

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09091-0 - The Admirable Adventures and Strange Fortunes of Master

Anthony Knivet: An English Pirate in Sixteenth-Century Brazil

Edited by Vivien Kogut Lessa De Sá

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THE ADMIRABLE ADVENTURES AND  
STRANGE FORTUNES OF MASTER  
ANTHONY KNIVET

This is the first critical edition of the original 1625 travel account by Anthony Knivet, an Englishman who spent nine years in Brazil in the last decade of the sixteenth century. His is the oldest extensive description of Brazil written by an Englishman, but despite its historical, geographical, and ethnographic relevance it has never merited an annotated (or even a separate) edition in English. This edition, which includes a detailed introduction and plentiful notes, aims at enabling the English-speaking public to follow Knivet's compelling tale.

The text describes Knivet's incredible escapades between roughly 1592 and 1601, which included working as a drudge for the governor of Rio de Janeiro, escaping into the hinterland to live with native tribes, and joining in conquest and gold-seeking expeditions. The story provides a unique insight into early colonial Brazil and the myriad of people occupying its territory: Portuguese settlers, mixed-race servants, Indians, slaves, and European travelers.

Anthony Knivet arrived in Brazil in 1591 aboard an English privateer and was soon captured by the ruling Portuguese. He was taken to Rio de Janeiro, where he spent almost ten years as a servant to the governor. After various adventures, including time spent among the Indians and a frustrated escape to Angola, Knivet managed to return to England in 1601. He lived until 1649 in London, where his memoirs were published in 1625.

Vivien Kogut Lessa de Sá is a teaching associate in Portuguese studies at the University of Cambridge and a lecturer in English for the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio). Her Portuguese translation of Anthony Knivet's adventures was published in Brazil in 2007.

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

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 education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107463004](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107463004)

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First published 2015

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*

Knivet, Anthony, active 1591–1649.

[Admirable adventures and strange fortunes.]

The admirable adventures and strange fortunes of Master Anthony Knivet : an English  
 pirate in sixteenth-century Brazil / [edited by] Vivien Kogut Lessa de Sá, University of  
 Cambridge; [by] Anthony Knivet.

pages cm. – (New approaches to the Americas)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-09091-0 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-46300-4 (paperback)

1. Knivet, Anthony, active 1591–1649 – Travel – Brazil. 2. Cavendish, Thomas,  
 1560–1592 – Travel – Brazil. 3. America – Discovery and exploration – British –  
 Early works to 1800. I. Kogut, Vivien. II. Title.

G460.K5517 2015

910.4'5–dc23 [B]

2015012654

ISBN 978-1-107-09091-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-46300-4 Paperback

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*To the memory of my grandmother Mathilde Lajta.*

*She traveled far so that we might follow.*

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## Abbreviations

AA	“The admirable adventures and strange fortunes of Master Antonie Knivet...”
CSP	<i>Calendar of State Papers</i>
KNY	Knyvett-Wilson Family Collection, at the Norfolk Record Office, Norwich
NRO	Norfolk Record Office, Norwich
VF	Francisco de Assis Carvalho Franco, ed., <i>Vária Fortuna e Estranhos Fados de Anthony Knivet que foi com Tomás Cavendish, em sua segunda viagem, para o Mar do Sul, no ano de 1591</i> . Trans. Guiomar Carvalho Franco (São Paulo: Ed. Brasiliense, 1947).