

Subsystems of Commerce on the Coast of Brazil and the formation of inside interests in the dissolution of the Portuguese Colonial Empire (Santos, 1788-1822)¹

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the initial results of research into coastal commerce and its relations with the colonial system and with the context of the independence. My thesis is that in small ports along the coast of the captaincy of São Paulo, such as Santos, there existed groups of merchants involved in coastal commerce who defended their interest in exclusive participation in this sector and who were

contrary to presence of foreign merchants. This discussion is supported by documents from the Santos customs, such as exportation-importation charts, ship charts, official letters written by governors and customs magistrates and formal petitions of foreign merchants.

Keywords: Portuguese Empire; merchants; coastal trade.

This text presents the first results of ongoing research on commerce along the southern coast of Portuguese America in the period between the modernization of the Portuguese Empire at the end of the eighteenth century and its dissolution between 1808 and 1822.

The historiography of colonial commerce has investigated the exchanges between different points of the coastline of Portuguese America, which linked the principal with the peripheral ports, as well as linking the peripheral ports themselves.² In addition, the municipal administrative documentation – as well as that of the Overseas Council (*Conselho Ultramarino*), referring to the captaincy of São Paulo, shows the prominent military and commercial role that the port of Santos achieved in the center, south and southeast of the country, which led me to the preliminary conclusion that in this period

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conditions existed for the consolidation of commercial subsystems along the coast of Brazil.³

These subsystems participated in the functioning of the colonial system as a whole and also led to the strengthening of interests which were manifested in the conjuncture of the political movement in the first two decades of the nineteenth century that culminated in independence. By *subsystems* I mean the ports that were peripheral in relation to the principal ports – which had predominantly Atlantic orientated activities, such as Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Recife – and their coastal mercantile activity.

The abolition of the fleet system by the Charter of 10 September 1765 stimulated the maturing of coastal commercial subsystems, since it legalized the navigation of Portuguese vessels between the ports of Portuguese America. As the monarch said: “within my dominions, my vassals can sail freely; when it seems good for each one to send their ships and to wherever it is most convenient to send them”. He added that “within my said dominions ... they can sail from any free port to any other ... and that they can pass any of those goods that are permitted to be traded between one port and another, without there being any impediment or embargo”. The fleet system, which until then had imposed many restrictions on ports and mercantile navigation, was no longer suited to the purposes of a more competitive insertion of the Portuguese kingdom in European trade.

Despite the limitations imposed on navigation in Portuguese America until that time, port subsystems had always existed in various parts of the Empire and consisted of ports that were specialized in coastal or intra-insular trade, for a combination of natural reasons (depth of the bar, winds and ocean currents), geo-politics (ease of access to certain areas where it was necessary to assure or consolidate the sovereignty of the Empire) and the economic conditions of the merchants operating within them.

Russell-Wood notes that the routes of the “Portuguese caravels and carracks brought them to ports that were ... integrated in subsidiary transport and communication networks with smaller ports”, which gave extraordinary life to coastal trade and facilitated the redistribution of goods within dominions, as occurred on the coast of Western Africa, the eastern coast of Indian and Ceylon.⁴

In Portuguese America there existed ports ‘with a vocation for oceanic trade’, such as Belém do Pará, São Luís do Maranhão, Recife, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, as well as smaller ports that specialized in cabotage, as was the case of

Fortaleza, Ilhéus, Vitória, Angra dos Reis, Parati, Santos, São Francisco do Sul and Rio Grande, amongst others, along the southern coast. According to Michael Pearson, although he was referring to the largest and principal ports of Asia, the large mass of colonial commerce was coastal. The observations of these authors inspired my more detailed analysis of what I am calling subsystems, making them the object of my investigation.

A COASTAL SUBSYSTEM IN THE CAPTAINCY OF SÃO PAULO

For natural and geopolitical reasons the port of Santos, the principal port in the captaincy of São Paulo, became a subsystem in the center and south of Brazil. This was especially true from 1788 onwards due to Governor Bernardo José de Lorena incentives policies, which during the reign of D. Maria and part of the regency of D. João VI sought to concentrate in this port the commerce of the captaincy of São Paulo and the southern coast.

This policy certainly favored the merchants interested in cabotage trade based in the town of Santos, who to an extent found arguments to defend this in D. Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho's 1798 reform program. One of the beliefs of this program was that the formation of 'centers of political strength' in parts of America would lead to administrative centralization, territorial defense and the formation of a powerful Luso-Brazilian empire.⁵ A center of political strength could concentrate administrative, fiscal, military and mercantile responsibilities in a greater area, expanding the margin of efficiency of public administration in the Kingdom.

The basic elements of the consolidation of a port subsystem along the south/southeastern coast and a group of merchants with interests in the cabotage trade⁶ were thus related to the greater policy of the Empire, which involved, amongst other actions, the rationalization of coastal trade in the captaincy of São Paulo, a venture which the governor Bernardo José de Lorena tried to implement.

These merchants represented a group of Portuguese interests that had long been internalized⁷ and who through trade promoted the center-south-southeast integration of Brazil. The process of the interiorization of the metropole is a current of Brazilian historiography that explains the emancipation process based on the domestic contradictions of Portuguese politics, denying a rupture between colonial elites and those in the Kingdom, but emphasizing the

divergence between Portuguese of the Kingdom and the new Court, the latter being adepts of the “consolidation of an Empire in Brazil”.⁸

In 1808 the transfer of the royal family to Rio de Janeiro represented the victory of the intention of enlightened segments of Portuguese society (and increasingly those of Brazil) to form a powerful Luso-Brazilian empire,⁹ but also the greater commitment to English trading interests in Brazil in a general form, as demonstrated by measures such as the opening of ports in 1808 and the treaties signed by Portugal and England in 1810, which established more advantageous import taxes from British industrial products, to the detriment of those from the metropole,¹⁰ and those of 1815 and 1817, especially in relation to the slave trade.

The formation of a powerful Luso-Brazilian Empire implied the end of monopolies and adoption of liberalizing measures, which also signified free trade and the greater opening of the economy to foreigners. Not all Portuguese interests were concentrated in oceanic trade, internal and coastal interests also existed – as has been widely shown in the historiography – and established groups which had been operating in the sector for a long time needed some protection, whether they were from Brazil or Portugal. In this way it can be seen that there were internal contradictions among the Portuguese in relation to the context of the new court, influencing the set-up of political forces in the independence period related to the articulation of the regions of São Paulo-Minas Gerais-Rio de Janeiro.

Certainly the opening of the ports in 1808 and the 1810 treaties signed by Portugal and England benefited trade in Brazil, formalizing an already existing commercial relationship, as indicated by the tendency for contraband to increase¹¹ and the strong Anglo-Saxon presence in Portuguese trade.¹²

English or Asian fabrics were the most important items imported in the principal and peripheral ports in Portuguese America, and the liberalizing of this trade interested the merchants established in the main and secondary maritime cities. Smaller merchants benefited indirectly from the opening of the ports and the 1810 treaty. The fewer the restrictions on trade imposed on the principal mercantile markets, such as Rio de Janeiro and Bahia, the better for coastal merchants, who found a busy center of supply that was diversified in terms of market prices.

The interests of these coastal merchants were essentially related to the redistribution of European goods and receiving of colonial goods through cabotage, and it is in these areas that the documentation allows us glimpse a

movement, even an institutional one, whose target was to ensure some protection for the coastal trade carried out by merchants, from both Portugal and Portuguese America, established and working in Santos and along the coast of the captaincy of São Paulo and the south of the continent.

It was not oceanic trade that interested them, unlike the merchants of Rio de Janeiro and the captaincies of the north such as Bahia and Pernambuco, because they did not have enough capital and nautical resources for this type of ventures.

These merchants were adepts of free trade. The brothers José Bonifácio de Andrada and Antônio Carlos represented this well in the constituent courts of 1821. The defense of provincial autonomy, an idea that also was supported by the representatives of Bahia and Pernambuco, shows that political autonomy was sought to independently manage the business of the captaincy,¹³ which also involved cabotage trade. Even the specific agrarian interests of the captaincy were intrinsically related to the coastal trade, since the sugar produced was redistributed along the coast.¹⁴

The 1821 *Diário das Cortes Constituintes* deserves to be reread with the sole aim of tracking the insinuation of interest groups in coastal trade in the captaincy defended by deputies from São Paulo. Some situations animate this suggestion, such as the fact that the majority of deputies came from the coast of the captaincy or had a history of working in towns directly linked to the port of Santos: of the nine deputies, three were from Santos, one was born in Santos but had been sent to Rio Grande as a customs magistrate and three came from Itu.

In 1821 the provisional government of São Paulo included a Ministry of the Marine, although it possessed neither a warship or merchant ship. Research of the Constitutional Courts has suggested that this attitude could involve more than a merely administrative intention.¹⁵ The thesis of the defense of the interest of the merchants who operated in the cabotage trade out of Santos can explain the creation of this ministry in the captaincy's government.

Trade and the Independence of Brazil are questions that are interminably tied together, as shown by a vast literature.¹⁶ The creation of a Commission for the Improvement of Trade during the debates in the Constituent Courts also demonstrated this relationship, but the position of Deputy Antônio Carlos de Andrada e Silva, from Santos, encouraged even further the thesis that will be defended here.

Although he caused controversy, Antônio Carlos was not an advocate of the free entrance of ships into Brazilian ports and defended the application of high taxes on the entrance of these vessels (Berbel, 1999, pp.143-150). This measure would restrict the movement of foreign vessels along the coast, which would certainly be concentrated in the principal ports, thereby safeguarding the interests of the merchants established in the cabotage.

The company of Estevão de Resende on D. Pedro's journey to Minas Gerais in May 1822 raise even more suspicions that the interests of the cabotage trade along the southern coast of Brazil sought to build a base of representation in the new political order of emancipation.

Estevão de Rezende was born in Minas in 1777. In 1823 he was elected deputy to the Constituent Assembly for the same province, afterwards he was a member of the General Assembly in 1826, twice minister of the Empire (1823 and 1827), senator for Minas Gerais in 1826 and president of the Senate in 1841. He married the daughter of Brigadier Luiz Antônio de Souza, a rich Portuguese dry goods merchant based in São Paulo and with commercial representation in Sorocaba, Santos, Iguape, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, and in Amarante and Porto in Portugal. He also owned various sugar plantations and warehouses in the town of Santos.¹⁷

LIMITS OF THE BUREAUCRATIZATION OF SUBSYSTEMS

There is a good and important bibliography which has already conceptualized the merchants of São Paulo city and their internal and external mercantile connections in the eighteenth century.¹⁸ My priority, however, is mercantile movements in the town of Santos, with the objective of understanding how a subsystem functioned in a given context. It is not my intention at present to trace a socio-economic profile of the merchants themselves. Nonetheless, as Maria Borrego and Maria Viveiros have stated, various merchants who lived in the city of São Paulo operated in the town of Santos.

The thesis defended in this text, namely the consolidation of mercantile interests along the southern coast of Portuguese America and its influence on the political order of independence, will be supported by qualitative data. The investigation of smaller ports which formed subsystems along the coast is made more difficult by the lack of quantitative data.

From the Pombaline government onwards a significant effort was made to

raise the resources needed to reconstruct Lisbon after the 1755 earthquake.¹⁹ This included the creation of a centralized revenue and expenditure body for the Crown, which functioned in the Kingdom, and Finance Councils (*Juntas da Fazenda*) installed in the captaincies. However, the documentation suggests that the movement of the entrance and departure of vessels in the smaller ports was controlled by customs staff, who were only occasionally asked by the governor to account for port finances.

Inspection tables were set up in the principal ports in 1751,²⁰ and it is suggestive that in the State Archive of São Paulo there exists only one box with documents from the Santos customs. This data indicates the lack of statistical rigor of the kingdom in the smaller ports. There also exists the possibility that these accounts may be found in among documents related to the principal ports to which the smaller ones were directly connected. In the case of Santos, this was Rio de Janeiro.

However, in the middle of these Santos customs papers held in the state archive there exists a chart of the exports from the port in 1798, prepared during the administration of one of the governors, Martinho de Melo Castro e Mendonça, who was most concerned with collecting economic data about São Paulo, possibly motivated by D. Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho when he was Secretary of State of the Marine and Overseas Domains.²¹

In a handwritten manuscript with the products exported to Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro, there appear four columns that register rice, coffee, leather and whale oil. However, shortly below there is an inscription that details better the mercantile activity of the port and at the same demonstrates the limits and the limited rigor of customs staff accounting.

The text states:

as well as the four types stipulated above from the production of the land, also exported to Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro were eighty thousand *arrobas* of sugar, more or less what was carried on horseback from Itu and other towns in the mountains, to here where it was boxed, as well as other effects and foodstuffs produced by the said towns which export it to Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande and which here make the greatest traffic as the most notable and interesting town and seaport in this captaincy.

Some points call attention in this document, such as the registration of sugar in a secondary part – in other words in an external inscription below the table

prepared by the customs agent. As the principal representative of the agro-exporting economy of the captaincy sugar deserved a more rigorous registration of the values and quantities exported, but this did not happen.

The document refers to the calculation of exports for 1798 and there is no mention at any moment of salt, one of the principal products demanded in Portuguese America, especially in areas strongly linked to mule raising economy.

This data helps to revise the thesis that the port of Santos was a 'salt port'. The mention of the 'other effects and foodstuffs', that the document does not specify, contributes to a more diversified vision of the activities of this port and reformulation of the idea that the Sea Road, that had to be followed by anyone coming from the inland parts of the captaincy, was merely a 'sugar road'.

For this period in the customs documentation the charts of the vessels which entered and left the port were not found, unlike 1808 and 1818.²² The 1798 document mentions Rio de Janeiro, Bahia and Rio Grande.

The vessel charts, however, are more detailed, and the two located in the Santos Customs Box show the exchanges between this port and the ports of the south (Rio de São Francisco, Ilha de Santa Catarina, Laguna, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande), the northern and southern coast of the captaincy of São Paulo (Ubatuba, Vila Bella, São Sebastião, Iguape, Cananeia, Paranaguá), Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo, the coasts of the northern captaincies (Pernambuco, Maranhão, Bahia), Lisboa, Madeira, Porto, Figueira, the eastern coast and the western coastal strip of Africa (Mozambique and Cape Verde). Since the ports had already been opened, London and the provinces of Spanish America also appear (Buenos Aires and Montevideo).

Nevertheless, the 1798 map is important as it shows relatively diversified mercantile movement in a small port on the south coast of the captaincy of São Paulo. This map should be read in light of a governor, Martinho Mello e Castro, who began to really demand greater rigor in the registration of movement and accounting of ports that were predominantly non-oceanic, as was the case of Santos and other small ports along the same coast.

Since the government of Morgado de Mateus, and the Pombaline policy stimulus, there had been a concern with the efficiency and rationalization of the financial system. But it would still take some time - until the first decades of the nineteenth century - for the governors of São Paulo to concretely apply a more effective accounting policy.

The arrival of more rigorous accounting, at a time of the consolidation of interests along the coast, may have been the reason for misunderstandings between customs staff and the governor. Some of these were also merchants, such as Bento Thomaz Vianna, an administrator in the same institution and a agent-merchant, which appears to have been the principal characteristic of merchants in the port of Santos.

The perception of Brazil as the center of the economy of the Empire, the move of the court to Rio de Janeiro and the interiorization in the colony of inspection bodies may have weakened the smaller ports previous autonomy regarding the administration of their movement and revenues.

Some captaincy governors, especially at the beginning of the nineteenth century and close to independence, were more rigorous in the inspection of these ports, such as governor João Carlos Augusto D'Oeynhausien who in 1819 officially requested the customs magistrate of Santos to send "immediately the import and export charts... for 1817 and 1818". He also emphasized that it was "prime necessity" that this be sent to the government of the captaincy in "compliance with royal orders".

The response of the customs magistrate to Governor D'Oeynhausien shows that the smaller ports had a tradition of self-administration and the extent of the bad feeling among royal employees due to the rationalization of the fiscal and inspection machinery during the *Joanino* period.

The magistrate said that on 16 April 1809 the Tribunal of the Royal Board of Trade of Rio de Janeiro had made him responsible for the "fortune of the said charts" and that "none of the Honorable Lord Governors and Captain Generals" of the captaincy had requested these charts from him, with the exception of the Conde de Palma (D. Francisco de Assis Mascarenhas), who nevertheless, according to the judge, did not impose on him "any obligation to make any sort of remittance similar" to what he had then received from Oeynhausien.²³

The control of the movement of the smaller ports was also lighter in terms of the actual functioning of the customs. According to what the same magistrate told the governor in 1821, after being alerted again to present the import and export charts, customs officials only worked on these charts "when they were not occupied with the dispatch of goods or the unloading of salt", because for him "these two expedients [had] the preference in the form of the organization to the benefit of trade".

The attempt to place customs guards “at least in the reduction of revenue for the treasury” was fruitless, because according to the magistrate “almost all of them do not know how to write or count, requirements, among others, that they have to be provided with”.

The same officials who loaded and unloaded vessels had to prepare ‘circumstantial’ charts, the phrase used at the time, containing the registration of all material unloaded in the port, “designating, values, volumes and weights and the place from where they came”, with the same occurring for the case of exports.

Another detail of interest in the magistrate’s argument is that untrained and non-educated staff – despite the fact that being educated was essential to acquire the right to exercise these functions –, could be called on to register port movements, while the magistrate also noted that he had never been heard in related to this question, “because the Board of the Royal Treasury had long since [stopped] ordering [him] to inform them of the actual dispositions as opposed to those in the Charter, and the inalterable practice of all customs”.²⁴

To understand this question of the structure of the functioning of the smaller ports, which were less inspected by governors, with the accumulation of tasks of officials or the attribution of the obligation to register port movements to unqualified staff, it is essential to understand why there exists so little data from the time about these ports, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century, and also to give the proper emphasis to the problem of the illegal presence of foreigners and contraband, which was certainly higher on these points of the coast.

SUBSYSTEMS: A PARADISE OF CONTRABAND AND SMUGGLERS

Even after the opening of the ports, the smaller marine cities still had deficiencies in their customs administrative structure that made cabotage trade attractive for merchants established in Brazil and for foreigners, for whom the environment of the belief in liberties and free trade at that time could work in their favor.

In São Sebastião, on the northern coast of the captaincy of São Paulo, there were no customs in 1810 or tax register, and only incoming and not outgoing goods were paid for. That year, the English merchant Luís Pirigal bought a

series of products in that town and paid only 'honorable sureties' to transport them to Rio de Janeiro.

English appear to have been a constant presence in Santos. Among the reasons for this was that the port that needed a large quantity of ordinary and luxury fabrics. In addition, the port was also part of the mercantile leather circuit, to a large extent dominated by the port of Rio Grande.²⁵

I believe that there was a tendency for foreigners of a non-Portuguese background to increasingly enter the intense trade on the peripheral southern and southeastern coast. It is known that many of these merchants were often 'men of the sea' or 'men of seamanship', a definition given by some witnesses in processes requesting qualification as Familiars of the *Santo Oficio*. As a result they did not always have a terrestrial residence. This appears to have been the case of the English corsair Thomas Taylor, who traded with a Spanish smack on the southern coast. In May 1806 he turned up in Santos, using the argument made by almost all foreign merchants along the coast of Brazil before the opening of ports: repairs and the right to hospitality for damaged vessels.

Some ports on the Brazilian coast, seen as strategic for the defense of the dominions of the Portuguese Crown against foreign penetration, had a strong presence of military forces, based in garrisons, fortresses and forts. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Santos came to have this status, due to the Crown policy of closing the ports used by the traditional mining zones of Minas Gerais,.

The deep rooted presence of officers and soldiers in marine cities appears to have had an influence on a type of permissiveness or facility in relation to their contracts with corsairs, foreign merchants and smugglers. Militia corporals often served as masters and boatswains on smacks, and were men who lived between the militia and coastal commerce.

The opening of ports in 1808 opened the consumer market of Portuguese America to products manufactured in other nations, transported in Portuguese vessels, but foreign smacks, launches and brigantines continued practicing illegal trade along the southeastern and southern coast of Brazil, mooring 'underneath the Fortresses', as happened in Barra Grande in Santos. For this they also depended on fort officials and guards to look the other way. On one occasion when the head customs guard and the guards of the vessels went to apprehend a 'package with goods' on an English jolly-boat anchored at the bar of the town of Santos, they were insulted by the English crew and even when

they asked the officer in the fort and the guards of the jail, they were told there were no soldiers to help them.

According to the denunciation of the head-guard, the jolly-boat officers were going to Santos “to sell the goods and presented deeds with great effrontery” and afterwards people from the town went by canoe to Barra Grande and entered “publically the aforesaid vessel with the purpose of trade”, whilst the troops overlooked the defrauding of royal taxes.²⁶

In certain situations officers would cover for foreign merchants, helping them to deal with the inspections and civil authorities. It was the brigadier and commander of the town of Santos who wrote an official letter to Governor França e Horta, adding to it the petition of Thomas Taylor justifying his mooring in Santos.

Taylor alleged that he had arrived in Santos due to a lack of supplies and water and that he needed to make equipment and caulk the vessel. However, to satisfy these expenses on supplies and maintenance of the smack, it was necessary to sell part of the cargo in the port and he asked authorization for this. Along with the English corsair there came an English brig, whose captain Simeão Coleman, also wrote a petition saying that he would pay the product – the tax – to the Royal Treasury.

All the sailors, English and Paraguayan, were unanimous in their statements that the vessel had come from Buenos Aires, headed to Montevideo and went privateering in the River Platte. Before mooring in Santos, the smack had also stopped in Santa Catarina.

English corsairs, therefore, sailed along the southern coast of America, captured Spanish vessels and participated in the cabotage trade, knowing that the smack was a type of vessel appropriate for this type of mercantile trade.

The treatment given by the brigadier and commander of the town of Santos to Taylor and Coleman, however, was not that of a corsair, since he sought to legalize their argumentation.²⁷ Or, as the merchants themselves said, the documents were a form of purifying oneself.²⁸

Along the northern and southern parts of the coast of the captaincy of São Paulo there were many ports more marginal than those of Santos, which thus had less rigorous inspections and which received many of these foreign merchants. Some came with specific cargoes for merchant-agents in Santos.

Although it was of interest to the merchants established in Santos to remain as the predominant force in coastal commerce, certain scenarios or the

unavailability of proper nautical resources could impose the necessity to acquire goods from foreign merchants. The litigious region of the River Platte also could cause established merchants to avoid navigation in those parts, leading them to prefer to acquire goods from vessels, even foreign ones, that brought them to Santos.

In 1804 Pedro Bautro, owner of a Spanish frigate called *Fama*, left Montevideo with “a cargo of forty-two thousand leathers destined for the port of Cadiz” and arrived in São Sebastião, with a “serious need for water and with the ‘wales’ of the ship open”, as Bautro himself stated in the petition he wrote to Governor França e Horta.

He also alleged that the his frigate had suffered so much damage that it was necessary to remove some of the cargo in a smack and he thus asked for authorization to send 4000 – 5000 leather hides to Lieutenant Coronel Caetano José da Silva in Santos, or to whoever the governor ordered “to be sent in vessels that were willing to go to Lisbon”.²⁹ The rest would continue to Cadiz.

Before the opening of the ports in 1808, foreign merchants, using the smaller ports, were already part of Portuguese maritime trade, ‘purifying’ their illegality and introducing themselves into the bureaucracy of the kingdom by means of requests such as the above. Pedro Bautro’s requests were actually authorized by the governor.

However, while the leather hides were transferred, part to the smack *Santa Cruz* and part to the Warehouse of the *Armação Real* (Royal Outfitters), where they would remain until the *Fama* was repaired, Pedro Bautro went to Rio de Janeiro and traded all the cargo, even the damaged smack, to the great indignation of the commandant of the port who noted in an official letter that Pedro Bautro had promised in his request to send 4000 or 5000 leathers to Santos.³⁰

After this the Captain-General of the port argued that the leathers hides should be sent to the merchant-agent of Santos, and managed to get authorization from the governor to prevent Pedro Bautro from retrieving the 3100 hides that that been transferred to the *Santa Cruz*.

In a new petition Pedro Bautro resorted to the rights of hospitality which “required that he be received and helped”, further challenging the Captain-General and the governor when he said that this hospitality was costly and that he would pay the ‘taxes’, but that they should give him a “document,

so that in the presence of his sovereign he could shown him how in this captaincy hospitality was observed with allied nations”.

The use of a diplomatic argument swayed the governor, who authorized the Spanish merchant to sell his goods in Rio de Janeiro rather than Santos. Nevertheless, he had to present a guarantor to ensure the delivery of the hides to Rio de Janeiro and the payment of any monies due.

The entrance of foreign merchants into the cabotage trade before the opening of the ports was shown by Pedro Bautro’s success in obtaining three guarantors, all from the city of São Paulo. Providing guarantors involved trust in the person, who was either known directly or was indicated by another, to whom the credit would be made.

Pedro Bautro, therefore, despite stating that he was “a private individual from the Spanish nation” and not having correspondents in São Sebastião or in the captaincy, and barely able for this reason to satisfy the said guarantee, must have had some insertion in the local community of merchants. Of his guarantors, two held positions in the council of São Paulo. Colonel José Vaz de Carvalho was a magistrate and *almotacé* (examiner of prices and weights); Francisco Antonio de Souza, one of the principal merchants of the city, with inland, coastal and Atlantic mercantile interests, was also an *almotacé*; the third guarantor was José de Andrade e Vasconcellos.³¹

As has already been mentioned, particular circumstances could result in a merchant established in Portuguese America and involved in coastal business allowing some space for the participation of foreign merchants in the sector. Nevertheless, the success of their business and their strengthening as a group depended on a certain level of protection from royal policy, as happened before 1808.

The documentation indicates that foreigners had always traded along the coast, selling European or colonial goods to merchants-agents in smaller ports or buying colonial goods to be redistributed in larger ports, but this was subject to the hindrances of Portuguese legislation, and established merchants in turn always had the ability to resort to the law if they felt prejudiced.

The opening of the ports and the even the sense of liberties of the time may have had the effect of making the traffic of foreign merchants along the coast easier. In 1813 a royal notification and a note from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for War, both sent to Lord Strangford, were also sent to the governor of the captaincy de São Paulo, Luís Teles da Silva (Marquês de

Alegrete), confirming that the charging of duties on the transshipment of English goods had been suspended.

Transshipment was a common stage in the cabotage trade and the 1810 Treaty, which allowed for favorable tariffs for British products transported in Portuguese vessels, may have been followed, as the royal notification suggests, by measures that allowed for coastal redistribution.

At the same time, as well as advantageous tariffs for their goods, English merchants obtained a certain amount of favor, since instead of paying directly for transshipment duties they were allowed to present guarantees, something which they certainly easily obtained in their coastal mercantile relations.

In the royal notifications dated 15 November 1814, 9 January 1815 and 11 August 1816, D. João VI ordered the prohibition of the cabotage trade to foreigners, but they were already all along the coast, working in areas that functioned as subsystems of colonial trade, as was the case of Santos, redistributing colonial goods among the ports and trading European goods.

In 1816, the same year as the final notification banning foreigners from the cabotage trade, D. João VI, possibly under English pressure, allowed foreigners to export products they grew themselves to any port.

This thus involved pendular political behavior that ended up always offending someone: sometimes established merchants who carried out coastal trade in Brazil, sometimes foreign merchants (Costa, 1980, pp.77-78).

Around the time of independence the government of the captaincy of São Paulo appeared to contain representatives of the interests of established merchants who operated along the southern coast of Brazil. In 1821 the merchants from this area met and wrote a petition to the vice-president and secretary of the interior and finance of the provisional government of São Paulo against an English brig which had entered the port “carrying salt bought in Rio de Janeiro at the price of that market”. In response the customs magistrate was told to embargo the salt and to explain his motives for allowing it to be unloaded.³²

The customs magistrate sought to justify himself by resorting to Portuguese legislation, alleging that the prohibition of coastal trade to foreigners only applied to “foodstuffs typical of the country”, and that salt was a foreign product.

Several days after the magistrate’s justification a new order was sent to him by the provisional government of the captaincy, requesting the suspension of the

embargo imposed on the salt from the English brig. What is curious is that the first letter and the order were both signed by the vice-president and secretary of the interior and finance. The latter was also signed by “gentlemen from the provisional government of this province”.³³ This situation suggests an internal division that deserves to be investigated in more detail.

The merchants’ petition denouncing the English brig was not signed, but was written in the third person plural. Its content denoted the force of conviction in the protection that could be given by the Court.

They clearly believed that “HM [had] ordered in favor of internal trade and national business the prohibition of the so-called coastal trade of cabotage to foreigners, by royal notification of 15 November 1814 issued to the government of this province”.

Nonetheless, they recognized that foreigners were entering this forbidden “trade and business”, one of the examples being the brig *Courier*, which delivered a cargo of salt to an English merchant, Guilherme Whitaker, who was registered among the population of Santos.

However, there is a moment at which it was very clear what could have existed along the coast of the captaincy of São Paulo regarding the defense of trade carried out by ‘nationals’, with this being the designation most used for Portuguese established there for a long time or born in Portuguese America.

This is when they say:

this procedure of unloading diametrically opposed the spirit and the letter of royal orders in favor of internal trade and national business, to be practical and to open the trade or competition of foreigners in the same as they project and start to practice after the others ... will mean that shortly these foreigners will entirely possess our trade and navigation... excluding the residents of this kingdom and province employed in such a useful area, so that the remnant of our *merchant marine* will disappear at the same time and rest of the money which foreigners so desire.³⁴

At this moment of crisis in the Empire, it seemed that the merchants who operated in Santos still had the same perception they had always had that the orders of the king would give them some protection. The presence of representatives from São Paulo in the Constituent Courts and in the new political order in 1822 may be related to this defense of merchant marine along the Brazilian coast. This intention appears in the attitude of the provisional

government of São Paulo, which created a Ministry of the Marine, under Miguel José de Oliveira Pinto.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The coastal trade subsystems in Brazil thus covered ports not directly involved in the Atlantic trade, but ones which polarized the movement of colonial and European goods along the coast and inland. Many of them came to have influence over extensive areas of the coast, as was the case of Santos.

The administrative and inspection actions of the Portuguese Empire had unequal textures in Brazil and along its coast. The smaller ports, since they had looser customs administration, tended to be attractive to merchants, both foreign and Portuguese, since duties were not paid on the departure of goods and had less rigid control and inspection resources.

With the opening of the ports, the government of D. João VI, having made a commitment to the English, tried to balance itself between protecting the interests of the Portuguese who had long operated in these ports and in the cabotage trade, and to guarantee to a certain extent the insertion which foreign merchants, especially English, already possessed.

It was in this political game with its tense equilibrium that the interests of the captaincy of São Paulo came to be introduced in the new political order of 1822. Not as an agro-exporting economy – which had not reached the proportions it would grow to during the coffee period, which was still far in the future, though marked by the presence of Nicolau Pereira de Campos Vergueiro in the Ministry of Agriculture of the provisional government of 1821 –, but as an economy of cabotage trade.

NOTES

¹ This text is part of a research project that has been underway for at least two years and partially funded by CNPq. I was especially able to mature my vision of the Portuguese Empire in the four encounters that took place in 2009 in Cátedra Jaime Cortesão for the discussion of the fourth report of the thematic project Dimensions of the Portuguese Empire (Fifteenth to Nineteenth Century), coordinated by Prof. Laura de Mello e Souza. I would like to thank Prof. Vera Ferlini, coordinator of the Economic and Social Dynamics Group of the same project for accepting this research in the Cátedra and for some sugges-

tions at the beginning. In the transcription of the documents I counted on the collaboration of my then Scientific Initiation student, Felipe Garrido, currently a master's student in the Unesp Post-Graduate Program at Franca campus.

² Sampaio, Antonio Carlos Jucá de. Os homens de negócio do Rio de Janeiro e sua atuação nos quadros do Império português (1701-1750). In: *O antigo regime nos trópicos: a dinâmica imperial portuguesa (séculos XVI-XVIII)*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001, pp.73-106; Valentin, Agnaldo. Comércio marítimo de abastecimento: o porto de Iguape (São Paulo), 1798-1880. Available at: www.abphe.org.br/congresso2003/Textos/Abphe_2003_73.pdf; Meinz, Maximiliano M. Centro e periferias coloniais: o comércio do Rio de Janeiro com Santos e Rio Grande (1802-1818). *Revista de História*, São Paulo: Depto. de História, FFLCH, USP, no. 154, pp. 251-266, 2006; Osório, Helen. *O Império português no sul da América: estancieiros, lavradores e comerciantes*. Porto Alegre: Ed. UFRGS, 2007.

³ I owe this idea to a fruitful dialogue with Mozart Vergetti after watching his communication at a roundtable at the II International Meeting of Colonial History in Natal (RN) in 2008.

⁴ This combination of natural reasons and reasons of state that allowed a port achieve the status of monopoly in navigation, albeit just oceanic, is shown by Elliot for the case of Seville and its complex of ports of San Lúcar and Cádiz. See *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, pp.108-109; Russell-Wood, A. J. R. *Um mundo em movimento: os portugueses na África, Ásia e América (1415-1808)*. Lisboa: Difel, 1998, pp.63-65. In some parts of the Portuguese Empire, however, the Portuguese did not practice coastal commerce, which was in the hands of the local population, as was the case of Eastern Africa. See, Pearson, Michel N. Markets and merchant communities in the Indian Ocean. In: Bethencourt, Francisco; Curto, Diogo Ramada. *Portuguese oceanic expansion - 1400-1800*. Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp.93-95 and 101.

⁵ Berbel, Márcia Regina. *A nação como artefato: deputados do Brasil nas cortes portuguesas, 1821-1822*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1999, p.166.

⁶ Russell-Wood notes that outside the dominions of the state of Brazil, the Portuguese were little involved in coastal trade. However, this statement lacks a detailed specification of whether those who carried out this trade were residents of the areas in question, or if they were 'men of the sea', as the documentation of the time calls them, or if they lived in the Kingdom. In certain areas they were not directly involved in cabotage, as in the Gulf of Benin in Western Africa. See Russell-Wood, 1998, pp.63-65.

⁷ Of the 12 merchants of the town of Santos who I believe to be the most important, because they had reached the rank of *Familiar do Santo Ofício* and held high military rank, ten were born in Portugal; of these six came from the *Comarca* of Minho.

⁸ Dias, Maria Odila Leite da Silva. *A interiorização da Metrópole (1808-1853)*. In: Mota, Carlos Guilherme. *1822: dimensões*. 2.ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1986, p.169.

⁹ Márcia Berbel admits that in the constitutional courts of 1821 the political proposal from São Paulo was close to the idea of a ‘powerful Luso-Brazilian Empire’ dreamt of by the “enlightened elite since the end of the eighteenth century”. Berbel, 1999, p.78.

¹⁰ It has to be taken into account that the favorable tariff of 15% on products manufactured in England was applied to those imported ‘by Portuguese’. This English presence in the Brazilian economy during the Joanino period, however, was tinted with a certain amount of protectionism of Portuguese interests that D. João VI sought to assure, as noted by Emília Viotti da Costa: “the benefits that D. João VI conceded with one hand he sought to restrict with the other, extended to the Portuguese. See, *Introdução ao estudo da emancipação política do Brasil*. In: Mota, Carlos Guilherme (Org.). *Brasil em perspectiva*. 11.ed. São Paulo; Rio de Janeiro: Difel, 1980, p.78.

¹¹ For a creative discussion, well supported by qualitative data, of the difference between condemning and prohibiting contraband in the Portuguese Empire, see Pijning, Ernst. A new interpretation of contraband trade. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 81, pp. 733-738, 2001; and *Contrabando na legislação portuguesa durante o período colonial*. Sociedade Brasileira De Pesquisa Histórica (SBPH). *Anais da XIV Reunião*. Salvador, pp. 85-88, 1994.

¹² Pedreira, Jorge Miguel de Melo Viana. *Os homens de negócio da praça de Lisboa de Pombal ao vintismo (1755-1822)*. Diferenciação, reprodução e identificação de um grupo social. Lisboa: Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1995, pp.118-119.

¹³ According to Márcia Berbel the support of São Paulo for the prince regent was dependent, amongst other demands, on the “free administration of the provincial economy (refusal to send resources to the Treasury in the Court)” and on the “right to representation the implementation of laws and decrees against local particularities and circumstances, at the judgment of the Council” (1999, p.74). In relation to the São Paulo project at this time, great attention has to be paid to the works of Miriam Dolhinikoff.

¹⁴ I am referring to producers from the traditional ‘sugar quadrilateral’, studied by Petrone and linked to the port of Santos. But there were also, though they have not yet been studied, producers from the town in the north, more linked to the northern coast of the captaincy, through the ports of Ubatuba and São Sebastião. Petrone, Maria Thereza Schorer. *A lavoura canavieira em São Paulo: expansão e declínio (1765-1888)*. São Paulo: Difel, 1968.

¹⁵ BERBEL, 1999, p.74 and 76. Of the nine deputies, seven represented Santos or Itu, which indicates the base of the representativeness of the captaincy of São Paulo at that moment.

¹⁶ Dias, 1986; Lenharo, Alcir. *As tropas da moderação*. O abastecimento da Corte na formação política do Brasil: 1808-1842. 2.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Turismo e Esporte, 1993; Oliveira, Cecília Helena. *A astúcia liberal: relações de mercado e projetos políticos no Rio de Janeiro (1820-1824)*. São Paulo: Uduf/Ícone, 1999. Among the proposals made in the constituent courts there was one in favor of trade “as an almost bellic activity, commanded and directed by the Luso-Brazilian state with the objective of strengthening it against others. Trade and the marine appeared associated with the defense

of territory and both were extensions of state competence”. This was almost the old mercantile monopoly (Berbel, 1999, p.150).

¹⁷ Costa, 1980, p.119; and Leonzo, Nancy. Um empresário nas milícias paulistas: o brigadeiro Luís Antônio de Souza. *Anais do Museu Paulista*, São Paulo, Tomo 30, 1980/1981, pp.246-247.

¹⁸ Araújo, Maria Lúcia Viveiros. *Os caminhos das riquezas dos paulistanos na primeira metade do Oitocentos*. São Paulo: Hucitec; Fapesp, 2006; and Borrego, Maria Aparecida de Menezes. *A teia mercantil: negócios e poderes em São Paulo (1711-1765)*. São Paulo: Alameda, 2010.

¹⁹ In relation to the character of Pombalism in the reform of the Portuguese state and for a more complete vision of the complexity of the 1755-1763 context, between the earthquake and the Seven Years War, the following is recommended reading: Monteiro, Nuno Gonçalves. *As reformas na monarquia pluricontinental portuguesa: de Pombal a D. Rodrigo*, a text to be published and graciously given to me by the author for reading and prior discussion. This is reinforced by the essential work by Souza Laura de Mello e. *O sol e a sombra: política e administração na América Portuguesa*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006, p.49.

²⁰ Alden, Dauril. *Colonial roots of modern Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, p.12. These Inspection Points had been subordinated to the Board of Trade in Lisbon since 1755.

²¹ Mapa da exportação dos produtos da paróquia da vila de Santos no ano de 1798. Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, doc. 1-25-2. It is even considered that the Morgado de Mateus had a more incipient interest in the statistics of the São Paulo economy and that the “elements collected by the governor (Melo e Castro) are indispensable for the study of the economic history of São Paulo”. Petrone, 1968, pp.137-138. The same author highlights the limits and the difficulties of obtaining statistical data about the economy of São Paulo and the movement of seaports and dry ports, such as in Santos, principally for the eighteenth century.

²² Mapa das embarcações que entraram e saíram nesse porto de Santos, 1808 e 1818. Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, docs. 1-14-2 and 1-20-4.

²³ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 21, doc. 1-21-3, 1819.

²⁴ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, doc. 1-23-15, 1821.

²⁵ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 15, doc. 1-15-2, 1810 and 1-15-3, 1810. See also Menz, Maximiliano M. *Entre dois Impérios: formação do Rio Grande na Crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial (1777-1822)*. Doctoral Dissertation (in Economic History) – FFLCH, USP. São Paulo, 2006; Osório, 2007.

²⁶ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço,1, pasta 13, doc. 1-13-3, 1808; doc. 1-13-4, 1808; 1-13-5, 1808.

²⁷ Autos-cíveis de exame e vistoria feita numa sumaca espanhola... neste porto apresada pelo brigue inglês de que he mestre Thomas Taylor. Apesp, ordem 236, cx. 10, doc. 10-6-46, 1806.

²⁸ As stated by Pedro Bautro, a Spanish merchant who reached São Sebastião in 1804. Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 9, doc. 1-9-24, 1804.

²⁹ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 9, doc. 1-9-7, 1804.

³⁰ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 9, doc. 1-9-15, 1802.

³¹ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 9, docs. 1-9-23 and 1-9-24, 1804.

³² Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 23, doc. 1-23-23, 1821.

³³ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 23, doc. 1-23-26, 1821.

³⁴ Alfândega – almoxarifado 1722-1822, Santos, C00227, maço 1, pasta 23, doc. 1-23-27, 1821, emphasis added.