncavo was growing. By 1780, it had reached 102,853 inhabitants. In contrast, Sergipe del Rey, which was subordinated to the Archbishopric of Bahia, produced few vocations. All indications are that, in many cases, the records lumped natives of Sergipe together with the Bahians to increase their ranks, since they were numerically inferior to the Pernambucans and Portuguese.

However, financial wealth was not the only reason why the Recôncavo was so important. The region was also rich in vocations. The sugar and tobacco plantations of the Recôncavo, Salvador, Jaguaripe, Maragogipe and, later on, Nazaré das Farinhas, became hubs for small and medium-sized farms that employed one to ten slaves who often worked alongside family members. As we have seen, this fact was used to justify the criticism that the archbishop, Dom Joaquim Borges Figueiroa, leveled against the Franciscans who took off for their relatives' plantations and farms, living more like family men than friars.

Amid all these conflicting interests, a question arises: how did the Franciscans manage to ensure social mobility, when their austere rule required friars to renounce worldly glory? The damage done included a factor of extreme importance to the issue at hand: the term "minors," which possessed not

only a moral connotation but referred explicitly to the conflicts that placed the Minorites in the opposite camp to the world of the great, the Friars Major, in the social mechanism.

Vaucher (1987) observes that the rapid clericalization of the Order of Friars Minor made them lose sight of the original impetus of the social realities of the time, and since the generation of St. Bonaventure, the term "minors" had been interpreted as a call for humility in the most general sense, losing the social connotation of the word. "Minors" became a dead word in Brazil because it lacked the transformative power of its roots, bound up as they were with a meaningful practice and conflict, which naturally did not occur in the colony. The greatest significance acquired by the term "minors" was the practice of poverty, divorced from the social context of the colony, while it was based on the stratifications and oppositions between "majors" (the colonists) and "minors" (the colonized). Therefore, the term "minors" became progressively devoid of real meaning. This loss of identity ended up leading the Franciscans to associate themselves with the world of the "majors" – the colonists.

In the public mind, Franciscanism has always been imbued with a unique characteristic bolstered primarily by the Order's way of life: poverty. This is where there seems to have been a contradiction within the colonial system. Social improvement was the way effectively to participate in the complex circle of relationships, but one of the most favored paths towards that goal was a career in the church. Among the Franciscans, there were two possibilities: being a lay brother or a priest. The first was not a "good deal" – few wanted to lead a life devoid of prestige, devoted to domestic tasks and cut off from direct contact with society. On the other hand, being a priest not only involved social prestige but gave access to financial resources forbidden by the Rule. Nevertheless, there were two main reasons why the priesthood predominated over the regular clergy in the Portuguese mentality: the holiness of the priest's ministerial function, as the bearer of the passport to Heaven or Hell; and, another no less important reason, the priesthood's superior status, exemption from taxes, prestige and clearly defined social position.

Overall, the Franciscans' ranks gradually thinned. By 1779 their number had been reduced to 300 or 305; by 1797, it was down to 180, although that figure rose later on. However, by 1804, the province had only 120 professed friars (ATAS CAPITULARES, 1970, note 66). The history books view the main milestone for the crisis as 1759, the year when the Marquis of Pombal declared war on the Jesuits and kept a close eye on the other religious orders. Implementing a policy of changing the role of the Portuguese Crown in its overseas possessions, Pombal established a new political-administrative order of opposition to the Jesuits and the Church. Some of the reasons for this turnaround in Church/State relations contributed decisively to the disintegration of the ecclesiastical institution in Brazil: the economic power acquired by religious orders and secularism propagated by the Enlightenment. These external reasons affected religious institutions internally, gradually emptying their ranks. The ban on accepting novices and the frequent exodus of professed religious eventually led to a break between a markedly devout society and a society tending towards secularism. While this shift in ideas was going on in the Metropolis and the colony, an internal crisis was also underway in the religious institutions, which clearly showed



that they were doomed – a factor that accelerated the practice of indifference towards the religious spirit and a decline in the observance of regular discipline.

The five points discussed here provide an overview of relations between the Franciscan institution and the realities of life in Portuguese America, particularly in regard to internal structure and hierarchical divisions, thereby leading to an imbalance in internal relations caused by the difference in status between the clergy and the laity. The system of vocational selection through stringent admis-

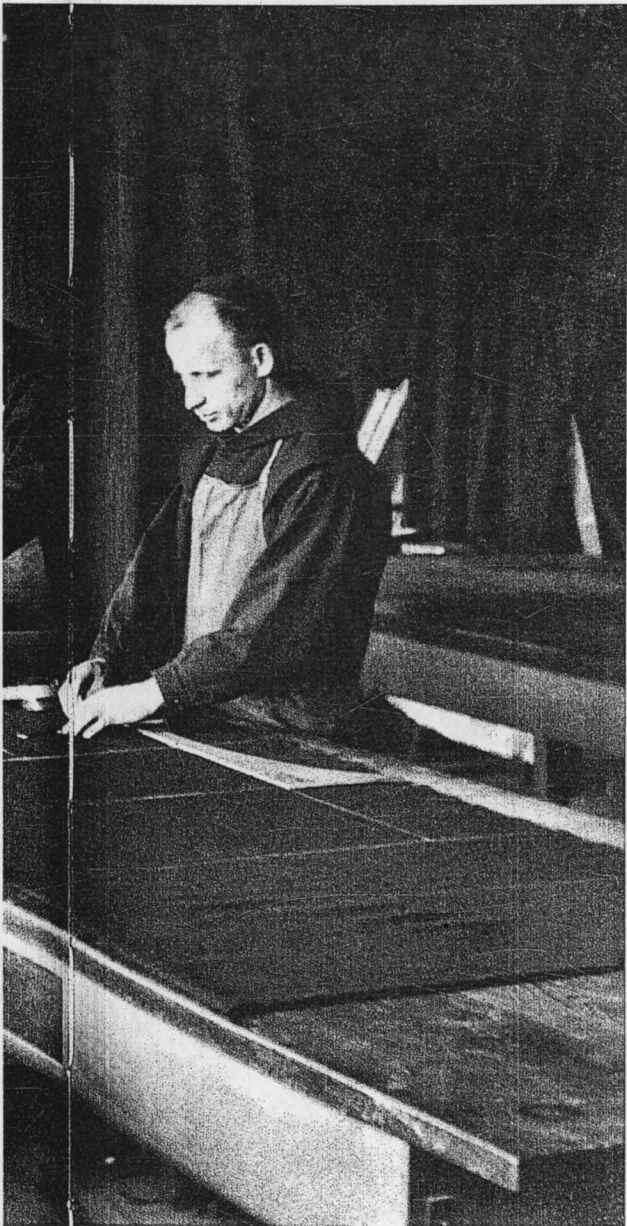
sion requirements fostered and ensured a gap in the internal life of the convents. This situation was confirmed by the decrease in vocations for the lay ministry, and mistrust when it came to accepting Brazilians into the Order. However, this situation was not limited to the Franciscans; it was experienced by all religious institutions.

This chapter has sought to restore the historical presence of the Franciscans in Salvador since the Order was established there, personified by the Convent of São Francisco and its members, which are the main focus. Being a relatively unexplored subject with a very small updated bibliography, this study was mainly based on archival research, which has given originality and consistency to the observations made about the Franciscan presence in Bahia in the last two decades of the 18th century and the first two of the 19th century. This entire study has focused on understanding the changes that the Franciscan institution underwent as a result of the internal and external crisis that led to a slow process of decay.

The basic conclusion that can be drawn is that, despite being under the tutelage of the State, the Franciscans managed to "circumvent" the rules of the local Church and State. The conflicts between these two bodies seem to have been resolved by an apparent submission that was actually a strategy to safeguard internal spaces, especially to increase the number of Franciscan vocations in the colony.

The history of the Franciscans in colonial Brazil was not always harmonious. The 18th century was clearly marked by internal tensions. The friars' diverse backgrounds gave rise to disputes, grievances and changes. Portuguese Franciscans (from Oporto), Bahians and Pernambucans vied for a place in the Province of St. Anthony of Brazil, but few natives of Bahia and Pernambuco had access to administrative posts in the province. The years 1779 and 1780 brought to light an aspect of Franciscan history that is as yet little studied.

The provisional and mutable nature of the institution is more than obvious, especially in times of crisis. Thus, I have



Lay brothers have always been associated with domestic chores and handicrafts. In this 20th-century photograph, they are making habits.

tried to focus my research on perceiving these changes within the Franciscan Order in Bahia, and particularly in Salvador. Studies will progress to the extent that other local and general geographies join in the process of internal and external reorientation experienced by religious institutions. This will permit an overview of continuities and discontinuities in the process of the redefinition of the Church and State in Brazil.

It can be argued, without ceremony, that the Franciscans followed the path indicated by the integration process of colonization, involving the political and religious underpinnings of the civilizing project of African-Indigenous-Portuguese Christendom. This permits an understanding of changes within colonial Franciscanism and its relationship to the political changes in the Portuguese Crown, concurrently resulting in crisis and decline.

The Franciscans in Salvador played the role of stewards of the colonial system, strengthening its capacity through the symbolic exchange carried out by the religious consciousness, which corroborated both institutions: Church and State. Based as it was on segments of different origins (Portuguese and Brazilians; Bahians and Pernambucans) and social-ecclesiastical status (fathers and lay brothers), the monastic structure experienced conflict because of the numerical decline of its members. This caused a schism between the Franciscan identity and the identity of the official Church, which were maintained by the priesthood, a persuasive tool for the State's interests. The crisis in 1779 foreshadowed the decay that would set in in subsequent years.

The Franciscans chose the cloister, providing sacramental assistance at the convent and relegating missionary work in the Amerindian villages to a secondary place within the Franciscan agenda. Nevertheless, this stance allowed them to establish a turbulent presence in the colony. Their decline ultimately involved deeper and broader aspects, including the close attachment of the Franciscans to the Crown and the ruling classes of the colony, and fierce internal power struggles.

## Notes

- 1 Excerpted from the MA thesis entitled "Mudança de Hábito. Os Franciscanos do Convento de São Francisco de Salvador (1779-1825)" ("Change of Habit. The Franciscans of the Convent of São Francisco in Salvador [1779-1825]"), presented at the Nossa Senhora da Assunção School of Theology, São Paulo, in 1994 (unpublished).
- 2 "Le mouvement naturel des sociétés, semble-t-il, s'oriente vers la satellisation en fonction d'un centre. L'équilibre est pratiqué et pensé à partir du centre: il représente le facteur unifiant. Si le centre perd de son énergie unifiante, le système éclate ou s'évanouit."

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