

Ascetic tropics: Franciscans, missionary knowledge and visions of Empire in the Portuguese Atlantic at the turn of the eighteenth century

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ABSTRACT: This essay focuses on the study of Franciscan written and intellectual culture in Portuguese America. Specifically, it analyzes the role the Franciscans played, through their writings, in the shaping of the Portuguese-American world, of the way that world was thought about, and of contemporary understandings of the place Brazil should occupy within the Portuguese monarchy. It examines the visions of the Empire which the so-called Seraphic Order developed in the Brazilian colonial context, the written strategies they used, and the missionary and colonial knowledge which they employed when constructing their perceptions of the American world. To that end, it looks in detail at the Franciscan friar António do Rosário and his text *Frutas do Brasil* (Lisbon, 1702), in which he used his knowledge of the natural world to construct a complex plant-based allegory with clear political connotations about Brazil.

KEYWORDS: Franciscans; António do Rosário; Natural knowledge; Portuguese America; Portuguese Empire; 17th-18th centuries.

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RESUMEN: *Trópicos ascéticos: franciscanos, saberes misioneros y visiones de imperio en el Atlántico portugués en torno a 1700.*- El presente trabajo centra su atención en el estudio de la cultura escrita e intelectual de los franciscanos en la América portuguesa. En concreto, analiza el papel que los franciscanos, a través de sus textos, desempeñaron en la configuración del mundo luso-americano, en el modo de pensarlo y en la forma de entender el lugar que Brasil debía ocupar dentro de la Monarquía portuguesa. Examina las visiones de imperio que la Orden seráfica construyó, las estrategias escritas que empleó a tal efecto y los saberes misioneros y coloniales que movilizó a la hora de elaborar sus percepciones del mundo americano. Para ello, se centra en la figura de Fr. António do Rosário y su obra *Frutas do Brasil* (Lisboa, 1702), en la que el autor hizo uso de su conocimiento del mundo natural para construir una compleja alegoría hortofrutícola de claras connotaciones políticas en torno a Brasil.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Franciscanos; António do Rosário; saber natural; América portuguesa; Imperio portugués; siglos XVII-XVIII.

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This essay seeks to analyze several aspects related to Franciscan intellectual and written culture in the Portuguese-American context. Although historiography has traditionally relegated the Franciscans to the background, they played a central role at the heart of Portuguese-American colonial society right from the Order's establishment in 1585. However, its role became even more important during the second half of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth century (Romag, 1940; Röwer, 1941; Röwer, 1947; Willeke, 1974; Willeke, 1977). The Franciscans were leading figures in the intellectual and learned sphere which was created in different areas of the Brazilian colony, and their role in that sphere became even more central from the end of the 1600s. Starting at that time, the Order underwent a process of "intellectualization", culminating in the eighteenth century with several of its friars becoming members of the colony's academies and learned circles (Almeida, 2012; Palomo, 2014; Moraes, 2014).¹ The position which the Franciscans occupied in the Portuguese-American intellectual world was reinforced by significant written production going as far back as the early seventeenth century. However, their output was admittedly less vast than that of the Jesuits, and was principally circulated in manuscript form (Jaboatão, 1761: 208-229). It encompassed a wide variety of genres, from catechisms, dictionaries and grammar manuals in indigenous languages to natural history texts, narratives of missions, chronicles and hagiographic accounts, sermons and devotional treatises. The Franciscans in Portuguese America, therefore, contributed—to a greater or lesser extent—to the formation and circulation of the knowledge which tended to arise from missionary activity (Castelnaud-L'Estoile *et al.*, 2011; Wilde, 2011). The Order promoted the introduction of certain devotions aimed at specific communities (such as merchants, *pardos* and slaves) in order to integrate them into colonial society; they contributed to the composition of the history of the Order, and of the Portuguese in Brazil more generally; and they reflected in their texts the political and social realities of the colony. In this sense, the following pages seek to respond to some of the questions about the role the Franciscans played, through their writings, in the shaping of the Portuguese-American world, of the way that world was thought about, and of contemporary understandings of the place Brazil should occupy within the Portuguese monarchy. What visions of the Portuguese Empire and of the New World did the Franciscans succeed in building at certain moments in time? Specifically, how was Brazil perceived by those Franciscans who wrote their texts not with a metropolitan outlook based on accumulated knowledge, but drawing on their own experiences of the New World—Franciscans at the borders of the Empire itself, or rather, in one of those many centres like Pernambuco, Bahia, Luanda and Goa which made up the pluricontinental Portuguese monarchy? How did they construct their discourse? What writing practices and rhetorical strategies did they exploit? What missionary and local knowledge did they employ and how did they use that when writing texts like these?

To respond to these questions, the present analysis will focus on Friar António do Rosário and his written output. Friar António, a monk in the province of San Antonio de Brasil, wrote several devotional texts around 1700 which had not insignificant success in his contemporary Portuguese-American environment. Specifically, this analysis will examine the contexts of production in which one of his most original works, entitled *Frutas do Brasil, numa Nova, e Ascetica Monarchia, consagrada à Santissima Senhora do Rosario*, was produced. Printed in Lisbon in 1702 by António Pedroso Galvão, the text is relatively well known to scholars of colonial Brazil and its intellectual contexts. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda wrote a few pages about it in his *Visão do Paraíso* (Holanda, 2010: 345-354). However, the attention paid to Rosário's work has tended to be more literary than historiographical, focused mainly on its rhetorical and stylistic features and attempting to frame the work within the Portuguese-American Baroque (Hatherly, 2000; Hatherly, 2002; Anastásia, 2009; Biron, 2009). Although the text may not appear to be much more than a minor collection of sermons and pieces of sacred oratory, it is in fact an extended vegetable-based allegory, in which the fruits of the New World are proposed as metaphors which set out a specific ideal of monarchy and Christian society (Rosário, 1702). The text in a way belongs to a genre of political-allegorical writing which was echoed in both the Peninsular Iberian world and Spanish America (Flor, 1999; Cañizares-Esguerra, 2001; Rubial García, 2010: 210-230). Making use of his knowledge of nature, which took on a clear 'moralizing' dimension, as we shall see, Rosário ultimately poses a whole series of questions related to the Portuguese-American colonial context to which he belonged and, more generally, to the role which, in his view, Brazil should play at the heart of the Braganza monarchy.

FRIAR ANTÓNIO DO ROSÁRIO AND THE 1702 EDITION OF *FRUTAS DO BRASIL*

We have few biographical details about the life of this Franciscan friar. He was born in Lisbon in around 1647, and soon before turning 24 he joined the Discalced Augustinians in the recently-founded Convent of Monte Olivete, in the same city, taking the name Friar António de Santa Maria. As an Augustinian, he carried out duties as a lecturer in Arts and Philosophy, as a preacher and as General Visitor for the Order. He also wrote a number of texts which, as we shall see, were circulated in print. We do not know why he made the decision to leave the Augustinian order and join the secular clergy; what we do know, however, is that he moved to Brazil in 1686, to the city of Salvador de Bahia, as a secular clergyman. Soon afterwards, however, he decided to enter religious life once more, this time joining the Discalced Franciscans, also known as *capuchos* in the Portuguese context. He eventually took his vows in 1689, in the convent of Nossa Senhora das Neves de Olinda in Pernambuco, changing his name one final time to António do Rosário. His presence in the region of Pernambuco, travelling between the convents of

Olinda, Recife and Ipojuca, was to a large extent marked by the activities he undertook as a apostolic missionary, performing many of his duties among indigenous communities but also, undoubtedly, among the members of the complex colonial society which had been established in this area of Portuguese America (Jaboatão, 1761: 212-213; Barbosa Machado, 1741-1759: I, 377-378).

Friar António, furthermore, spent part of his time writing a number of works of a spiritual and devotional nature, thereby continuing the writing activities he had carried out during his years as an Augustinian. At that time he had written a short work, entitled *Martirologio singular da invictissima Japonesa a Madre Maria Madalena*, which was printed in 1675 in a small-format edition (12°) in Lisbon by João Galvão (Rosário, 1675). His *Sermam das almas*, the product of his preaching, was printed, again in Lisbon, by João da Costa in 1678 (Rosário, 1678). During the years he spent in Portuguese America (where he remained until his death in 1704), and after entering the Franciscan order, another four texts of his were published, all of them aimed principally at audiences in Pernambuco. In 1691, a small sermon-book in 4° format entitled *Feyra Mystica de Lisboa* was published, printed again by João Galvão. In this book, Rosário brought together two sermons and few talks [*práticas*] he had himself delivered at the Convent of Olinda during the *trezenario* for Saint Anthony in 1688 (Rosário, 1691). This was followed by another short work, the *Carta de Marear*, which was published in a smaller format (8°) as a short guide to the mental prayer necessary for “the settlers in the New World of Brazil” [*os ultramarinos do novo mundo do Brasil*].² With possibly rhetorical intentions —part of the modesty *topos* required for any printed book— Rosário assured that the book was only published after it had been circulating in manuscript copies, beyond his control (Lisbon: António Pedroso Galvão, 1698). He thus decided, he wrote, to “restore and add to the said *Carta*, so that it may be circulated in better condition as a printed book” [*restaurar, & acrescentar a dita Carta, com tenção que pella estampa, mais bem acondicionada se pudesse espalhar*] (Rosário, 1698: preliminaries, no page number).³ Soon afterwards, in 1701, a new volume was released by the Lisbon printer Manuel Manescal da Costa, entitled *Sortes de S. António*, in which Rosário brought together once again sermons which he had delivered at another *trezenario* dedicated to Saint Anthony, observed at the beginning of June 1693 in the church of the Franciscan Convent in Recife (Rosário, 1701). The Galvão family’s printing workshop in Lisbon was used once again by Friar António to print the text which would prove to be (as we shall see) his most unique and complex work, *Frutas do Brasil*, printed, as mentioned above, in 1702.⁴

Despite the relatively “minor” character of some of his texts, Rosário’s written and printed output places him at the forefront of Franciscan Portuguese-American writers, and undoubtedly makes him one of the most successful in terms of printed works, only just surpassed in the eighteenth century by figures like Friar António de Santa Maria Jaboatão, Friar Francisco Xavier de Santa Teresa, Friar

José da Conceição Gama and Friar Apolinário da Conceição (Almeida, 2012; Palomo, 2014). Like Apolinário, Rosário successfully won over several important figures in the colonial world as patrons for his devotional writings, persuading them to finance the printing of some of his texts in Lisbon. The very decision to finance the printing of books like these must have taken on a particular significance in a place like Portuguese America; printed works like Rosário’s, which were intended for the colony itself and the reading public of Brazil, were even more valuable because of the absence of printing presses in the region.⁵ We might wonder, indeed, whether people took on the patronage of these works to emphasize their piety; the colonial elites were used to performing religious acts as a way of increasing and consolidating their reputations within the communities they belonged to and in which, generally, they had flourished through business and/or owning land. In truth, the religious dimension of financing these printed works was only one of many factors in a more ambitious strategy for social promotion. In a context like Pernambuco around 1700, financing the edition of a text and thereby becoming the object of its dedication was ultimately a form of distinction, as a way of investing in the acquisition of specific social and cultural capital. In such spaces, where the elites needed clear markers to endow them with honor and status, financing the printing of a devotional text became part of a whole set of practices which naturally arose from the logic of “ennoblement” (Palomo, 2014: 126-132).

Friar António do Rosário himself expressed this impression in the dedication which he wrote to D. Francisco de Sousa, from whom he had raised the funding to print the *Carta de Marear*. A member of an old family in Pernambuco with links to the sugar industry, the owner of several mills, and well-connected to the court, D. Francisco was also, as indicated on the book’s frontispiece, a *fidalgão* of the Royal Household, a Knight of the Order of Christ and a Colonel of the Cavalry of Pernambuco. He had played a relatively important role in the so-called Mascate War (“War of the Peddlers”) in 1710-1711,⁶ and fulfilled long-held ambitions for honors some years later when he was named *maestro de campo* of the Recife corps, as his father had been previously (Mello, 2003: 381-382, 464).⁷ Despite the important position which D. Francisco already held at the heart of society in Pernambuco in 1698, Friar António did make it clear that the decision to finance the edition of this new book had bestowed further prestige on him. The book, he wrote, was no less than an “monument through which posterity will know of His Worship as the first son of Brazil who, with the new patronage of this work, has immortalized his name and honored his ancestors” [*Obelisco, em que a posteridade advertirá ser V.M. o primeiro filho do Brasil, que com o novo meçonado desta obra, soube V.M. immortalizar o nome, acreditar os ascendentes*] (Rosário 1698: Dedication to D. Francisco de Sousa. Preliminaries; no page number).

The case of Francisco de Sousa —who, it seems, was the foremost figure in this type of literary patronage with-

in Brazil— was quite different to that of Simão Ribeiro Ribas, the general commissary of the cavalry in Pernambuco. He also took on the printing costs of some of Friar Antônio do Rosário's other works, lending his patronage, specifically, to the Lisbon edition of *Frutas do Brasil*. But, in his case, the symbolic weight and the social effects which a move like this could bring were of even greater value. Unlike D. Francisco de Sousa, Ribas was born in Northern Portugal, from humble origins (his father was a laborer), who had made his considerable fortune as a merchant in Pernambuco. In short, he was a *mascate* ("peddler"). Through marriage, he had become part of an enriched mercantile elite which aspired to social recognition and political participation in Pernambuco (Souza, 2012). Like others with links to these groups, Ribas not only attempted to hold military positions, such as that of commissary of the cavalry, which he held in 1702. That same year, he also acquired a sugar mill and, soon afterwards, became a *familiar* of the Inquisition. In 1710, he became part of the first municipal corporation in Recife, making a name for himself, like Sousa, during the 1710-1711 war which pitted the *mascates* of Recife against the *nobreza da terra* linked to neighboring Olinda. As part of his strategy for social ascent, Ribas joined the Third Order of San Francisco of Recife, founded in 1695, as did his father-in-law Miguel Correia Gomes. The Order, in truth, played a central role as a space for social legitimation for the mercantile (*mascate*) community to which Ribeiro Ribas belonged (Marques, 2010). Against this backdrop, financing the edition of a printed book like *Frutas do Brasil* undoubtedly helped to strengthen his position at the heart of the Third Order, and laid the way for him to become *ministro* of the Order in 1710-1711. More generally, it also strengthened his position within Pernambuco.

It is clear from the nature of Rosário's writings and printed works that they were, in the main, the product of (and, at the same time, a mirror of) the apostolic activities which he carried out in Brazil's northern coastal regions. Specifically, those activities —preaching, instruction for the holy life and rural missions— were aimed not at converting gentile indigenous people but rather colonizers of Portuguese origin, and at slaves and natives who had already been converted. As with many other contemporary missionaries' texts —both within and beyond Europe— Friar Antônio sought in his writings to prolong his apostolic activity by putting at the disposal of the faithful, as a sort of written mission, the instruments which would allow them to properly observe holy practices and exercises. In short, printing books was a way of extending his mission (Bouza, 2008; Palomo, 2010: 144-147). This aim was made particularly explicit in the *Carta de Marear* itself, whose first draft, Rosário confirmed, had been written while he was fully engaged in missions carried out at the behest of the captaincy in Pernambuco. The *Carta*, he wrote, had been very useful for inspiring "many people to further devotion and benefiting their souls" [*a devoção de muytos, e experimental aproveitamento das almas*]. In his own words, the circulation of the text in manuscript form

had made it "confused, misshapen and corrupted because of the range and ignorance of the pens [with which it was copied]" [*mareada, disforme, & viciada, pela variedade & ignorancia das penas*]. Therefore, the aim in printing it, as discussed above, was to re-establish it in its original form, so that it could serve the "poorest and most lost people in these lands" [*os mais pobres, & remontados destes Paizes*] as a brief set of instructions for mental prayer (Rosário, 1698: Prologue to the reader. Preliminaries, no page number).

Compared to Friar Antônio's other texts, *Frutas do Brasil* offers a curiously different outlook. It is certainly his most complex work, rhetorically, intellectually and spiritually, and was perhaps aimed also at more learned audiences. Dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, the work has an essentially religious and moral character, which the Franciscans Jerônimo da Ressureição and Luís da Purificação duly noted in their respective *ensuras* of the text. The first, who noted that his fellow Franciscan's previous texts had essentially been of a spiritual and devotional nature, emphasized the moralizing direction of Rosário's new work. In this text, the fruits served as no more than a vehicle which the author ingeniously used as allegories of "virtues and good habits" [*virtudes, & bõs costumes*]. Through these allegories, he sought to encourage in all "the spirit to serve and love God well" [*o espirito para bem servirem, & amarem a Deos*] (Rosário, 1702: *Censura*. Preliminaries, no page number). The Jesuit Baltasar Duarte, on the other hand, expressed a somewhat different opinion in his *censura* written at the behest of the Royal Censor. While recognizing his talent for articulating "inventions of some benefit about virtues, and curious invectives about vice",⁸ he did not hesitate —rightly— to highlight the book's political dimension. In his view, the text was not only an appeal for greater recognition of Brazil's already-central role in the context of the Portuguese monarchy; it was also a demand for greater recognition as a result from the Crown (Rosário, 1702: *Censura*. Preliminaries, no page number).

Beyond its vindicatory nature, Friar Antônio's work is constructed, effectively, as a political and moral allegory, based around three great sermons or, to use the author's words, three great "parables". Each one of these corresponds to one of the three principal parts of the "new and ascetic Monarchy" which he outlined metaphorically throughout the text. The first of these parables, divided in turn into three chapters, is focused on the pineapple (*ananás*). Friar Antônio's intention here was to symbolize the figure of the king, whose attributes he believed to be depicted in the pineapple's shape; the pineapple, of course, also perfectly summarized the American world itself. Similarly, the second parable is divided up into five chapters, dedicated to sugarcane. Considered the "Queen of Brazilian fruits", it is presented as a sort of "Queen of Sheba" for Portugal, which arrived in the Portuguese kingdom just as the biblical queen had entered Jerusalem, "with golden riches and precious stones" [*com muita riqueza de ouro, & pedras preciosas*] (Rosário, 1702: 51-52). The third and final parable, the longest, is elaborated

over the course of three chapters, dedicated respectively to each of the three estates which made up the social order of the Ancien Regime. It thereby turns its gaze in turn to the clergy, the nobility and the common people, whose respective virtues, as well as vices, are represented in over thirty fruits (Rosario 1702: 106-157).

MORALIZING FRUIT: PUTTING NATURAL KNOWLEDGE TO SPIRITUAL USE

Throughout the three sermons, or parables, which make up the text, Rosário not only shows an effective command of the tools which the art of Rhetoric offered to those who, like him, spent much of their time in the pulpit. As other scholars have pointed out, his expert navigation of the twisting paths of oratory allowed him to construct a discourse which is marked by its invention, wit and elaborate use of conceits. His style of writing, therefore, displays some of the characteristic trends of the Baroque period and Iberian culture of the time —trends which were also found in the Portuguese-American literary world (Hansen and Pécora, 2004). Based on analogical thought, a principle which was intrinsic to the period, he successively constructs a series of metaphors in which the fruits of Brazil become the vehicles of his allegorical discourse. Underlying this all is the traditional image, the metaphor, of the world as a book, a universe which can be read and interpreted just as the words of a book are read and interpreted (Blumenberg, 2000). In this sense, Rosário is carrying out a moral and ascetic reading of the natural world. In his allegorical discourse, each of the plant species he describes becomes identified in moral terms with the different elements which made up this imagined monarchy, fulfilling the same purpose as emblems but without the visual element. What is certain is that the use of the natural world was a relatively common artifice in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iberian emblematic language (García Mahiques, 1991; Flor, 1999). In this language, the natural world, conceived as a text to be deciphered in order to uncover the language of the Revelation itself, became a code or instrument for the depiction of the political order. The species and animals of the Creation were no more, therefore, than elements which became associated with specific moral meanings. Consequently, their properties came to foreshadow the vices and virtues of each of the many elements which together made up the Republic.

In order to construct this allegorical and emblematic moral-political discourse, António do Rosário gathered a wide-ranging natural knowledge, a kind of “vegetable erudition”, founded on the cumulative logic which was so characteristic of this period (Marcaida, 2014: 45-136). This allowed him to establish a whole catalogue of some thirty-six fruits and species found in Portuguese America, which are listed at the beginning of the text. Not all of the species were native to Brazil; indeed, one example of a foreign species was the sugarcane plant. Over the course of the book, some of the fruits cited in metaphorical terms include the pineapple, the papaya, the cashew, the banana,

the coconut, the passionfruit, the Surinam cherry, the *managaba* (*Hancornia speciosa*), the huito and the Brazil plum, to name only a few. However, the use of figurative language with clear moral undertones did not stop him from simultaneously giving concise descriptions of some of the characteristics which distinguished the different fruits from one another. He often mentions, for example, their appearance, color and taste and even their possible uses. He points out, for example, that the papaya was not only an excellent fruit but also had an appearance and taste similar to melon, and could be eaten at any time since it “soothes the humors” and “cools the liver” [*compoem os humores, refrigera o figado*] (Rosário, 1702: 109-110). The fruit of the mandacaru (*cereus jamacaru*), a species of cactus native to the coast and inland of Brazil, he noted, was the size of a small apple [*maçã camoesa*], with reddish skin split into segments, each of which was a “cluster of thorns” [*pinha de espinhos*]; its pulp, “white like snow” [*alva como a neve*], was sweet, smooth and refreshing during warmer periods (Rosário, 1702: 136-137).

References to fruits’ characteristics and qualities follow on from one another, used to evoke images of clerics, friars, noblemen and manual workers. In some cases, Rosário even gives a rough outline of how they were processed. When he writes about sugarcane, for example, he includes several analogical references to the many stages of the production of sugar, from cutting and splitting the cane, to grinding it, to boiling it and finally to draining it (Rosário, 1702: 71-98). This knowledge of sugar-making and of the world of sugar-mills, which was presented as a real metaphor of Hell, culminates in the description of several types of sugar, distinguishing white refined sugar from “unrefined” [*redondo*], “crushed” [*retumbado*] and most of all dark “muscovado” [*mascabado*] sugar. Muscovado sugar acquires here a particular worth and reputation since it is seen to evoke the figure of Saint Benedict the Moor, “the glory of brown sugar, the fame of muscovado, and the wonder of molasses” [*gloria dos pretos, credito dos mascabados, maravilha dos retames*] (Rosário, 1702: 98).

Furthermore, all of the physical qualities and characteristics which Rosário identifies in the fruits over the course of his treatise come to take on a moral significance themselves. In this sense, the attributes and uses which both indigenous and European culture associated with certain species could come to take on new meanings and even blurred meanings (Lima, 2014: 351). The well-known sweet taste of pineapple—a fruit which represented the king—is thus seen as an accurate image of mercy and royal clemency. But, at the same time, he reinterprets to some extent the functions of its juice, traditionally considered an effective remedy for wounds because of its acidity. Thus, since the wounded man is representative of the criminal man, the curative function of pineapple juice is supplanted and it becomes representative of sovereign justice itself (Rosário, 1702: 5). In a similar way, he writes that the Brazil plum was used in the *Sertão*, where there was no water (or so it was claimed), to relieve thirst. This quality, however, allowed an analogy to be formulated associating the Brazil plum to the clergy’s and

monks' daily tasks: providing food and spiritual relief to their sheep, thirsty for doctrine and the blessed sacraments (Rosário, 1702: 110).

In the brief descriptions of the fruits mentioned, Rosário appears not to have consulted one sole source of information. Throughout the three parables which make up his text, he obeys the rules of sermon-writing, and therefore limits himself to noting in the margins the various parts of Scripture upon which he built his arguments, adding only a handful of authors linked to the patristic and spiritual tradition of the Church.⁹ In truth, some of the thirty-six fruits included in his text were indigenous species in northern Brazil, from the regions of Pernambuco and Maranhão. It is entirely possible, therefore, that the knowledge he displays of Portuguese-American fruit could partly be down to his own experience as a missionary in those areas and his direct contact with the species he describes. However, a large chunk of his knowledge of fruit and vegetables can only be explained through the knowledge built up over two centuries of European colonisation, based on observation and complemented by the wide-ranging heritage of the indigenous population, from the names of the fruits—many of which, like the words for 'pineapple' (*ananás*) and 'huito' (*jenipapo*), kept their indigenous naming—to their qualities and uses.

At the end of the seventeenth century, when Friar António do Rosário wrote his text, there was already a relatively large body of writing on this topic. From treatises, histories and natural histories to letters, missionary accounts and simple writings addressed to the king, they tended to be circulated primarily in manuscript form, although there were several works which were eventually printed in Europe. There are, of course, the writings of authors like Pero de Magalhães Gândavo, the French writer Jean de Léry and the Jesuit Manuel da Nóbrega, who, in the middle of the sixteenth century, were already collected a large body of information about the plants, animals and indigenous peoples of Portuguese America. Other texts besides these also contributed to a better understanding of the natural world and were relatively common throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among these texts, there are Gabriel Soares de Sousa's *Tratado descritivo* or *Notícia do Brasil*, which he sent to Cristóvão de Moura in the Madrid court (Sousa, 1851); *Tratados da Terra e Gente do Brasil*, written by the Jesuit Fernão Cardim at the end of the sixteenth century and which, after becoming part of a booty haul, was eventually printed in English in 1625 (Cardim, 1997),¹⁰ and Ambrósio Fernandes Brandão's *Diálogos das grandezas do Brasil*, written around 1618 (Brandão, 1956). Every one of them, among other topics, dedicated a part of their exposition to the natural world of Portuguese America. They described, in varying degrees of detail, not just mammals, birds and fish, but also minerals, plants and fruits, usually considering how they could be used.

The *Historia Natvralis Brasiliae* (Leiden-Amsterdam, 1648), written in the context of Dutch Brazil, was more systematic and exhaustive. Firstly, it brought together the four books of Willem Piso's *De medicina brasiliensis*,

which contained references to 89 species of plants and their medicinal uses. Secondly, it included the German naturalist George Marcgrave's treatise under the title *Historia Rerum Naturalium Brasiliae Libri Octo*, which brought together the material he had accumulated during his time in Pernambuco in the service of Maurice of Nassau (Piso & Marcgrave 1648). Lavishly illustrated with engravings produced from Marcgrave's own drawings, the first three books of his treatise were devoted solely to describing the trees, plants and fruits of Brazil, identify some 279 species. Unlike Piso, Marcgrave did not only point out the therapeutic functions which many of the plants had, but also mentioned other uses and properties (Whitehead and Boeseman, 1989; Brienen, 2001; Françoze, 2010; Medeiros and Albuquerque, 2014).

We find something very different indeed in the Jesuit Simão de Vasconcelos' *Noticias curiosas e necessárias das cousas do Brasil*. The text is that of the first two books of the *Chronica da Companhia de Jesus no Estado do Brasil* (Lisbon, 1663), where it acts as a lengthy prologue, a descriptive outline of Portuguese America with clear Edenic traits. The text was in fact censored upon publication, because, at certain points, it went as far as to attempt to pinpoint the exact location of Eden in Brazil. However, it was printed again, standalone and expurgated, in 1668 under the title *Noticias curiosas* (Ramos, 2001; Santos, 2001). Far from offering the usual descriptions found in earlier works, Vasconcelos studied the Portuguese-American natural world through the prism of the Book of Genesis, arguing that they were proof of the "goodness" which God had wanted to bestow on this land and thus contesting traditional opinions that it was a torrid and uninhabitable region. His journey through the plants and fruits of the region was but a way of proving, in accordance with Scripture, the abundance, excellence and variety of a natural world which acted as an incitement to praise for the Creator. Furthermore, this natural world made Brazil a place which surpassed all others in beauty (Vasconcelos, 2001: 129-149).

Within this field of writing, and particularly considering that Friar António do Rosário was a Franciscan, mention must be made of the specific contribution of his Order to the natural knowledge in Portuguese America.¹¹ As far back as 1627, or thereabouts, Friar Vicente do Salvador gave an all-encompassing description of the geography, climate, mines, flora and fauna of Brazil in the seventeen chapters which make up the first book of his *Historia do Brasil*, along with the inhabitants, their languages, their hamlets, their marriages and so on (Salvador, 2008: Book I, chaps. IV-XVI). However, the text in this case is rather generic, short on details and, above all, intended to provide a backdrop of the region (essentially, the region of Bahia) for potential readers of his work. The text is in effect dedicated to constructing a narrative about the conquest of Portuguese America. But, in fact, it was not very different in its objectives from another, possibly more wide-reaching and denser, text written around the same time: Friar Cristóvão de Lisboa's *História dos animais e arvores do Maranhão* (Lisboa, 2000). A *capucho*

friar, he was directly involved in the Franciscan mission in Maranhão, where he spent eleven years between 1624 and 1635 engaged in evangelization and in the government of the recently-founded *custodia* of Saint Anthony (Amorim, 2005). The manuscript codex which survives today, whose contents Friar Cristóvão compiled while living in America, brought together a total of 259 drawings. Most are accompanied by corresponding texts, each image depicting a different species from the vegetable and animal kingdoms: marine species (116 drawings), animals (21 drawings), birds (77 drawings) and various plants and fruit from Maranhão and Grão Pará (55 drawings). In reality, the manuscript which we have appears to have been the draft for a “treatise on birds, plants, fish and animals” which Cristóvão was in the process of writing in 1627. It is thought that this manuscript was intended to serve, furthermore, as a foundation for the text of the chapters specifically dedicated to the natural world within a wider project, the *Historia natural, e moral do Maranhão*. This project, written in four volumes, was meant to be printed soon before Cristóvão’s death in 1650, but never reached that stage (Walter, 2000: 50-58).

It is clear from the text that Friar Cristóvão went to great effort to accumulate and compile a wide range of information about the flora and fauna in Maranhão, trying also to “preserve” it by having it depicted in the drawings he commissioned. In reality, his undertaking was not essentially different from Piso and Marcgrave’s (probably more systematic) work, contributing to a set of knowledge that, since Antiquity, shaped a specific genre: the so called ‘Natural History’. But, possibly, it neither can be dissociated from a Franciscans’ particular taste for, or inclination towards, understanding nature —an inclination which was rooted in the Order’s spiritual and intellectual traditions and which, furthermore, was present in other missionary contexts, such as in Portuguese India (Xavier and Županov, 2014) and Spanish America (Pardo Tomás, 2013).¹² In the Portuguese-Brazilian world, this inclination would later be echoed in Friar António do Rosário’s work, but above all —now moving forward into the eighteenth century— in the output of several friars linked to the colony’s learned circles. One of these was Friar José Mariano da Conceição Veloso, known particularly for his *Flora Fluminensis*, which was printed only posthumously between 1827 and 1832 (Nunes and Brigola, 1999).

However, António do Rosário’s *Frutas do Brasil* was essentially a moral and spiritual text. It was not, specifically speaking, a treatise on natural history, although it made a huge use of natural knowledge. Both from the formal/rhetorical point of view and in terms of its content/aims, there are many elements which distinguish it from texts like those of Fernão Cardim and even Cristóvão de Lisboa. Written in a missionary context, both of those latter authors had essentially sought to accumulate information about the Portuguese-American botanical and natural world. They put forward a relatively pragmatic view of that world, focusing above all on the species’ external characteristics and qualities, and, to a great extent, to their possible medicinal, economic and other uses. This conception of the natural

world was a stark contrast to the Rosário’s, but also to the conception present in many other seventeenth-century treatises and writings on natural history —writings which were more inclined to attribute spiritual meaning to fruits, plants and animals whose appearances were believed to enclose hidden, limitless moral meanings.

Friar António do Rosário —we must bear it in mind— had been lecturer in Philosophy during the time he spent as Augustinian monk in Portugal. Indeed, he shared a conception of the natural world which was present in the work of authors like Eugenio Petrelli, John Parkinson, Antonio León y Pinelo and even Simão de Vasconcelos —a relatively common conception in certain intellectual contexts at the time (Ledezma, 2005: 54). In this respect, several recent studies have made clear the close links which existed at that time between fields which historiographers have often considered to be inherently opposed, such as so-called modern science and Baroque culture (Flor, 1999; Pimentel and Marcaida 2008; Marcaida and Pimentel 2014; Marcaida, 2014). Going beyond a traditional vision which only defines modern science in terms of rationality and progress, research has opened up to analyze figures such as Andrés Ferrer de Valdecebro and Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, traditionally marginalized in the field of the history of science, from a different perspective. Ultimately, it has been highlighted how in some learned circles in the 1600s there was a way of understanding natural knowledge which turned it into a sort of preternatural knowledge, deeply pervaded with theological thought. This was sustained by specific Neo-Platonic perceptions of the world which saw it as existing on two planes —one visible, the other invisible— which existed in harmony. But it was simultaneously supported by the way in which Saint Augustine had set out his understanding of nature as an expression of divine wisdom and omnipotence. Knowing the universe, essentially, was a way of becoming closer to the Creator. The natural world, as mentioned above, was merely a book, a text, written by God. Like the Scriptures, knowing and understanding it required a whole exercise of exegesis, through which one had to observe the elements and species which made up the world beyond their external appearance and attempt to decode the hidden moral and spiritual meaning contained within plants and animals. For this purpose, similarities, analogies, metaphors —such characteristic epistemological bases of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries— were an essential instrument for the understanding of nature and the meanings which God had given to it (R. de la Flor, 1999; Ledezma, 2005; Pimentel, 2009; Marcaida, 2014). Furthermore, that is why emblematic and allegorical language, so distinctive of Baroque literary culture, found itself particularly comfortable in a treatise like António do Rosário’s.

THE TRUE INDIA: THINKING ABOUT THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE FROM ITS BOUNDARIES

Within this interpretative framework, the New World and the natural world of America became for many of Nieremberg, Vasconcelos and Rosário’s contemporaries a

new space to investigate the elements of the Revelation which had remained hidden from the ancients. For many of them, America revealed itself to be a new Eden, a mythical world which took on providential meaning (Ledezma, 2005: 74). The way in which António do Rosário understood natural knowledge does not only explain the series of moral allegories which he associated with the different fruits of Brazil as if they were emblems of his “ascetic monarchy”. Ultimately, the nature of the New World, interpreted in this symbolic way, allowed him to construct his own unique vision of Portuguese America and the place it should occupy within the Portuguese Empire. In this respect, we should not interpret a text like *Frutas do Brasil* outside of the distinctive political parameters of the age and context in which it was written. It cannot be read from a perspective more relevant to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—as a text in which there are hints of future separatist and nationalist claims.¹³ Such thoughts were alien to a colonial political mindset which did not contemplate—and indeed could not contemplate—the Brazilian region as something separate from the Portuguese monarchy. However, as we shall see, that does not mean Rosário’s text does not articulate, at certain points, views which seem close to a form of local (Pernambucan) nativism similar to many of the expressions of (urban) *criollo* patriotism which arose in Spanish America. In any case, the treatise did indeed open the possibility of thinking about Brazil in a different way (Almeida, 2012: 1, 317; Curto, 1998: 421). Rosário, not in vain, sought in his text to redefine—or at least define in new terms—the role which he believed fell to Portuguese America in the framework of the Braganza monarchy. He thus appeals for a central position for Brazil within an imperial structure which, at least in terms of perceptions and symbolic value, still bestowed greater significance on the Asian world, and particularly on India.

In order to support his unique understanding of the Empire, Rosário deployed on the one hand a whole series of discursive strategies through which he tried in part to ‘sanctify’ the Americas. For this, in fact, he turned to rhetorical features not very different from those which were increasingly being used from the end of the sixteenth century in a range of contexts in Spanish America and even in Portuguese India. As is well known, there were many images and lengthy reasoning constructed in colonial American contexts, through chronicles, hagiographies, natural histories and other texts, all with the aim of sacralizing the New World. It became, as we have just seen, a space in which authors could claim the presence of a multitude of signs which were understood as no less than expressions of the divine. Furthermore, it was a space where holiness became possible, especially for those of peninsular descent who had been born in the New World. It was, therefore, part of attempts to counter and eliminate the negative perception—sometimes even diabolical—which, from a metropolitan viewpoint, was often cast over the lands of America, its climate, its nature and its inhabitants, including those who were born there and proclaimed themselves to be the heirs of the Spanish and Portuguese (Rubial

García, 2010: 211-342; Cañizares-Esguerra, 2008). As a result, there was no shortage of accounts, especially during the Baroque period (and sometimes written by *criollos*), which constructed a paradisiacal vision of the Americas and, naturally, of Brazil. As has already been noted, the *topos* which located earthly paradise in America found there one of its most explicit manifestations in the Jesuit chronicler Simão de Vasconcelos’ censored *Notícias curiosas* (Holanda, 2010; Santos, 2001; Ramos, 2001). There were also expressions which came from a less erudite world, such as those which are found in the unique cosmogony of the colonizer Pedro de Rates Henequim, who was condemned by the Inquisition in 1744 (Gomes, 1997).

Friar António do Rosário’s text does not explicitly mention the image of an Eden in Rio de Janeiro, Bahia or Pernambuco, but his Brazil, interpreted through the lens of fruit and vegetables, does nevertheless leave the impression of a comparable understanding of the American region and its nature (Holanda, 2010: 345-354; Hatherly, 2002: 14). Rosário, in fact, turned to some elements which were well-established in the literature of the period, and particularly in many texts on nature. These elements worked well as signs of the favor and divine blessing which had been bestowed on the New World. In this sense, for example, he evokes the passionfruit and, along with it, the passionflower (Rosário, 1702: 157-179). Many saw this plant, thanks to its unique stem, stamens, petals and so on, as an emblem of Christ’s Passion (whence its name): the crown of thorns, the lance, the blood spilt by Christ, the column to which he was nailed and the whip with which he was flogged. Noted as early as 1574 by Nicolás Monardes, the analogy continued to interest several seventeenth-century theologians and naturalists. Some of the most obviously symbolic depictions of the passionflower circulated from the beginning of the seventeenth century in printed works by authors like Antonio Possevino, Giacomo Bosio and Juan Eusebio Nieremberg himself, and served to reinforce this spiritualized vision of the flower. The passionflower became a sort of eucharistic emblem, which in turn made it the clearest indication of divine presence in the New World, and, of course, in Brazil (Cañizares-Esguerra, 2008: 202-207; Marcaida, 2014: 195-203; Pimentel, 2014). Rosário was keen to recall that “God had designed “directly into this mysterious flower the deplorable tragedy of the Passion”, since it was a parable to evoke his sacrifice [*pintou o Creador ao vivo nesta misteriosa a lamentavel tragedia da sua Paixão*]. For that same reason, he added, he decided to crown his treatise on the fruits of Brazil by reminding readers of “the flower which this land produces for the glory of the creator” [*a flor que produz a mesma terra para Gloria do Creador*] (Rosário, 1702: 156-157). And, in fact, Rosário did not limit himself to the episodes of the Passion represented in the passionflower. He also argued that a providential dimension could be attributed to Brazil, thanks to its fruits. Indeed, the colony’s original name—Santa Cruz—had itself evoked the Passion of Christ. In reality, only the greed and the sins which colonization had brought with it posed a threat to the original nature of this earth filled with

signs of Redemption. With those signs continuing to be ignored, the following punishment was the only possible result:

What land, what climate in this Brazil; what similarities the flowers and fruits of this land have to the Passion of the Christ. The first name with which this part of America was baptized by its discoverers was Santa Cruz; ambition beat the name Santa Cruz out of the land, and re-named it Brazil, after the Brazilwood tree; out of interest in wood, not remembrance of the Cross, this land is called Brazil, and not Santa Cruz, as it was at first known, when there was not so much sugarcane, so much fruit, so much Brazilwood, so much greed, so much coldness and so much sin. Oh, how I fear that with so many signs of the Most Holy Passion of the Christ this new world will end up with punishments, for failing to take heed of those signs [...]: so many signs of the Cross and of the Passion of the Christ can be seen in the flowers and fruits of this fatal land, that it would not be too bold to suspect and foresee punishment upon punishment (Rosário, 1702: 164-166).¹⁴

Alongside the role in his discourse allocated to the *topos* of the passionflower and its eucharistic and providential characteristics, Rosário also made use of other figures and allegories to invoke the sanctity which, he believed, was attributable to Portuguese America—to show that it was a place chosen by God. He even sought to claim primacy for America over Europe, constructing an allegory putting two different images face to face. The first was that of a rosary made of flowers, drawn by the Virgin in the first volume of the book of the world (corresponding to the Old World); the second was that of a rosary made of fruit, which she had printed onto the second volume (corresponding to Brazil). In the Old European World, God and his mother had made the rose the queen of flowers; in the New World they had replaced it with the pineapple, “so that the rosary of His mother, made of flowers in the Old World, should come to be made of fruit” [*para que o Rosario da sua mãe fosse em fruto, o que no mundo velho era flor*]. While Friar António does praise both, he also compares them directly and eventually finds the fruit to have advantages which the flowers did not. Flowers, marked by fragility and inconstancy, were merely fleeting and transitory, “appearing and disappearing” [*o mesmo he apparecerem, que desapparecerem*], thus becoming a symbol of the brevity of life. In contrast, fruits grew and multiplied, lasted longer than flowers, were consequently more persevering and robust, and thus were favored by God:

fruits, which are firmer and more constant than flowers, won God’s blessing; and flowers did not receive blessing, fragile and inconstant as they are; and if fruits are more excellent than flowers, more blessed by God, more favored and more useful than flowers; the rosary made of fruit is, therefore, more excellent than the rosary made of flowers (Rosário, 1702: 25).¹⁵

The fruits’ superiority in quality, divine favor and utility meant that the allegorical rosary which they made up, a

metaphor for the American world which created them, was considered superior and more beneficial than a rosary of flowers. The comparison even translated to the Asian sphere, implicitly revealing his consciousness of the worldly dimension of the Portuguese monarchy and of the way in which its different parts could be balanced. For Rosário, Asia was present in the rosary through the offerings which the Magi brought to the Christ-child (the third joyful mystery), which themselves represented the mysteries—joyful (incense), sorrowful (myrrh) and glorious (gold)—which made up the devotion. But that was nothing to boast about, thought Rosário: America, too, had fruits which represented the wonders of the rosary. Furthermore, just one fruit—the pineapple, which the Virgin had planted in Brazil—contained a representation of the “whole Garden of the Rosary” [*todo o Jardim do Rosario*], because divine providence had decided to depict all of the Rosary’s mysteries in it (Rosário, 1702: 37-38). Finally, the pineapple, the “King of Apples” [*Rey dos pomos*], was not just the fruit which made up for the evil bestowed on men by the apple in Eden, thanks to the Virgin’s intervention. It was also an exact “image and portrait” [*estampa, & retrato*] of the rosary, which made Brazil, its homeland, a Promised Land (Rosário, 1702: 44-46).

But, as well as underlining the holy and beatific nature which he attributed to the Portuguese-American world, Rosário wanted, from a more explicitly political perspective, to define the place which Brazil should occupy within the Portuguese Empire. When writing about sugarcane, in which he identifies the “queen” of his text’s proposed ascetic monarchy, Rosário evokes other places around the Empire such as the old fortress of Mina and, especially, India, which—despite its ever-shrinking political and economic clout—continued to occupy, at the end of the seventeenth century, a central place in the Portuguese imperial imagination. Aware of the imbalance which this perception of the different parts of the Portuguese Empire implied, Rosário makes a clear reference to the decline of India which, for its “sins and injustices”, had for many years been a shadow of its former self. Rosário underlined Brazil’s superiority over India, the former having become in his view “the true India and the true Mina of the Portuguese” [*a verdadeira India, & mina dos Portuguezes*]. He thus asserted Brazil’s supremacy, which contributed, economically speaking, the most to the Braganza monarchy (and certainly more than a mythified Asian world). And this contribution was thanks essentially to the sugar industry—the pouches of “diamonds” (as refined sugar was known) which left Brazil every year “in thousands of containers” [*pelos bizalhos dos diamantes, que embarca em milhares de caxas todos os annos*] (Rosário, 1702: 50-51).

Rosário thus pins the riches of Portuguese America and, therefore, of the Empire itself on sugar production, going so far as to demand royal favor for those who cultivated and processed sugar. When “queenly sugarcane”, like the biblical Queen of Sheba, arrived loaded with opulent gifts, it was natural to expect the King, like the wise and grateful Solomon with his illustrious guest, to bestow similar favor upon his “so faithful and loyal servants”

[*tão fieis, & leaes Vasallos*]. Essentially, it was them, he pointed out, who had been prepared to lose their “lives and possessions” [*as vidas, & as fazendas*] defending and restoring this sugar-based empire. Rosário’s text served as a reminder, an evocation of the role which the plantation and sugar-mill owners had played fifty years earlier at the end of Dutch rule over Pernambuco and the northern coastal areas of Brazil, making a decisive contribution towards the restoration of Portuguese sovereignty in the region. The issue, of course, was not trivial, and would serve throughout the second half of the seventeenth century as an argument in attempts to determine the relationship between the monarchy and the elites of Pernambuco. These elites sometimes asserted loyalty to the crown and sometimes, from a purely contractual standpoint, proclaimed themselves to be political subjects (rather than simply natural subjects) of the Portuguese monarch (Mello, 2003: 160-169).

This apparent defense of the “sugarocracy” which had dominated the Portuguese-Brazilian economy since the end of the sixteenth century was by no means insignificant. It was produced during a time of deep political, economic and social transformations across Portuguese America. On the one hand, the sugar industry itself suffered from serious difficulties during the second half of the seventeenth century. The significant growth in sugar production in the British, French and Dutch Caribbean led to a substantial increase in competition and therefore to a sharp decrease in Brazilian exports. Furthermore, it brought with it a significant reduction in sugar prices and higher demand for slaves, whose price progressively rose (Schwartz, 2014).¹⁶ Meanwhile, the discovery, recognition and exploitation of the gold mines in the interior regions of Brazil favored, from 1693, the development of gold- and mineral-based activity which immediately began to acquire a relatively important role within the Brazilian economy, contributing to several wide-ranging changes within the colonial economy. There was no shortage of critics who, in these transition years from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, spoke out to warn about the political, social and moral risks which could come about—or had already come about—from the exploitation of gold. The euphoria which the gold industry had engendered, they said, attracted contemptible men to the gold regions, awakened greed in foreigners and ruined industries like sugar and tobacco by taking away a significant percentage of the slave workforce and diverting away other goods needed for the upkeep of sugar-mills and plantations (Souza, 2006: 78-86). By making sugarcane the “queen” of his monarchy and the product which ensured the Empire’s riches, António do Rosário appears to have sided with those critical voices, if only implicitly. He does not directly mention gold in his text, but—just like other political and religious figures of the age, such as the Italian Jesuit Giovanni Antonio Andreoni (Antonil) in his *Cultura e opulência do Brazil* (Lisbon, Valentim da Costa, 1711)—he does claim that sugar was the central element of the Portuguese-Brazilian economy and demands royal support (Souza, 2006: 84-98).

His arguments take on further significance, to a certain extent, when put in the context of late-seventeenth-century Pernambuco, where António do Rosário wrote this, and other, texts. His presence in several of the captaincy’s convents put him in direct contact with the different faces of society in Pernambuco, making him by necessity aware of many of the problems and hopes which had been growing there since the middle of the 1600s. We must not forget that after the war against the Dutch, and after the Dutch had ceded control over the region in 1654, Pernambuco found itself embroiled in several political and social tensions which undoubtedly marked its unique course within Portuguese America. As pointed out by Evaldo Cabral de Mello, whose line of argument I follow here, the tensions led to political instability, the result of the aforementioned complex relations established between the elites of Pernambuco and the King’s representatives. The Pernambuco elites, thanks to their role in the sugar industry, claimed to be the architects of the restoration of Portuguese power and, therefore, deserving of the monarch’s favor. The king, keen to strengthen his authority, was not always willing to oblige such desires (or, alternatively, he rejected them outright by supporting merchant groups, many of whom were from Portugal). Intermittent clashes of varying degrees occurred throughout this period, but they became particularly important during the Mascate War (Mello, 2003).

The difficulties which the sugar industry was then undergoing were also closely linked to this political situation. In the specific context of Pernambuco, the problems affected above all the colonial aristocracy, born in America and essentially made up of landholders and sugar-mill owners. Impoverished and ever more ruralized, this *nobreza da terra*, which had formerly built its apparatus of power through the institutions of a decadent Olinda, felt particularly wronged by the rise and the growing political, social and economic power of the *mascates* of Recife. To add to this, many factory owners were economically dependent on them, heavily indebted and continually obliged to turn to loans from those same merchants to finance their sugar production (Mello, 2003).

In this context, Rosário does not appear to take sides. Not explicitly, at least. This standpoint let him highlight to the monarch the role of his loyal vassals who had previously risked their lives and possessions in order to restore control over the sugar industry. As we have seen, this seems to be an allusion to the *nobreza da terra* which had taken part in the Dutch wars. But, at the same time, he makes significant criticisms of certain attitudes which he identified among those who were part of, or who wanted to become part of, the colonial nobility. In his conception of the nobility, Rosário sketched out a classical model defined on the basis of each subject’s Christian virtues, on the works which showed his good qualities and on the merits which he gained from his actions—characteristics which were identified, respectively, with the sugar-apple or “count’s fruit” [*fruta do conde*], the *areticuapé* and the managaba. Rosário yet again attributed a moral meaning to the first of these fruits, pointing out that the *manjar-*

like “rich substance” [*rica massa*] within it was indeed a representation of the “good substance” [*boa massa*] and the “good conscience” [*boa consciencia*] which should define the identity of a nobleman. Furthermore, it should serve as a guide to those who proudly defined themselves as *fidalgos* in the New World, who claimed that they would be the counts and marquises of Brazil if a formal, titled nobility existed (Rosário, 1702: 124-125).

Never diverting his focus from the Portuguese-American world, he criticizes those who considered themselves to be nobles because of what they *had* —land and riches— rather than what they *were*: those who, without illustrious blood and other markers of worth, had managed to penetrate the nobility with the help of others; those who were driven by passion and showed themselves to be bloodthirsty and vengeful, demonstrating that “they are not of pure and clean blood” [*não são de sangue puro, & limpo*] but of “mixed blood” [*sangues de mistura*]. He denounced those who, forgetting their origins —something which happened easily in the New World— made themselves out as *fidalgos*. They did not only live like *fidalgos*, wasting their income and their inheritance, but also occupied all sorts of posts and offices, making the land which they inhabited a “land of foreigners and the stepmother of natives” [*patria dos forasteiros, & madrastra dos natu-raes*] (Rosário, 1702: 135-137). He also criticized the proliferation of a common method used to enter the nobility within the Portuguese Empire: the granting of the habit of the Order of Christ (Stumpf, 2014; Raminelli, 2015). Since the color of this habit was represented in the red of the Surinam cherry [*pitanga*], Rosário was keen to point out how quickly such a fruit could sate those who ate it, thus symbolizing how weary and disgusted people were at seeing so many “shamefully flaunted and much disparaged” habits [*tão mal predicados, & estimados*], in the hands of those who lacked merit and service (Rosário, 1702: 138-141).

Despite the criticisms which he launched against the colonial nobility and many of those who aspired to belong to it, Rosário adopted a generic tone in his discourse. It would be difficult to assert that the sugar-mill owners of Pernambuco were the ultimate and specific target of his invectives, although some of them probably felt as if they were. The defense of the sugar industry in Friar António do Rosário’s text appears to seek neither the involvement of a specific body or concrete community within the world of Olinda and Recife, nor confrontation with them. It appears, rather, to be a defense of a Pernambuco in which, ultimately, both sugar-mill owners and *mascates* were involved in an industry which he saw as a base for the riches of a rapidly-changing Empire.

In reality, as we have seen, António do Rosário set his eyes upon a wider horizon throughout *Frutas do Brasil*, articulating a specific vision far beyond Pernambuco of the Braganza monarchy and the space which the Portuguese-American colonial world should occupy in it. His own experience of the Empire, after several years as a missionary in the Franciscan province of Santo António do Brasil, allowed him to consider Portuguese

America in a new light, and to forge a different perception of Brazil in which the colony was depicted and proclaimed as the bedrock of the Portuguese Empire, a new India. To that end, he constructed a powerful allegorical discourse in which the nature of the New World was interpreted in a symbolic and emblematic way, allowing him to “read” the Portuguese-American world. In this reading, that world became a place of Edenic and providential significance in which everything that was brought over from other worlds—even devotion to the rosary— seemed to acquire a greater degree of excellence. In his rhetorical strategy, in fact, he made use of his extensive natural knowledge, knowledge about fruits in Portuguese America which had been accumulated since the beginning of European colonization, including by Franciscans. However, the explicitly moral metaphorical value taken on by the fruits he included corresponded to his specific conception of natural knowledge itself, a conception which was highly religious. Nature emerged in Brazil as a great book written by the hand of God, whose hidden spiritual meanings had to be decoded. In short, the text which António do Rosário published in 1702 is a revealing example of the intellectual density characteristic of the Franciscans in the Portuguese-American world and of Iberian imperial experiences more widely. It is a clear display of how the Franciscans, despite their lower profile in printing and writing than the Jesuits, did indeed develop a significant role in the development of the colonial world in the regions of Asia, Africa and America.

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NOTES

- 1 On academies and learned circles in eighteenth-century Portuguese America in general, see Kantor, 2004.
- 2 The text’s composition reflects how mental prayer was diffused, from the end of the seventeenth century, among the Portuguese-American peoples who the missionaries targeted. It must also be noted that Portuguese Oratorians, and especially the Franciscans linked to the Varatojo Convent in Portugal, also made mental prayer a central part of their missionary activity during the same period, both in Portugal and in Cape Verde (Tavares, 2005).
- 3 The work went on to be published a second time, again in 8°, published in Lisbon by Filipe de Sousa Villela in 1717. A copy

- of this edition is kept in the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisbon, [BNP], SA 2755 P.
- 4 Rosário's work had two nineteenth-century editions (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Imperial de P. Plancher, 1828; and Rio de Janeiro: Typ. Imperialde E. Seignot-Plancher, 1830). In both editions, the 1702 edition's preliminaries, as well the final index, were removed. A twentieth-century complete fac-simil edition is the Ana Hatherly's edition (Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional, 2002).
 - 5 The printing press did not arrive in Portuguese America until the court arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1808. Before that, there had been just one (failed) attempt to set up a printing workshop in Rio, between 1747 and 1749, led by António Isidoro da Fonseca (Barros, 2012). We should also bear in mind the possible presence of presses and portable presses in missionary *aldeias*, as happened in Jesuit settlements in Paraguay (Neumann, 2015: 93-97; Veríssimo, 2011).
 - 6 The Mascate War (1710-1711) was the last episode of the conflict which, in Pernambuco, pitted the so-called *nobreza da terra*, linked to the sugar industry and municipal power in Olinda, against the rising merchant classes who, having arrived from Portugal, had settled around Recife. These merchants, known pejoratively as "peddlers" (*mascates*), had their political aspirations recognized in 1710 when the Crown created municipal institutions in Recife, autonomous of the Olinda city council. Some of the *nobreza da terra* then began an uprising, which led to them seizing Recife and expelling the Governor—the representative of the monarch. The *mascates* responded with a military intervention (Mello, 2003).
 - 7 A report sent to the *Conselho Ultramarino* in Lisbon in 1704 into the services offered by D. Francisco de Sousa between 1661 and 1704 revealed that he wanted to be promoted to specific military posts in Pernambuco, for which he was favored thanks to his status as a *fidalg*o. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon, Conselho Ultramarino, Cx. 21, d. 1968. I am grateful to Mafalda Soares da Cunha for providing me with the information contained in this document.
 - 8 [...] inventivas proveitosas nas virtudes, & invectivas curiosas contra os vícios.
 - 9 He cites, among others, Saint Jerome, Saint Isidore, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Bonaventure and Thomas à Kempis. He also refers to the odd classical author such as Seneca.
 - 10 Cardim's manuscript treatises were taken from the Jesuit during a pirate attack in the Atlantic. They were later acquired by Samuel Purchas, who included them in the fourth volume of his *Pilgrimes* (London, Imprinted for H. Fetherston, 1625).
 - 11 It must be remembered that, in the structure of Equinoctial France—that is, the colonizing efforts of the French in Maranhão between 1612 and 1616—the Capuchins Claude d'Abbeville and Yves d'Évreux wrote, respectively, the *Histoire de la mission des pères capucins* (Paris, 1614) and the *Suite de l'histoire des choses memorables* (Paris, 1615). Both texts included chapters containing relatively generic descriptions of the geography, fauna and flora of the region. On these two texts and the contexts in which they were produced, see Daher, 2002.
 - 12 It is well known that Francis of Assisi and, after him, Bonaventure established a singular way to interact spiritually with nature, seeing in its elements God's image and presence, so that knowing them—that's to say, decoding the Creation—was understood as a way for spiritual rising and for approaching the Creator (Vauchez, 2009: 394-426). Their teachings, based on St. Augustine, were reflected in the intellectual output of several Franciscans linked to Oxford and Paris *Studia* during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as Robert Grosseteste, Duns Scotus and Roger Bacon, whose writings improved the use of an experimental—empirical—way for understanding natural reality. Bartholomeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum* largely circulated in Latin and French manuscript versions during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and had 32 editions between 1474 and 1536 (Lenhart, 1924). In the early sixteenth century, a spiritual text as Bernardino de Laredo's *Subida al Monte Sion* (Seville, 1522) reflected, through the body of Christ and the sufferings of his Passion, the physiological and pharmacological knowledge of its author, who also wrote—from a similar perspective—the *Metaphora Medicine et Chirurgie* (Seville, 1522) and *Modus cum ordine faciendi medicandi* (Seville, 1527) (Buffon, 2013: 361-367; Boon, 2012: 85-107).
 - 13 In Eduardo França Paiva's view, this interpretation of Rosário's text as "the first separatist and nationalist manifesto", was implicit in Fernando Cristóvão's analysis of *Frutas do Brasil*. Cf. Paiva, 2006: 110. See also Cristóvão, 2001.
 - 14 Notavel terra, notavel clima tem este Brasil; notaveis simpatias tem as flores, & frutas desta terra cõ a Paixão de Christo. O primeiro nome com que esta América foy bautizada dos seus descobridores, foy de Santa Cruz; a páos lançou a ambição o nome de Santa Cruz, chamandolhe Brasil, pelo pao Brasil; mais pelo interesse do lenho, que pela memoria da Cruz, se chama esta terra Brasil, & não Santa Cruz, como se chamava no principio, em que ainda não havia como hoje tanta cana, tanto sumo, & tanto pao Brasil, tanta cobiça, tanta frieza, & tanto peccado; oh como temo que com tantos sinaes da Sacratissima Payção de Christo acabe este novo mundo com castigos, por se não aproveitar dos sinaes [...]: tantos sinaes da Cruz, & da Payção de Christo, se estao vendo nas flores, & frutas desta fatal terra, que não será temeridade de juizo suspeitar, & recear castigos, & mais castigos [...].
 - 15 [...] os frutos que são mais firmes, & constantes que as flores, he que levãrão a benção; & as flores ficarão sem benção pela fragilidade, & inconstancia da sua natureza; & se os frutos são mais excellentes que as flores, mais abençoados de Deus, mais ditosos, & uteis que as flores; mais excellent he logo o Rosario em fruto, do que em flor.
 - 16 The slave system—as it is well known—was at the basis of the Portuguese-American sugar industry. The religious orders were not outside the establishment of a slave society in Brazil, since they made use on slave labor in their plantations and sugar mills, and often were even directly involved in the slave trade. Concerning the position of the religious orders (especially, the Jesuits' position) regarding slavery, see, among others, Zeron, 2009.

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