CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

EARLY BRAZIL

Early Brazil presents a collection of original sources, many published for the first time in English and some never before published in any language, that illustrates the process of conquest, colonization, and settlement in Brazil. The volume emphasizes the actions and interactions of the indigenous peoples, Portuguese, and Africans in the formation of the first extensive plantation colony based on slavery in the Americas. It also includes documents that reveal the political, social, religious, and economic life of the colony.

Original documents on early Brazilian history are difficult to find in English, and this collection will serve the interests of undergraduate students, as well as graduate students, who seek to make comparisons or to understand the history of Portuguese expansion.

Stuart B. Schwartz is George Burton Adams Professor of History at Yale University. His books include *All Can Be Saved* (2008); *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico* (2000); *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas: South America* (1999); *Implicit Understandings* (1994); *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels* (1992); *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society* (1985); *Early Latin America* (1983); *A Governor and His Image in Baroque Brazil* (1979); and *Sovereignty and Society in Colonial Brazil* (1973). Professor Schwartz specializes in the history of colonial Latin America, especially Brazil, and the history of early modern expansion.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

EARLY BRAZIL

A Documentary Collection to 1700

Edited by

STUART B. SCHWARTZ
Yale University

Translated by

CLIVE WILLIS AND STUART B. SCHWARTZ

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521124539

© Stuart B. Schwartz 2010

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2010

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Early Brazil : a documentary collection to 1700 / edited by Stuart B.
Schwartz ; translated by Clive Willis and Stuart B. Schwartz.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-521-19833-2 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-521-12453-9 (pbk.)
1. Brazil – History – To 1821 – Sources. I. Schwartz, Stuart B. II. Title.
F2524.E275 2010
981′.01–dc22 2010006637

ISBN 978-0-521-19833-2 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-12453-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs
for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not
guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

CONTENTS

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

PREFACE

This collection of documents, many of which are translated here for the first time in English and some of which have not been published before in any language, has been selected to bring to students and general readers basic texts of early Brazilian history. As such, they are part of the broad topic of Europe's expansion in the early modern era and, specifically, of Portugal's role in that process and in the encounter and clash of peoples and cultures that it set in motion. After Vasco da Gama reached India and returned to Portugal in 1498, the way had been opened for trade with Asia by way of the Cape of Good Hope. A second expedition of thirteen ships sailed for India in March 1500 under the command of Pedro Alvares Cabral, but on the outward voyage, its route out into the Atlantic, taken to avoid the contrary winds and currents along the West African coast, brought this fleet to an unexpected landfall on what most (but not all) historians believe was, to Europeans at least, an unknown shore.[1] First contact with the local inhabitants was peaceful; the Portuguese carried out a little trade and exploration; a cross was erected on Friday, the first of May; and a mass was celebrated. The fleet's secretary, Pero Vaz de Caminha penned a report in the form of a letter to the king (I-1) about the new land. A ship was dispatched back to Lisbon, and the remainder of the fleet then proceeded on the Cape route toward India. Cabral called the new land the "Island of the True Cross" but that denomination was soon replaced by "Land of the Holy Cross," and then in practice by other less spiritual designations. Some of the early mariners referred to this coast as "the "land of parrots," others called it the "land of the bedsheets" because the white sand of the beaches looked as though

1 The so-called policy of secrecy or governmental control of information has been expounded by a number of authors. The implication is that earlier Portuguese voyages of exploration in the Atlantic had already made contact with Brazil but, for diplomatic reasons and the desire to exclude competitors, had kept the information secret. Although there is no documentary evidence of the policy, its existence would help to explain the seemingly peculiar route of Cabral's voyage and the success of including Brazil in the Portuguese sphere in the subsequent negotiations with Castile in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). See Jaime Cortesão, *A política de sigilio nos descobrimentos* (Lisbon, 1960); Luís de Albuquerque, *Dúvidas e certezas na história dos descobrimentos* (Lisbon, 1990).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

sheets had been laid out on the shore, but the most popular name soon became *Brazil*, a word of debated etymology derived either from the legends of a mystical Atlantic island named "Brasyl" or from the valuable reddish wood that seemed the color of embers (*brasas*) extracted from the large brazilwood trees that grew in the forests of the new land. In the sixteenth century, in the age of tapestries and before the age of chemical dyes, the color red was particularly hard to produce, and so word of the new Portuguese "discovery" spread rapidly (I-2). Other Europeans, especially French merchants and sailors from Normandy and Brittany, also began to explore the Brazilian coast, contact the indigenous inhabitants, and trade for brazilwood. Despite this competition, the Portuguese crown remained more interested in the spices and riches of India than in a land of naked "gentiles," parrots, and dyewood.

For the first thirty years or so, the Crown turned to private individuals who, under royal contract, would exploit the dyewood and in return take on the task of further exploration and defense, recognizing royal sovereignty but, in effect, assuming the burdens of control. This system had been used previously on the coast of West Africa in the Atlantic islands, and the small outposts and trading stations under the direction of a manager were much like the "factories" (*feitorias*) that had organized trade in those places. The Portuguese claims, although recognized by Castile in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), remained in question, and both Spanish expeditions and French interlopers continued to visit the Brazilian coast despite Portuguese diplomatic protest. The Portuguese king, Dom João III, moved to eliminate the competition for dyewood by sending naval expeditions in 1527 and then again in 1532 under Martim Afonso de Sousa, whose instructions also required the establishment of settlements. The first town, São Vicente, was established by him in that year.

By that date, it was already clear that Portugal had to assume the burden of settlement if it hoped to keep foreign rivals from seizing this territory, a desire that probably became more intense when news of the exploits of Cortés in Mexico and Pizarro in Peru reached Lisbon. Still, the Crown was committed to its Indian Ocean gambit, and so it turned once again to a combination of private initiative under royal sponsorship by redeploying an institution, the hereditary seigneury, that had medieval precedents but that had already been modified and adapted to overseas colonization in Madeira and the Azores.[2] These fifteen donations or lordships along with the title of captain were awarded between 1533 and 1535 to twelve nobles (*donatarios*)

2 H. B. Johnson, "The Donatary Captaincy in Perspective: Portuguese Backgrounds to the Settlement of Brazil," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 52 (1974), 203–14; António Vasconcelos Saldanha, *As capitanias do Brasil. Antecedentes, desenvolvimento e extinção de um fenómeno atlântico* (Lisbon, 2001).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

who, in return for extensive powers and rights of taxation, were expected to colonize and develop their grants (II-1). Within each captaincy, the lord had the power to grant lands, administer justice, found towns, and collect revenues. Some of these powers were much like those of the old feudal nobility in Portugal, and even though the Crown emphasized that these grants were not feudal, the temptation for the captains was to treat them as such.

The project was only partially successful. Most of the donataries had no Brazilian experience. Some of them did not assume the challenge at all and did nothing; the four northernmost captaincies were not settled. In others, the captains squabbled with the colonists who had their own ideas of what the juridical and social character of the new settlements should be. Most of all, there was trouble with the indigenous population, who objected to the settlements that implied the taking of land, the disruption of hunting and fishing grounds, the taking of women, and eventually the imposition of forced labor. Only in a few places did the captaincy system seem to flourish, usually because of the fortuitous combination of positive relations with the indigenous people and the introduction of a major export crop, sugar. In both the captaincies of São Vicente on the southern coast and in Pernambuco to the north, alliances through marriages, trade, or military cooperation with some indigenous peoples facilitated the process of settlement. Also in both regions, sugarcane cultivation was successfully introduced. But the shift from economic activities based on dyewood collection to that of plantation agriculture altered the relationship with the native peoples from one of the barter of trade goods for the intermittent labor of felling trees to one of constant labor, which the native peoples rejected. This led donataries such as Duarte Coelho of Pernambuco (II-2) to petition for the importation of African laborers and also to increasing levels of violence between the Portuguese and the indigenous inhabitants of Brazil.

From the very first moment of contact, the Portuguese had been both attracted and repelled by the indigenous people of Brazil. Vaz de Caminha's report had stated that these people lived in a state of innocence like Adam before the fall, and his fascination with their seemingly open sexuality was repeated by many of the first Europeans who arrived. In fact, five of Cabral's crew had tried to jump ship in order to stay. During the first decades, the Portuguese and other Europeans had developed a kind of proto-ethnography distinguishing among the various groups that spoke languages of the Tupi-Guarani family, most of whom were semisedentary agriculturalists, and the many peoples who spoke languages of other families and who were, for the most part, hunters and gatherers, and thus considered less civilized by both the Portuguese and the Tupi speakers (IV-2; V-1). The endemic warfare among the Tupi, their cannibalism, their nudity, and their seeming lack of "civilization" all provoked depreciation, but neither the Portuguese nor

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

the French could gather dyewood without them, and many Europeans took indigenous women as wives or concubines, thereby producing increasing numbers of *mamelucos*, that is, children of mixed origins.

By 1549, the continued presence of the French on the coast, growing hostility with the indigenous peoples of the coast, and the failure of a number of the captaincies moved the Crown to attempt a reorganization of the colony. In that year, a large expedition was sent out under Tomé de Sousa as governor-general to establish a royal capital. He founded the city of Salvador on the Bay of All Saints in the captaincy of Bahia, a place where the donatary had died at the hands of the Indians and where a small settlement already existed, to some extent the result of the presence of a Portuguese man who had married and settled among the Tupinambá around the bay (III-2). The expedition included royal treasury and judicial officers as well as six Jesuit missionaries. There were also about a thousand penal exiles that had been sent to colonize. The instructions (III-1) given to de Sousa authorized him to distribute lands and to promote the sugar economy, and they extended broad powers to him as governor. The successful donataries such as Duarte Coelho of Pernambuco disliked this infringement on their authority, but there was little they could do.

The royal governors, Tomé de Sousa and his successors, especially the legally trained Mem de Sá (1558–74), began to confront the central problems of the colony, brutally eliminating Indian resistance, fostering the sugar economy, and sponsoring the intensive missionary activities of the Jesuits (III-4, 5). Chief among these challenges was the continuing presence of the French, now in the form of a colony at Guanabara Bay, which included Huguenot participation and which had allied with a number of indigenous groups along the southern coast. Mem de Sá initiated a campaign against this colony of "Antarctic France" (IV-1, 2) and, after heavy fighting from 1565 to 1567, finally destroyed it (III-6, 7). In 1567, the Portuguese established their own city of Rio de Janeiro on the bay as the seat of a second royal captaincy, but at this time, it was a settlement far less important than Bahia or Pernambuco, where the sugar industry was now in full swing. By 1593, those two captaincies were producing more than 80 percent of the colony's income.[3]

The growth of that industry and its need for large numbers of laborers led to the increasing enslavement of Indians by the colonists at the same time that Jesuit missionary activities and the foundation of missionary villages, or *aldeias*, were growing. Jesuit activities throughout the colony had expanded under the leadership of men such as Fathers Manoel da Nóbrega and José de Anchieta, who led the struggle to eliminate the worst abuses of the Indians,

3 Harold B. Johnson, "The Settlement of Brazil, 1500–1580," in *Colonial Brazil*, Leslie Bethell, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 37.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

improve colonist morality, and promote the religious life of the colony. Jesuit colleges were found in every major town, and eventually Jesuit sugar estates and ranches were also developed to support these activities. Even though there were only 110 Jesuits in all Brazil in 1574, their impact was enormous (V-3). Still, the colonists seeking workers objected to interference from the missionaries.

Both sides, colonists and Jesuits, sought to convince the Crown that they were best suited to make the Indians useful subjects of the Crown, and on the frontiers such as the interior of the southern region of São Paulo, an economy based on indigenous slavery persisted (V-5). However, legislation limiting enslavement of the native inhabitants in 1570, 1585, and 1609, despite loopholes, made it clear that access to indigenous laborers would be limited (V-4). Moreover, epidemic diseases devastated the indigenous populations in the 1560s, so that the expensive alternative of importing African slaves became increasingly attractive to the sugar planters in need of laborers. By the end of the century, despite colonist complaints, the transition to African labor was well on its way, and the sugar economy was booming. The number of sugar mills had reached 192 by 1612, and the colony was exporting 10,000 metric tons a year. The levels of African importation rose in the seventeenth century to approximately 7,000 to 8,000 a year. Despite this growth, Brazil still only represented a small fraction of the income of the Portuguese Crown, far behind the percentage generated by India. No wonder, then, that the kings of Portugal never included Brazil within their formal title, to the dismay of the Brazilian colonists. Still, the growth of the sugar economy was bringing increasing trade to the colony, provoking the interest and jealousy of foreign merchants and states and producing social as well as political and economic effects in the colony and throughout the empire. Among these was the solidification of a slave economy and a social hierarchy based on color. Slaves reacted to this with various forms of resistance (IX-1, 2) or sought other ways to improve their condition. Slavery as a social and economic system weighed heavily on all of Brazil's inhabitants, and virtually no one – slave, free, or former slave – escaped its effects (IX-3).

Sugar was a peculiar crop that combined agriculture and industry because of the need to process the cane and extract its juice in the field. The demands of running a sugar *engenho*, or mill, and its surrounding estate or plantation (also called, by extension, an *engenho*) demanded capital, labor, land, and a variety of skilled artisans and workers (VI-1, 3). In addition, the Brazilian industry was characterized by the presence of cane farmers who supplied sugarcane to the mills on a variety of bases, often in a kind of sharecropping (VI-2). The production and commerce of sugar created the opportunities for colonial success (VI-3). The owners of the mills and some of the larger cane farmers formed social as well as economic elite,

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

dominating local institutions of government and social prestige. Their position rested firmly on their ability to manage their estates and to control their slave force (VI-4).

As the sugar economy flourished, political changes in the Atlantic world began to draw the colony into the vortex of dynastic and political conflicts. In 1580, just as the sugar economy was expanding, a dynastic crisis in Portugal caused by the death of King Dom Sebastião led to the assumption of the throne by Philip II of Spain. Portugal was then ruled by the Spanish Hapsburgs for the next sixty years. Although political separation between the two kingdoms was maintained and at first the situation brought Portugal certain commercial advantages, such as access to Spanish silver and markets, it also drew Portugal into Spanish geopolitical involvements and wars. The Spanish Hapsburgs imposed an exclusionary trade policy on Portugal (VI-5) that cut it off from its traditional northern European partners, the English and the Dutch. These enemies of Spain now made Portuguese shipping and colonies primary targets. In 1624, the Dutch seized Salvador and held it for a year, and in 1630, they returned to capture Pernambuco and eventually most of northeastern Brazil, which they held until 1654, supporting their operation in Brazil by also taking the major Portuguese slaving ports of El Mina (1638) and Luanda (1641–8). Dutch Brazil continued to be a colony of sugar and slaves under the auspices of the Dutch West India Company, which encouraged the resident Portuguese planters to remain in place by providing religious toleration as well as capital for their sugar operations (VIII-1). Although Portugal separated from Spain in 1640 with a "restoration" of independence and the new monarch, Dom João IV, sought alliance with the French, English, and Dutch, Portugal's colonial possessions remained at risk. The Dutch did not surrender Brazil until 1654 as a result of a local uprising against the Dutch West India Company and a financial settlement negotiated with Holland. Alliance with England was cemented by a trade agreement in 1654 and a royal marriage accompanied by an enormous dowry. Meanwhile, the war against Spain dragged on until 1668 when Spain finally recognized Portugal's independence. The war had been paid for to a large extent by taxing Brazil's products: tobacco, hides, and, above all, sugar. It was at some point in the 1640s that Brazil had replaced India as the most profitable and thus most important colonial area within the Portuguese empire, but as early as the 1620s, the governors of Portugal and many residents of the colony (VII-1) had recognized that Brazil was now the key to the empire.[4] In the colony, a vibrant culture had developed, controlled to some extent by civil

4 This shift is the central theme of Edval de Souza Barros, *Negócios de tanta importância. O conselho ultramarino e a disputa pela condução da Guerra no Atlântico e no Índico* (1643–1661) (Lisbon: Centro de História de Além-Mar and Universidade dos Açores, 2008).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

and religious authority, but despite the continuing efforts of the clergy (X-1) and the watchful eye of visiting officials of the Inquisition, distance from the metropolis promoted or permitted various kinds of dissent (X-2), facilitated a disregard for law, or allowed for jurisdictional conflict or the exercise of personal power (X-1). Moreover, the inequalities and abuses inherent in a slave-based economy and society overshadowed all other aspects of the colony's organization.

As Brazil emerged from the political and military challenges of the 1640s and 1650s, it was confronted by new problems. Dutch and English colonies in the Caribbean, attracted by rising sugar prices, had set up their own plantation systems, and the competition had increased the supply of sugar and the demand for slave labor, lowering the price of the former and raising that of the latter. Brazilian planters were caught in the middle at exactly the moment that the Portuguese Crown was taxing sugar to pay for its diplomatic and military needs (VI-5). Brazil still enjoyed comparative advantages as a producer, but the conjunction of competition, prices, and international relations created a situation of crisis by the 1680s. Cut off to some extent from Spanish silver, its Indian Ocean empire and trade routes seriously reduced, and its Brazilian colony faced with a lack of revenue and specie and high taxes, the Portuguese Crown tried a variety of measures: devaluating its currency in 1688, sponsoring the exploration in search of precious metals in the far reaches of its empire, and seeking new markets in Europe for its products. Its attempts to create new plantation zones in areas such as Maranhão in northern Brazil, to exploit the resources of the Amazonian region, or to tap into the trade of the Rio de la Plata region by establishing an outpost at Colônia do Sacramento in 1680 all met with only limited success (XI-1). However, the sense of disaster disappeared after 1690. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1689 (War of the League of Augsburg; King William's War, 1689–98) and the disruption of Atlantic trade by Anglo-French hostilities once again created opportunities and new demand for Portugal's colonial products – not only sugar but tobacco and hides as well, a product of the growth of ranching in the colony (XI-2). The price of sugar increased and, with it, the industry as a whole recovered. More important, the search for metals finally produced major results with gold strikes from 1695 to 1698 in the interior of southeastern Brazil (XI-3). Gold and then diamonds began to transform the shape and the nature of the colony and its relations with Portugal. From Lisbon, the discoveries of gold seemed to be part of a providential design. As Portuguese immigrants and African slaves flooded the new mining areas and as the mineral wealth flowed back to Portugal and then into the hands of its trading partners, Brazil was recognized in Lisbon and throughout Europe as the heart of the Portuguese empire – in reality, what it had already been during much of the previous century.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

In comparative terms, Portuguese Brazil shared much with the other imperial establishments of the Europeans in the Americas, but it also had distinctive features that resulted both from local conditions and opportunities and from the character and intentions of the Portuguese empire of which it was a part. Brazil had been first explored as part of an ongoing process of maritime voyaging into the Atlantic and down the coast of Africa that had eventually brought the Portuguese to the Indian subcontinent and beyond. Thus, Brazil remained for a half-century as a secondary consideration. This was a situation quite unlike the roughly contemporaneous Spanish conquest of the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru, especially after Cortés's expedition to Mexico. Although the religious and economic motivations of both Castile and Portugal were similar, the available precious metals and large sedentary peasant populations of Mexico and the Andes provided tremendous incentives for Spanish immigration and for imperial concern and intervention. America quickly became the primary Spanish imperial venture, whereas Brazil, without apparent mineral resources and seeming to offer far fewer opportunities for wealth than the spice trade with Asia, remained something of an imperial backwater. Only after 1550 was a royal governmental presence established and, even then, the development of European institutions – convents, law courts, bishoprics, and, with the exception of the Jesuits, even the presence of the missionary religious orders – was slow to develop. Unlike Spanish America, no universities were established, no separate legal system created, no printing presses introduced; neither were the Portuguese able to use existing indigenous aristocracies as intermediaries to control the large native populations as the Spanish did in the centers of their viceroyalties. Brazil remained well integrated into metropolitan institutional life. The relative ease of contact by sea from Lisbon to Salvador probably contributed to this situation but, in general, Portugal ruled Brazil as an overseas province of slight importance. When by the 1560s the sugar economy began to develop, the colony seem to resemble the Spanish Caribbean islands of Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico, except that the availability of large indigenous populations meant that their use as labor lasted longer in Brazil than in the Caribbean. The process that led to the large-scale importation of Africans, however, was the same.

By the seventeenth century, as parts of Brazil became a full-fledged plantation colony, it attracted the interest of other empires as both a target and a model. The Dutch seizure of northeastern Brazil and their capture of the West African slaving ports to supply it was an attempt to reproduce and exploit the Portuguese success. By midcentury, Dutch Brazil's failure and the deleterious effects of the fighting on Portuguese Brazil had opened the door for the Dutch, English, and French to establish their own sugar and

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

slave colonies in the Caribbean, sometimes closely and consciously following the Brazilian example. With the exception of Surinam, however, none of them had the continental dimensions of Brazil. The Brazilian *sertão* (interior) presented both challenges and opportunities that were realized with the discovery of gold in the 1690s and the subsequent movement of population inland. The Brazilian colony was to be more than an archipelago of sugar enclaves scattered along the continent's Atlantic coast and, once large deposits of mineral wealth were discovered, its government and its character began to resemble more closely that of Spanish America, its neighbor and its major continental rival.

The documents translated in this volume have been selected to illustrate a number of the principal themes in the history just outlined. Each document is accompanied by a short introduction and information on its publication history or source. Clive Willis has ably translated many of the documents. Given the nature and origin of the written sources, the selection of texts tends to emphasize the Portuguese as the protagonists of this history rather than the indigenous peoples of Brazil or the Africans who were brought there as slaves, but the volume is not a celebratory recitation of the exploits of the mariners, explorers, missionaries, and administrators. It seeks instead to demonstrate through these documents what the business of colonial expansion was about in a practical rather than a heroic sense. Rather than emphasizing the impressive character and skills of men such as the Jesuit missionaries Manoel da Nóbrega and Antônio Vieira, the military victories of Mem de Sá, the exploits of intrepid mariners and backwoodsmen, or the literary accomplishments of observers and commentators such as Ambrósio Fernandes Brandão and Gabriel Soares de Sousa, this volume focuses the mutual perceptions and interactions of Europeans (including the French and the Dutch), Native Americans, and Africans. The theme of their interaction forms a central thread that unites these selected documents as a whole. Rather than using small snippets of many documents to cover the broadest range of topics, I have decided where possible to use entire documents or extensive extracts to provide a fuller accounting of some themes but also to give the reader a feel for the nature, style, and format of the correspondence and literary production of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In addition, considerable attention has been given to the political and administrative structure of the colony, its institutions, and its governance. Both the French and Dutch interludes are also represented here. Economic aspects, particularly the sugar economy, have been emphasized, given the central role of that commodity in the colony's history. Many of the documents also illustrate aspects of social relations – between various sectors of

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

colonial society: colonists and Indians, masters and slaves, plantation owners and their dependent farmers. Unlike many of the Portuguese outposts and enclaves in Africa and Asia, Brazil became a colony of settlement with cities and towns, a comparatively large European population, the development of agriculture, and a large number of offspring of mixed origin, as well as a large population of African- and Brazilian-born slaves. This was a slave society in which European social hierarchies fused with new rankings based on race or legal status and in which patriarchal and personal authority based on social class combined to set the parameters of Brazilian life.

Stuart B. Schwartz
Yale University

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

A NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Wherever the documents and extracts that appear in this volume have been translated into English for the first time, the sole and abiding principles have been accuracy and readability, especially from a twenty-first-century and transatlantic viewpoint. At the same time, care has been taken to maintain, as far as possible, the flavor and stylistic resonance of the original texts. Whereas the vast bulk of these texts were composed in the Portuguese language of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they naturally involve a variety of styles and approaches corresponding to the standpoint and perceived duties of their authors. Some were reacting to and describing the Brazil of the initial encounters with the indigenous population and couching their reports in a form that was deferential to the Portuguese monarchy. Others were reporting on the struggle to beat back their French rivals in the sixteenth century or were setting their focus on the Dutch occupation of Pernambuco in the seventeenth century. Yet others concern themselves with the growth of the sugar economy of the Northeast and with its dependence on slave labor; inevitably there figures the involvement of the Church and, particularly, of the Jesuits in their efforts to dominate and shape Brazilian colonial society. Yet *e pluribus unum*!

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

A NOTE ON PORTUGUESE CURRENCY, WEIGHTS, AND MEASURES

The basic unit of accounting was the *real* (plural: *réis*).

1 vintém = 20 réis
1 tostão = 100 réis
1 cruzado = 400 réis
1 *milréis* = 1,000 réis (written 1$000)
1 conto = 1,000 milréis or 1,000,000 réis was written 1:000

Standard Units of Weight

Arroba = 14.5 kilograms = 32 pounds
Alqueire = 36.3 kilograms (approximately 1 English bushel; 8 gallons)
Quintal = 100 kilograms (the English hundredweight)

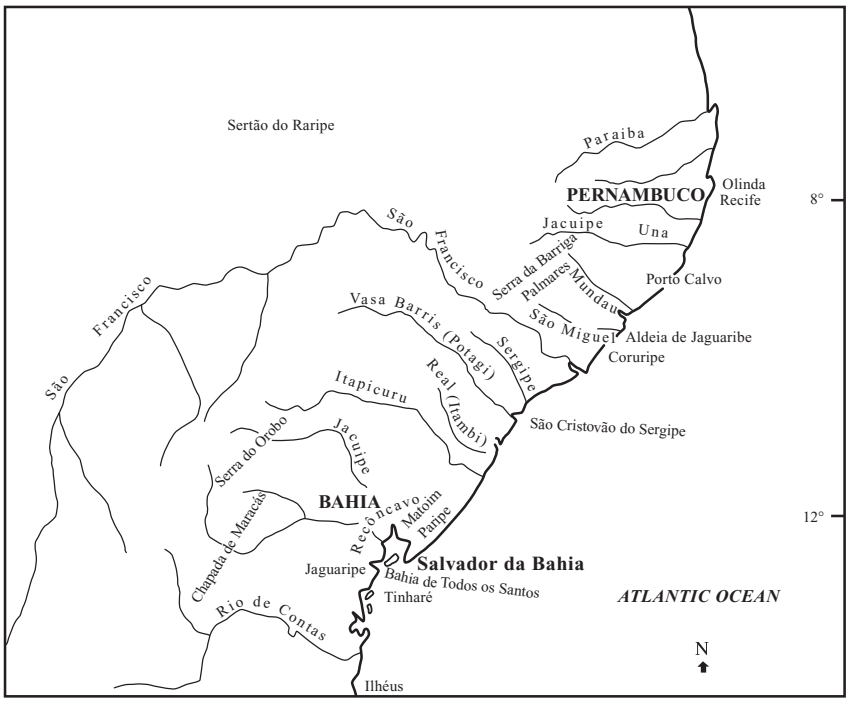
Length and Area

Légua (league) = approximately 5,555 to 6,000 meters = 3 to 4 miles
Tarefa = 4,352 square meters (in Bahia). This measure varied regionally. It was also supposedly equivalent to the amount of land needed to produce sugarcane for one day's worth of milling.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information



Map 1. Bahia and Pernambuco. Showing places named in the text.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

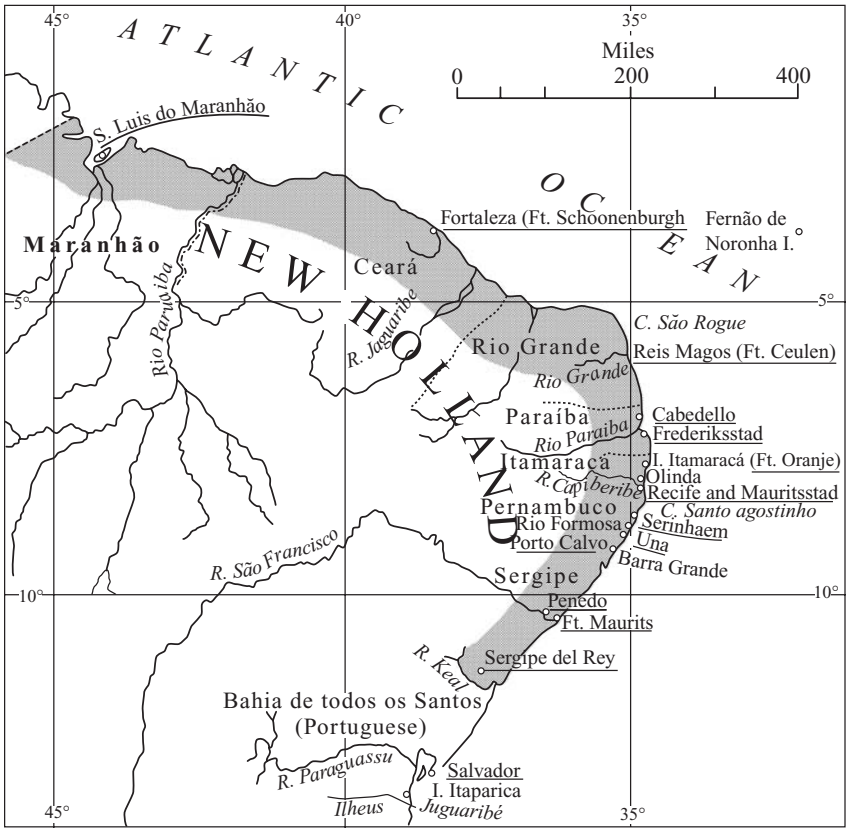
Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

Map 2. Colonial towns and settlements within Palmares quilombo.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information

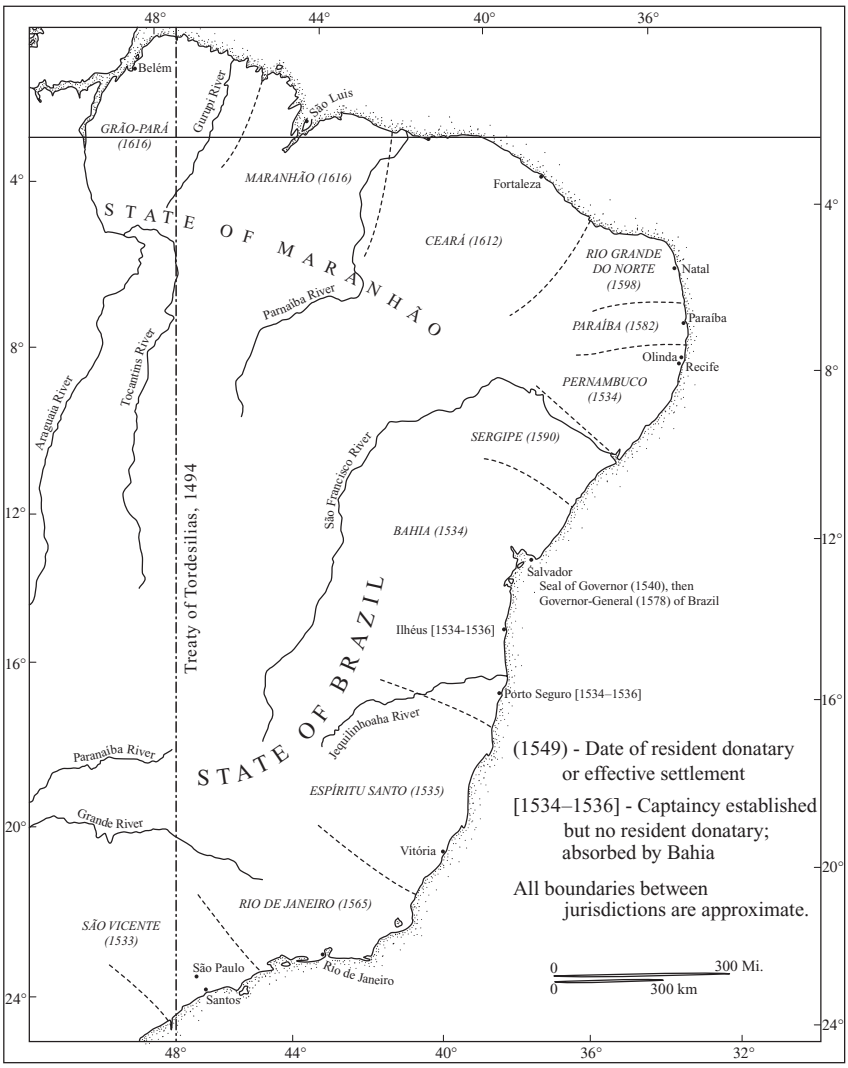


Map 3. Netherlands Brazil, 1643.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-19833-2 - Early Brazil: A Documentary Collection to 1700
Edited by Stuart B. Schwartz
Frontmatter
More information



Map 4. Brazil, ca. 1650.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org