

# SEIZURES AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE INCONFIDÊNCIA MINEIRA AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY OF BOOKS AND LIBRARIES (1789)

*Distresses inflicted on the participants of the Inconfidência Mineira as a research source for the history of the book and libraries (1789)*

André Figueiredo  
**RODRIGUES**

São Paulo State University  
- UNESP  
[andrefr@assis.unesp.br](mailto:andrefr@assis.unesp.br)

## ABSTRACT

The article discusses the distress inflicted on the participants of the Inconfidência Mineira (1789) as source of research for the study of the history of book, of the libraries and of the reading practices in Minas Gerais, in the second half of the eighteenth century. First, we examined the historiography of the book and his intersection with the distress. We also analyzed the possibilities and limits imposed on their use as study material for private libraries. Finally, we show some of the reading practices made by the seditious of the Minas Gerais in agreement with the revolutionary ideas that circulated in Europe and North America.

**Keywords:** Distresses; Librarie; Reading practices; Inconfidência Mineira.

## RESUMO

O artigo discute o sequestro de bens dos participantes da Inconfidência Mineira (1789) como fonte de pesquisa para o estudo da história do livro, das bibliotecas e das práticas de leitura em Minas Gerais, na segunda metade do século XVIII. Primeiro, examinou-se a historiografia do livro e sua interseção com o sequestro. Também foram analisadas as possibilidades e os limites impostos à sua utilização como material de estudo para bibliotecas privadas. Finalmente, mostrou-se algumas práticas de leitura feitas pelos sediciosos mineiros de acordo com as ideias revolucionárias que circulavam na Europa e na América do Norte.

**Palavras-chave:** Sequestro; Biblioteca; Práticas de leitura; Inconfidência Mineira.

**M**ay 22, 1792, the head of Lieutenant Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, better known by his nickname Tiradentes, hung in a cage in the central square of the city known at the time as Vila Rica de Nossa Senhora do Pilar de Ouro Preto, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. This event marked the end of the attempted separatist rebellion in Minas Gerais in 1789 known as the Inconfidência Mineira.

The crime of treason committed by wealthy people of the Minas Gerais State captaincy against the state and prevailing political and social order was investigated after Colonel Joaquim Silvério dos Reis's initial accusation. Official legal proceedings, which included witness testimonies and other types of evidence and which are today collectively referred to as the *devassa*, were implemented in order to investigate the offense and, ultimately, to punish those responsible for the attempted uprising. These legal proceedings were established to look into *lèse-majesté* crimes: treason against the life of the king, his representatives, or the security of the state (ORDENAÇÕES..., 1985, v. 3, book V, title VI, p. 1153).<sup>1</sup>

In the study of the history of this uprising and its historical context, the main sources of information are the records from the *devassa* created in response to the Inconfidência Mineira. These records were originally titled *Autos de Devassa da Inconfidência Mineira* (hereby referred to as "Seizure Records"). The records, which exist both in their original handwritten form and as typed publications that were released to the public in portions over time, represent almost all of the open procedural documents used to judge the Inconfidência crimes committed by the captaincy of Minas Gerais.

At the end of the proceedings in April 1792, the courts condemned Lieutenant Tiradentes to death and sentenced the other seditionists to exile. Those convicted also had their possessions seized by the Portuguese Crown.

According to the law, all possessions belonging to a person who is imprisoned were to be presented by means of seizure. Records suggest that the *devassa* investigators sought to carry out this task. Historians therefore retained the idea that the seizures represented a true snapshot of all goods belonging to the members of the movement (individuals known as the *inconfidentes*) at the time of their arrests, and that the listing of these possessions as published in the typed version of the Seizure Records accurately reflected the *inconfidentes'* patrimony.<sup>2</sup>

Because they are technically separate from the official legal proceedings, the original handwritten Seizure Records have never been published in full. What is known and typed out in the most recent edition – volume 6 from 1982 – represents only partial reports of the assets of those involved in the Minas Gerais uprising, as required by the judges to get an idea of each defendant's patrimony. Each district of Minas Gerais followed its own judicial process for producing seizure records. Some districts added information after the discovery of new possessions and carried out new seizures; others added information on the accounts rendered by trustees, and others still reported on the return of belongings that were lent to the rebels by third parties until their final liquidation as part of closing proceedings

(RODRIGUES, 2010a, p. 19-20).

Using information from the interrogations in the devassa and in an attempt to reconstruct people's social and economic lives, this work focuses on the seizure of books that the *inconfidentes* possessed in their personal collections (*livrarias*, or private libraries, as they were referred to at the time). This study also uncovers some of the *inconfidentes'* reading habits based on the influences that these same books had on their political and seditious conduct. First, however, it is important to evaluate the asset seizures as a source for research on the reconstruction of the history of books and reading habits in Minas Gerais in the second half of the eighteenth century.

### Asset Seizures and the History of Books in Eighteenth-Century Minas Gerais

In the context of the Inconfidência Mineira, the term *seizure* refers to the process of describing, evaluating, and dividing up the material assets of a person who has been arrested. According to the legislation at the time, as established by the legal documentation known as the *Ordenações Filipinas*, seized items were to be recorded with attention and thoroughness so that it was clear which assets were to be sent to the Crown's treasury (ORDENAÇÕES..., 1985, v. 3, book V, title CXXVII, p. 1299-1300).

These records are largely lists of real estate, land, tools, animals, clothing, furniture, slaves, gold and silver stores, utilitarian and decorative objects, religious pieces, active debts (receivables), passive debts (payables), silverware, currency, books, and many different types of objects for personal use. These records provide a clear understanding of the conspirators' daily lives, as well as their economic and social structures; the records also reveal the contrast between the extreme poverty of some seditionists and the comfort and opulence of others.

Out of the *inconfidentes'* seized assets listed in the 1789 Seizure Records, books are the objects that have been of interest most frequently in historical research. They have been useful in the attempt to determine the existence of a rich and varied literary culture at the time, and they have also revealed people's reading and writing practices and the appropriation of the ideas contained in the publications circulating at the time. Much focus has been placed on how their contents were understood.

As part of the first efforts in 1901, it was the responsibility of Francisco Inácio Marcondes Homem de Melo, the Baron Homem de Melo, to transcribe and publish a series of documents on the Inconfidência Mineira. Most of these documents belonged to the Brazilian Institute of History and Geography. He was therefore responsible for the groundbreaking act of publicizing the Seizure Records, which until that point had not been researched or published and from which very valuable information was obtained, such as the list of books that comprised Canon Luís Vieira da Silva's collection (MATHIAS, 1992, p. 97; RODRIGUES, 2010a, p. 38-39).<sup>3</sup>

A few years later, in 1945, Eduardo Frieiro would address the same topic in the first chapter of his book *O diabo na livraria do cônego* (The Devil in the Canon's Library) by making an inventory of the books seized from Vieira da Silva's collection as part of the *devassa* in an attempt to uncover more of his thought process, since he "breathed lungs full of the best spirit of his time" (FRIEIRO, 1981, p. 20).<sup>4</sup>

With Eduardo Frieiro's research, the Seizure Records began to be used as a source document in the study of the *inconfidentes'* possessions and the history of books in Minas Gerais in the second half of the eighteenth century. Sílvio Gabriel Diniz continued this research with the article "Bibliotecas setecentistas nas Minas Gerais" (Eighteenth-Century Libraries in Minas Gerais), in which he studied the contents of these collections and the owners of the private libraries in the state in the eighteenth century, informing what educated people read, or rather, "what was said to have been read" (DINIZ, 1959a, p. 338). In that same year, with the publication *Um livreiro em Vila Rica no meado do século XVIII* (Private Book Collection Owners in Vila Rica in the Mid-Eighteenth Century), he analyzed the sale and circulation of books in the city of Vila Rica (DINIZ, 1959b).

In 1964, Bradford Burns published "The Enlightenment in Two Colonial Brazilian Libraries", in which he discussed the repercussion of the Enlightenment in Minas Gerais based on the works belonging to the Municipal Library of São João del-Rei, the origins of which date back to two private libraries formed in the second half of the seventeenth hundreds by *inconfidentes* José de Resende Costa, José de Resende Costa Filho, and Batista Caetano de Almeida, a politician in the colonial period known as the First Reign (Primeiro Reinado). Although Burns's analysis shows that intellectual citizens in Minas Gerais had good collections, nothing more can be said about them, since there are no reliable records showing what titles they contained. Eight hundred books owned by Batista Caetano were donated in 1824, and the publications owned by the Costa family (an unknown amount donated on an unknown date), were also added to the collection, but there are no records of the titles (BURNS, 1964).

After more than twenty years and with progress toward the discovery of the reading habits of the educated class, Paulo Gomes Leite began his publications on the presence of books on topics such as the Enlightenment (many of which had been forbidden), revolutionaries, and heretics found in various private libraries in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. One collection is that of Canon Luís Vieira da Silva, which is detailed in the *devassa* Seizure Records, as well as in records from censorship trials. Leite's works include the 1995 article "Revolução e heresia na biblioteca de um advogado de Mariana" (Revolution and Heresy in a Mariana Lawyer's Private Library).

In his Master's thesis, "A torpeza diversificada dos vícios: celibato, concubinato e casamento no mundo dos letrados de Minas Gerais (1748-1801)" (The Diverse Clumsiness of Vices: Celibacy, Concubinage, and Marriage in the World of the Educated in Minas Gerais [1748-1801]), Luiz Carlos Villalta analyzes education and morality among well-read citizens

in colonial Minas Gerais based on their reading habits, their book use, and the composition of the Minas Gerais ecclesiastical libraries in the second half of the seventeenth century, comparing them to the collections seized from the clerics involved in the sedition movement (VALLALTA, 1994a).

Examples of other works that follow this rationale include his articles “O diabo na livraria dos inconfidentes” (The Devil in the *Inconfidentes*’ Collections), “Os clérigos e os livros nas Minas Gerais da segunda metade do século XVIII” (The Clergy and the Books in Minas Gerais in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century), and “O que se fala e o que se lê: língua, instrução e leitura” (What Is Spoken and What Is Read: Language, Instruction, and Reading). These studies provide information on the personal collections belonging to the clergy and *inconfidentes* of Minas Gerais. A quantitative statistical analysis was applied to the books (authors’ names, book titles, and languages in which the works and prices were written) in order to identify consistencies and differences between the private libraries (VILLALTA, 1994b; 1995; 1997). In “Ler, escrever, bibliotecas e estratificação social” (Reading, Writing, Libraries, and Social Stratification), Villalta revisits the topic of libraries and correlates their existence with book circulation, reading habits, and political and religious conflicts (VILLALTA, 2007c). In “Lugares, espaços e identidades coletivas na Inconfidência Mineira” (Places, Spaces, and Collective Identities in the Inconfidência Mineira), co-authored by André Pedroso Becho, Villalta reflects on literacy, education, and the intellectual and political origins of the Inconfidência Mineira (VILLALTA; BECHO, 2007).

Villalta’s 1999 doctoral dissertation was entitled “Reformismo ilustrado, censura e práticas de leitura: usos do livro na América portuguesa” (Enlightened Reformism, Censorship and Reading Practices: The Uses of Books in Portuguese America). It was later published in 2015 under the title *Usos do livro no mundo luso-brasileiro sob as Luzes* (Examining the Uses of Books in the Portuguese-Brazilian World). In the later publication, Villalta investigated the role of censorship and the uses of books in Portugal and in Portuguese America under the Portuguese Enlightenment in order to understand what readers’ reading habits were and how readers used their books. When he relates reading habits to political conflict in his last chapter, entitled “Usos inventivos do livro e contestação política: a Inconfidência Mineira” (Inventive Uses of Books and Political Conflict: The Inconfidência Mineira), he brings together the *inconfidentes*’ understandings of and perspectives on these books and infers how the seditionists made use of these publications, especially those that discussed subversions to public order and helped them consider rebellion against the Portuguese Crown. Based on the seized books and the testimonies that made up the *devassa* legal proceedings, Villalta noted the survival of “cultural and literary elements dating back to before the seventeenth century,” such as theories on power from the Second Scholasticism and historical interpretations of the Portuguese Restoration of 1640. Such elements, he argued, “merged with understandings of the Enlightenment and, in particular, with the works by Guillaume Thomas Raynal on European colonization and the Independence of English America” (VILLALTA, 2015, p. 508).

In 2008, Rafael de Freitas e Souza published *O Tiradentes leitor* (Tiradentes, The Reader) based on his 2004 Master's thesis. In 2014, Kenneth Maxwell published *O livro de Tiradentes: transmissão atlântica de ideias políticas no século XVIII* (The Tiradentes Book: The Spread of Political Ideas Across the Atlantic in the Eighteenth Century). These authors did not directly focus on the seizures, but analyzed some of the works obtained therein. In doing so, they uncovered multiple ideas that the *inconfidentes* and, more precisely, Lieutenant Tiradentes, had found in writings on the American Constitution – ideas which may have served as the catalyst for their plans for sedition. These writings were gathered in a book under the title *Recueil des loix constitutives des colonies angloises, confédérées sous la denomination d'Etats-Unis de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (A Collection of Constitutional Laws of the Confederate English Colonies under the Name of the United States), published in Paris in 1778 and hereby referred to as *Recueil*. Freitas e Souza discusses the cultural significance that the book had in Tiradentes's establishment of the intellectual quality he had lacked to be considered a true national hero: the dimension of the literate owner of one of the copies of *Recueil* that circulated among the conspirators in Minas Gerais (SOUZA, 2008). Under the supervision of Kenneth Maxwell, five intellectuals, including Júnia Ferreira Furtado and Heloísa Murgel Starling, wrote their chapter "República e sedição na Inconfidência Mineira: leituras do *Recueil* por uma sociedade de pensamento" (The Republic and Sedition in the Inconfidência Mineira: Readings of the *Recueil* by a Thoughtful Society). In it, they analyze how the conspirators saw and discussed the successful American Revolution of 1776 and the writings on the Constitution as models of what they wanted to accomplish in Portuguese America (FURTADO; STARLING, 2013, p. 107-132).

Finally, in *A fortuna dos inconfidentes: caminhos e descaminhos de bens de conjurados mineiros (1760-1850)* (The Fortune of the *Inconfidentes*: Paths Taken by Conspirators' Assets in the Inconfidência Mineira [1760-1850]), André Figueiredo Rodrigues studied the original handwritten Seizure Records of the conspirators' assets and found that the judicial process of the Inconfidência and the seizures carried out as part of official investigations were motivated by a complex network of interests that resulted in direct and indirect interventions that were both personal or collaborative in nature and which guided the investigation, omitted assets, and incriminated enemies. Of course, the descriptions of the assets often included the books that were seized. The analysis of the original handwritten Seizure Records provided knowledge on some of the works owned by the poet Cláudio Manuel da Costa that had not been qualitatively described in the typed records. This analysis also revealed the quantity of books and the titles that made up the collections owned by José de Resende Costa and Canon Luís Vieira da Silva (RODRIGUES, 2010a).

It is important to note that all of these authors, with the exception of André Figueiredo Rodrigues, performed research that relied mainly on the typed Seizure Records as sources for the reconstruction of the history of books and reading in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. In fact, the findings of their research prove the existence of a rich and varied written culture that was present in the libraries of those involved in Inconfidência Mineira.

The history of these collections was slowly revealed over time.<sup>5</sup> The most recent studies specific to personal collections kept in Minas Gerais, such as those published by Paulo Gomes Leite and Luiz Carlos Villalta, contain additional research into books and reading in the colonial period. These studies have been performed in Brazil and abroad since the 1980s, when the repertoire of sources was expanded to include the analysis of documents extracted from the Royal Censorship Court of Law of Portugal and the Portuguese Royal Court of Law's General Commission for the Study and Censorship of Books. Lawsuits and accusations were also sent to the Holy Tribunal, which was responsible for locating forbidden works in colonial libraries; even when ownership could not be proven, they often had information on who had read the books. Other documents have also gained relevance in this and other research. Newer studies have relied on more modern theories and more sophisticated methodologies, such as the use of more varied interdisciplinary sources or of more accurate quantitative documentation. Examples of this documentation include lists of works made when people traveled with books, information on the purchase and sale of books, bookstore catalogs, and appraisals of inventory for probate purposes. These documents have aided in the understanding of people's reading habits and books that were kept in private libraries.<sup>6</sup>

Among this variety of documentation, the Seizure Records have been consistently consulted and are considered essential for the study of the literature and writing culture in eighteenth-century Minas Gerais. The Seizure Records are used as a reliable inventory of the books and publications seized by government authorities. The goal of this research has been to determine evolutions in political thought in the *inconfidentes'* circles of interest, power, and sociability, and in the assimilations of ideas among individuals (and, more specifically, among the *inconfidentes* within the literate sphere of the captancy).

First and foremost, it is important to establish criteria for the use of the Seizure Records that list the assets owned by those involved in the Inconfidência Mineira as a source for research. These records must be discussed in detail to determine the limits and possibilities of their use.

### Asset Seizures as a Source for Research on the History of Books

Similar to appraisals of inventory after death, seizure records represent one of the most significant sources for research on book ownership and reading habits.

Although the *devassa* seizures followed a systematic procedure according to the laws of the time as established by Book V of the *Ordenações Filipinas*, and, in theory, required rigor and thoroughness, the practical details of seizures fell to local courts; the appellate judges responsible for the legal proceeding or judicial inquiry in question were required to comply with orders passed down from superior judges or magistrates addressing the defendant's property. Because one of the penalties for *lèse-majesté* crimes is the total loss of property, "which would lead to a decisive blow to the fate of the families involved," orders

were “delegated from a higher court after having exhausted the possibilities of defense for the defendants” (RODRIGUES, 2010a, p. 48). Since those involved in the *Inconfidência* of 1789 were residing in Minas Gerais, it was incumbent upon the governor to appoint the judges or the commissioners in charge of prosecuting those indicted in the crime, who was then responsible for enforcing the law in their respective administrative jurisdictions (ORDENAÇÕES..., 1985, v. 3, book V, title CXXVI, p. 1299).

The implementation of seizure processes was not entirely objective, and did not necessarily consist of mere descriptions of each asset: seizures depended on the personality and criteria of the seizure clerk in question, who decided whether to comply with the judicial rulings or to make changes to the process through the use of personal strategies, such as failing to correctly record assets or choosing to omit a particular asset (RODRIGUES, 2010a, p. 48).

In light of this and due to the level of variation in the private libraries, it is important to consider the extreme situations that indicate the possible limits to the analysis of this documentation in academic research. A reading of these records reveals a certain inconsistency in notarial practices: some of the records were meticulous and careful, while others were sloppy and full of mistakes and omissions.

### 1-) Record Omissions

Inconsistencies were observed in the Seizure Records that list the books apprehended from the *inconfidentes*. Some report only the number of works in the collections; titles and other typographical data were often omitted. Others mention only authors' names and book titles, and others still provide only abbreviations or partial names (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 168-190).

In the house of the Portuguese poet and magistrate Tomás Antônio Gonzaga, located in Villa Rica (the present-day city of Ouro Preto), the clerk reported the existence of only eighty-three books: “forty-three books by various French, Portuguese, and Latin authors... seven half-folio-sized books, and thirty-three quarto-sized publications,” which were listed among the other assets inventoried in his seizure records (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 49).

Also in Vila Rica, at the residence of Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula Freire de Andrada, commander of the Regiment of Cavalaria Paga and the highest military officer involved in the *Inconfidência Mineira*, the Seizure Records indicate that his collection consisted of eighty-four books distributed onto two shelves, one of which was “painted” and another of which was “well worn” (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 224).

A similar situation occurred in the case of magistrate and poet Cláudio Manuel da Costa, for whom the records cited several books and one manuscript (“A book on Saint Ignatius



of Loyola in manuscript form”), in addition to a series of books listed without their respective titles or authors. The records merely reported “on the right-hand of the bookshelf on fourth shelf, forty books; on the fifth shelf, forty-four books; on the on the left-hand side of the fourth shelf on the bookshelf, forty-nine books; on the fifth shelf of the same shelf, forty-six.” Another record reported “fifteen octavo-sized books, and one quarto-sized book” and “three translations of plays, and another translation of poems” (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 99-100).

At Father Carlos Correia de Toledo e Melo’s residence in the town of São José del-Rei (the present-day city of Tiradentes, Minas Gerais), the devassa legal proceedings led to the seizure of a “painted shelf” with 105 books “large and small, by various authors; specifically: ninety-nine [books] with dust jackets, and six with parchment covers” (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 70).<sup>7</sup> A similar description can be found in the records of the four books seized from Lieutenant Tiradentes: “three octavo-sized books and one quarto-sized book” (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 58).

During the seizure of Father Manuel Rodrigues da Costa’s private collection, located on the Registro Velho Farm, seventy-three publications were found, distributed into 212 volumes. The records of his books include “an octavo-sized ecclesiastical manual... Hobert Theology [in] seven quarto-sized volumes... eight folio-sized volumes of the works of Calmet...,” as well as the book by “Fernão Mendes Pinto, a small, folio-sized book” and “fifteen old and almost useless books of various materials,” the authors and titles of which were not mentioned because of their state of deterioration (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 438-440).

In the latter two cases, the clerks’ concern was more with recording the material aspects of books, such as the form of their binding (with dust jackets or parchment covers) or size (half-quarto-sized, quarto-sized, octavo-sized, or folio-sized), than with recording the authors’ names or the books’ contents.

Although this apparent lack of information seems to make it impossible for us to know the subject matters of most of these collections, the characteristics and the state of conservation of those works can tell us “more than those indecipherable” lists, since, as Maria Aparecida de Menezes Borrego teaches in her study of the contents of São Paulo houses in the eighteenth century, records of books such as quartos show that it was the publication in question was available to the masses. This is because the format of quartos – sheets folded twice to create eight pages – were more easily handled and shipped,” unlike the large and heavy folio-sized books with “more refined formatting” and which “require[d] support when being read” (BORREGO, 2009, p. 242, 247).

The description of the state of conservation of books as “old,” used, or worn, for example, allows us to understand them as works that had been widely read or circulated, even when more details about the libraries are unknown (BORREGO, 2009, p. 246).

The mysteries that result from this lack of information, which resulted from the making

of book records in this way, may be “resolved” by consulting the original handwritten Seizure Records (as yet unresearched for the majority of the *inconfidentes*). These records provide complete lists of the assets seized by the Portuguese Crown, with all of the judicial stages and descriptions of each book, such as its purchase, sale, return, or circulation. As Robert Darnton writes:

What was proverbial wisdom to our ancestors is utterly opaque to us. Open any eighteenth century book of proverbs and you will find entries such as: ‘He who is snotty, let him blow his nose.’ When we cannot get a proverb, or a joke, or a ritual, or a poem, we know we are on to something. By picking at the document where it is most opaque, we may be able to unravel an alien system of meaning. The thread might even lead to a strange and wonderful world view (DARNTON, 1988, p. XV).

## 2) *Erroneous Records*

In addition to incomplete records, spelling errors were also common in the lists of titles and authors, especially those of foreign works (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 170).

The private collection owned by *inconfidente* and Canon Luís Vieira da Silva, kept at his residence in the city of Mariana, was the largest of all the seizures and was considered one of the best in the captaincy because of its numerous publications on topics ranging from encyclopedism to rationalist philosophy to the naturalist optimism of the French Enlightenment. In this case, there were almost perfect records on his literary property (FRIEIRO, 1981, p. 18-20). Even so, there were problems with the notes. For example, the Dominican theologian Melchor Cano was transcribed by the clerk as “Melxioris Cari” (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 170).

In this collection, as well as in others, clerks simply butchered the names of many books and authors; in most cases, this was likely due to the clerks’ lack of education, rigor, or knowledge of foreign languages. Often, only the author’s first name, or a word or summary of the title is noted, as in William Robertson’s *L’histoire du regne de l’empereur Charles-Quint*, which was translated in the seizure as “History of Charles V,” with no mention of the author. The same was also found in the case of David Hume’s *Histoire de la Maison de Tudor [sur le trône d’Angleterre]*, which was written as “*Histoire de Tudor*” with no author indicated. Books such as *Elementos de arte militar* and *Le messiadé* appeared without reference to their authors (who are, respectively, José Marques Cardoso and the German poet Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock). In another case, the name Suetonius appeared, with no mention of the title of his work *The Twelve Caesars* (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 85-91; VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 170).

Only partial records were made on Cláudio Manuel da Costa’s library. Examples included “Neto, one volume;” “Historic dictionary, four volumes;” and “Surdo, two volumes”

(AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 97-99). Unfortunately, notes like these do not allow us to recognize many of the works or authors to which they refer.

We also do not know, for example, whether the six octavo-sized volumes of the *Nouveau dictionnaire historique* listed as part of Canon Vieira's collection are those of the Jesuit priest François Xavier de Feller, "the esteemed plagiarist who, to compose this work, shamelessly appropriated the analogous work of Benedictine Chaudon," as Eduardo Frieiro describes, or whether they were one of the editions of Louis Moreri's *Dictionnaire*, or Louis-Mayeul Chaudon's original dictionary (FRIEIRO, 1981, p. 26). On a shelf in da Costa's house were ten volumes of the *Dicionário de Moreri* (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 97).

Another difficulty is the use of pseudonyms. Also in the case of da Costa's collection, "Lourenço Graciano, [in] two volumes" was listed in the record (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 98). This item refers to the priest and Spanish educator Baltasar Gracián y Morales's book, *El criticón*. The work was published in three parts, the first of which was written under the fictitious name Garcia de Marlones, and the others of which were published under the name Lourenço Gracián. The main character of this book is named Critilo, and he serves as Tomás Antônio Gonzaga's *nom de plume* in his satirical poem *Cartas chilenas*. Critilo's verses maintain a close dialog with the character Doroteu, who represented the real-life Cláudio Manuel da Costa. This work may have been either lent to Gonzaga by da Costa, or it was among the books that were not listed by the clerk when the seizure record of his house was created.

Another limitation found in the records is the clerks' ignorance with regard to the value of different publications; works that they considered to be of little value were omitted or abbreviated (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 170-190). This may be explained by the fact that the books were frequently read; in some cases, it may have been because the publications were materials that were not in traditional book form (CHARTIER, 1990, p. 155).<sup>8</sup>

These examples illustrate the extent to which abbreviated records and a lack of information make it difficult to ascertain all the works seized from the Minas Gerais conspirators.

### 3) *The Number of Books*

Another important aspect to consider in the studies of the *inconfidentes'* private libraries is how many books actually belonged to each collection.

Because the records were inconsistent (some were thorough, while others were sloppy), it is impossible for us to know exactly which titles and authors made up the collections. However, it is possible that their numbers, more complete typographic information, and information on previously omitted authors and titles will be recovered once the handwritten Seizure Records are fully analyzed. As mentioned previously, the original documents

have never been published in full because they were established as separate legal proceedings. All that is known are the partial asset reports that were published to summarize each prisoner's property. Part of the analysis of the full Seizure Records must include the final destinations of the seized assets: at the end of the judicial process, the confiscated books were listed in the records along with the condemned criminals' other belongings. This final inventory was made after all the property restitution steps and bestowments among the family and the Royal Treasury were carried out (if the cases reached this point).<sup>9</sup>

The Brazilian Institute of History and Geography, located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, has a collection of eleven original asset Seizure Records from the cases against Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula Freire de Andrada, captain and farmer José de Resende Costa, Father Manuel Rodrigues da Costa, farmer José Aires Gomes, examining magistrate Tomás Antônio Gonzaga, colonel and farmer Francisco Antônio de Oliveira Lopes, Father Carlos Correia de Toledo and Melo, poet and magistrate Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto, sergeant-master Luis Vaz de Toledo Piza, accountant Vicente Vieira da Mota, and Canon Luís Vieira da Silva. The Historical Archives of the Museum of the Inconfidência in the city of Ouro Preto contain the seizure records of the former contractor Domingos de Abreu Vieira (RODRIGUES, 2010b, p. 46).

Of the twenty-four condemned *inconfidentes*, the original handwritten Seizure Records are available for only twelve. Two of the missing records are those of José Álvares Maciel and José de Resende Costa Filho, who did not have assets seized because they were legal dependents in their families and lived under the patronage of their parents and their family names. Thus, the original documents of ten remaining conspirators have yet to be examined. The typed edition of the Seizure Records includes information on the reports of assets owned by the bachelor Cláudio Manuel da Costa, Father José da Silva e Oliveira Rolim, and Lieutenant Tiradentes. As for the others, there is no evidence of confiscations of property owned by farmer and landowner João da Costa Rodrigues, Lieutenant Vitoriano Gonçalves Veloso, the lawyer Domingos Vidal de Barbosa Laje, Father José Lopes de Oliveira, carpenter and pilot Antônio de Oliveira Lopes, farmer and captain João Dias da Mota, or Dr. Salvador Carvalho do Amaral Gurgel (RODRIGUES, 2010b, p. 46).

The most famous colonial library in Minas Gerais was that of the Canon Luís Vieira da Silva. According to Eduardo Frieiro (1981), the books found in his possession were essential to the uprising, since they decisively influenced the revolutionary moods of those involved in the Inconfidência Mineira.

The spirit of nonconformity and of the revolution – the spirit of the devil, according to Frieiro – was still present at that seizure. Vieira da Silva's collection contained approximately eight hundred volumes representing 270 titles. Subjects such as religion, literature, philosophy, and science, from ancient texts to modern writings, were all well represented. There were obvious signs of appreciation for classical antiquity and the best of the French, Italian, and Portuguese classics. There were also many French philosophical and literary

texts. There was nothing about Brazil or from Brazil in the entire collection (FRIEIRO, 1981, p. 24, 29-30).

Among his books, there was a predominance of what were considered profane subjects, contrary to the standards of the time: among the religious members of society, “the majority possessed works of devotion and liturgy, theology, and canons” (VILLALTA, 1994a, p.197-198).

Though we know of the “revolutionary” nature of Vieira da Silva’s library, the exact number of titles and volumes that comprised it is unknown. Vieira da Silva’s collection is the subject of frequent references and citations, and it has always impressed scholars due to the cultural and historical value of the works. In these cases, admiration resulted in assumptions and additions to the collection, with changes to its numbers that led to false historical implications (LEITE, 1995, p. 155).

The number of books attributed to Vieira da Silva is impressive. While Eduardo Frieiro was the first to make an estimate, attributing 270 works divided into approximately eight hundred volumes to the collection, Paulo Gomes Leite estimated 276 titles spread across 563 volumes (LEITE, 1995, p. 156). In several texts, Luiz Villalta, pointed out discordant figures: in “A torpeza diversificada dos vícios,” he wrote that the Canon’s library contained 241 titles divided into 556 volumes. In the articles “Os clérigos e os livros nas Minas Gerais da segunda metade do século XVIII” and “Ler, escrever, bibliotecas e estratificação social,” he estimated 279 titles divided into 612 volumes (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 168; 1995, p. 24; 2007c, p. 302).

Despite these numerical discrepancies, the original handwritten Seizure Records from Luís Vieira’s estate suggest that, in fact, 267 books across 569 volumes were confiscated. These numbers are based on the final reports involved in the seizure after books that did not belong to him were returned and the works were organized quantitatively and by topic (INSTITUTO HISTÓRICO E GEOGRÁFICO BRASILEIRO, 1803, DL 70.11). This variation in numbers can be explained by two factors: the lack of knowledge on the process as a whole, and the fact that the list published in the Seizure Record is a perfect and absolute snapshot of everything the *inconfidente* had in his house; some of the calculations did not consider the fact that some of the assets may have belonged to third parties.

It is important to note that property owned by third parties was present in the seizure of assets from Cláudio Manuel da Costa’s house. Because any seized asset could be restored to its rightful owner provided there were documents or witnesses to prove that the object confiscated in the legal proceedings was owned by a third party, these borrowed assets would have almost certainly been returned. This was true in the case of Francisco de Souza Martins, a nephew of Cláudio Manuel da Costa. Martins asked the Board of the Royal Treasury Court of Minas Gerais to return objects belonging to him that had been seized from his uncle’s house. At the end of the proceedings and after proving that assets had been given to him by another uncle, João de Souza Costa, and then delivered to his

father, Captain Antônio de Souza Mesquita, they had been left in Cláudio Manuel da Costa's custody when Martins moved from Vila Rica to Itabira and Pitangui. With this evidence, they were returned to him. The various items returned to the nephew (beds, tables, chairs, mattress, etc.) included "a prosody, two Virgils, and other books" (AZEVEDO, 1943, p. 282-283).

Of the books listed in Martin's documentation, only the prosody, written by the Jesuit priest Bento Pereira, appears on the list of books originally seized from da Costa. The other two books by the Roman poet Virgil could be among the works that were quantified but not named by the clerk, as explained in the item regarding the omission of books from the seizures.

Similar cases also occurred, evidence of which can be found in research into the primary sources that correlate with the legal proceedings described in the typed version of the Seizure Record.

A summary of the collections and the quantities and volumes seized from the *inconfidentes* is provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1- Books seized from the conspirators (*inconfidentes*) involved in the Inconfidência Mineira**

Inconfidente	Books	
	No. of Titles	No. of Volumes
Carlos Correia de Toledo e Melo	60	104
Cláudio Manuel da Costa	(a)	
Domingos de Abreu Vieira	(b)	
Francisco Antônio de Oliveira Lopes	(b)	
Francisco de Paula Freire de Andrada	(c)	
Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto	4	18
Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (Tiradentes)	4	-
José Aires Gomes	4	4
José Álvares Maciel	(d)	
José da Silva e Oliveira Rolim	(b)	
José de Resende Costa	20	61
José de Resende Costa, filho	(d)	
Luís Vaz de Toledo Piza	(b)	
Luís Vieira da Silva	267	569
Manuel Rodrigues da Costa	75	210

Tomás Antônio Gonzaga	83	-
Vicente Vieira da Mota	(b)	

Source: AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6; Arquivo Nacional, v. 7 – Sequestros diversos; Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro – Autos de Sequestro diversos.

NOTE:

(a) Only some of the titles of the books seized from Cláudio Manuel da Costa are known (97 titles); the clerk listed 198 works without descriptions of the number of volumes, their titles, or their authors. His collection likely had no more than 340 books.

(b) In his seizure records, there is no information about books.

(c) In Francisco de Paula Freire de Andrada's library, eighty-four "volumes of books" were seized. This abstract annotation does not allow us to know exactly whether they are the titles divided into volumes or whether they are titles of separate works existing in his collection.

(d) Because he lived under the patronage of his parents, none of his property was seized.

As the records show, the lists of books seized from the *inconfidentes* contain errors and omissions, calling into question the analyses of these men's literary assets. In order to avoid the inconsistencies between the typed and handwritten versions of the Seizure Records, it is recommended that the original handwritten documents always be consulted: due to the lack of knowledge on the contents of procedural documents, historians have attributed inconsistent numbers to these private libraries.

#### 4-) Disregarded Works and Transcription Errors

Even though the document is an important source for research, any reading of the Seizure Record or other *devassa* documentation should be done with caution: imprecisions and misunderstandings occurred in the transcription of the original handwritten documents. The Seizure Records may have also fallen victim to another type of omission: disregarded works. A typical example can be found in the survey of the property owned by the poet, magistrate, and miner Inácio José de Alvarenga Peixoto, a resident in the town of São João del-Rei. The record includes a disappointing number of seized works: only four titles spread across eighteen volumes. This seizure record does not reflect the magistrate's career or even any works of literature (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 194-495).

In addition to the possibility of compromising books being omitted from the *inconfidente's* libraries, as reported by Eduardo Frieiro, Bradford Burns, Luiz Carlos Villalta, Paulo Gomes Leite, and Álvaro de Araújo Antunes, there are also errors in the transcripts of the asset inventories that cast doubt on the published transcripts of the handwritten records (FRIEIRO, 1981; BURNS, 1964; VILLALTA, 1994a; VILLALTA, 1994b; LEITE, 1995; ANTUNES, 2004). According to historians, the collection owned by José de Resende Costa, had twen-

ty titles distributed across sixty volumes, by authors such as Voltaire, Jean-François Marmontel, Molière, Fénelon, Racine, Virgílio, and Homer (VILLALTA, 1994a, p. 202; BURNS, 1964, p. 432; PINTO, 1992, p. 65; PINTO, 2014, p. 77).

Though not included in the list published in the sixth volume of the Seizure Record, which served as a fundamental reference for the aforementioned authors, another title was known to have been part of José de Resende Costa's collection: *Selecta Latini Sermonis exemplaria e scriptoribus probatissimis, ad christianae juventutis usum collecta* by French educator Pierre Chompré, first published in Paris in 1752 and republished in Portugal in six octavo-sized volumes (INSTITUTO HISTÓRICO E GEOGRÁFICO BRASILEIRO, 1799, DL 70.9, fls. 5, 22v). It is an anthology composed of selected (and sometimes rewritten) passages by Latin authors meant for students who intended to enroll at the University of Coimbra.<sup>10</sup> There are records in the devassa documents that one of José de Resende Costa Filho's plans was to study in Portugal in 1789 (AUTOS..., 1976, v. 1, p. 254-255). The book, therefore, apparently belonged to the colonel's son, who was preparing himself for the entrance exams at the university. Because José de Resende Costa Filho was legally dependent, the examining magistrate José Caetano César Manitti did not specifically seize this conspirator's property; he notes that the young man "was employed in his studies" (ARQUIVO NACIONAL, v. 7, doc. 14, fl. 4; RODRIGUES, 2010, p. 50).<sup>11</sup>

However, it is significant that, in the two existing handwritten versions records regarding this seizure, the Brazilian Historic and Geographic Institute (IHGB) (in complete handwritten Seizure Record) and the Brazilian National Archives (ANRJ) (reports used in the publication of the Seizure Records of the Inconfidência Mineira), list references to the book *Seletas latinas*. Therefore, the difference between the handwritten records and published records was an error in transcription (ARQUIVO NACIONAL, v. 7, doc. 14, fl. 3).

In addition to the inclusion of *Seletas latinas*, it is noted that Homer's *Iliad*, which was reported as being divided into "seven volumes" in the printed version of the Seizure Records (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 428), was later changed to "eight volumes" as part of a seizure reassessment. In addition, the work of the Italian priest Antônio Genuense was changed from the initial "seven volumes" to "two volumes" (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 428). In the same typed version, the listing "*Horacio*, an octavo-sized volume" is included twice (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 428). The work *Gradus ad parnasum*, "an octavo-sized volume," was contained in the typed edition of the Seizure Records (AUTOS ..., 1982, v. 6, p. 428); however, it did not appear on the final list of the books that were seized. With this information, the conclusive number of the works seized from Resende Costa is twenty titles divided into sixty-one volumes (INSTITUTO HISTÓRICO E GEOGRÁFICO BRASILEIRO, 1799, DL 70.9, fls. 5, 22).

This number is corroborated by information contained in the 1804 auction record referring to the Resende Costa family's assets. There is a clear mention of the sixty-one volumes in the library, auctioned for the amount of 35,860 réis, the currency at the time (INSTITUTO HISTÓRICO E GEOGRÁFICO BRASILEIRO, 1799, DL 70.9, fls. 33-33v).



Of the titles that made up the Resende Costas' collection, only two of them survived the time: the poem *La religion* by Monsieur Louis Racine (1775 edition, in an octavo volume), and *Oeuvres*, by the French playwright Jean Baptiste Racine, which was divided into three octavo volumes (Figure 1). Because only their titles, *Poema da Religião de Racine* and *Obras de Racine*, were listed in the published edition of the Seizure Records (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, 428), historians attributed the authorship of these two works to a single writer: Racine. When the books were donated to the São João del-Rei Municipal Library by José de Resende Costa Filho, in 1827, the authors were found to be different: the playwright Jean Racine was the father of Louis Racine (RODRIGUES, 2010a, p. 40-41).<sup>12</sup>

These examples clarify the possibilities for and the limitations to the use of the Seizure Records in research on the *inconfidentes'* private libraries. Therefore, due to these questions of deletions, omissions, and incorrect transcriptions of words, authors, and book titles, the published edition of these records must be compared to the handwritten version whenever possible before they can be relied on as a source for research.

**Figure 1 - Books that belonged to the *inconfidente* José de Resende Costa Filho, donated to the Baptista Caetano d'Almeida Municipal Library in São João del-Rei, Minas Gerais, Brazil**



Source: Researcher's archives.

5) *Book Use*

First and foremost, it is important to note that a book can be found in a personal collection at the time of seizure as the result of a loan, inheritance, or gift; it may be merchandise for sale or exchange, a mere decorative element, or simply waiting to be returned to its true owner.

In these seizures, books served as symbols of power and status much like dishes, garments, and gold and jewelry, which were all thoroughly described in the records of some residences.

According to the final version of the *devassa* documents, the main businessmen, magistrates, farmers, servicemen, ecclesiastics, and some of the most important Portuguese-Brazilian intellectuals of the time were all involved in the Inconfidência Mineira. They belonged to a select group of wealthy people from the captaincy who differed from the rest of the population and sought to show off their wealth. Visible signs of status were necessary to demonstrate social distinction in colonial society and to have the privileges that this provided. The items that marked social distinction, such as lace, formal clothing made of fine fabrics, gold and silver accessories, and books, functioned to create social division and allow for ostentation.

In this society that valued putting on airs, in which appearances and identities went hand in hand and in which luxury and displays of wealth intersected, citizens such as the poet Cláudio Manuel da Costa (whose property was the target of three seizures between June 1789 and March 1791) owned items such as domestic wares from England, Macau, and India, including enameled dishes and knives with silver handles. His private library was said to include the work *Horas latinas* with the "crown of Jerusalem" engraved in silver on the cover (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 105, 101-102).

Villalta explains that books often served as decorations, since it was practical to "decorate houses with bookshelves that appeared to have books" or with "bookshelves with the semblance of books" (VILLALTA, 1997, p. 372-373; 2015, p. 326-327).<sup>13</sup> Sílvio Gabriel Diniz tells the story of the merchant and captain Manuel Ribeiro dos Santos, the administrator of the Minas Gerais tithing contract from 1741 to 1750 and a resident of the city of Mariana. When sending orders for books to Portugal, Ribeiro dos Santos demanded that his suppliers ship him new works with "blank, good paper, bound like those with cursive lettering" or "with the best covers that there are, all with titles on the spine in gold" to serve as decoration (DINIZ, 1959b, p. 182).

But in addition to functioning as part of interior designs, books were also recognized as sources of knowledge by *inconfidentes*, and much of their use is connected to the practice of professional activities and academic studies (VILLALTA, 1995, p. 20; 2007b, p. 251; 2007c, p. 300; 2015, p. 328-329, 333).

For example, thirty percent of Cláudio Manuel da Costa's collection was comprised of works on canons and law, followed by works of literature (which reflect his poetic aptitude) and then by dictionaries and books on history, philosophy, politics, and theology, as well as holy writings. The report on Peixoto's library, from which only four books were seized, lists only works reflecting his poetic inclinations, such as collections by Pietro Metastácio, Claude-Prospér de Crébillon, Voltaire, and the Jesuit priest Manuel (VILLALTA, 1997, p. 365).

In his study of the 911 inventories of both commoners' and clergymen's assets from 1714 to 1822, records which are kept at the Second Official Notary Office in the city of Mariana, Villalta located book collections in seventy-six of the records; a total of 1,253 different works were listed, some of which repeated at greater or lesser frequency from one collection to the next, with a total of 2,031 volumes. The largest library belonged to the lawyer José Pereira Ribeiro, who had 211 titles divided into 476 volumes (VILLALTA, 2007c, p.302, 2015, p.358-359, 376). In a specific study on Ribeiro's collection, Paulo Gomes Leite calculated that he had 201 books distributed into 486 volumes (LEITE, 1995, p. 156). When analyzing Ribeiro's relationship with his library as an owner and reader, Álvaro de Araújo Antunes determined that his collection contained 204 titles divided into 476 volumes (ANTUNES, 2004, p. 34).

Despite these numerical discrepancies, José Pereira Ribeiro's library serves to illustrate another use of books at the time: they were the foundation of social networks, since they offered "subsidies to those who dominated or questioned the [current] order" and therefore had an effect on power struggles (VILLALTA, 2015, p. 333). In this context, José Pereira Ribeiro is cited in the Seizure Record as the owner and person responsible for the arrival of two books censored by the Crown in Minas Gerais: the aforementioned *Recueil* and the original French edition of *Philosophical and Political History of Establishments and European Trade in the Two Indias* by Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, also known as Abbot Raynal.

When this inventory was performed in 1798, Raynal's work was on loan to the *inconfidente* Domingos Vidal de Barbosa Laje, and *Recueil* had been lent to Canon Luis Vieira da Silva. Due to the presence of these two texts in Ribeiro's library and because they are frequently referred to by the *inconfidentes* in their criticisms of Portuguese colonialism, Paulo Gomes Leite describes this library as the most important "ideological support for the Inconfidência Mineira" (LEITE, 1995, p. 156, 158, 162).

In the culture of the second half of the eighteenth century, the *inconfidentes* were the center of a literary bohemia. This subculture migrated from the purely literary circles and the confluence between European ideas of the Enlightenment and Portuguese-Brazilian traditions, and gradually became explicitly political and subversive, eventually morphing into the Inconfidência Mineira. Villalta notes that the conspirators brought prohibited works from abroad, exchanged books and translations of texts, and debated the ideas addressed in the books (VILLALTA, 2015, p. 471-480).

According to the researcher, these books made their way into the hands of the people

of Minas Gerais through bookstores and auctions, and from Brazilians returning home after studying in Europe. They also brought illustrated compendiums and sought to spread them and integrate them into modern philosophical, scientific, literary, and revolutionary thought in an attempt to break colonial ties (VILLALTA, 2015, p. 480-500).

At their meetings, the rebels discussed not only poetry, but also the political and economic situation of the Minas Gerais captaincy. They looked to the Thirteen English Colonies as an example of successful independence, which they learned about through writings published in French and in English. Although book ownership was not widespread, books were frequently read and circulated.

The effects of books on the *inconfidentes* and their degree of inventiveness as readers is made evident by aspects that transitioned from more strictly literary issues, such as references to translations, to the loaning of books, to readings, to discussions that clearly refer to the insurgent movement itself.

In these social circles, works were read not only by those who bought them, but also by their families and friends, as part of the common practice of book lending at the time. Peixoto described the literary bohemia of the meetings held at the home of Francisco de Paula Freire de Andrada, where the most significant and heated seditious discussions in Vila Rica took place. In his testimony, Peixoto mentioned that he went to the residence to talk, “laugh a little... deliver a book... and take another from his library” (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 5, p. 118-120; VILLALTA, 2015, p. 473). Salvador Carvalho do Amaral Gurgel, a physician who had recently moved to the city, visited Lieutenant Tiradentes to ask him for a French dictionary that he wanted (AUTOS..., 1978, v. 2, p. 218).

The original handwritten Seizure Records describing the assets of Canon Luis Vieira da Silva list works that had been confiscated but which did not belong to him. This provoked complaints like the one made by the royal superintendent of Vila Rica, appellate judge Francisco Gregório Pires Bandeira, in 1790, who requested the return of three of his books that had been lent to Vieira da Silva: *Istoria civile del regno di Napoli*, by Pietro Giannone, and two titles by the French philosopher and abbot Gabriel Bonnot de Mably – *Observations sur le gouvernement de les États Unis de l’Amerique* and *De l’étude de l’histoire, à Monseigneur le prince de Parme*. The opposite situation also occurred: Vieira da Silva had lent Bandeira two literary works: a volume by Pietro Metastásio and *Contes moraux* by Jean-François Marmontel (INSTITUTO HISTÓRICO E GEOGRÁFICO BRASILEIRO, 1803, DL 70.11, fl. 11).

In addition to book exchanges among third parties and the *inconfidentes*, another common practice that books provided was involvement in book clubs and collective discussions. In one of the meetings held at the residence of the aforementioned Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula, Tomás Antônio Gonzaga met with Father Carlos Correia de Toledo, Lieutenant Tiradentes, and Peixoto to talk, in his words, about “humanities.” On that occasion, according to Gonzaga, Peixoto discussed “some octaves recited at the baptism of His Excellency Dom Rodrigo [José de Meneses]’s son,” his famous poem *Canto genetliá-*

co. They also examined some of the host's books, among which "there was one" that referred to the poet, messianic prophet and "shoe cobbler Bandarra" (Gonçalo Annes Bandarra) (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 5, p. 223; VILLALTA, 2015, p. 473).

These examples illustrate some of the uses that can be attributed to books. The books served as sources of knowledge on the main ideas circulating in Europe and North America, and most were written in French and English. They also served as objects of decoration or symbols of power and sociability through exchanges, loans, and discussions at private meetings.

## Reading Habits and Political and Seditious Conduct

Each seizure record provides a list of books seized from a person, but it doesn't necessarily allow us to confirm that the owner had read a given work or had understood the ideas contained therein.

Explicit references to a given book were not necessary to know whether a work was read or whether a significant part of it had been assimilated. Quotations in poems, literary works, sermons, testimonies, or everyday conversation may have revealed contact with a given publication or the author's way of thinking (SOUZA, 2008, p. 65).

In the contexts of the devassa legal proceedings, several witnesses shared opinions and arguments that they believed in, which were based on ideas from books they had read or learned about directly or indirectly. In that environment, no one would repeat an author's opinions without being in agreement with them and convinced of their truth. In cases of disagreement, the reference would be negative to make the dissent clear (SOUZA, 2008, p. 65-66).

Using a variety of linguistic resources, witnesses made clear use of quotations from readings and authors who they believed in during their testimonies. An example of this occurred with Father Carlos Correia de Toledo, who said in his testimony on February 4, 1790, that

[...] he heard Francisco Antônio de Oliveira Lopes say that there was a book by a French author that was in the hands of a doctor in the city of Mariana that had started the trend of uprisings by discussing cutting off the head of the governor and making a speech to the people and discussing a scholarly subject, and that this book had been burned by His Majesty (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 5, p. 149-150).

Although the information provided by Father Toledo does not perfectly match the teachings of Abbot Raynal, since he did not develop concrete details as to "how the uprisings should be carried out," the citation allows us to understand how his book, *Histoire philosophique [...] dans les deux Indes*, indirectly informed the *inconfidentes*, and inspired the imaginations of both the conspirators and the investigators. It is important to question why Father Toledo would have memorized the essence of the book's contents if he did not

agree with the ideas contained therein.

In his testimony as part of the devassa on November 16, 1789, Lieutenant Colonel Francisco de Paula said that, in his house, Lieutenant Tiradentes, Peixoto, Father Toledo, and Father Rolim praised Abbot Raynal as a “writer with great views, because he predicted the uprising of North America” (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 5, p. 173).

This evidence shows that Father Toledo admired and agreed with Raynal’s ideas, and it likely reflects the reading habits of the Vila Rica literary circles. Like the priest, other *inconfidentes* were also interested in books that included discussions regarding the independence of English America. One of them was Lieutenant Tiradentes, who was “searching bookstores and libraries for books that discussed the uprising of the English,” according to testimony by Father José Lopes de Oliveira in Vila Rica on June 30, 1789 (AUTOS. 1976, v. 1, p. 206).

In his testimony, Francisco Xavier Machado, the standard bearer of the Cavalry Regiment of Vila Rica, spoke of Lieutenant Tiradentes and provided information regarding his intense literary activities, his involvement in debates, and the strategies he used to spread his principal revolutionary ideas, as well as the effects that the books had on the *inconfidentes* and their degree of inventiveness. According to the summary of Machado’s testimony,

[...] he always heard Joaquim José exaggerate the beauty, fertility, and wealth of the country in Minas Gerais, and say that, for these reasons the state could easily become independent, as did English America; to which he [the standard bearer] testifies, naturally, that this could never happen because Minas Gerais had no strength to preserve itself, and no navy to defend himself as English America had had...and, after a few days, the same lieutenant had gone to his house and had shown him a book written in French, asking him to translate a chapter for him, which was the aforementioned book *Recueil des loix constitutives des colonies angloises, confédérées sous la denomination d’Etats-Unis de l’Amérique Septentrionale*. The chapter he pointed to was the eighth section, about the election of a private council, the content of which was unique in the lieutenant’s opinion, and the witness translated it; later, he leafed through the same book and as if he were searching for a specific place, though he was left with the same book... The witness also knows that the same lieutenant searched that city [Vila Rica] for Sergeant Major Simão Pires Sardinha, taking him some English books to translate certain places that also related to things about America. (AUTOS..., 1976, v. 1, p. 189-190).

Though long, the excerpt is enlightening and reveals that, although the intellectual influence on the Minas Gerais conspirators was of French origin (and Abbot Raynal’s book is exemplary in this, as it is the most frequently cited publication in the Seizure Records), the example they sought for revolutionary ideas came from the successful example of the North American revolution of 1776. Perhaps because libertarian ideas in the United States were largely French in origin, the *Recueil* was the main source of information on North American republicanism for the *inconfidentes* of Minas Gerais (JARDIM, 1989, p. 44; FURTADO; STARLING, 2013, p. 107-132; FRIEIRO, 1981, p. 39-41).

The testimony also illustrates Lieutenant Tiradentes's strategy to ask different people to translate single chapters of the *Recueil*, which, as mentioned previously, was a work on American law that had been published in French. As a result of this strategy, more people came into contact with revolutionary propaganda, as the fundamental ideas of freedom adopted by the English colonies are described in these chapters.

Francisco Xavier's account also clarifies that the publications were not only read and interpreted: their ideas were transmitted orally through conversations. People were accused of conspiring with each other and, in these social networks, the spread of ideas was considered subversive. While seditious ideas were discussed in the private educated circles of Vila Rica, Tiradentes's method of activism resulted in their spread to public spaces, such as taverns, brothels, and the roads that brought the cities of Minas Gerais together. Literary bohemia proliferated across very diverse social strata. The books (particularly those which allowed the people of Minas Gerais to maintain contact with the most sophisticated and subversive ideas of the time) aided in the discussions and critical reading of the social, political, and economic circumstances that affected Minas Gerais in the second half of the eighteenth century in terms of the possible horizons to be followed after the uprising was carried out. For example, they read that the fiscal oppression of the Thirteen Colonies was the trigger for the spread of the desire for independence on American soil. Here, their interpretation motivated desires for freedom from colonial oppression and to break ties with Portugal. Moreover, these ideas were closely aligned with those of the Enlightenment.

There were many works on the Enlightenment in the *inconfidentes'* private libraries, though many of them had been prohibited through royal censorship and by the Church. There were French writers such as Montesquieu, Abbot Mably, Étienne de Condillac, Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linguet, and Voltaire (whose works were included in almost all of the seized collections), German writers such as Bielfeld and Christian Wolff, Dutch writers such as Cornelius de Pauw, Scots David Hume, and William Robertson, the Italian priest Antônio Genuense, the Spaniard Benito Feijoo, and the Portuguese writer Luis Antônio Verney, among others; the books were kept next to Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. The collections were described as "a war machine serving the critical spirit and disbelief, driven by free-thinkers who sought to subvert the political and religious foundations of society" (FRIEIRO, 1981, p. 49).

Alongside these more "radical" works were also books that taught doctrine and dogmas of faith and which exposed readers' appreciation for classical antiquity, universal history, science, law, and literature – the best French and Portuguese classics.

As noted previously, and without dwelling specifically on the many topics or books that represented within each of these subjects, the spirit of nonconformity and criticism of the political and economic system prevailing in Minas Gerais was revealed primarily in the testimonies given in the legal proceedings after the Inconfidência failed. The conspirators' testimonies in the *devassa* investigation showed that the revolutionary ideas spread orally, and

started from exposure of interpretations in the books that made up in their private libraries.

## Final Comments

The books described in the Seizure Records of the Inconfidência Mineira are important sources for understanding what was inside the private libraries seized from those involved in the movement. These records allow for the study of the books that were owned and possibly read at the time. Though these lists of possessions are useful, there are some limitations to their use as a source for research. It is important to understand the limits and possibilities of using such documents as historical records: issues include the omission of authors and titles, abbreviated notations, disregarded works, transcription errors, and inaccuracy in the quantity of books listed in the inventories. It is crucial that the original handwritten Seizure Records be consulted whenever possible, because they include the final numbers of books and the fate of many of the seized publications.

The use of these books was also relevant in the discussion of the literary bohemian subculture and its intersection with the revolutionary ideas that were circulating in Europe and America. These two factors fostered political and seditious conduct, which was ultimately spread through two interconnected media: books and oral language. Therefore, thanks to these records of the *devassa* legal proceedings and asset seizures, we have become aware of the possession and circulation of books and their contributions to the ideas behind such important political movements.

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## Notes

1 According to José de Resende Costa's testimony, the inconfident's plans included the possibility of decapitating the governor, Captain-General Luís Antônio Furtado de Castro of Rio de Mendonça and Faro, the Viscount of Barbacena, and persons faithful to the Portuguese monarchy, as well as the examining magistrate of Vila Rica, Pedro José de Araújo, the secretary of the Royal Treasury Board, Carlos José da Silva, and the governor's assistant, Antônio Xavier de Resende. Therefore, the inconfident committed treason by expressing such ideas (AUTOS..., 1976, v. 1, p. 258). As a witness in another testimony, Costa commented that "the first step of this conspiracy and riot was to cut off the head of his illustrious and excellency, the Viscount of Barbacena... as well as [the head of] Colonel Carlos José da Silva" (AUTOS..., 1981, v. 4, p. 206).

2 The Seizure Records of the Inconfidência Mineira were published for the first time between 1860 and 1874 in the Public Archives Journal of Rio de Janeiro. The second edition was printed under the protection of the Brazilian Ministry of Education in 1938. The most recent edition, which includes almost all of the supplementary documentation from the movement, was published between 1976 and 1983 by the Minas Gerais State Government and the state's House of Representatives in a ten-volume edition by the Official Minas Gerais Press. The eleventh volume complemented this edition with new documents presented and a more complete republication of others. It was printed in 2001, under the patronage of the Inconfidência Museum.

3 Seizure of Canon Luiz Vieira da Silva's assets. *Revista Trimestral do Instituto Histórico*, tomo 64, v. 103, p. 159-160, 1901.

4 The work *O diabo na livraria do cônego* (The Devil in the Canon's Library) was first printed in Belo Horizonte in 1945 by Livraria Cultura Brasileira. In 1957, it was reprinted with additions and notes made by the Itatiaia publishing company, also from Belo Horizonte. This publishing house, in partnership with the Editor from the University of São Paulo (EDUSP), released a second edition in 1981. This book was consistently recorded as having first appeared in 1957 (VILLALTA, 2007b, p. 249; ANTUNES, 2009, p. 256).

5 For this to be accomplished, Daniel Mornet's contributions were fundamental for theoretical and analytical support (*Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*), as were works by Robert Darnton (*The Literary Underground of the Old Regime*; *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History*; *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Prerevolutionary France*; among others) and Roger Chartier (*Leituras e leitores na França do Antigo Regime*; *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*; *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the 14th and 18th Centuries*; among others). According to Luiz Carlos Villalta, the Brazilian colonial period owes much to the groundbreaking works by Alcântara Machado (*Vida e morte do bandeirante: The Life and Death of the Bandeirante*; 1929), which provide evidence of books as an element of everyday life, despite the "private libraries that were petty in quantity and quality" in the São Paulo inventories of 1578 to 1700,

as well as those by Carlos Rizzini (*O livro, o jornal e a tipografia no Brasil; Books, Newspapers, and Typography in Brazil; 1946*), which showed the process of communication from book and newspaper publications to literary academies in terms of censorship and education; by Luis Henrique Dias Tavares (*Introdução ao estudo das idéias do movimento revolucionário de 1798; Introduction to the Study of the Ideas of the Revolutionary Movement of 1798; 1959*), by Kátia de Queirós Mattoso (*Presença francesa no movimento democrático baiano de 1798; The French Presence Democratic Movement of Bahia State in the 1798; 1969*), who sought to understand the origins of ideas present in the Bahia Inconfidência of 1798; and by Rubens Borba de Moraes (*Livros e bibliotecas no Brasil colonial; Books and Libraries in Colonial Brazil; 1979*), who analyses of institutional libraries, such as those associated with ecclesiastical entities (Jesuits and other religious orders) and public access in Rio de Janeiro (the Royal Library) and Bahia (the State Public Library), provide information on the publications held at these institutions, as well as on censorship, book circulation, and colonial typographies (VILLALTA, 2007b, 249)

6 For example, the Brazilian colonial period alone has been researched by Júnia Ferreira Furtado (*O livro da capa verde: o regimento diamantino de 1711 e a vida no Distrito Diamantino no período da Real Extração; The Book with the Green Cover: The Diamond Regiment of 1711 and the Life in the Diamond District During the Period of Royal Extraction*): in her analysis of daily life in the diamond region of Minas Gerais from 1772 to 1808, she found books in the inventories she studied. The period has also been studied by Leila Mezan Algranti in "Os livros de devoção e a religião perfeita: normatização e práticas religiosas nos recolhimentos femininos no Brasil colonial" (*Books on Devotion and the Perfect Religion: Normalization and Religious Practices in Women's Gatherings in Colonial Brazil*), a chapter in *Cultura portuguesa na Terra de Santa Cruz (Portuguese Culture in the Land of Santa Cruz)*, edited by Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, as well as in *Livros de devoção, atos de censura: ensaios de história do livro e da leitura na América portuguesa, 1750-1821 (Devotional Books, Acts of Censorship: Essays on the History of Books and Reading in Portuguese America, 1750-1821)*. In her research, Algranti discusses the ownership, reading, and circulation of devotional books in convent libraries and women's gatherings in Portuguese America, exploring subjects such as the system of censorship and the meanings behind the practice of reading of religious works. Another researcher is Álvaro de Araújo Antunes, who wrote *Espelho de cem faces: o universo relacional de um advogado setecentista (The Mirror of a Hundred Faces: The Relational Universe of an Eighteenth-Century Lawyer)*. He also wrote his doctoral thesis *Fiat justitia: os advogados e a prática da justiça em Minas Gerais, 1750-1808 ('Fiat Justitia': Lawyers and Judicial Practices in Minas Gerais, 1750-1808)*, as well as the article "Os ânimos e a posse de livros em Minas Gerais, 1750-1808" (*Temperaments and Book Ownership in Minas Gerais, 1750-1808*), contained in the collection *O império por escrito: formas de transmissão da cultura letrada no mundo ibérico (The Empire in Writing: Ways of Transmitting Literate Culture in the Iberian World)*, edited by Leila Algranti and Ana Paula Megiani). Antunes's works discuss the private libraries of lawyers who worked in the city of Mariana at the end of the eighteenth century. He attempts to elaborate on the relationship between book ownership and professional practices. Another researcher is Thábita Araújo de Alvarenga, who wrote the 2003 Master's thesis "Homens e livros em Vila Rica: 1750-1800" (*Men and Books in Vila Rica: 1750-1800*). This work used information extracted from the private libraries in Vila Rica, from 1750 to 1800 to reconstruct the social practices involving book ownership at the time, which had an eminently practical sense to readers. Maria Aparecida de Menezes Borrego wrote *A teia mercantil: negócios e poderes em São Paulo colonial, 1711-1765 (The Merchant Web: Business and Power in Colonial São Paulo, 1711-1765)*, as well as the chapter "Entre fazendas da loja e os trastes da casa: os livros de agentes mercantis em São Paulo setecentista" (*Between Store Farms and House Wares: The Books of Mercantile Agents in Eighteenth Century São Paulo*), part of the collection entitled *O império por escrito: formas de transmissão da cultura letrada no mundo ibérico (The Empire in Writing: Methods of Literary Cultural Transmission in the Iberian World)*, edited by Leila Algranti and Ana Paula Megiani. These works provide evidence of several books listed in the inventories in São Paulo, and reflect the existence of a readership (albeit a modest one) at a time when the commercial practices and merchants that linked the city of São Paulo to other regions of Portuguese America, thus inserting the city into business networks that connected interests on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to these authors and several others that we could still cite for the colonial period, noteworthy research has been published by Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva in her the articles "Livro e sociedade no Rio de Janeiro: 1808-1821 (Books and Society in Rio de Janeiro: 1808- 1821)", "Uma biblioteca científica brasileira no início do século XIX" (*A Brazilian Scientific Library at the Beginning of the 19th Century*), "Os livros de Lisboa e o comércio de livros com o Brasil" (*The Lisbon Book Collections and the Book Trade with Brazil*), and her book *Cultura e sociedade no Rio de Janeiro: 1808-1821 (Culture and Society in Rio de Janeiro: 1808-1821)* (VILLALTA, 2007b, p. 249-250).

7 Later, when their assets were evaluated, the books, which previously were only counted, were described in

detail, with information about the author, the work, its conservation status, and its format (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 347-350).

8 Roger Chartier teaches us that "popular media" included printed materials with "plurality of uses," and he notes that, in many cases the printed material was not in book form (CHARTIER, 1990, p. 155).

9 Details on the standardization of seizure records can be read in Rodrigues (2010a, p. 51-64). That is not our focus here.

10 When analyzing the literature imported from Lisbon by traders based in Rio de Janeiro from 1769 to 1822, Márcia Abreu (1999, pp. 227-228; 232 - note 30) found that Seletas latinas ranked second among the most commonly requested works; the first was *The Adventures of Telemachos*. This work was also among the books seized from José de Resende Costa (AUTOS..., 1982, v. 6, p. 428).

11 When José de Resende Costa Filho was arrested and sent to jail in Rio de Janeiro, he took clothes that had not been seized at that moment: six shirts, a morning coat and shorts, three loafers, a pair of socks, and a pair of shoes. These are the only assets cited in the Seizure Records belonging to Resende Costa Filho. (ARQUIVO NACIONAL, v. 7, doc. 14, fl. 5).

12 The historians referred to herein are Burns (1964, p. 432), Villalta (1994, p. 202-203), and Pinto (1992, p. 65; 2014, p. 77).

13 Luiz Villalta (2015, page 327) reminds us that the book's appearance could somehow give it a certain relevance in the eyes of the reader, "creating a certain favorable idea of the content." This is observed in the verses in the satirical poem *Cartas chilenas* by the poet Tomás Antônio Gonzaga; in his First Letter, he uses specific events, signs of the period, and rhetorical devices to describe the arrival of Dom Luís da Cunha and Meneses to take over the governance of the Minas Gerais captaincy from 1783 to 1788 in the form of the character *Fanfarrão Minésio*. One passage reads as follows: "That the gesture, along with the people's dress / Do the same as the inscriptions / On the covers of little books, / That give them, in their opinion, a good idea" (GONZAGA, 1995, p. 52).

André Figueiredo RODRIGUES, PhD. Professor in the Department of History and the Graduate Program in History at São Paulo State University (UNESP). Address: Av. Dom Antonio, 2100 – Parque Universitário – CEP: 19806-900, Assis – SP, Brasil.

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