

Villages and missions in the captaincy of Ceará and Rio Grande: catechesis, violence and rivalries

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Abstract

Missionary activity in the captaincies of Ceará and Rio Grande, in the late 17th century and the beginning of the following one, was marked by a clash of interests involving missionaries as well as many local colonial authorities and the troops of São Paulo. It was at stake the suspicious prominence of each of the social actors involved in a conflict of generalized violence that marked the so-called War of Açu, when, dividing villages or flogging indigenous people in the hinterland, each of these actors, in their own way, sought favors from the Portuguese Crown and direct influence in the conflict region.

Keywords: indigenous history; Jesuits; war of the barbarians.

Aldeias e missões nas capitanias do Ceará e Rio Grande: catequese, violência e rivalidades¹

Resumo

A ação missionária nas capitanias do Ceará e Rio Grande, no final do século XVII e início da centúria seguinte, foi marcada por uma disputa de interesses que envolvia, além dos religiosos, diversas autoridades coloniais locais e as tropas de paulistas. Em jogo, a suspeitável proeminência de cada um dos atores sociais envolvidos em um conflito generalizado de violência que marcou a denominada Guerra do Açu, quando então, aldeando índios gentios ou fustigando os povos indígenas no sertão, cada um deles buscava mercês da Coroa portuguesa e influência direta na região de conflitos.

Palavras-chave: história indígena; jesuítas; guerra dos bárbaros.

Aldeas y misiones en las capitanías de Ceará y Rio Grande: Catequesis, violencia y rivalidades

Resumen

La acción misionaria en las capitanías de Ceará y Rio Grande, a fines del siglo XVII y comienzos de la centuria siguiente, fue marcada por una disputa de intereses que envolvía, además de los religiosos, diversas autoridades coloniales locales y las tropas de paulistas. En juego, la sospechable preeminencia de cada uno de los actores sociales envueltos en un conflicto generalizado de violencia que marcó la denominada Guerra do Açu, cuando entonces, aldeando índios gentios o fustigando los pueblos indígenas en el *sertão*, cada uno de ellos buscaba mercedes de la Corona portuguesa e influencia directa en la región de conflictos.

Palabras clave: historia indígena, jesuítas; guerra de los bárbaros

Villages et les missions de la capitainerie de Ceará et Rio Grande: la catéchèse, la violence et les rivalités

Résumé

L'activité missionnaire dans la capitainerie de Ceará et Rio Grande, dans le fin du XVIIe et du début du siècle suivant a été marquée par un conflit d'intérêts impliquant non seulement les missionnaires, mais aussi plusieurs autorités coloniales et les troupes de Sao Paulo. Dans le jeu, l'importance douteuse de chacun des acteurs impliqués dans un conflit d'une violence généralisée qui a marqué la guerre dite de Açu, quand aldeando gentil ou d'attaquer les peuples indigènes dans l'arrière-pays chacun à sa manière propre cherché les faveurs de la Couronne portugaise et direct influence dans la région du conflit.

Mots-clés: histoire des peuples autochtones; les jésuites; la guerre des barbares.

Article received in March 10, 2013 and approved for publication on May 5, 2013.

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¹This study is a result of a larger research, funded and developed at UFRN scope and entitled "A sociedade norte-rio-grandense nos documentos manuscritos do Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino: poder e cultura no espaço colonial".

The Barbarian War, a series of various conflicts against the indigenous peoples in the Brazilian backlands in the captaincies of the northern region of the old Brazilian state, in the middle of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, was marked permanently in Brazilian history. During the War of Açú (1683-1716), which was one of the most violent and dramatic episodes, many vassals of the King were required to participate in the conflicts, including missionaries and the São Paulo army, who were obliged to calm down the angry Indians and catechize the heathen ones who lived in Christian hamlets.

The cross and the sword — an analogy used to highlight the meeting of interests between the Church and the Crown — were raised together in colonial Brazil. As you will see, the agents and representatives of those forces aimed at acquiring temporal advantages in many different ways. In this process, rivalries also marked religious men due to their pioneering efforts in promoting missions, as they stood in distinct sides of regional conflicts of large dimensions. There was a clear separation of interests between the mazombos, who were the sons of the Spanish and Portuguese immigrants², and Paulistas (who were born in São Paulo).

Religious and local authorities were fearful of losing their influence in the captaincies of Ceará and Rio Grande, which were areas full of conflicts due to the presence of the corsair Indians — those considered dangerous that lived in the backlands and did not live in the hamlets — joined together against a new element in the northern colonial backland: the São Paulo army, which had the endorsement of the general governor of Brazil. This article was written particularly to understand this historical context in the related captaincies that will point out the meaning of the actions of the involved social actors, among them, missionaries, local colonial authorities and indigenous groups.

The Cross and the Sword: catechism, violence and rivalry

It is known that after the Pernambuco Restoration, with the victory over the Dutch (1630–1654) in the region, later known as Northeast, the pastoral fronts with the religious missions entered the most recondite spaces of the colonial countryside, encompassing the backlands of Jacobina, Kiriri and the region of river San Francisco. The natural and historical conditions of the colonization led the first corral people, called curraleiros,³ and missionaries to concentrate in the middle of San Francisco river?, transforming the backlands of the region of

²Mazombo was a vulgar term, it means that someone was “the son of Brazil, born from European people”. Antônio de Moraes Silva, *Diccionario da Língua Portuguesa composto pelo padre D. Rafael Bluteau, reformado e acrescentado por Antonio de Moraes Silva, natural do Rio de Janeiro*, Lisboa, Oficina de Simão Thaddeo Ferreira, 1789. Available in: <www.ieb.usp.br>. Accessed in: October, 2012. Here, this term will be used when the intention would be the depreciation against men who were born in Brazil, in which a broad meaning used to cause, according to the interests involved, distinct local identities.

³The term “curraleiro” is related to the men who directly or indirectly handle the cattle in the cattle farming. However, for the period analyzed in this article, the corral people were men who spread the pastoral fronts in the backland countryside. Soon, they appropriate the indigenous lands, with the support of the Portuguese Crown.

Rodelas into a type of headquarters, later on followed by Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande, Ceará, Piauí and Maranhão.⁴

At that time, it was common that missionaries served as chaplains in military troops, especially in positions taken by the Franciscans. The Jesuits, at this time, were gathered in the baklands of Bahia and reduced the Indians of the indigenously hamlets of Santa Tereza de Canabrava, Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Natuba, Ascensão do Saco dos Morcegos and Nossa Senhora do Socorro de Jeru.

In 1685, the Jesuit priest João de Barros spent three months in the mission of Rodelas — managed by the French Capuchin Monks since 1671 — and together with his partner, he established the missions of Acará, Rodelas, Caruru and Sorobabé. The priests were expelled by “*mulheres da torre*”, the niece and sister of the powerful Francisco Dias de Avila, in 1696.⁵

In the context of open conflict that marked the War of Açú, the role of the missionary, who was an agent of the Portuguese empire, was as relevant as that of military officials and colonial authorities. His job was concentrated in areas of direct dispute, where religious men, allotees and the São Paulo troops, each in their own way, disputed the lands mile by mile, in order to control the indigenous manpower and the conversion of neophytes to the Church.

Besides the complexity of that process, there was the creation of *Junta das Missões*⁶ (Council of the Missions), in 1681, which was submitted to the Council of the Kingdom, whose resolutions should be made by the governor, the bishop, the general hearing officer and the Treasury procurator. The authorities, as disposed, demonstrated the importance of the new colonial context, because they extended its abilities through the civil, religious and financial administration.

Initially, the Council of the Missions should meet whenever the governor or the bishop (at the absence of the bishop, the general vicar takes place) decided it was necessary. Later, besides the aforementioned authorities, the Jesuit priest, Principal of the Olinda School, the São Francisco guardian, the São Bento abbot, the Congregation of São Felipe Néri provost and the Carmo and the Carmelitas Descalços priors, should also meet.

By meeting at least twice a week, this council should be careful and establish, by writing, “to be informed about the State of the Missions and about how its Religious function satisfied their obligation.”⁷

In the routes between Rio Grande and Ceará

In Ceará, at the beginning of the 18th century, the priests of Society of Jesus met not only in the Ibiapaba village, but also in the Jaguaribe stream, when

⁴Beatriz G. Dantas; José Augusto Sampaio; Maria Rosário de Carvalho. “Os povos indígenas no Nordeste brasileiro: um esboço histórico”, *In: Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (org.), História dos Índios no Brasil*, São Paulo, Companhia das Letras/FAPESP, 1992, p. 438.

⁵*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 441-442.

⁶Organ in charge of dealing with the questions related to the indigenous missions in Pernambuco (T.N.).

⁷Royal charter to the governor of Pernambuco about the creation of the Council of the Missions (03/07/1681); still, Royal charter to the governor of Pernambuco about the Prelates attending the Council of the Missões (01/28/1701) - “Informação Geral da capitania de Pernambuco” [1749], *In: Annaes da Biblioteca Nacional*, vol. 28, Rio de Janeiro, 1906, p. 379-381.

the reduction of the paiacus⁸ took place next to the neighboring captaincy, in the region of Açu (RN). The area was unstable due to the rising of the Tapuias, who had been attacked by the Paulistas in the region of Ceará and Rio Grande since the 1690s. The Company's provincial priest, João Pereira, referred to the missionary work in the south of the captaincy of Ceará:

In the new hamlets of Açu, in the Territory of Jaguaribe in Pernambuco, there is a lot of suffering, the Priests João Guinzel [João Guedes] and Vicente Vieira, not only in the attacks that they had launched to the Paiaquises [paiacus], but much more of the cowboys, who were somewhere, the Tapuias, soon wanted to put the corrals next to them, with notable nuisance and insolence, without being able to repress them, instigating other nations so that they could challenge them, when they should act as Christian and help the Priests to attract them and to become attached to the Faith. However, being in the same place as the Paulista Penitentiary, they will someone who defends them and they will be free from such scares that interfere so much with the service of God.⁹

As one may notice, the success of the priests' work was directly related to the presence of the Paulistas and the protection of the religious mission. The dispute was with the *curraleiros* that instigated the conflict between the Indians and disrespected the decisions made by the Council of the Missions of Pernambuco. In 1724, the king reprehended the commander of Ceará, Salvador Álvares da Silva, for the unfair war against the Indians "genipapoaçu"; at the Jaguaribe stream, because they were in the hamlets and with the missionary. Soon, the commander acted against the decision of the Council of the Missions that was hindering the attacks on the Indians under the religious government.¹⁰ It is possible to infer that an indigenous group that took the name of the paiacus chief, who was killed in 1699 by the Paulista battlefield master, called Manuel Álvares de Moraes Navarro, to be discussed ahead.

The reduction of the Paiacu Indians had one of the most difficult connections at that moment. In 1671, it enrolled under the emblematic political category of *tapuia*, then considered to be obstinate barbarous Indians who attacked villages and killed the cattle of *curraleiros*. The jaguaribaras and potiguaras required a permission to wage a war from the battlefield master of Ceará, considered by the priest Francisco Ferreira de Lemos and other people from Fortaleza as a fair war. The Indians gathered together in the indigenous hamlet of Parangaba

⁸In its original version, this article signed the ethnonyms with capital letters and in the singular form, which, according to the author's article, tried to maintain the recognition of the indigenous groups in the past and today (E.N.).

⁹João Pereira, S.I., "Informação para a Junta das Missões de Lisboa, 1702, 1702", In: Serafim Leite, *História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, Lisboa/Rio de Janeiro, Livraria Portugália/Editora Nacional do Livro, 1938-50, V, p. 569-573.

¹⁰Letter of the governor of Pernambuco, Manuel Rolim de Moura to the king about the provision of declared war with the tapuias and genipapoaçu Indians at Jaguaribe. Salvador Álvares da Silva, was the commander of Ceará. 07/06/1724. AHU-(Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Documentos Avulsos da capitania do Ceará), cx. 2, doc. 84.

with a sergeant “to fight and destroy the nation of paiacus.”¹¹ Two months later, they made an agreement with the battlefield master.

In July 1694, again, an expedition was sent to fight the paiacus, and at that time it also included the “jandoins, icós and other corsair Indians that infested lands of Jaguaribe and Banabuyu”. In that same year, the royal charter was sent to the general governor of Pernambuco, Caetano de Melo de Castro, who was ordered to take some initiatives due to the ruinous situation of the captaincies of Ceará and Rio Grande, among them, the establishment of six indigenous hamlets for the dominated Indians in Açu, Jaguaribe and Piranhas. The governor, in turn, suggested that the battlefield master of Ceará should deal with the Indians who lived in the hamlets with mildness, so that, together with them, they could beat the other invading Indians.¹²

*Religious and local authorities joined together
against a new element in the northern colonial
backland: the São Paulo army*

Considered as the main instigator of conflicts against the curraleiros, the Indians (paiacus) would be persecuted for years and “repelled from everywhere.”¹³ According to the documents of the Society of Jesus, those Indians were gathered in hamlets, firstly by the priests Philip Bourel and Alexander Nunes, in 1700. Actually, there were two hamlets: one belonging to João Batista do Apodi and another one next to the Jaguaribe stream in Ceará, called Nossa Senhora da Anunciação. Before 1704, there were four priests in the mission, when it was decided that “to have more than one is not fruitful in the work and it could be dangerous.”¹⁴ The presence of the missionaries, however, was not a hindrance for the fight to continue, once the Portuguese were invading the lands of the mission and the Indians were killing the cattle at the backlands.

Then, the priests decided that the hamlets should be moved as far as possible from the corrals. “Even if the paiacus would be from Ceará,” said one missionary, “it was not possible to choose a place good enough for the ‘cowboys’ audacity’ and for the ‘soldiers permissiveness.”¹⁵ The priests received an authorization from the governor of Pernambuco to locate the Indians in a non-cultivated area, as it was considered to be more appropriate; even so, the inhabitants of Jaguaribe stream, together with icós, attacked the hamlets. The generalized anguished outcry gained resonance in the annual report of Andreoni priest, dated from 1704:

¹¹Barão de Studart, *Datas e Factos para a história do Ceará*, edição fac-símile, Fortaleza, Fundação Waldemar Alcântara, 2001 [1896], p. 82-83.

¹²*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 97-98.

¹³João Antônio Andreoni, S.I., “Carta anual de 1704”, In: Serafim Leite, *História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, Lisboa/Rio de Janeiro, Livraria Portugália/Editora Nacional do Livro, 1938-50, IV, p. 543.

¹⁴*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 543.

¹⁵*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 543.

[The] inhabitants of the territory of Jaguaribe, while using the icós (another sort of tapuias) suddenly attacked paiacus, who were busy fishing; they killed children and women who were helpless, and then went straight to the indigenous hamlet, where the Missionary and the other ones were, with a horrible outcry and the usual tumult. Due to the fact that it happened at night, it was possible to hear screaming far away and there was a time when they asked for help from their curraleiros (corral men) neighbors. The paiacus were assisted by them, and retired themselves together with the Missionary in the Residence of Nossos Padres do Lago Apodi, a little safer due to the presence of the São Paulo soldiers.¹⁶

The Jesuit indigenous hamlet of the paiacus, in Jaguaribe, fell apart, and the Indians and surviving missionaries went to the Apodi. The presence of the Indians was considered to be so harmful to the curraleiros — who had to shoot their cattle due to generalized hunger and little possibility of tillage of the land — that the Jesuit inhabitants gave nothing less than 300 thousand réis (the plural of Reais, the monetary unit used until 1942 in Brazil) under the condition that those Indians would not return to the area from where they had been expelled.

Still in the Apodi, in accordance with the mentioned annual letter, there was a new fight between paiacus and icós; those people, who had been dispersed due to the attack, came back to the indigenous hamlet, aiming to collect the bones of their dead relatives. However, as the icós kindled fire to the bodies, the missionary “secretly buried them, in order to avoid reducing them into dust, used it in their food and drink, with condiments as wild honey, according to their gentle custom.”¹⁷

In that conflict, the icós Indians were presented by the Jesuit as mere instruments used by the Jaguaribe inhabitants, being the motivation of the attack on the paiacus to avenge the death of their leader Canindé.¹⁸ In my opinion, it is one of the most subtle questions concerning the indigenous action in the context of the War of Açú, specifically, to the traditional meaning of the war for the Indians. In the case of jaguaribaras and potiguaras, who had asked for permission from the commander of Ceará to wage war against paiacus, the appropriation of typical elements from the Portuguese military action was seen, because the colonial legislation logic did not allow to attack other peoples without a fair war authorization.

So, to what extent has the traditional indigenous war motivation been activated, and also, what was the importance, in that context of generalized conflicts, of the choice of each group of indigenous peoples related to which side they would support in the conflicts? The documentary gap in the case of the open war in the backland, is one of the main hindrances to answer, in detail, any of the aforementioned problems. On the other hand, it is clear that the simple

¹⁶João Antônio Andreoni, S.I., “Carta anual de 1704”, In: Serafim Leite, *História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil*, Lisboa/Rio de Janeiro, Livraria Portugália/Editora Nacional do Livro, 1938-50, IV, p. 544.

¹⁷*Idem, Ibidem*, p. 544.

¹⁸Canindé was considered “king of the Janduís” and he possibly had under his command nothing less than 13 to 14 thousands of Indians spread between Pernambuco, Itamaracá, Paraíba and Rio Grande. In 1692, a treaty of peace was signed with the Portuguese Crown. Cf. AHU-RN (Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Documentos Avulsos da capitania do Rio Grande do Norte), cx. 1, doc. 42, Canindé died of malaria in the jesuit indigenous hamlet of Guarairas, at Rio Grande, in 1698. AHU-RN, cx. 1, doc. 47.

antagonism between the “wild” and the “colonist” Indians is insufficient, in analytical terms, to understand the inter-ethnic dynamics that was associated with several interests. The indigenous groups, in general, helped to compose this fluid picture in the military alliances. There is no doubt that the connection between the meanings and motivations of the wars between the Indians and the Europeans is an essential and current subject in the studies of colonial history, not only in Brazil, but also in other parts of America.¹⁹

As Pedro Puntoni pointed out, the War of Açú was a “generalized conflagration”, the logic behind these conflicts never had any resemblance with the controlled dynamics of the traditional indigenous wars. For him, the revengeful and repressive operations that were performed by the State put the Indians in a kind of a “new notion of terror”. It introduced strange elements to the indigenous peoples, though these were widespread in the Portuguese colonial world. In 1688, one of these measures was as follows: The proposal of a candidate to the position of commander of Rio Grande, Lopes Ulhoa, was acceptable, provided he would kidnap “five or six children of the heads as hostages who they will have in their company in the fortress.”²⁰ With the purpose of subjugating the dispersed Indians in the backland, the proposal to the Overseas Council²¹ was that instilling fear would motivate the indigenous people to submit to the authorities. Besides, it was also recommended that two priests of the Society of Jesus would be sent to catechize the Indians. This once again explains the confluence of interests between the representatives of the Cross and the Sword, as aforementioned.

The Apodi’s indigenous hamlet, however, would not last long. Some of them, about 200 Indians, accompanied the missionaries João Guedes and Vicente Vieira to the indigenous hamlet of Urutagui, to the south of Paraíba. Another group went along with the priests Felipe Bourel and Manuel Diniz to the mission of Nossa Senhora da Encarnação, where there was the old indigenous hamlet of Igramació, in the shore of Cunhaú (which is the present city of Vila Flor).²² In 1712, with the death of priest Bonifácio Teixeira by the paiaçus, the Jesuit indigenous hamlet of Apodi was closed.

Paulistas and Mazombos in the captaincy of Ceará

About Ceará, historiography in general has not given necessary attention to the missionaries’ actions in the indigenous hamlets, far away from the

¹⁹In the colonial Suriname, for example, the arawak were sometimes favored by the colonial politics, once they used to make alliances with the conquerors against the carib Indians, submitting them to the military force. Cf. Neil Lancelot Whitehead, “Ethnogenesis and Ethnocide in the European occupation of Native Suriname, 1499-1681”, In: Jonathan Hill (org.), *History, power and identity: Ethnogenesis in the Américas, 1492-1992*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1996, p. 20-35.

²⁰Cf. Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 124, 143, 144.

²¹Collegiate in charge of judging and emitting reports to assist the sovereign in matters of overseas domains (T.N.).
²²Fátima Martins Lopes, *Índios, colonos e missionários na colonização da capitania do Rio Grande do Norte*, Mossoró, Fundação Vingt-um Rosado/IHGRGN, 2003, p. 182-185.

shores of Jaguaribe and Açú, being limited to the historical reflection of the most known cases only.²³

However, the dispute between the missionaries and commanders was clearer in the indigenous hamlets next to the fort, in the region that later became the Fortaleza village, headquarters of the province. These conflicts were also mentioned in the Council Mission of Pernambuco. In 1698, the King determined that the spiritual government of the indigenous hamlets would be with the missionaries, and the temporal administration, with the commander.

Mentioning specifically about Ceará, I declare you through this letter as a Regiment, that I will perform inviolably, to keep from the one who reaches you; that neither male nor female Indians can leave any of the Indigenous hamlets, without the Commander's order, and the expressed agreement consent of the Missionaries who attend them; that the Indians are able to work, being always one part of the three there are in each indigenous hamlets, not being allowed the entrance of sick people, old and younger than fourteen years old, and women of any age; that the ones that will serve should be there for the regular salary, that is used, and for determined time, so that when it is finished they can return to the hamlets, and the payment will be determined by the Commander and the Missionaries, thus the Indians could always be pleased with their work; that the female Indians are not be able to serve more than milk, also for the salary, and with specific time, and the same payment security, but in the case, that they ask for them to serve some inhabitants, who are married, and of good behavior.²⁴

The real decision making powers were changed into Regiment, to be followed by the commanders and then the missionaries: this means that, if there were any doubts, each one would report to the Council of the Missions, "which would not only observe the Indigenous hamlets of Ceará, but also all of the Pernambuco jurisdiction."²⁵ With this decision making power, the Council of the Missions simply disrespected important indigenous legislation, the *Regiment of the Missions* (1686), whose first paragraph prescribed the temporal and spiritual government of the indigenous hamlets, which could be retained by the priests of the Society of Jesus and Santo Antônio.²⁶

What had happened was the flexibility of the law, motivated by the urgency of containing the conflicts, aiming at preventing the missionaries from withholding their endorsement for considerable time in the case of a fair war, and in most

²³Cf. Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002; Paulo Sérgio Barros, *Confrontos invisíveis: colonialismo e resistência indígena no Ceará*, São Paulo/Fortaleza, Annablume/Secult, 2002; Maria Idalina da Cruz Pires, *Guerra dos Bárbaros: resistência indígena e conflitos no Nordeste colonial*, Recife, UFPE, 2002.

²⁴About several issues related to the Indians and the missions (01/31/1698), see "Informação Geral da capitania de Pernambuco" [1749], In: *Annaes da Biblioteca Nacional*, vol. 28, Rio de Janeiro, 1906, p. 386.

²⁵"Informação Geral da capitania de Pernambuco" [1749], In: *Annaes da Biblioteca Nacional*, vol. 28, Rio de Janeiro, 1906, p. 386.

²⁶"Regimento das Missões do Estado do Maranhão e Pará" [12/01/1686], In: Oscar Beozzo, *Leis e Regimentos das missões: política indigenista no Brasil*, São Paulo, Edições Loyola, 1983, p. 114-120.

of the considered cases. The local interest of the allotment of people, for this reason, overlapped with the religious interest, which guaranteed to avoid the indiscriminate attacks to release the lands from the hostile Indians who were under the safe maintenance of the pastoral fronts. Therefore, the Crown reaffirmed its powers while remaining as the 'Deliverer of Justice' on paper. It first wanted to guarantee the jurisdictional base to its security then the security of its vassals, in this case, the Indians who lived in hamlets and those who lived in settlements. As Fernanda Olival recalls from the citation of one of the priests, Antonio Vieira: "Prize and punishment are two opposite poles, in which it is decided, and it supports the conservation of any Monarchy".²⁷

The real situation was very unstable. The Indians of the indigenous hamlets of Parangaba, Paupina, Caucaia and Parnamirim, far from each other, about two or three leagues away from the fortress, suffered all kind of exploitation by the penitentiary, the soldiers and the commander. "Besides being used as military force against the rebellious tapuias", said the priest Antônio de Souza Leal, mayor of the Missions of the North, "the Indians were explored in the work of wood transport, without any payment, while the Indian maidens were taken away from the indigenous hamlets as cotton spinners and used in a turpitude way by the soldiers".²⁸

Considered as the main instigator of conflicts against the curraleiros, the Indians (paiacus) would be persecuted for years and "repelled from everywhere"

The Christian indigenous hamlets next to the coast established in 1662 by the Jesuits Pedro Francisco Cassali and Jacobo Cócleo (Name translated into Portuguese – Jacques Cockle), were abandoned and the priests retired to Pernambuco six years later. Soon, there was a non-fulfillment of the provision dated from April 17th of that year, which stipulated that the indigenous hamlets next to the fort, in Ceará, had to be reduced to only one, under the Jesuit's government.²⁹

The bishop of Pernambuco, in 1696, also made a representation with the same text, denouncing that ordinary soldiers were the criminals of the village, and that the commander was not trying to help, as he was taking the Indians

²⁷Fernanda Olival, *As Ordens militares e o Estado Moderno: Honra, mercê e venalidade em Portugal (1641-1789)*, Lisboa, Estar, 2001, p. 20. Still according to the author, the main obligations of the Prince consisted of watching over the Religion, guarantee the peace (order) and Justice inside the Kingdom. In any of these cases, however, the Justice tended to occupy a prominence place as a priority attribute of the royalty.

²⁸Exposition of the priest Antonio de Souza Leal, missionary of Brazil, about the offences made to the heathen ones in the captancies of Pernambuco and Piauí. (S.l.n.d) [Post. 1720], In: Virginia Rau, *Os Manuscritos do Arquivo da Casa de Cadaval respeitantes ao Brasil*, vol. II, Coimbra, Universidade de Coimbra, 1952, p. 384-393.

²⁹Provision of Francisco Barreto de Meneses, governor of *Estado do Brasil* [17/04/1662], In: Geraldo Silva Nobre, *História Eclesiástica do Ceará, Fortaleza*, Culture and Sports Secretary, 1980, p. 118-121.

off from services without payment and without the religious consent of the Society of Jesus.³⁰

The first bishop of Pernambuco, D. Estevão Brioso, was informed about the conjunction of that distant area to his episcopal headquarters, and requested the missionary and the local founder of the recluse Oratorian,³¹ priest João Duarte do Sacramento, to take care of the abandoned hamlets. From 1678 on, priests João Álvares and João do Rosário started to care for the indigenous hamlets abandoned by the Jesuits. That Oratorian has remained in Ceará for over 32 years, and from these priests' work it is possible to understand the context of the violence, the disputes and the rivalries that characterized the missions in Ceará.

The Oratorians, as well as the Jesuits, denounced the atrocities committed in the indigenous hamlets in the coast. Priest João Álvares was in Ceará in charge of giving spiritual assistance to the soldiers of the penitentiary and to the Indians in the indigenous hamlets. It was also due to the fact that he was an ex-lieutenant, "to reduce the angry heathen" and to organize "capable men of weapons" in the indigenous hamlets to beat the tapuias Indians. There was news that the commander exploited the Indians for work, abused the females and hung the obstinate Indians. This is a fact that would have caused a rebellion without any precedents by the people who lived in the hamlets. The priest, in the condition of temporary vicar, excommunicated all the soldiers and also the commander himself for "deviating the Indian women," who, after that, truculently said about his temper: "The king has given me this vine [Ceará captaincy] to gather grapes in return for my services; I will not give you a berry."³² He said, still, that the action of the priest was invalid because he could not excommunicate them, "though they were in the service of Your Majesty".

Since the priests denounced this kind of violence, several indigenous groups started to request the presence of missionaries in their lands, claiming that they wanted to be baptized and become vassals of the King. This led to another direction in colonization, a kind of creative adaptation, though in that context it involved many risks for their lives. As I have defended in another occasion, this kind of indigenous action in the context of the pastoral fronts in the captaincy of Ceará should help us to understand, in a broader way, some of the other guidelines of the settling. That is to say, those guidelines that were not restricted to economic aspects alone.³³

In 1698, the Crown determined that the indigenous hamlet of Aracati, 20 leagues away from the penitentiary and under the direction of priest João da Costa, would not be transferred next to the fort, because this could result in several inconveniences. It also stated that the indigenous hamlets should be established with a missionary and

³⁰Letter of the bishop of Pernambuco to the King about the material and spiritual state of the captaincy of Ceará. 06/26/1698. AHU-CE, cx. 1, doc. 53.

³¹The oratorians of Pernambuco were also known as *néris* (due to the founder of the Congregation in Europe, São Felipe Néri), *lórios*, *recluses* and *manigrepos*. Cf. Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A fronda dos mazombos: nobres contra mascates*, Pernambuco, 1666-1715, São Paulo, Editora 34, 2003, p. 111.

³²Documents from the Archive of Torre do Tombo (Portugal), Códice 23, *apud* Maria do Céu Medeiros *Igreja e dominação no Brasil escravista: o caso dos Oratorianos de Pernambuco (1659-1830)*, João Pessoa, Idea, 1993, p. 70-72.

³³Cf. Lígio de Oliveira Maia, "Um outro sentido da colonização. A apropriação indígena das solicitações de datas de sesmarias na capitania do Ceará", *Cadernos do LEME*, vol. 3, n.1, Campina Grande, jan. /jun. 2011, p. 2-24.

should remain in the lands chosen by the Indians, not “to the site, or to change against their will.”³⁴ The Court recommendation was that the Christian indigenous hamlets would be established near the settlements and fortresses for the protection of the inhabitants against the attacks of hostile Indians. This prohibition in the transference of the Aracati Indians, in my opinion, was aimed at preventing them from staying in the lands of captain João da Fonseca Ferreira. And he should, at that moment, count on the support of some authorities, among them, priest João da Costa.

What can be inferred from the document is that, while hindering the Indians from descending or transferring to the captain’s lands, the King accepted the admonition of the prelate of Pernambuco and reaffirmed its regal control over the missionaries’ activities. This, however, seems to have constituted a particular situation in the captaincy of Ceará. Therefore, the Oratorians retained, in the backland of Santo Antônio, the three indigenous hamlets in the lands of the allottee João Fernandes Vieira. Among them, there was the mission of Ararobá, also known as “the backland door”, known for its importance in the first entrances. It seems clear that the intention of the *curreiros* was to possess the available manpower in his lands. The priests would have the task of catechizing or “calming down” the Indians; at the same time, the religious mission kept part of his patrimony, without incidental costs for the Congregation. We still need to learn about the real interest and motivation of the Indians in this complex game that involved the establishment of the Oratorian missions.³⁵

On the other hand, the Oratorian priest João da Costa would be the main character of at least two important events in colonial history. The first one, certainly the most famous one, is the *Levante dos Mascates* (1711), when he was accused of being one of the abettors of the attempted murder of Bernardo Vieira de Melo. The second event, which is more notable, was an episode known as the Massacre of Jaguaribe (1699), when Manoel Álvares de Moraes Navarro, the battlefield master of the regiment of Paulistas, murdered about 400 *paiaçus* Indians, including their chief Jenipapoçu.³⁶

In the middle of these two dramatic events there was the old rivalry between Pernambuco and Bahia, that is, for the detention of control given by the central power of the Crown. This control was consolidated in the Brazilian colony by the general governor. The autonomy of the Olinda councilmen’s power was at stake and they were to lose their influence, though they fought along with the Pernambuco Restoration in the war against the Dutch. As demonstrated by Evaldo Cabral de Mello,

³⁴“Informação Geral da capitania de Pernambuco” [1749], *In: Annaes da Biblioteca Nacional*, vol. 28, Rio de Janeiro, 1906, p. 384-386.

³⁵The other indigenous hamlets were Ipojuca and Capibaribe. The first chief *xucuru* converted of the indigenous hamlet of Ararobá took the name of João Fernandes Vieira Ararobá. It is clearly that there were common interests between the allottees, the oratorians and the Indians who lived in the indigenous hamlets. Cf. Maria do Céu Medeiros, *Igreja e dominação no Brasil escravista: o caso dos Oratorianos de Pernambuco* (1659-1830), João Pessoa, Ideia, 1993, p. 49-62.

³⁶About the *Levante dos Mascates* and the participation of the oratorians in the conflicts, see: “Clericus clericus lupissimus”, *In: Evaldo Cabral de Mello, A fronda dos mazombos: nobres contra mascates*, Pernambuco, 1666-1715, São Paulo, Editora 34, 2003, p. 111-139; sobre o massacre do Jaguaribe, vide: “São Paulo x Mazombos”, *In: Pedro Puntoni, A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil*, 1650-1720, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 241-289.

the disputes were due to the rivalries between the religious orders of Pernambuco which had left the convents to spread all over society. Hence, the suggestive issue was used by the author while dealing with this question: *Clericus clerico lupissimus*.³⁷

The separation between the Oratorians, who was then the most important and influential religious order of Pernambuco, occurred in two ways: one was the Madre de Deus and the other one was the Santo Amaro. The first one was formed by the religious order which followed the Oratory Rules of Lisbon under the endorsement of Bartolomeu de Quental. It was aimed at developing in urban centers, more than in densely settlements; the second one was the indigenous hamlets where missionaries had the orientation of the Sacramento priest, who led an ascetic life with the main objective of evangelizing the Indians. To sum up, the priests of Madre de Deus were supported by the Mascataria³⁸, and the other one, by the Olinda council, being part of one of the wildest conflicts that involved the clergymen (secular and regular), the pro-men of the land and the representatives of the kingdom.

However, it was the episode of the Massacre of Jaguaribe that mattered in this context. The Paulista Manoel Álvares de Morais Navarro, battlefield master of the “Lencastro” regiment — a homage to his protector, the general governor of Brazil, João de Lencastro — had left with his captains, soldiers and Indians to the region of Açú, in July 1699, with the objective of making a fair war against *Caratiús* (or *Ariús*). In the morning of August 4th, the army passed by the indigenous hamlet of paiacus of the Jenipapoçu chief, where he was welcomed with festivities and commemorations. With the approach of a group led by the brother of the chief, Navarro drew a carbine and killed Jenipapoçu in cold blood, his soldiers followed the attack with firearms, and at once they eliminated more than 400 Indians and imprisoned the remaining 300. That indigenous hamlet had been founded by the Oratorian João da Costa. Immediately, he denounced the injustice of the war, in terms of the Law of 1611, since the Indians were in their hamlets and were not corsairs.³⁹

Morais Navarro told in his version that the Indians would have betrayed him in a trap, and justified the horrible action as an anticipated defense. Pedro Puntoni had discussed all of the confusing documentation of the episode of the massacre of Jaguaribe which was not easy to grasp. To the author, from a broader political dimension,

Such massacre would only be another the Barbarian War, in which the stratagem commanded the strategy adopted for the fight — one of many waged by the Portuguese-Brazilian army —, if it were

³⁷*Clericus clerico lupissimus*, “o sacerdote é o maior lobo para outro sacerdote”. “The clergyman is dangerous only to another clergyman”. (free translation).

³⁸Political group of the merchants (pejoratively called “mascates”) organized with the Chamber of Recife (T.N.).

³⁹Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 245.

not another episode that came prior to the conflict between the “Pernambuco nobility” and the power of general government.⁴⁰

The intention of the Oratian priest, assisted by the commander of Rio Grande and other corral men, was to banish the outsiders who commanded the army of the Paulistas, since the general government had promised them the ownership of the lands with the expulsion of the Indians. This was the reason of the conflict, which Pedro Puntoni tells us, between the Paulistas and Mazombos.

However, in order to understand the disputes of the regional reach — that passed by the tenuous line of secular and spiritual measures in the middle of the conflicts in the colonial backland — it is interesting to observe the action of the protagonists in this jurisdictional fight in the captaincy of Ceará; among them, besides two commanders, there were two secular vicars and two superiors of the Society of Jesus.

The captains Bento Nunes de Siqueira and Pedro Carrilho were named as attorneys of the battlefield master, Morais Navarro, who registered his defense in the archbishopric of Bahia. The latter attorney was the commander of Ceará for ten months, in 1694; in that case, at least in the legal scope, he was an eyewitness of the Paulista service. Another former commander of Ceará was Pedro Lelou, who was inquired in the process and asked, in a cynical tone, if it was an illicit act to kill the unfaithful enemies and take their lands. “If it were”, affirmed the military man, “all the princes and corporals of the Europe should also be excommunicated.”⁴¹

This episode, however, was not limited to an individual and isolated conspiracy of the military men in the war. According to priest João da Costa, “evil advice” to kill part of the paiacus and imprison the others was a conspiracy of the priest from the institution of Saint Peter, João Leite de Aguiar, born in São Paulo, and the former captain of the army, another influential Paulista in the region of the conflicts, Matias Cardoso, who was a potential ally to the pretensions of Morais Navarro.⁴²

In a consultation with the Overseas Council, in May of 1696, priest João Leite de Aguiar — who had reduced the Jaguaribara Indians in Ceará — reported about the missions to the north. According to him, with his capital, he was at the shore of Jaguaribe to reduce the paiacus, and he remained with them for one month, enough time to give notice to the inhabitants: about the achieved peace and that they should take their cattle and settle in the region. On the way to Pernambuco, he met with the commander of Rio Grande, Bernardo Vieira de Melo, who was going to Açu with the objective of establishing a penitentiary

⁴⁰Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 245. From this perspective, the author opposes to the Baron de Studart thesis and other authors who change the episode into a simple fight to the indigenous manpower and lands ownership. The Baron has an important collection about Navarro and the episode of Jaguaribe. Cf. Barão de Studart, “Documentos relativos ao mestre-de-campo Morais Navarro. Notícias para um capítulo novo da história cearense”, *Revista do Instituto do Ceará*, tomo XXX, Fortaleza, 1916, p. 350-364 e tomo XXXI, 1917, p. 162-223.

⁴¹Letter from de Pedro Lelou to D. João de Lencastro [17/12/1699], *apud* Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 257.

⁴²Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 248.

for 30 soldiers of the Henry's regiment. The commander's disposition seemed to not have convinced the clergyman, who affirmed that one of the main problems in the region was the commander's attitude, "opposite to the service of God." Being serviceable, the Overseas council recommended that João Leite de Aguiar should be made vicar of the captaincy of Ceará.⁴³

On the other hand, the defense of Navarro had started as soon as the Oratorian João da Costa — who was part of the religious order of the indigenous hamlets and aimed at catechizing the Indians, as told by Sacramento priest — convinced the bishop of Pernambuco about the rudeness of the unfair war against the *paiaçus*. The immediate reaction of the prelate was to order an investigation to bring together other elements of the case to Council of the Missions.

In Ceará, the responsibility of the investigation was entrusted to the general vicar, priest João de Matos Serra. Between October and November of 1699, the clergyman walked through the conflict area, collecting details about the events from the people who were living in Açú, Natal and the region of Jaguaribe. All the papers sent to Lisbon by the bishop were documents that supported the accusations against Navarro and priest João da Costa. Here, we can witness all the rivalry that existed between the religious orders. The new vicar of Ceará, João de Matos Serra, who replaced priest João Leite de Aguiar, was under pressure from the penitentiary soldiers. He abandoned the service at the captaincy without a bishopric license. It is important to mention that another Oratorian, João

Navarro drew a carbine and killed Jenipapoçu in cold blood, his soldiers followed the attack with firearms, and at once they eliminated more than 400 Indians and imprisoned the remaining 300

Álvares priest, convinced the bishop that João Leite could not succeed to reach the vicarage "due to the many misunderstandings, not only with the soldiers, but also with the inhabitants."⁴⁴ An alliance was taking place between the new vicar of Ceará and the Oratorian priest João da Costa at that time. This alliance, as it will be seen, was not only against the Paulista, but also the Jesuit missionaries.

Against the Mazombos party and the Paulistas, the priests of the Society of Jesus appeared. In 1702, the priest Ascenso Gago, chief of the Ibiapaba indigenous hamlet, passing by Açú while going to Pernambuco, not only confirmed the Navarro's version, as he mentioned that he had favored the Jesuits in the meeting of the dispersed Indians of the indigenous hamlets of Apodi and

⁴³Consult of the Conselho Ultramarino (Overseas Council) to the King [D. Pedro II], about what João Leite priest has wrote related to his work in the mission at Ceará [09/04/1696], AHU-CE, cx. 1,doc. 34.

⁴⁴"Informação do bispo de Pernambuco sobre a carta régia de 26 de junho de 1696", *In*: Geraldo Silva Nobre, *História Eclesiástica do Ceará*, Fortaleza, Secretaria de Cultura e Desporto, 1980, p. 254-258.

Jaguaribe.⁴⁵ Priest João Guedes had requested João de Lencastro for the permanence of the Paulista army, agreeing to the tragic end of the Indians: “however, as later I heard the reasons that had obliged the battlefield master to start war, I did not have another remedy than to conform with God’s will, therefore he was served to allow that they would give the cause to this ruin.”⁴⁶

Pedro Puntoni still emphasized that all the animosity that pointed towards the relationship between the Jesuits and Paulistas, the “bandeirantes” in the south of the colony, seems to have disappeared regardless of the pragmatism of the missionaries from the Society of Jesus.⁴⁷ The guilt of the Indians in the massacre of the Jaguaribe did not earn, 20 years after the episode, the same colors in another letter of the same Jesuit João Guedes, who accused the Paulista Morais Navarro: “considering, however, the battlefield master that, after being placed in hamlets, would be a major crime to captivate the Indians, took a barbarous and unworthy resolution as a Christian.”⁴⁸

On the contrary, the speech of the Jesuit was the same as that of the Oratorian priest João da Costa, who confirmed it in the investigation made by the general vicar of Ceará, priest João de Matos Serra, in the beginning of 18th century. If the speech had been the same, its utility would have been different. It was to hinder the battlefield master of Piauí, Bernardo Carvalho de Aguiar, who would have under his control the indigenous hamlet of Ibiapaba, the most important redoubt of the military army of the indigenous vassals of the region.⁴⁹

Final Considerations

The old rivalry between Pernambuco and Bahia or between the Kingdom and the Mazombos involved several institutions, among them, the religious orders of the Oratory and the Society of Jesus, which also presented some signals in the distant captaincy of Ceará. In the dispute, the priority for the missionary pioneering changed to political support to the Crown in the pacification of the colonial backland.

As demonstrated, the missionary action was not a homogeneous enterprise, neither in its composition nor in its interests. When dislocating the indigenous

⁴⁵Ascension Certify Gago das Serras of Ibiapaba [05/03/1702], *apud* Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 263-264.

⁴⁶Letter from João Guinzel [Guedes], Jesuit and missionary in the indigenous hamlets of Rio Grande, to João de Lencastro, do Arraial do Açú [29/10/1699], *apud* Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 264.

⁴⁷Pedro Puntoni, *Ibidem*, p. 263, nota 60.

⁴⁸Declaration of the priest João Guedes from the Companhia de Jesus and missionary in Brazil, about the petition of the battlefield master Bernardine Carvalho de Aguiar related to the disconnection of the indigenous hamlet of Ibiapaba from the captancy of Ceará. S.l.n.d [1720?], *In: Virginia Rau, Os Manuscritos do Arquivo da Casa de Cadaval respeitantes ao Brasil*, vol. II, Coimbra, Universidade de Coimbra, 1952, p. 398; Pedro Puntoni, *op cit*, p. 264, nota 62.

⁴⁹This petition, confirmed by the Portuguese Crown, has caused a general mobilization in the captancy of Ceará, involving missionaries, local authorities and the Indians who lived in indigenous hamlet. Cf. “Índios da Ibiapaba: o braço forte da capitania”, *In: Lúcio de Oliveira Maia, Serras de Ibiapaba. De aldeia à vila de índios: vassalagem e identidade no Ceará colonial - século XVIII*, Tese de Doutorado em História, UFF, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, 2010, p. 200-221.

hamlets of Jaguaribe and Apodi to the indigenous hamlets next to the fort of Nossa Senhora da Assunção, in the village of Fortaleza, the rivalry was perceived between the local authorities and the missionaries because of the Indians living in the hamlets, for the government and the control over the Indians of the backland. Even the rivalry between the religious orders only existed because of the events that followed the episode known as the “Massacre of Jaguaribe”, when the Paulista battlefield master, Manoel Álvares de Moraes Navarro, murdered the chief of paiacus, in 1699.

The general vicar of Ceará, priest João de Matos Serra, who was an ally to the Oratorians of Recife, had led an investigation with the objective of proving the guilt of Navarro in the development of the unfair war. At the same time, he intended to decrease the influence of the priests of the Society of Jesus in the captaincy of Ceará. However, attentive to the disputes in Pernambuco and Bahia, the influential Jesuit João Guedes, was not only on the side of the Kingdom which was against the Oratorians, but he also defended the permanence of the Paulista regiment, led by Navarro, because it was convenient to his Order at that moment.

The existing rivalry between the secular and Jesuit religious men in Ceará, specifically involving the missionaries of the indigenous hamlet of Ibiapaba, continued during the following years. At that time, the priests were facing the vicar of Acaraú’s force, the priest João de Matos Monteiro, who was no one less than the nephew of the priest João de Matos Serra, captaincy vicar, author of the investigation against Navarro and a supporter of the Oratorians. Nevertheless, the dispute for the religious influence in that region did not have a favorable end to any of the parties, because the clergyman died in 1730, and the priest João Guedes, author of a long and violent representation against him, died ten years later.⁵⁰

Between the captaincies of Ceará and Rio Grande — catechism, violence and rivalries had set the tone of the missionaries’ enterprises. For the influence of each one of the religious orders related to the pioneering in the missions, the basic condition was to receive endorsement from the Crown and to increase its influence in the region. As demonstrated, such pioneering was necessarily a transition from the creation and maintenance of agreements and alliances that involved the distinct indigenous groups in that generalized conflict contexts. The massacre of Jaguaribe — most importantly, its effect that would oppose Indians and other social groups who had different interests — can be considered as one of the first chapters of the “Frona dos Mazombos,” as affirmed by Pedro Puntoni in relation to the work of Evaldo Cabral de Mello,⁵¹ which had spread in the middle of the captaincies of Ceará. Thus, counterbalancing took place once again: the disputes between the religious orders (regular and secular ones) and local authorities to get control of the Indians who lived in hamlets, and the Indians of the backland.

⁵⁰Cf. Parecer do conselheiro do Conselho Ultramarino, Antônio Marques Cardoso, sobre a queixa do padre João Guedes da Companhia de Jesus contra o padre João Matos Monteiro, cura do Acaraú [S. l.n.d], AHU-CE, cx. 4, doc. 254; About the priest João de Matos Serra, a disobedient person and contumacious about the determination of the diocese of Pernambuco, vide: Geraldo Silva Nobre, *História Eclesiástica do Ceará*, Fortaleza, Secretaria de Cultura e Desporto, 1980, p. 261-295.

⁵¹Cf. Pedro Puntoni, *A Guerra dos Bárbaros: povos indígenas e a colonização do Sertão Nordeste do Brasil, 1650-1720*, São Paulo, Hucitec/Edusp/Fapesp, 2002, p. 255; Evaldo Cabral de Mello, *A fronda dos mazombos: nobres contra mascates*, Pernambuco, 1666-1715, São Paulo, Editora 34, 2003.