

**Imperial rivalry and frontier commerce:  
some aspects of contraband between Spanish missions of  
Mojos and Chiquitos and Portuguese *capitania* of Mato  
Grosso (c. 1767-1800)**

**Rivalidade imperial e comércio fronteiriço:  
aspectos do contrabando entre as missões espanholas de Mojos e  
Chiquitos e a capitania portuguesa de Mato Grosso (c. 1767-1800)**

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ABSTRACT

The struggle between Spain and Portugal for the definition of the neighboring regions of their American colonies was accompanied by different policies concerning commerce between vassals of both empires. While the Spanish Empire forbade commerce with foreigners, the Portuguese Crown secretly stimulated the contraband at Colônia do Sacramento and Mato Grosso. During the second half of eighteenth century, contraband became intensely practiced by merchants, missionaries, military and even governors in the valley of the Guaporé River. The missions of Mojos and Chiquitos consolidated the production of cattle, tallow, mules, cocoa, cotton and sugar, but irregular supply of European goods encouraged missionaries and Spanish merchants to seek alternative suppliers. At the same time, in Portuguese *capitania* of Mato Grosso, orders from central power, availability of gold and demand in fort Príncipe da Beira propitiated a convergence with Spanish vassals' aspirations. This paper analyses the impact of contraband among Spanish and Portuguese administrative institutions, merchants and indigenous peoples in the contested frontier of Mojos, Chiquitos and Mato Grosso provinces. It focuses on the period after the expulsion of Jesuits, when contraband prospered, and the late Spanish reformist governors.

KEYWORDS: Contraband. Mato Grosso. Missions. Mojos. Chiquitos. Commercial policy.

RESUMO

A contenda entre Espanha e Portugal pela definição da posse das regiões limítrofes das colônias da América foi acompanhada de políticas distintas no tocante ao comércio entre vassallos de ambos os impérios. Na segunda metade do século XVIII, na região do vale do rio Guaporé (centro da América do Sul), ao passo que havia rigorosa proibição ao contrabando por parte da Coroa espanhola, a Coroa portuguesa estimulava veladamente o comércio ilegal, que se tornou intensamente praticado por mercadores, missionários, militares e mesmo governadores. As missões de Mojos e Chiquitos e as regiões de Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Cochabamba e La Plata, embora produtoras de gado, sebo, mulas, cacau, cera, algodão e açúcar, sofriam com a escassez de artigos europeus devido ao monopólio comercial espanhol, situação que encorajava missionários e comerciantes a procurar fornecedores alternativos. Por sua vez, os portugueses, estimulados pela Coroa, contavam com pedras e metais preciosos das minas de Mato Grosso para adquirir os artigos de primeira necessidade indispensáveis ao abastecimento do Forte Príncipe da Beira, circunstância que propiciava uma articulação com os interesses de setores locais dos domínios espanhóis. Neste texto analiso os impactos do contrabando sobre instituições administrativas, comerciantes e povos indígenas desde o período pós-jesuítico, auge do contrabando, até a administração dos últimos governos reformistas espanhóis, responsáveis por tentativas de interdição.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Contrabando. Mato Grosso. Missões. Mojos. Chiquitos. Política comercial.

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“[...] esta provincia ha sido la madre del Fuerte del Príncipe de la Beyra”.  
Lazaro de Ribera, governador de Mojos, ao vice-rei de Buenos Aires,  
Nicolás de Arredondo, 20 jun. 1791.<sup>1</sup>

## Supply and Smuggling

The indigenous populations that occupied the eastern Andes *piedmont* savannahs and tropical steppes that spread through the valleys of the Beni, Mamoré, Madeira, Guaporé and Pilcomayo rivers, were harassed in the first century of colonization by Spaniards that sought the chimeric *Paytiti* and his silver mountain, or that under that pretext, captured Indians for personal service. Those Spanish “entries” started from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, border town installed in 1561 (GARCÍA RECIO, 1988, p. 50-62 *et passim*). Towards the end of the XVII century, there are records that bandeirantes paulistas, sometimes disguised as Jesuits, also harassed those Indians, an example of a frustrated attempt, to capture 1500 Taus and Piñoquis in 1694. (FERNÁNDEZ, 1895, p. 101) The offer of protection against the “entries” of cruceños and paulistas, on the one hand, and the liberation of encomiendas and all sorts of personal services on the other hand, were powerful arguments used by the jesuits to attract the many groups of Indians that lived there (SAIGNES, 1975, p. 231-232). In 1682, the first mission in the Mojos region was founded, dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto: and in December 1691, Father José Arce founded among the Piñoquis, who were in a sorry state, the San Xavier pueblo, the first of the ones known as the Chiquitos missions. In 1713 Father Atamirano referred that, in Mojos there were 17 reductions, 24914 baptized Indians and a total of 20914 inhabitants, and a 1749 census stated, in turn, that there were seven *pueblos* and 14701 people.<sup>2</sup>

The Jesuits faced there, as in other places, the problem of assuring the supply of certain items that could only be acquired in Spanish cities, at the same time as they tried to stop the personal service indigenous capturing “entries” and avoiding that the Spanish presence interfered in the evangelization (MÖRNER, 1999, p. 282-284). Their pleas at the Charcas Hearing answered by a Royal Provision in 1700, that besides banning any Spanish entry in Mojos and Chiquitos, also regulated external commerce, particularly with Santa Cruz de la Sierra, the nearest Spanish city, which was forbidden to

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<sup>1</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid [AHN], Estado, 4397.

<sup>2</sup> “Breve noticia del estado en que se hallan el año de 1713 las misiones de infieles que tiene a su cargo la provincia del Perú, de la Compañía de Jesús, en las provincias de los Mojos”. (BARNADAS; PLAZA, 2005, p. 76) (the authors attribute the report to the Jesuit Diego Francisco Altamirano); Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, Espanha [AGI], Charcas, 199. Letter from the vire-roy of Peru Count of Superunda, to the king of Spain, Lima, 19 sep. 1749, on the standard of the of the Chiquitos’ Indians sent by the ombudsman Don Francisco Xavier de Palacios.

“introduce in said missions any type of merchandise, or any type of sharing”; at the same time the missionaries were entitled to send commissioners and keep procurators in Santa Cruz and Peru, not needing to hold any licensing for such commerce<sup>3</sup>

In the Jesuits time, the Mojos and Chiquitos missions sent wax, fabrics, fat, cocoa and sugar to Santa Cruz and Peru and received tools, salt, knives, clothes, beads, glass, religious items and in the early days cattle, mules and horses. Gathered in San Xavier for a consultation in 1715, the Jesuits decided that “there should be a deal with a specific person (in Santa Cruz de la Sierra) to bring the necessary goods”, and not with any trader that showed up in the missions, whose curators should previously send a needs list to San Xavier.<sup>4</sup> Through the same route also went cocoa, wax and Mojos fabrics, that suffered from “malfunctions and delays”, as referred by one of the Governors, sailing 30 and 40 days up the Mamoré e Río Grande rivers, “their drivers suffering one thousand evils because of the lack of water near Santa Cruz”.<sup>5</sup>

The main thing to note here is, as observed by other authors, the Jesuits controlled the trade of the exceeding missions’ production, negotiating it directly in Santa Cruz and in Peru (GARCÍA RECIO, 1987, p. 15; BLOCK, 1994, p. 68-69; TOMICHÁ CHARUPÁ, 2002, p. 201). With the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish Empire in 1767, the conception that the production should be sent to the *Real Hacienda* Central Administration was imposed, which would have the function of controlling all the *pueblos* accounts, receive its fruits, trade them, and pay the curators and Indians. Contrarily to the Paraguay missions, in Mojos and Chiquitos the curators that replaced the Jesuits kept the temporal power from 1767 to 1789, meaning, they were responsible for the sending of the economic excess to the *Real Hacienda*’s warehouses.<sup>6</sup> The Real Cédula of 15 September, 1772, accompanied by thorough regulations written by the Santa Cruz Bishop Don Francisco Herboso y Figueroa, confirmed a politico-military governor for each of these provinces, that the first curator of each *pueblo* was

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<sup>3</sup> Real Academia de la Historia [RAH], Colección Mata Linares, t. 56, f. 138-52. “Real Provisión de la Audiencia de Charcas”, La Plata, 9 nov. 1700. García Recio (1987, p. 15) e Tomichá Charupá (2002, p. 197), watchful to the interactions of the missions with the surrounding areas, they observed that the entrance of Spanish traders was not allowed in Chiquitos and Mojos, and the trading was conducted in the ranch of “El Palmar”, 12 leagues from the San Xavier mission.

<sup>4</sup> “Consultas celebradas en las juntas hechas en el Pueblo de San Xavier sobre las Misiones y razones q’ sobre ellas se trataron”, c. 1715. (CORTESÃO, 1955, p. 120).

<sup>5</sup> AGI, Charcas, 576. Letter by Ignacio Flores to Juan Joseph de Vértiz, Cochabamba, 9 feb. 1780, on the losses of the route between Mojos and Santa Cruz de la Sierra and the feasibility of the new one that followed directly to Cochabamba.

<sup>6</sup> Laic administrators were introduced in the Paraguay missions by the “Instrução” in 23 aug. 1768 and the “Adição” in 15 jan. 1770, written by the Buenos Ayres governor, Bucareli y Ursúa. For Maeder (1987, p. 140), the system was practically an adaptation of the Diretório dos Índios, which legislated the Indian villages in Portuguese America from 1758. Even though Mojos and Chiquitos didn’t have laic administrators until 1789, the diverting of community goods and the intensification of Indian exploitation occurred in a similar manner to the Paraguay’smissions about which one can consult among others the analysis by Ganson (2003) and Wilde (2009, p. 202 *et seq.*).

responsible for the temporal, and that production was sent to the *Real Hacienda*, who would arrange for the payment and the necessary supplies.<sup>7</sup> This type of state commerce monopoly remained until the beginning of the XIX century, but suffered a major change with the “Superior Instruction” of 14 September, 1789, issued by the Audiencia de Charcas, that finally removed the power that curators had over the temporal and installed secular administrators in each of the *pueblos*.<sup>8</sup>

On this strongly centralized economic system that succeeded the expulsion of the Jesuits from Mojos and Chiquitos, the governor of Mojos, Don Lazaro de Ribera wrote to the Vice Roy of Buenos Ayres, Nicolás de Arredondo: “ All these fruits and goods, that are communitarian, are faithfully delivered by the Indians to those that govern their towns, who up to now have been the curators and are sent by the Mamoré, and Grande rivers to the Subordinate Administration of Santa Cruz from whence they go to the General which is in Ciudad de la Plata”. Therefore all production should be absorbed by the *Real Hacienda*, that would be responsible for the supply Indians and priests of whatever necessary: “to there we return salt, iron, clothes, and some goods from Europe, to help the Indians, promote their industry, conserving the temples, and other needs of the Province.<sup>9</sup> The system was problematic, however, as noted by the same governor in light of the visits that he had conducted in some of the *pueblos*, among other reasons because the risk that production was not directly traded (the term used is smuggling) with Santa Cruz or with the Mato Grosso’s Portuguese, as near as they were, was not negligible.<sup>10</sup>

In reality, the Mojos and Chiquitos missions were placed in a fiercely disputed territory with the Portuguese empire. Besides the Cuiabá mines, discovered in 1718, the Portuguese sought to consolidate their position amongst the uncertainties of the Madrid Treaty, creating settlements in key spots: in the middle of the valley of the Guaporé river, well ahead of the Spanish missions, Installing Vila Bela (1752), capital of Mato Grosso, and the Fort of Nossa Senhora da Conceição (1760), twice rebuilt (in 1769, changing its

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<sup>7</sup> AGI, Charcas, 515. Temporal regulations for the Mojos and Chiquitos missions, Santo Ildefonso, 15 set. 1772, f. 57, §29: “Así los texidos como la cera se ha de remitir a la Receptoría General, que se ha establecido en la Ciudad de la Plata”; f. 81, §3: “la correspondencia de los curas sea con dicho gobernador, remitiéndole a este las listas de los generos que necesitan para sus respectivos pueblos y las facturas de los efectos que remiten, para que este se corresponda con la Receptoría General de esta Ciudad [de la Plata], pidiendo lo que graduare conveniente y necesario para cada pueblo, y remitiendo al Receptor de Santa Cruz los efectos que deben pasar a esta ciudad a la Receptoría General”. Esperava-se que a produção das missões custeasse os salários de curas, receptores e governadores e que restasse algum “resíduo” à *Real Hacienda*, porém o regulamento advertia sobre a elevação da produtividade: “se reconociere no haber resto suficiente para sostener los gastos inexcusables, se deberá tomar algún medio suave y equitativo de aumentar estos fondos comunes” (f. 80, §1).

<sup>8</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. Instrução Superior da Audiência de La Plata, 14 set. 1789.

<sup>9</sup> AHN, Estado, 4436, n. 14. Lazaro de Ribera a Nicolás de Arredondo, San Pedro, 19 mar. 1790.

<sup>10</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. Lazaro de Ribera ao rei, San Pedro, 17 set. 1787.

name to Fort Bragança, and in 1776, to Fort Príncipe da Beira). Weighing the advantages of dominating key access spots to the Amazon basin and Paraguay and Paraná, and of the gold extracted from those lands, the supply of the Mato Grosso captaincy was difficult. It is not surprising that one of the Governors estimated that “the goods necessary for our conservation acquire a degree of value of over 300 percent from their first handling”.<sup>11</sup> Slaves, salt, weapons, tools, fabrics, mules and other wet and dry goods, passed through the fluvial routes from Grão-Pará and São Paulo, or by land from Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. In any case, as traders added the transportation and taxation costs to the final price, adding great profit margins, the prices of the most necessary items were, to use the expression of the Ministers of the Kingdom, “exorbitant”.<sup>12</sup> The supply drama was aggravated with the lack of manpower, since the slaves were being concentrated in the mining activities, and few occupied themselves with farms. This scenario provided a favorable set for Portuguese traders to pass near the close and abundant Mojos and Chiquitos missions to conduct transactions of great interest to the Mato Grosso’s economic life (LOBO, 1960b, p. 420; SAIGNES, 1975, p. 226).

Thus, between June and September 1740, Luiz Rodrigues Vilares, Portuguese, captain major of the Cuiabá mines, coordinated an expedition of a group of traders to Chiquitos. In a letter addressed to the Jesuits, he proposed to supply fabrics, salt, sugar, wines “and other goods that weren’t found amongst the Indian practices”, in exchange for cattle, beasts and horses of the Spanish domains, and ensured accessible tariffs of “greater commodity than those that by decree were given by the Seville contracts, and with less spending than that introduced by the French, English and Dutch”.<sup>13</sup> Going against the ruling of the Field Master of Cuiabá of 26 June, 1723, that banned any contraband with the Spaniards, the traders of these mines anticipated themselves to the decisions of the Portuguese central power, to whom they only communicated this enterprise in a letter of 20 September 1740, with a request for mercy for the opening of the referred commerce.<sup>14</sup> The Portuguese Crown, facing the delicate negotiations of the Treaty of Madrid, ordered the first governor of Mato Grosso, D. Antonio Rolim de Moura

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<sup>11</sup> Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo, Lisboa [IANTT], Ministério do Reino, maço 500, caixa 624. Instruction from Luiz Pinto de Souza Coutinho, governor of Mato Grosso, to his successor, Luiz de Albuquerque de Melo Pereira e Cáceres, Vila Bela, 24 dec. 1772. §67 (quote) and §33.

<sup>12</sup> Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa [AHU], Avulsos da capitania do Pará [PA], cx. 69, d. 5919. Instrução secretíssima a João Pereira Caldas, Ajuda, 2 set. 1772.

<sup>13</sup> AGI, Charcas, 425. “Cópia de la carta de Luys Roys Vilares, escrita en Cuyabá en 22 junio de este año de 1740 a los P.s micioneros de Chiquitos solicitando la introducción de su comercio por estas partes en el Peru”.

<sup>14</sup> AHU, Avulsos da capitania de Mato Grosso [MT], cx. 3, d. 140. Ouvidor João Gonçalves Pereira to the king, Cuiabá, 20 set. 1740.

to “be all vigilant to stop the inhabitants of your governance all trading of goods with the”,<sup>15</sup> ban reinforced in 1757.<sup>16</sup>

In the meanwhile. The contraband ban was removed by letter of 5 June 1761, in which Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, who had assumed the State Secretariat instructed the governor of Pará about the “political use of commerce and correspondence that can be held carefully with the Castilian priests”.<sup>17</sup> In this about face towards a veiled incentive of contraband the Portuguese Crown is not accompanied by the Spanish, who in October 1740 reinforced, in a forceful way, the ban of any contact with the Portuguese.<sup>18</sup>

Even though the Spanish central power continued to ban contraband until the end of the colonial era, at a local level, traders, missionaries, military and governors had no other option, to the point of a Buenos Ayres governor recognition that, the products from the fleets took so long to arrive and were so expensive, that he was forced to buy them at the Colônia do Sacramento.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Instruction by the queen D. Mariana Vitória”, Lisboa, 19 jan. 1749. (MENDONÇA, 1985, p. 26).

<sup>16</sup> AHU, Cód. 613. Instrução de Tomé Joaquim da Costa Corte Real a D. Antonio Rolim de Moura, Belém, 7 jul. 1757, §11.

<sup>17</sup> Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa [BNL], Reservados, Cód. 11415. Manuel Bernardo de Melo e Castro a Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, confirming the reception of letter 5 jun. 1761, Pará, 11 out. 1761.

<sup>18</sup> AGI, Charcas, 207. “Auto”, La Plata, 19 out. 1740. A Ley 8, tít.13, lib. 3, one of several that banned commerce with foreigners in the Spanish empire, already done in 6 jun. 1556 and included in the *Recopilación* of 1680, ordered “que todos los que trataren y contrataren en las Indias, provincias y puertos de ellas con estrangeros de estos nuestros reinos de España, de cualquier nación que sean, y cambiaren ó rescataren oro, plata, perlas, piedras, frutos, y otros cualesquier géneros y mercaderías, ó les compraren ó rescataren las presas que hubieren hecho, ó les vendieren bastimientos, pertrechos, armas, ó municiones, y se hallaren principalmente culpados en los dichos rescates, compras y ventas, incurran en pena de la vida y perdimiento de bienes” (*Recopilación de Leyes de los Reinos de las Indias*. 4. ed. Madrid: Consejo de la Hispanidad, 1943. t. 1, p. 619; of similar subject was the Ley 7, tít. 27, lib. 9 [t. 3, p. 327]). On interdictions to contraband, see Haring (1939, p. 79-85, *et passim*).

<sup>19</sup> The Reais Cédulas of 26 mai. 1721 and 10 mai. 1723 reinforced the ban on “comércios y introducciones ylizitas” and rejected the pretexts of the Buenos Ayres *vecinos* who, “por la retardacion de Navios de estos Reinos, les precisava muchas vezes a comprar las ropas que pasavan a la Colonia”. In: ARCHIVO General de la Nación Argentina. *Campaña del Brasil: antecedentes coloniales*. Buenos Aires: Archivo General de la Nación, 1931. v. 1, p. 473 e 485. Quoted and analyzed in the works of Possamai (2001, p. 276).

**Figure 1** – Missions, settlements and forts at the Guaporé river valley, in the second half of the XVIII century.



**Fonte:** Own elaboration form a contemporary map of Bolivia. Location of missions Block (1994, p. 45) and Tomichá Charupá (2002, p. 667).

In the Spanish empire, the commercial system inaugurated by the catholic kings and perfected by the Habsburgs was in force, funded, on one side, by the single port regime in Spain and the vice-royalties, and on the other, in the imposition of only one colonial commercial route. Thus, all commerce in South America would be supplied with European products through the route that connected Seville, then Cadiz to the Panama isthmus; from there to the port of Callao from where, driven by mules, the goods arrived

in Lima capital of the vice-kingdom,; or were shipped to Arica following then to Potosí. Until the free trade decree of 1778, the supply of the Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Tucumán, Assunção e Buenos Aires regions was dependent of this long route. To the high transportation costs and custom taxes, were added the extraordinary profits of traders, that could reach 150, 300 and 500% (HARING, 1939, p. 180; CANABRAVA, 1984, p. 42-49; MOUTOUKIAS, 1988a, p. 62; POSSAMAI, 2001, p. 276-78).

Such was the situation of the Spanish domains adjoining the Portuguese, who knew it very well, so much so, that Rolim de Moura, consulted by the ministers of State in 1774, stated that the Spaniards lived in a constant state of lacking of essential European: “the prices of goods that come from Europe are exorbitant and most of them are worthless; the baize that arrived to my neighbors the Jesuits was mere burlap; from Europe no dishware from India, nor crystalline glass”.<sup>20</sup>

With the expulsion of the Jesuits, Spanish traders from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Córdoba, Salta e Tucumán saw the possibility of intermediating trading between the abundant production of the Mojos and Chiquitos missions and the apparently more attractive goods brought by the Portuguese. In turn, since 1761, the Portuguese abandoned any reservations towards contraband with the Spaniards in the Mato Grosso and Amazon borders, and sought to plan a commercial offensive that meant a decisive blow against the colonial exclusivity of their rivals.

### **Pombalino Plan and the Exclusivity Dispute**

On the 1 December, 1772, the Marquis of Pombal entertained in his residence Martinho de Melo and Castro e José de Seabra e Silva to discuss the details of a Commercial Plan with the intention of introducing in Mato Grosso, in the captaincy of São José do Rio Negro and other Castilian domains adjoining regions.<sup>21</sup> The strategy emblematically called “Security and Commerce Plan”, envisioned to stimulate the activities of the Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão, created in 1755, to pep up the economy of the border captaincies, through the cheapening of the price of slaves and goods and the installation of trading posts in the itinerary of the Amazonic rivers, and, finally to secretly promote the introduction of goods in the Spanish domains.<sup>22</sup> “One of

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<sup>20</sup> “information given about the captaincy of Matto Grosso to the Marquis of Pombal by the Count of Azambuja” [1774] (apud BASTOS, 1972b, p. 94).

<sup>21</sup> This meeting is known by the letter of Ignacio Pedro Guintella, Ancelmo José da Cruz, Francisco José Lopes and João Roque Jorgeto the governor of Pará, João Pereira Caldas, Lisboa, 2 out. 1772, em: AHU, PA, cx. 69, d. 5919.

<sup>22</sup> There is a mention to the project in: AHU, PA, cx. 65, d. 5657. “Memoria das Instruções, e Ordens”, 10 jul. 1770; and the plan was exposed in detail in: AHU, PA, cx. 69, d. 5919. “Instrução secretíssima a João Pereira Caldas”, 2 set. 1772. Analysis of this Commercial Plan can be read in Davidson (1970, p. 158, 162, 313) and Bastos (1972a, p. 94-102).



the most important businesses, that currently constitute the Interests of my Crown” referred to a “highly secret instruction” to the governor of Pará, João Pereira Caldas, which consisted in “introducing in the great majority of the Spanish Provinces of the Orinoco, of Quito and of Peru with greater profits than what was done before in that Colonia do Sacramento”, a “thick and fruitful commerce”, “with little possibility for the respective governors to stop it”. For such, under “the most unbreakable secret” – making known to only the immediate actions to be done, not the full extent of the plan –, it was the governor’s duty, foremost, to limit the profit of all traders that did business in those parts to a maximum of 12%, “to reap in a bigger extension the hefty profits, which do not allow for small quantities to be sold with covetous prices”.<sup>23</sup>

This plan, whose format, according to David Davidson (1970, p. 194), offered “the purest manifestation of state mercantilism”, was therefore based in three central points: (a) to introduce European goods in the Spanish empire (b) A limitation of traders profits to 12% and a third aspect would follow as a consequence: (c) to lower the prices there was the need to establish a table, as it actually happened,; as well as, because it was only for the government to conduct hidden transactions with the Spaniards, the merchandise would be bought previously from business men as per the table’s prices; those that sought higher prices, would inevitably be excluded.<sup>24</sup>

Around the 28 January 1775, the governor of Mato Grosso, Luiz de Albuquerque de Melo Pereira e Cáceres, lowered (in some cases by 50%) and froze the prices for slaves and goods sold in the captaincy, and established an interest rate of 5% per year. Changes wouldn’t have been of little note, if we compare them with the going prices of 1770 and the new table of 1775: a good black, bought in the ports of Rio de Janeiro or Bahia, and that was sold in Mato Grosso for 300\$000, now cost 160\$000, if he came from Pará; the bushel of salt went from 30\$000 to 9\$450; each flask of wine, vinegar or brandy, from 3\$000 was no valued at 1\$687; the piece of linen, item of great desire among the Spaniards used to cost 9\$000(unspecified measure and origin), and the new prices are: 9\$111 (large French linen), 6\$918 (narrow) and 3\$205 (from Hamburg).<sup>25</sup>

The incentive to contraband in the shape of a rigid state control – that strategically should covert itself “with such a disguise that it does not seem that your lordship promotes it, and even less that you have orders to do it”<sup>26</sup> – did not stop to exert

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<sup>23</sup> AHU, PA, cx. 69, d. 5919. “Instrução secretíssima a João Pereira Caldas”, 2 set. 1772.

<sup>24</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 26, d. 1536. “Reflexoens sobre o Governo e Administração da Capitania de Mato Grosso” [anônimo, c. 1788].

<sup>25</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 15, d. 916. “Memória dos preços comuns a que no Mato Grosso são vendidos os géneros molhados e secos” [c. 1770]; AHU, MT, cx. 17, d. 1093. “Copia da Pauta q. se estabeleco em Matto Grosso, para por ella venderem os Negociantes a ouro”, Vila Bela, 28 jan. 1775.

<sup>26</sup> AHU, Cód. 614. Instruction by Martinho de Melo de Castro to Luiz de Albuquerque, Belém, 13 ago. 1771, §5.

severe pressure under certain niches of Portuguese traders. Thus, the Luiz de Albuquerque government was harshly criticized by someone that wrote some “Reflections on the Government and Administration of the Mato Grosso Captaincy, which manifest the concussions, theft, depredation and violence that are committed by the Governors of said State in detriment to the Fazenda Real, and ruining His Majesty’s vassals”.<sup>27</sup> About the contraband the anonymous author refers that:

This commerce is done by subtracting by the Governor from his Commissioners, the goods that should be passed on to the Spanish domains, fixing to them extremely high prices, and bringing in return from the Spanish mines to the Mato Grosso’s domains different goods, such as sugar, flour, fat, chickens, horses, cattle, dried meat, bought from the Spaniards at a negligible price, selling them after to the Fazenda Real and to private citizens for excessive prices, as for example fat, which they brought at 640 the bushel and sold it in Mato Grosso at 3600, the horses that cost ten pesos at fifty pesos &a.

As if this wasn’t enough, the real reason that led to the foundation of the Casalvasco settlement, the anonymous author continues, was to divert Castilians from trading in Vila Bela, where traders sold them goods at lower prices, and force them to buy in Casalvasco, at the mercy of the practiced by the governor’s favoured traders. In the same manner, because too many mules came by Cuiabá, coming from the Goiás route, and lowered the prices of those bought from the Spaniards, with a loss to the monopoly established by the Plan, a register was created between Cuiabá and Vila Bela. Finally, since only the military and the government licensed traders could pass to the Spanish domains for commerce, entirely controlled by the Fazenda Real, Whoever wanted to participate had to sell their goods to the commissioners responsible for the supply of the royal warehouses, at the lowest possible.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, the attempt to supply European goods in sustainable way to the Spanish empire failed. According to Davidson (1970, p. 199), the supply of black slaves to the Grão-Pará captaincy was insufficient, and the navigation of the fluvial route between Belém e Vila Bela had difficulty in finding crews. There few that had enough capital to supply the luxury items required by the Spaniards, and the route ended up being more used by the administration than by traders.

The contraband that prevailed was of victuals produced in the missions exchanged for gold from the Portuguese mines. In 1770, the curator for the Santa Magdalena mission, Don Tomás Zapata, supplied 200 heads of cattle to the Portuguese

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<sup>27</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 26, d. 1536 [c. 1788].

<sup>28</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 26, d. 1536. “Reflexoens sobre o Governo” [c. 1788]; “Informação sobre a capitania de Mato Grosso dada pelo Astrônomo Antonio Pires da Silva Pontes” [1798] (apud DAVIDSON, 1970, p. 193).

in a deal with Manoel Pedro, who paid him with one gold ring with diamonds, two shotguns and three pounds of gold dust.<sup>29</sup> In 1775 as in the Jaurú registry, 100 mules passed to Vila Bela and the Portuguese acquired from the Chiquitos Indians 400 to 600 heads of cattle, in exchange for “fabrics and trinkets”; in that same year the traders Don Gabino and Don Jacinto, from Córdoba and Salta, brought 564 beasts from the Jaurú registry that were bought in installments by the Vila Bela traders.<sup>30</sup>

In the decisive years for the construction of Fort Forte Príncipe da Beira (started in 1776), the Portuguese acquired from the Spanish traders a considerable herd of cattle, along with mules and supplies. In 1778, Don José Franco, militia lieutenant in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, supplied 646 heads; In 1781, Don José Pericena, Don José Antonio, Don José Soares, Don Ramón Gonzalez de Velasco and the same Don José Franco brought a total of 1200 mules.<sup>31</sup> Finally in 1787, frei Melchor Guillén, Don Ramon Lairana, Don Francisco Xavier Chaves e Don Joseph Lorenzo Chaves de Arias from the Concepción mission sent the Portuguese from Forte Príncipe: 4 canoes with meat and sugar; 3 canoes with meat and chickens; one canoe with sugar, 22 canoes loaded with flasks of brandy, sugar, fat, chickens, candles, chocolate, honey, fabrics, biscuits, sweets, tamarinds, and painted nets; and two canoes with brandy, sugar and fabrics. This deal was intermediated by the Portuguese military commissioned to enter Spanish territory and deal with priests and traders: Manoel José da Rocha, Francisco Rodrigues do Prado, Francisco José Teixeira and Joaquim Sousa.<sup>32</sup>

In the face of the drastic supply problems in the Spanish empire, there was a lucrative market for several products. Heedful of this need, the governor of Mato Grosso, Luiz de Albuquerque, sought to inform the Portuguese ministers on the most desired items by the Spaniards. Black slaves were avidly sought, but for of economic policy reasons, already foreseen in the 1772 Plan, the governor banned their bunched exit in 13 March, 1776.<sup>33</sup> Despite this, there were cases of sales of black slaves; the visitor of the Mojos mission wanted to buy one “moleca” and one “moleque”.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. Inquest conducted in the reduction of Nossa Senhora de Loreto de Mojos, 5 mar. 1770.

<sup>30</sup> AVB, p. 198, 216; AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1128. Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, Forte Príncipe, 28 jun. 1776.

<sup>31</sup> Arquivo Público do Estado de Mato Grosso, Cuiabá, Brasil [APMT], Defesa, 1778, 295. José Manuel Cardoso da Cunha a Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 21 set. 1778; APMT, Defesa, 1778, 292. José Manuel Cardoso da Cunha a Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 18 out. 1778; AHU, MT, cx. 24, d. 1453. “Relação dos Contrabandistas Espanhoes, que chegaram a esta Fronteira de Matto Groço pela via de Chiquitos em Agosto de 1781”, signed by Luiz de Albuquerque, Vila Bela, 2 jan. 1785.

<sup>32</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Representación de los Caciques”, Concepción, 20 jul. 1787.

<sup>33</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1128. “Bando”.

<sup>34</sup> APMT, Defesa, 1780, 474. José Manoel Cardoso da Cunha a Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 4 jan. 1780. It is likely that this visitor, frei Antonio Peñaloza, curator, vicar and ecclesiastical judge in San Pedro, had bought the referred slaves, because in 1789 the governor of Mojos had to take action

Thus, the item that ended up heading the Spanish preferences were the wrought gold pieces; as reported by Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, the Spaniards pretended “to negotiate with their mules for the equivalent in wrought gold pieces and some precious stones, goods they said to prefer because of the greater facility of transportation and selling in Peru”.<sup>35</sup> Fabrics came in second place in their preference: “fine and ordinary linen, Esguioens and similar others, as well as asking for other fine fabrics, especially blue brand and black, fine hats with other goods, that can be supplied by the Portuguese factories”.<sup>36</sup> Finally some fine glass and dishware from India appeared frequently in the orders made by the Spaniards.<sup>37</sup>

In reality, there was some excitement among the traders and curators of the missions about the dealings with the Portuguese, inclusively shared by some governors, as seen by the orders’ requests.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile it is not an easy task to find out who came out winning or losing. This question only makes sense if we think of the Mato Grosso’s government and the Castilian traders, since the Spanish central power was evidently hindered: the missions’ production, meant to reach the *Real Hacienda*, was diverted to Fort Príncipe da Beira, damaging gravely to the fiscal system. But the question of if he was winning or losing was constantly in the mind of Mato Grosso’s governor. After banning the selling of slaves, and facing Castilian arguments that reminded him that in Colônia do Sacramento there no such restriction, Luiz de Albuquerque wrote to the minister of State: “I find myself doubtful particularly in consenting or not, to the said Castilians, the purchase of some new slaves”.<sup>39</sup> The purchase of cattle, mules and horses with barred or wrought gold was another thorny question: maybe it “could be harmful” the governor speculated, “commonly speaking, that Castilians took with them the intrinsic value and the most precious representative of all things, which is the above mentioned gold, or conventional riches, in exchange for goods of no more than of an ideal and passing value such as mules”.<sup>40</sup>

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before “un descamino de chocolate que se hizo a un esclavo y a un mulato, criados de fray Antonio Peñalosa, desobediencia de aquéllos a las órdenes de este gobierno”. Archivo de Mojos, v. 9, n. 15. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 120).

<sup>35</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1128. Luiz de Albuquerque a Martinho de Melo e Castro, Forte Príncipe, 28 jun. 1776.

<sup>36</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 23, d. 1407. Luiz de Albuquerque a Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 21 mar. 1783.

<sup>37</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1128. Luiz de Albuquerque a Martinho de Melo e Castro, Forte Príncipe, 28 jun. 1776.

<sup>38</sup> See for example: AHU, MT, cx. 23, d. 1407. Don León Gonzáles de Velasco to José Manoel da Rocha, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 13 dez. 1782; Francisco José Teixeira to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 6 fev. 1783.

<sup>39</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 19, d. 1183. Luiz de Albuquerque a Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 9 jan. 1778.

<sup>40</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1128. Luiz de Albuquerque a Martinho de Melo e Castro, Forte Príncipe, 28 jun. 1776.

If the main target of the Pombalino Plan was not reached, it being draining precious metal from Peru by embedding goods at competitive prices in those Castilian domains, the Portuguese administration's pragmatism was able to adjust to the local conditions and undertake, with relative success, a vigorous drainage of supplies, cattle and mules from its neighbors, which, together with decisive policy for the possession of the Guaporé river, was of the utmost importance, truly vital, for example for the construction of Fort Príncipe da Beira. The construction of this monumental fort started in 1776 and continued throughout the 1780 decade, demanding the sojourn and upkeep of a considerable contingency of slaves, soldiers, and officials in that border. In a letter to the king in 22 February 1788, the governor of Mojos, Lazaro de Ribera, after two visits to the missions and several inquiries, stated that Fort Príncipe was largely supplied by the Castilians themselves:

The cattle and horses which offered an inexhaustible source of wealth, not only they destroyed it in multiplied killings done for fat, depriving the Indians of their main means of subsistence, but also opened all routes to the Portuguese to share these spoils in exchange for gold, topaz, linen, velvet, etc. the herds of horses went as a whole to the Forte del Príncipe de Beyra, and to the famous city of Santa Cruz. Cocoa, fabrics, sugar, brandy, tobacco, carpentry works along with other manufactured goods and industrial products that the fertility of this soil has to offer. [...] People, supplies, cattle, woods, in one word, all that was and is necessary every day to strengthen and extend such an establishment that directs itself against our own security has been found with a punctuality that astounds this ungoverned Province.<sup>41</sup>

## Dubious Loyalty

By joining together individuals and social groups who shared different cultural and identity agendas, contraband tensioned monarchic fidelity and colonial identity, and showed how these could also be negotiable. Often, economic advantages overcame imperial loyalty, and it was easier for people to identify with their next door neighbors, who had a similar social situation, than with the imposed colonial identity. Networks of complicity and trust, and even friendship, which in the Iberian tradition was, as analyzed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, a fundamental pre-condition for any solid commercial relationship set a potentially dangerous scenario for the central powers of Spain and Portugal who, whether they rejected or covertly supported contraband, coincided on the rigor of the control that fell on these border populations.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. Lazaro de Ribera ao rei, San Pedro, 22 fev. 1788.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Cooney's analysis (2006, p. 16, 24-26), Domingues (2000, p. 227 *et seq.*) and Holanda's (1995, p. 149). For a more general view on the identitarian changes among those that crossed the colonial borders, cf. the works of Weber (1992, *maxime* cap. 11; 2005, *maxime* cap. 6). Stimulating insights on the problem of trust networks among economic agents and monopolistic policies are supplied by the works of Costa (2002a, 2002b).

It was not uncommon for people, so frequently in contact with the opposite side, in fear of the authorities, swore allegiance to rival monarch. Thus, in 1740, the steward and provider of Cuiabá, Manuel Rodrigues Torres, writing to the governor of São Paulo, D. Luís Mascarenhas, complained of the injustice of his arrest, having been accused of diverting gold, and took the chance to denounce village officials and traders, who plotted to start contraband with the Spaniards. He reminded them of the dangers of this enterprise, so much bigger because the in their great part, Paulistas, potentially seditious people, to whom the Spanish and indigenous influence was certainly greater than the Portuguese. In recalled, in aid of his argument, the known example of the Lemes, whom, together with other Paulistas convicted by the Relação, “dared to publically toast to the health of Phellippe 5<sup>o</sup> and publically cheer for El Rey de Espanha and threaten with death the Portuguese people that didn’t”. This Paulista constitution that somewhat hybrid, was what most scared the Portuguese minister: “I have such little faith in this nation of people, who are neither Portuguese nor Castilian, nor gentile, because they have a little of each, because of the Portuguese they have the government that gives them their laws, from the Castilians the surnames, and from the gentile they still maintain a lot of rituals that mix with Judaic”.<sup>43</sup>

Among the Spaniards of the Paraguay province, the inhabitants of the Curuguaty village, founded next to the Paraná river in 1714, were also known as potentially seditious, being so close and in permanent contact with the Portuguese, and whom, at any sign of repression from the Spanish central power, could swear loyalty to the Faithful King.<sup>44</sup> The Villalba family, for example, was accused of having organized an uprising and murdering the main government representative in Curuguaty, in face of which they deserted to São Paulo. Hosted by the Morgado Mateus, the Villalba helped the governor in the planning and installation, in 1767, of the Iguatemi prison, not far from that Spanish village. The presence of the Villalba in Iguatemi was then confirmed by the Paraguay government, from the statement of Luiz dos Santos Chaves, sorocabano and deserter from the Portuguese prison, heard in Assunção in 1770. There was frequent contraband between the inhabitants of Curuguaty and Iguatemi until the demise of the prison in 1777. A certain Pedro Xavier de Rojas, arrested under the accusation of having

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<sup>43</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 2, d. 136. Manoel Rodrigues Torres to D. Luiz Mascarenhas, Cuiabá, 20 ago. 1740. For an interesting analysis of the historically built images on the paulistas, see: Mello e Souza (2006, p. 109-147).

<sup>44</sup> Such was the opinion of the governor of Paraguay Carlos Morphy, who expressed to the secretary of State his fears on having to harshly repress the inhabitants of that village. AGI, Buenos Aires, 539. Carlos Morphy, Governor of Paraguay, to the minister Julian de Arriaga, Assunção, 22 set. 1770.

made an illicit deal with the Portuguese, defended himself by saying that he sold cattle to the Villalba, which characterized trade between Spaniards, and not with foreigners.<sup>45</sup>

In reality, imperial loyalties had no similarities with any “nationalistic” feelings; they were, instead, unstable notions of belonging resulting from the material and symbolic colonialist devices. Tensioned by the contact relations inherent to contraband, these power devices were challenged and even manipulated in favour of economic advantages and prestige.

Such advantages could seduce the main responsible parties for the commerce with foreign domains, banned by the *Leyes de Indias*. The collaboration of Spanish governors and high officials was sought, certainly, by the governor of Mato Grosso, who, in the beginning of 1775, ordered the second lieutenant Manoel José da Rocha do Amaral to “take some pampering as best possible or well wrapped bribes to the President of the Real Audiencia de la Plata, to the Governor, and to the Captain General of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, to the bishop of the same city, and besides these to the governor of Moxos, subordinate to Santa Cruz, and to several curators of the missions”.<sup>46</sup> In May of the same year, Manoel José da Rocha’s reached the San Pedro mission where the governor of Mojos, Don León Gonzáles de Velasco, lived, who however had taken a leave for a few months in Santa Cruz. The Portuguese second lieutenant met lieutenant Don José Franco, to whom he delivered a package, that reached the hands of the governor of Santa Cruz, Don Andrés Mestre (1771-1777), in the name of the governor of Mato Grosso, consisting of a diamond ring.<sup>47</sup> This Spanish governor was conducting since October 1775, a visit to the Mojos *pueblos*, and as part of his measures to control the border, assigned 25 soldiers under the command of Don José Franco to garrison the missions of Loreto, Exaltación and Magdalena.<sup>48</sup> Whatever Don Andrés Mestre’s pretensions were, the commander he chose for this garrison remained one of the main intermediaries for the contraband with the Portuguese, and in November of the same year of 1775, when he met second lieutenant Manoel José da Rocha at the *pueblo* of Magdalena, Don José Franco negotiated Spanish silver for rings and black velvet cloths, and promised the passage of 300 heads of cattle that he had arranged with the curator of Trinidad.<sup>49</sup> In

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<sup>45</sup> Carlos Morphy to the king of Spain, Assunção, 27 abr. 1768. São Paulo, 1949, p. 574; statement by Luiz dos Santos Chavez, 1 out. 1770. São Paulo, 1949, p. 628; Archivo Nacional de Asunción, Paraguay [ANA], Sección Nueva Encuadernación, v. 524, doc. 2. “Pedro Xavier de Rojas Aranda, preso en la Real Cárcel acusado de mantener tratos con los portugueses del río Igatimí, vendiéndoles bueyes, plantea su defensa”, 12 set. 1770.

<sup>46</sup> AHU, cx. 18, d. 1106. Luiz de Albuquerque to João Pereira Caldas, Vila Bela, 19 jul. 1775.

<sup>47</sup> AHU, cx. 18, d. 1106. Manoel José da Rocha do Amaral to Luiz de Albuquerque, Fortaleza da Conceição, 26 jun. 1775; AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1116. Don Andrés Mestre a Luiz de Albuquerque, San Pedro, 15 out. 1775.

<sup>48</sup> Archivo de Mojos, v. 4, n. 12. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 100); AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1116. Manoel José da Rocha do Amaral to Manoel Caetano da Silva, Conceição, 6 nov. 1775.

<sup>49</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 18, d. 1116. Manoel José da Rocha a Luiz de Albuquerque, Conceição, 15 nov. 1775.

turn, Don León Gonzáles de Velasco clearly showed, as soon as he entered the Mojos government in 1773 (where he remained until 1777) his favourable disposition towards contraband, so much that, in a meeting with Manoel José da Rocha, he advised that “if anything was needed from Peru, a message was sent [...] and that the letters were sent to the curator of Madalena Padre Caetano Peres de Tudela, for being religious man of entire trust”.<sup>50</sup>

The difficulty in knowing, as Moutoukias (1988a, p. 114) suggests, “where the official starts and the trader ends”, is relevant, in this case, because the officials in charge of stopping diversions from the Mojos province were involved in a great part of the illicit commercial transactions recorded in documents. The already mentioned Don José Franco entirely governed Mojos when, in September 1778, he coordinated the passage of 646 heads of cattle, decisive moment for the Mato Grosso administration, that was starting the building of Fort Príncipe and needed to maintain the used slaves.<sup>51</sup> In 1783, he was mentioned in the statements by traders Francisco Sandoval and Antonio Mercado, accused of selling fat, sugar, fabrics and other products to Fort Príncipe,<sup>52</sup> and effectively participated in the committees that in the years 1781, 1783, and 1784 lead a total of 2100 horses and mules to the Portuguese domains.<sup>53</sup> The involvement of military officials in contraband doesn't seem to have shaken their worth with their governors: Félix José de Sosa, cited in 1783, was acting as commissioner in charge of sending the goods produced in the Mojos missions to the *Receptoría General* of Santa Cruz de la Sierra three years later.<sup>54</sup> Another military officer who was a interim governor, Don Juan Dionisio Marin, took advantage of the absence of Lazaro de Ribera, whose reforms were aimed at closing the doors to contraband, and personally led 8 canoes and a boat with a good provision of fat, wax, and supplies; during his stay at Fort Príncipe, as told by the Indians that accompanied him “he was given a play and a ball that lasted until three in the morning”, the musicians were deserters from San Martín; the payment appears to have been in crystalline glass and a Chinese chest, of unknown contents.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 16, d. 1031. Manuel José da Rocha Amaral to Manoel Caetano da Silva, Conceição, 27 mar. 1773.

<sup>51</sup> APMT, Defesa, 1778, 295. José Manuel Cardoso da Cunha a Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 21 set. 1778.

<sup>52</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. “Relación de todos los docum.tos [autos] que ha remitido à esta Real Aud.a de la Plata el Gov.r de Moxos D.n Lazaro de Ribera”, beginning in 24 ago. 1783.

<sup>53</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 24, d. 1453. “Relação dos Contrabandistas Espanhoes, que chegaram a esta Fronteira de Matto Groço pela via de Chiquitos em Agosto de 1781”. Rubrica de Luiz de Albuquerque, Vila Bela, 2 jan. 1785; AHU, MT, cx. 24, d. 1428. “Memória dos officiaes, e Soldados de Milicias Espanhoes, e indios de Servicio das Aldeyas da Provincia de Chiquitos, que no mes de Agosto de 1783 chegaram ao Rio dos Barbados”; e AVB, p. 241, 247.

<sup>54</sup> Arquivo de Mojos, v. 6, n. 18. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 1070).

<sup>55</sup> AHN, Estado, 4397, carpeta 4, n. 4. “Auto” on the accusation that the interim governor of Mojos province, Don Juan Dionisio Marin, would have taken to Forte Príncipe 8 canoes and a boat with several items, Pueblo de Santa Maria Magdalena, 11 abr. 1792. f. 1, 2v, 4.



The participation of curators in the trust network establishment is not without importance who, with the veiled collaboration of officials and governors, allowed the trade of items produced in the missions with the Portuguese or traders of the Santa Cruz de la Sierra region. In any case, as these negotiations were banned and it wasn't reasonable to neglect the risk that a governor more watchful of regulations wanted to investigate the missions accounts – as actually did Lazaro de Ribera –, the curators sought to dissimulate their involvement through a pacifying speech filled with pretexts. Thus, for the three Easter days in 1786, frei Cayetano Perez de Tudela, curator of Magdalena, managed to arrange a meeting between the Portuguese Flagship Bearer of the Dragoons Francisco Rodrigues do Prado and two Spanish traders, Antonio Mercado e Manuel Antonio de Salas. In June of the following year, frei Cayetano Tudela had to explain to governor Ribera of the faults noted in the *pueblo's* accounts and of the presence of the traders and the Portuguese military. Not recognizing it was contraband, the curator referred that in those days there was a “noisy dispute” a raffle game on account of the linen pieces brought by Rodrigues do Prado.<sup>56</sup> Which wasn't enough however, to hide the letters found by the governor among which was a an order from Antonio Mercado to the Portuguese military, who had left the following receipt: “I take in my possession forty marcs, four ounces, and three quarters of wrought silver belonging to S.r D.n Antonio Mercado, to complete in legitimate topaz rings, and fine precious stones, and other gold pieces, and good stones, and as confirmation of the aforesaid I pass this receipt written and signed by me”.<sup>57</sup> In November of the same year, Rodrigues do Prado returned with the requested order: “Señor d.n Antonio Mercado. = according to the order of the Governor it is not possible for me to pass this Pueblo, where I am am with all your orders, that I sent for. [...] At your service as a friend”.<sup>58</sup> After successive investigations governor Ribera realized that Manoel José da Rocha and Francisco Rodrigues do Prado were acting as true commercial representatives: bearing gifts, they bribed authorities, established trust and friendship networks, presented products, collected values, delivered orders and intermediated the passage of Spanish traders to Forte Príncipe and Vila Bela.<sup>59</sup>

There was, from the curators side, therefore, the fabrication of a speech that could be activated every time the authorities enquired about the origins of the goods or the presence of Portuguese in Spanish lands: The apothecary of Fort Príncipe was called

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<sup>56</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Visita del Pueblo de Santa Maria Magdalena”, beginning in 12 jun. 1787.

<sup>57</sup> AHN, Estado, 4397, carpeta 3 [n. 1]. A letter by Francisco Rodrigues do Prado, S. Pedro, 31 mar. 1786.

<sup>58</sup> AHN, Estado, 4397, carpeta 3 [n. 2]. Francisco Rodrigues do Prado to Antonio Mercado, Exaltación, 6 nov. 1786.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example: AGI, Charcas, 623. “Representación de los Caciques”, Concepción, 20 jul. 1787.

to the missions, which allowed to formulate that the sending of cattle and supply canoes was part of the payment for his services, and the delivery of letters asking for help in the capture of runaway slaves was a recurrent pretext that allowed for the stay of Portuguese in the missions.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, the pretexts often weren't enough to dissimulate the illicit activities, and some curators sought assurances from the Portuguese authorities. The curator of Madalena, frei Melchior Rodrigues, for example requested an asylum commitment in the domains of the Faithful King, in case the Spanish authorities accused him of practicing contraband, and a Portuguese official received a request from frei Juan Antonio Gomes Trigoso, "to pass him a statement that he did no commerce with ours".<sup>61</sup> Some curators got so involved in the illegal mission product trading that the intensification of the pressure on the Indians work could lead to protests. Thus, in 1786, Lazaro de Ribera, received in the province's capital the visit of the main Indians Lucas Guanama, Turibio Amando, Bárbara Mapaue, Maria Dachuju and Helena Arando. They came to ask for cattle as "they had nothing to eat", and to denounce the management of father José Ignacio Mendes, for the excessive beatings that he administered to the Indians and the illicit trading he maintained with the Portuguese Fort Príncipe.<sup>62</sup> Facing this situation, Lazaro de Ribera authorized the sending of 300 steer and 3 thousand heads of pampas cattle from Machupo.<sup>63</sup> The curator José Ignacio Mendes, being reprimanded,<sup>64</sup> deserted to the Portuguese domains, taking with him several canoes with products from the Exaltación mission, and in January 1788 requested a license from the Portuguese governor to remain in Mato Grosso<sup>65</sup>

With the expulsion of the Jesuits, the secularization of the missions led to a management system in which, in the point of view of the central power itself, the missionary figure had the objective of not so much propagate christianity, but to act as a political and a commercial intervenor among indigenous people.<sup>66</sup> According to David

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<sup>60</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. Frei Cayetano Perez de Tudela to Lazaro de Ribera, 29 jun. 1787; AGI, Charcas, 445. Lazaro de Ribera to the king, San Pedro, 30 jan. 1789.

<sup>61</sup> APMT, Defesa, 1778, 297. José Manuel Cardoso de Melo to Luiz de Albuquerque, 5 nov. 1778; APMT, Defesa, 1780, 458. José Manuel Cardoso da Cunha to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 9 ago. 1780.

<sup>62</sup> AGI, Charcas, 446. "Expediente sobre un socorro de ganado q.e se hiso al Pueblo de la Exaltación", Lazaro de Ribera, San Pedro, 17 out. 1786.

<sup>63</sup> AGI, Charcas, 446. Lazaro de Ribera to frei Antonio Peñaloza, San Pedro, 17 out. 1786, f. 2; Circular letter to the curators of Loreto and Trinidad, San Pedro, 18 out. 1786. f. 3.

<sup>64</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. Copy of the letter by padre José Ignacio Mendes, former curator of the Exaltación mission, to the current curator of the same *pueblo*, Forte Príncipe da Beira, 8 jan. 1788. on the case of Tadeo Terrazas, who was a curator in Santa Magdalena and deserted to Mato Grosso, see: APMT, Defesa, 1780, 453. Francisco José Teixeira ato Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 10 jun. 1780; Archivo de Mojos, v. 7, n. 5. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 111).

<sup>65</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 26, d. 1524. Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 14 mar. 1788; José Ignacio Mendes to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, [s.d.] jan. 1788.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. for the Chile case: Boccara (1998, p. 333).

Block (1980, p. 332), this phenomenon manifested itself in the Mojos missions through the passing of an acculturative and commercial orientation, in view of incrementing the production of tallow, cocoa, cotton, sugar and fabrics, absorbed by the *Real Hacienda*. However, less than half of the curators were ordained priests, and contrarily to the long residencies of the Jesuits in the same mission, in Mojos it was rare for this to happen: from 1769 to 1773 2 out of 13 curators remained in their posts; between 1773 and 1777 only one; Between 1777 and 1790 all varied. There was a case in which one of these changes, a certain Don Francisco Xavier Chaves, as he was removed from Concepción, took such a hefty equipage, that the Indians themselves could not help but notice: “He left [...] with ten and six canoes loaded with goods, fabrics, nets, desserts, and cloths, with other closed chests, all objects of their (the Indians) industry, sweat, and work”.<sup>67</sup>

The plentiful lifestyle of the curators didn't go unnoticed to the Portuguese traveller Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida (1849, p. 112-113), to whom they lived “as small kings”. On a visit to the Santa Magdalena mission he noted that “skilful cooks, with veal, chicken, hens, eggs, cheese, cream, butter, rice, sugar, etc., show their abilities in the different stews that they present in clay, Indian and silver dishware, to satisfy the greediness of one single man, who at the same time fills his ears with the people's serenades”. In comparison, the naturalist observed, “the poor Indian, who works so hard, spends his life miserably; [...] only two or three cows are killed during the week and the meat is distributed to each couple's leader, and the portion is so small that it will be enough for only one meal”.

The irregularity in the payment of wages could stimulate curators, governors and military officials to dispose of the missions assets for their own benefit, hindering the collection of the *Real Hacienda*. Low wages and the widespread notion that they could be compensated by the personal advantages that the position would bring, conditioned corruption in the whole empire (PIETSCHMANN, 1982, p. 23-25). José Lorenzo Chaves de Arias, son of a leading *encomendero* from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, acted as curator in Concepción, Loreto, Trinidad, Magdalena e San Joaquín. In 1787, the Indian chiefs of Concepción denounced him for having sent two canoes with brandy, sugar and fabrics to Fort Príncipe.<sup>68</sup> Being known as a person of “fractious character and not truthful”,<sup>69</sup> he was banned from acting in the Mojos missions.<sup>70</sup> Between 1800 and

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<sup>67</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Representación de los Caciques”, Concepción, 20 jul. 1787.

<sup>68</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Representación de los Caciques”, Concepción, 20 jul. 1787.

<sup>69</sup> Device formed between 1791 and 1792 concerning the punishment of the curator Don José Lorenzo Chaves de Arias, among other reasons for, “por sus comercios furtivos con el portugués”. Archivo de Mojos, v. 21, n. 1. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 173).

<sup>70</sup> “Reservado. El gobernador de Mojos informa acerca de los irregulares y perjudiciales antecedentes del presbítero [...]; y comunicando los recelos que asisten al suscrito de que este hombre temible entre de nuevo a la provincia”. Archivo de Mojos, v. 17, n. 7. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 160).

1806, he sent petitions to the Audiência referring to unpayed wages, apparently with no success.<sup>71</sup> Thus, also Don León Gonzáles de Velasco, in November 1777, complained, from Exaltación, to be paid his wages of 200 strong monthly *pesos*, value signed by the Audiência de Charcas in 1774. He supported his request with a detailed description of how he lived, what he spent, and what a Spanish governor in Mojos needed.<sup>72</sup>

The economic advantages of the trade with the Portuguese were not unknown from the traders of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Córdoba, Salta e Tucumán, but how did the Spanish smugglers get low prices in the Mojos and Chiquitos missions? Basically in two ways. On the one hand, by coercion, which even scared the Portuguese as was informed by the commander of Forte Príncipe to the governor of Mato Grosso: “I have news that the Spanish smugglers travelled by the river to Loreto, and from there took violently from the curator 30 or 40 horses, giving for them one bar of gold, and followed by land, seemingly far from danger”.<sup>73</sup>

The most common though, seems to have been the activation of a trust network that encompassed the curators of the missions, many of which were family members. During the government of Lazaro de Ribera, when there was a tough repression to contraband and countless interrogations, many curators and traders confessed to the existence of a routine trade, especially with Santa Cruz de la Sierra. It is worth remembering that, by regal disposition, all that was produced by the missions should be sent to the Central Administration of *Real Hacienda*, and that any type of trade was banned. Meanwhile, an inquest in 1786 showed that the Exaltación mission in Mojos sent, that year, 7 patacas of tallow José Tomás Ximenes, inhabitant of Santa Cruz, and the Santa Ana mission sent 11 patacas of tallow, 3 of meat, a chest of clothes and some straw hats, all for Don Miguel Chaves, also living in Santa Cruz.<sup>74</sup>

What can be seen by the curators accounts is that the traders of the Santa Cruz area bought several products in the missions at low prices and resold them to the Portuguese domains and the Spanish cities.<sup>75</sup> It is not unlikely though that there was an interest by the curators in these transactions, since they could facilitate the entry of their connections in the trust. Between 1784 and 1786, two *autos* were produced about some goods that the curators from Santa Ana e Exaltación illegally sent to Don Manuel Antonio de Salas, that were confiscated and sent with the other products to *Receptoría*

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<sup>71</sup> “Ultimo cuerpo de autos que forman el expediente sobre los sínodos del cura de Mojos”, La Plata, 21 fev. 1806. Archivo de Mojos, v. 21, n. 5. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 174).

<sup>72</sup> Archivo de Mojos, v. 4, n. 13. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 100, 340).

<sup>73</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 20, d. 1226. “Cópia de alguns §§ de huma carta do Ajudante das Ordens José Manoel Cardoso, comandante do Forte Príncipe da Beira”, com data de 27 nov. 1778.

<sup>74</sup> AGI, Charcas, 446. “Auto”, Porto de Loreto, 9 ago. 1786.

<sup>75</sup> P. ex., AGI, Charcas, 446. Ramón Lairana to Lazaro de Ribera, Loreto, 11 ago. 1786.

*General*.<sup>76</sup> This Manuel Antonio de Salas in 1783 had sent at least 10 bushels of sugar and other items to Fort Príncipe,<sup>77</sup> and was involved in the mentioned deals that occurred in the Magdalena mission in the Easter of 1786.<sup>78</sup> Antonio Mercado, who was also involved in those negotiations was an inhabitant of the Clisa valley,<sup>79</sup> and in a statement to governor Ribera referred that he entered Mojos in 1784 “driving wrought silver, clothes, tools for the curators, wool, beads and other trinkets [...] in exchange for fabrics, chocolate, and other goods from the Province’s industry”.<sup>80</sup>

In 1775, when Manoel José da Rocha returned from his expedition that intended to bribe Spanish authorities, he brought with him Juan Madan, an English trader, who lived in Cochabamba, brother in law of frei Cayetano Tudela, curator of Magdalena. It has been seen that Don León de Velasco had recommended to the Portuguese to treat with frei Tudela for anything that they needed from Peru, which renders the fact of this priest having an established trader in the region unsurprising. In June 1775, Juan Madan stayed at the fort Conceição, where he was well treated by the commander, who collected some information about the Spaniards.<sup>81</sup>

Also in Chiquitos, some traders took advantage of the low prices of the *pueblos* production, so as to resell it in Spanish cities or in the Portuguese domains, where in exchange they could get products that would reach astronomical prices in the Peru vice-royalty. In a long report to the king written in 1787, the governor of Chiquitos, Antonio Lopes Carbajal, pointed out the wealth of the province: “produce cera, algodón, arros, azucar, mandioca, anil, tamarindos, palillo, balzamo de capaibo, manno, o cochinilla, baynilla totaiz, toñaquiz, y todo lo neezario para la vida sin que sea cierto que no el grano de trigo”. But the sending of these products to the Central Administration was hindered, as they ended up “hacer caudal de los mercaderes logrerros, el que debia componer uno no pequeño en alivio de estos infelices, y del servicio del Rey”. According to the governor, the traders that illegally entered the missions “sold their goods making

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<sup>76</sup> Archivo de Mojos, v. 6, n. 16-17. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 107).

<sup>77</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. “Relación de todos los docum.tos [autos] que ha remitido à esta Real Aud.a de la Plata el Gov.r de Moxos D.n Lazaro de Ribera”, beginning in 24 ago. 1783.

<sup>78</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. Report by frei Cayetano Perez de Tudela to Lazaro de Ribera, Magdalena, 28 jun. 1787.

<sup>79</sup> AHN, Estado, 4436. Act on the news that, on the river Mamoré, in the last month of June, sailed a Portuguese boat, touching the *pueblos* of Exaltación and San Pedro, with the objective of introducing its goods, Loreto, 8 ago. 1786.

<sup>80</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. “Relación de todos los docum.tos [autos] que ha remitido à esta Real Aud.a de la Plata el Gov.r de Moxos D.n Lazaro de Ribera”, inicia em 24 ago. 1783.

<sup>81</sup> The commander’s letter to the governor Luiz de Albuquerque doesn’t mention, however, if there were any negotiations on that opportunity. From the fort Conceição, Juan Madan went on to the Magdalena mission to meet his brother in law. AHU, cx. 18, d. 1106. Manoel Caetano da Silva to Luiz de Albuquerque, Conceição, 26 jun. 1775. Madan mentioned in a report on the foreign traders established in Peru: AHN, RTC, leg. 10, cuad. 126. “Razón de los extranjetos que resultan de las declaraciones”, 1775. (CAMPBELL, 1972, p. 161).

at least 400% profit". To cut this problem short, he informed that he had assigned Santa Cruz troops to police the illicit trading and the border with the Portuguese.<sup>82</sup>

In any case the weaving of the trust networks was a fundamental requirement for business in these borders, mainly because deals work on the basis of advance payments of considerable sums for ordering products. Don León Gonzáles de Velasco sent to the commander of Forte Príncipe 65 wrought silver marcs for the purchase of "large and narrow pieces of linen from France, including two pieces of esguion" due to the "great rareness that exists in all kingdom of Peru of goods from Europe".<sup>83</sup> In another order, the commander of Fort Príncipe received a linen cloth bag with 422 silver *pesos* and 62 eighths of Castilian gold that should be employed in the purchased of goods ordered by the neighbors, "serving for the purchase this with the needed moderation, and attract many more according to the disposition that I am observing in these Spaniards". The order was included: "list of what is required from Spain/ 6 pieces of large French linen or at least 4/ 3 narrow ones/ 20 cubits of blue powder of the best quality / 2 good fine hats/ 60 pieces of Hamburg linen or however many that can be bought with the remaining silver/ we expect the delivery of everything until Easter at the latest".<sup>84</sup> Whilst the shipments didn't arrive, it was necessary to report to the costumer, as noted by the letter by Joaquim de Souza Pereira, cadet of the Dragoons troops of Vila Bela, to Don Antonio Antelo de la Vega, military officer assigned to the Chiquitos missions: "as soon as the commercial boats arrive here [Fort Príncipe da Beira] I shall give you a solution to your orders: and I beg of you not to forget of what we spoke, hoping quickly to be able to receive delivery of the orders we arranged in the Exaltación pueblo".<sup>85</sup>

The analysis of the produced documentation by both sides doesn't seem to have disallowed the observation that, in hindrance of the loyalty expected by the vassals of the Spanish king, the trust networks woven between governors, the military and curators allowed, profiting all involved parts, frequent commercial relations with the domains of Portugal. The action of these networks, by diverting the flow of the missions' production, was not an irrelevant blow to the Castilian commercial exclusivity.

## Banning of Contraband

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<sup>82</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. Antonio Lopes Carbajal to the king, San Ignacio de Chiquitos, 27 mar. 1787.

<sup>83</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 23, d. 1407. Don León Gonzáles de Velasco to José Manoel da Rocha, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 13 dez. 1782.

<sup>84</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 23, doc. 1407. Francisco José Teixeira to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 6 fev. 1783.

<sup>85</sup> AHN, Estado, 4397, carpeta 3 [n. 4]. Joaquim de Souza Pereira to Antonio Antelo de la Vega, Forte Príncipe, 13 nov. 1789.

Even though the changes of military governors in the Mojos and Chiquitos missions and in the province of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, influenced the contraband's dynamics, which, despite this, continued to happen, a radical change happened in the Don Lazaro de Ribera's government. The Portuguese always commented on the possibility that a new governor could stimulate or hinder contraband. as such, for example, after the death of the "vigilant governor Don Antonio Aymerik, Don Leon Gonçalves de Vellasco succeeded him, who seems to me not only less rigorous than his predecessor, but knowingly inclined to contraband", the governor of Mato Grosso informed.<sup>86</sup> This time, the reformist policy applied by Lazaro de Ribera, aim at a harsh repression on contraband and the rigorous control of all the production from the missions, was noted with surprise by the Portuguese. Francisco Rodrigues do Prado, commissioner responsible for contraband told Luiz de Albuquerque, in 1786, of the repercussion of the measures taken by Ribera: "this governor has order the exit of the province of any Spaniard that thinks he's a trader"; he also referred that he knew of the orders received by the governor about "not allowing contraband specially with the Portuguese [e] the draft of this letter was sent from the bishop of Santa Cruz to Fr. Antonio Penhaloza who showed it to me"; the same military suspected that "the curators of that province will have a great upheaval among them with the arrival of the new governor".<sup>87</sup>

In fact, Lazaro de Ribera acted as a rigorous official in the application of the Bourbonic reformist policy, through administrative rationalization and centralization, with a strict control of accounts, of vigilance on officials, and with the elaboration of prolific reports on the improvement of production and commerce. His management in Mojos between 1786 and 1792 gained him his indication for the Paraguay government, a province that acquired a bigger importance in the Spanish empire.<sup>88</sup> In Mojos, the vigilance measures and production control were incisive from 1786, when Ribera, informed of the dilapidation of the agricultural heritage of the Machupo and Ibari pampas, demanded more rigour in the license concession to those that went to those

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<sup>86</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 16, d. 1031. Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 25 mai. 1773,

<sup>87</sup> APMT, Defesa, 1786, Lata A, 835. Francisco Rodrigues do Prado to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 29 jul. 1786.

<sup>88</sup> On the reforms conducted by Lazaro de Ribera em Mojos, see: Bastos (1971-1973) and Parejas Moreno (1976). The illustrated governor, Ribera prepared several ideas on the incrementation of the cocoa and fabrics production, and the way one could pay the Indians benefitting the efficiency and cost reduction of the production costs, about which reports canbe consulted on the Santamaría analysis(1987, p. 275, 281-82, 283-87). Furlong (1954) presents an list of the books that Ribera took with him to govern Mojos (which is in AGI, Buenos Aires, 69) and narrates the trajectory of this official who, born in Malaga, graduated in Mathematics in Lima, also governed Paraguay, where he once again proposed controversial reforms, ending his life in Huancavelica.

parts to remove cattle and those that killed the animals to remove the tallow.<sup>89</sup> In the following year, he began the visits to the Santa Magdalena and Concepción missions, where he demanded from the curators a thorough accounting on the sale of goods from the missions to the Portuguese.<sup>90</sup> Surprised with the evidence of a regular trade conducted between the missions, Santa Cruz and Mato Grosso, he imposed harsh repressive measures: banned the presence of any Spaniards in Mojos, confiscated the goods and expelled the ones that were in the province,; assigned his nephew, Bernardo de Ribera, as a military governor of the Baures Party, border region with the Portuguese; banned the navigation of the do Guaporé, and forced that only the Machupo river or land routes were used in trips for sending goods to the *Real Hacienda*; finally he banned the passing of Portuguese beyond the Exaltación mission, where they should leave their letters.<sup>91</sup>

The reformist process ended with the withdrawal of the temporal power from the curators. In 22 February 1788, Lazaro de Ribera sent a “Plan of Governance” to the king and the Audiência de Charcas, who then approved it in which he proposed that the control of the indigenous production was no longer done by the curators, and passed on to military sub-delegates, similar to the Portuguese directors. This new system also established the mandatory sending of annual reports and harsh punishment for contraband.<sup>92</sup> The result was that the average annual income of the Mojos province increased 5 times in the Ribera government, compared to the previous government.<sup>93</sup>

These measures were really effective, as from the 1790 decade, there very few references to commercial transactions in that border, both in Spanish and Portuguese documentation (DAVIDSON, 1970, p. 199). The main goal of the Pombalino Plan of 1772, to drain precious metals from the Spanish domains through the exportation of European goods, didn't happen as expected, but the Portuguese administration was able to reformulate its priorities and facing the challenge of assuring the possession of the Guaporé river valley with a regular fort, was only able to achieve it because of the contribution of the Mojos and Chiquitos missions. The success of the enterprise strongly

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<sup>89</sup> AGI, Charcas, 446 [n. 44]. “Carta circular de Lazaro de Ribera prohibiendo las matanzas de ganado bacuno, y bentas del caballo”, Trinidad, 19 set. 1786.

<sup>90</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Visita del Pueblo de Santa María Magdalena”, from 12 jun. 1787; AGI, Charcas, 623. “Visita del Pueblo de la Purísima Concepción”, from 11 jul. 1787.

<sup>91</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 26, d. 1511. Francisco Rodrigues do Prado to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Príncipe, 1 jan. 1787; AGI, Charcas, 623. Lazaro de Ribera to the king, San Pedro, 17 set. 1787.

<sup>92</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Plan de gobierno”, sent in a letter by Lazaro de Ribera to the king, San Pedro, 22 fev. 1788.

<sup>93</sup> In 26 months of government by Ribera, de 1787 e 1789, the total revenue reached 113.532 *pesos* and 7 *reales*, instead of the 51.475 *pesos* and 1 *real* attained by the previous administration that lasted for 6 years. The new government's yearly average was of 46.014 *pesos* as opposed to 8.579 *pesos* of the previous government. AGI, Charcas, 439. Report by the Inspector on the issue of the increase of revenue from the province, Plata, 26 jun. 1789. f. 4-6v.



contrasts with the harsh blow suffered by the Spanish central power, with the dilapidation of the missions estate, the drainage of resources that should have gone to the *Real Hacienda*, and the final fiscal loss of so many untaxed commercial transactions. Only after the 190 decade does the Spanish empire effectively regain control over the missions.

On the other hand, the conduction of some commerce that was profitable to the Portuguese depended, in part, of the success of the Spaniards to supply these far away provinces. The free trade decree as highlighted by David Brading (2004, p. 440), even though allowing for the Spanish exports to the empire to triple in one decade, didn't rid them of the impact of the English naval blockade, situation that was able to be observed in the borders by the Portuguese military engineers Joaquim José Ferreira e Ricardo Franco de Almeida Serra (1849, p. 384), that noted in respect to the nature of contraband and the Spanish supplies:

[...] The Spanish always requested to the Portuguese the purchase of several valuable goods in the provinces of Chiquitos and Moxos, such as wrought gold, rings, bows, and precious stones, linen, cloth, dishware from India, glass, knives, iron, tools etc. in exchange for some silver, animals, cotton cloth and other goods. This commerce was sought with greater anxiety in the time in which both crowns of Spain and England were at war, for the great lack of goods not only in the city of Santa Cruz but also in Cochamba, in the city of Plata, and even in Potosí and other places and their dependencies. Despite the value of the exchanged goods in Mato Grosso, this commerce which in times of said wars could be voluminous, in peace its almost insignificant.

This contraband also affected diversely the Portuguese and Spanish traders. The monopolizing of these activities by the Mato Grosso government, according to the Pombalino plan's determinations, excluded a lot of traders from the business who saw themselves doubly harmed: on the one hand, they couldn't always sell at the lower prices that were required by the responsible commissioners for supplying the royal warehouses; on the other, the goods they brought from Brazilian ports had to compete with the ones acquired at low prices in the Castilian domains. In turn, the Spanish traders from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Córdoba, Salta and Tucumán, despite the inherent risks of an illegal activity in the Spanish empire, could, with little funding, buy supplies, cattle and mules in the missions, sell them to the Portuguese and acquire wrought gold pieces or fabrics of high commercial value in Peru. As for the missions' curators, who sold the *pueblos* estate in two fronts, to Mato Grosso and to Santa Cruz, the opportunities for personal gains were great.

## **Indians Between Petitions and Desertion to the Portuguese Domains**

The missions' Indians were the ones that suffered the most dramatic impact of these border trade relations. The intensification of the exploitation of indigenous labor was certainly the most important impact. With the secularization of the missions, the Indians ended up receiving greater pressure to increase production, due to the demands of the *Real Hacienda*, that should absorb these resources, and the curators worries, who were interested in diverting part of the surplus for the trade with Santa Cruz and Mato Grosso, were only able to do so with the increase of this surplus, or else the *Real Hacienda* could noticed the decrease in the shipments. Thus the Indians complaints against the mistreatment perpetrated by the curators ended up being more and more frequent. In 1787 the Indian chiefs of Concepción took the opportunity of the visit by the governor Lazaro de Ribera to denounce the violent treatment that they received from the curator Francisco Xavier Chaves – who incidentally was one the most assiduous contributors for the contraband with the Portuguese. For the Indians, howeverm the disrespect of the indigenous hierarchies by a curator that didn't spare beatings even to the chiefs, was seen as a similar violence to the economical exploitation itself:

[...] con maltratarlos en estos términos, y remitir a los Dominios de Portugal sus frutos y efectos, hizo castigar con azotes al capitán Domingos Ayame por que no madrugó para caminar a la Estacada [portuguesa], siendo lo mas notable y monstruoso en la persona del cacique gobernador iguales castigos, y en la de Maria Mapi, a quien le hizo dar mas de cien azotes por una mera sospecha que tuvo de que esta Yndia aconsejo a una joven privilegiada que no frequentase la casa del cura: con igual azpereza fue tratado el Yndio Juan Antonio Enobore, a quien lo hizo dar cinquenta azotes por que no lo saludo: y sesenta a Monica Ybéri mujer de Xavier Valdivieso: experimentando los Yndios Jueces iguales vejaciones y castigos". Os caciques referiram ainda que os juízes do *cabildo* indígena foram açoitados após a retirada do visitador frei Antonio Peñaloza, a quem contaram sobre o contrabando com o Forte Príncipe.<sup>94</sup>

In this report, as in many others, physical violence against the Indians was directly related to the increase in productivity and the intense contraband that the missions kept with Fort Príncipe da Beira and other Portuguese establishments. The flogging of chiefs generated frequent protests among the Indians, and the fact that they always mentioned, in their complaints, the number of administered whippings that often exceeded 100, aimed to emphasize the injustice in the punishment, since they knew that the maximum allowed by law was 12.<sup>95</sup>

In Chiquitos the same picture is observed: the curators intensified the exploitation of the indigenous labour so they could divert part of the production for

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<sup>94</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. "Representación de los Caciques", Concepción, 20 jul. 1787.

<sup>95</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. "Visita del Pueblo de la Purísima Concepción, empesa en 11 jul. 1787". f. 49, 53v-56v.

illegal trade, but to contain this, the government intensified the military control over the missions in an equally vexing way for the same Indians. In October 1789, the inspector for the Audiência de Charcas harshly criticized the trade established by the curators of Chiquitos from the goods produced by those missions, to the detriment of both the Indians and of the Central Administration: “the commerce of the curators with the traders has taken away the greater part of the provincial income”. The “goods of the community”, the minister adds, “were taken by traders at very low prices and in this way profited themselves and the curators. The curators have only sent to the administration of this city [La Plata], any other goods than ordinary wax and thick cloth in certain quantities, and it is known that the province produces other fine goods of several kinds”.<sup>96</sup> The governor Antonio Lopes Carbajal sought to apply the dispositions of the “Instrução Superior” of 1788 and in the Regulamento of 1790, by beginning to deploy military garrisons to the missions. In the San Ignacio mission, the conflicts increased, and in the *Corpus Christi* holiday in the year 1790, four Spanish soldiers were killed. In a letter to the governor, the chiefs expressed harsh criticism to the military presence in the missions and to the physical punishment and other atrocities— specially of a sexual character – committed by the curators, but assured of their loyalty to the king and their trust in the governor, showing a knowledge of the political language of the Old Regime.<sup>97</sup>

The commerce of tallow and the border interchange reached the missions’ cattle stock. Lazaro de Ribera, considering the Baures party, estimated that of the 8 thousand heads of cattle left by the Jesuits, there was 3746 left in 1788. The same governor refers that in the San Ignacio *pueblo*, 9600 heads of cattle and 1600 horses had disappeared, leaving only 200 cows, 169 horses and 300 sheep: “lacking meat for the upkeep of people there is no subjection or obedience”.<sup>98</sup> For the governor Miguel Zamora (1792-1802), the total stock for the Mojos province went from 54.345 in 1767 to 28.995 in 1787 (BLOCK, 1980, p. 333-338). In Chiquitos, the situation was not different, and as calculated by Santamaria (1987, p. 280), of the 43 thousand *vacunos* accounted for in 1762, there were less than 20 thousand in 1794. Hence the regime fed taxes to the Indians and as noted by

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<sup>96</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. “Respuesta del s.r Oydor q.e hace de Fiscal sobre los informes particulares y general visita de los pueblos de Miciones de Chiquitos, y otros documentos y papeles, que a presentado a Vuestra Alteza Don Antonio Lopez Carbajal”, La Plata, 21 out. 1789, f. 30-30v; excerpts transcribed in: Archivo de Chiquitos, v. 28, n. 1. (RENÉ-MORENO, 1973, p. 477).

<sup>97</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. “Testimonio de las diligencias practicadas por el gov.r de Chiquitos D. Antonio Lopes de Carbajal, consequentes al suceso acaesido en el pueblo de San Ignacio, y providencias tomadas por la Real Audiencia”, f. 5v-7. Letter in Chiquita language by the Inspector, lieutenant, second lieutenant, and other judges of San Ignacio, received and certified by the governor Antonio Lopes Carbajal, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 16 ago. 1790; f. 7-9: version of the same letter in Spanish.

<sup>98</sup> Archivo y Biblioteca Nacional de Bolivia, Mojos y Chiquitos, 12, 3. “Expediente de la visita practicada en el pueblo de S. Ygnacio de Moxos Partido de Pampas”, Lazaro de Ribera, 27 set. 1791 (apud VANGELISTA, 1998, p. 42).

Lacerda e Almeida (1849, p. 113): three cows per week provided a meal that barely supported a family.

The Indian chiefs sought institutional solutions for the supply of cattle and complained of changes in the management practices of the curator. Following the example of the Indian judges in Exaltación who, in 1786, required protection to the governor Lazaro de Ribera from the abuse of the curator and for the supply of cattle to the *pueblo* (which was answered with at least 3 thousand *vacunos*)<sup>99</sup>, in 1787 the chiefs of Concepción did the same, and were authorized to gather 4 thousand heads of cattle from the Machupo pampas, since “this pueblo is scarce on cattle and needs it for its maintenance”.<sup>100</sup>

Institutional protest channels were used by the chiefs to claim the removal of administrators and improvements in the supply of the *pueblos*. On the other hand the border situation provided the possibility of desertion to the rival domains under the perspective, even if often illusory, that a new life could begin. In contact with the Portuguese, who spared no efforts to attract them to the border towns that were decisive for the consolidation of territorial borders, a lot of Indians from the Mojos and Chiquitos missions deserted from the Spanish domains and passed to the Portuguese empire. In reality the Portuguese border towns of Leomil, Lamego, Balsemão and the surrounding areas of Fort Príncipe da Beira, in the Guaporé river valley, Casalvasco, in the Barbados river, and Albuquerque and Vila Maria, in the Paraguay river, counted with Indians deserted from Castile among a large part of its population (ARAÚJO, 2000, p. 113-115, *et passim*; SILVA, 1995, p. 66-78, 279-280, 273).

In this scenario, the most frequent strategy for attracting Indians from the rival domains was the offering of gifts and the establishment of trust networks with the chiefs, that became responsible for the migrations of common Indians. A chief from Exaltación, in 1773, was attracted to Fort Bragança through the offering of tools and all types of help so that he could plant his farm and stayed with his relatives;<sup>101</sup> and the Indian Estevan, *mayordomo* and treasurer of the same mission of Exaltación, took responsibility to conduct 60 families to Fort Príncipe in 1784. As if this wasn't enough, he urged other families from the Magdalena mission: “he told them to go there, there they enjoy freedom, and there is no curator to obey”.<sup>102</sup> The commander of Fort Príncipe, urged by

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<sup>99</sup> AGI, Charcas, 446. Lazaro de Ribera to frei Antonio Peñaloza, San Pedro, 17 out. 1786, f. 2; Circular letter to the curators of Loreto and Trindad, San Pedro, 18 out. 1786. f. 3.

<sup>100</sup> AGI, Charcas, 623. “Visita del Pueblo de la Purisima Concepción”, from 11 jul. 1787. f. 75v-76: “Pedimento. El cacique gobernador y mas justicias”, Concepción, 23 jul. 1787; f. 74-77v: “Decreto”, Concepción, 23 jul. 1787.

<sup>101</sup> APMT, Defesa, 1773, 84. Luiz Pinto de Souza to Luiz de Albuquerque, Forte Bragança, 24 jan. 1773.

<sup>102</sup> AHN, Estado, 4436. Cura de Exaltación Manuel Gusmán to Don Felix Jose de Souza, Exaltación, 21 set. 1784.

the Spaniards to return the deserting families answered, “since the referred Indians are free people”, he wouldn’t return them “against their wills unlike some curators who with their absolute power have them punished as if they were slaves”.<sup>103</sup> The routes of the outflow of production from the missions themselves allowed for contact with the Mato Grosso garrison. Manuel Gusman, ex-curator of Exaltación, answering the request of the governor of Mojos, Lazaro de Ribera, for explanations on the desertion of the Indians to the rival domains, referred that this confusion was promoted by the Portuguese, who took advantage of the fact that the trip from the Exaltación mission to Magdalena was done by the Guaporé river, directly in front of Fort Príncipe: “being indispensable the passage by the Fort as there is no other river, they went up it, and here was where the Portuguese caught them deceiving them with a lot of promises and gifts; from there followed others, that heard of what had happened and began to desert”.<sup>104</sup>

The Portuguese seduced the Indians with presents and by urging them to rebel against the physical punishment employed by the curators. Such was the opinion of Juan Barthelemi Berdugo, of the Spanish military who then assumed command of this province and of Mojos: “supieron estos [portugueses], con la libre entrada, salida, y paseo, q.e hacian en nuestros pueblos, ganar amplamente con su viva infiel sagacidad los candidos coraciones de los Yndios à costa de ridículas dadivas, y lo mismo es querer en el dia los operarios nuevos curas oprimir, o castigar algún delito a los Yndios, q.e comovidos de aquel traidor reclamo, y generosidad engañosa, aportan, y ganan al abrigo de aquellos abandonando hijos, y mujeres por el ningún amor q.e se tienen, como igualm.te familias enteras”. The consequences of this policy were clearly harmful for the Spanish empire: “de este modo se tiene retenidos bastante numerozo de Yndios Baures, y Ytonamas, Canicianàs, y otros, y no remediándolo, anteniendo aquel infame proceder aseguro se perderá de todo esta antemural provincia, y de ella redundarán perjudiciales consecuencias a la Corona”.<sup>105</sup>

To covertly stimulate the transmigration of Indians from the Spanish domains was the main directive of the Portuguese indigenist policy to supply the border towns as said in the Diretório. In fact, the recommendation of the State Secretary in this sense was very clear in the instruction letter of Tomé Joaquim da Costa Corte Real to Rolim de Moura, in 22 de August 1758: the Indians were considered free to choose the more advantageous Portuguese party, “Seeing from our part all freedom, and all honour and their convenience and from the part of said religious all deceit and slavery, and all

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<sup>103</sup> AHN, Estado, 4436. “Copia da la respuesta del comandante portugués, Francisco José Tesera de Acuña”, Forte Príncipe, 23 nov. 1784.

<sup>104</sup> AHN, Estado, 4436. Manuel Gusman to Lazaro de Ribera, Loreto, 27 ago. 1786. f. 4.

<sup>105</sup> AGI, Charcas, 515. “Memorial de D.n Juan Barthelemi Berdugo”, in which there is a long description of the Mojos e Chiquitos missions, Madrid, 2 dez. 1774.

contempt and prey”.<sup>106</sup> In November 1778, Luiz de Albuquerque informed the minister Martinho de Melo e Castro of the passage of 40 families from the missions of Coração de Jesus and São João, from the Chiquitos province, to the new Portuguese settlement of Vila Maria in the Paraguay river.<sup>107</sup> In 1781, new Indian bands from the Santa Ana and São Ignácio missions, also of Chiquitos, passed to the Portuguese side, thanks to the incisive commitment of the governor in attracting chiefs with gifts: “I shall not neglect to promote all possible trade with said Indians, even seeing if it is possible to enact, at least partly their useful desertion”, he informed the secretary of.<sup>108</sup> “It is true that in light of several diligences and sagacity”, Luiz de Albuquerque commented in respect of the passage in 1782 of 106 neophytes from San Rafael e San Juan, “I am careful in concealing my consent, and approval of similar desertions, and much more so the clandestine diligences that I have been undertaking, seeming that my orders are the most repugnant and contrary”.<sup>109</sup> The governor was reporting to the Lisbon Court on the application of royal orders that precisely recommended this strategy to drain, with the possible dissimulation, human resources from the rival empire, and did it *a fortiori* to neutralize any possible complaints from the Madrid court. <sup>110</sup> This policy that was in accordance with matters of the border trade, the dispute for exclusivity being the copy of the loyalty: “as much as the Castilian government works in stopping communication between us and them” minister Melo e Castro instructed in 1771, “those people will always find it more useful to communicate with us than to obey the laws of the ones that forbid them, and [...] in the case of being oppressed, they will always find in His Majesty’s domains a certain reception and a safe asylum ”.<sup>111</sup>

Contraband, this action of crossing the border through commerce, of trust networks, of circulation of goods and information, instead of passing on something like

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<sup>106</sup> AHU, Cód. 613. Tomé Joaquim da Costa Corte Real to Rolim de Moura, Nossa Senhora de Belém, 22 ago. 1758. §19. This passage was particularly emphasized by Martinho de Melo e Castro, when he sent the same letter attached to the instruction letter to Luiz de Albuquerque, dated 13 August, 1771, with the reservation that, in his reading, the governor should replace “Jesuits” for “Spaniards”: “como porém os castelhanos substituíram os jesuítas, não só nas terras, mas nas máximas, particularmente naquelas que nos dizem respeito, as mesmas cautelas e prevenções que então se apontaram a respeito de uns, devem presentemente tomar-se, com muita pouca diferença, a respeito dos outros”. AHU, Cód. 614. Instruction letter from Martinho de Melo de Castro to Luiz de Albuquerque de Melo Pereira e Cáceres, Palácio de Belém, 13 ago. 1771. §2.

<sup>107</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 20, d. 1218. Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 29 nov. 1778.

<sup>108</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 21, d. 1308. Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 27 jan. 1781.

<sup>109</sup> AHU, MT, cx. 23, d. 1405. Luiz de Albuquerque to Martinho de Melo e Castro, Vila Bela, 14 mar. 1783.

<sup>110</sup> Luiz de Albuquerque took care to send an attached copy of the complaint made by the governor of Chiquitos AHU, MT, cx. 23, d. 1405, Anexo 1. Juan Barthelemi Berdugo to Luiz de Albuquerque, sending a list with the names of the 106 Indians that deserted from San Rafael and San Juan, San Xavier, 11 ago. 1782.

<sup>111</sup> AHU, Cód. 614. Instruction letter by Martinho de Melo de Castro to Luiz de Albuquerque de Melo Pereira e Cáceres, Palácio de Belém, 13 ago. 1771. §10.

an absence of colonial power, expressed a very peculiar action of various types of power. The Portuguese Crown acted firmly in the sense of encouraging not any type of trade, but a contraband under the dissimulated control of the government: if project of draining precious metal from Peru had failed, the building of a monumental fort on the basis of resources supplied by their rivals was a geopolitical event of the greatest importance in the definition of the borders of the Iberian empires.

Under the Jesuits, the Mojos and Chiquitos missions kept commercial relations with privileged sectors in Santa Cruz de la sierra and in Peru; When the Ignacian were expelled, there was an imposition of a vision that all production of the missions should be sent to the *Real Hacienda*. Governors, bishops, military and curators started to divert production to Santa Cruz and Brazil. Contraband seems to have prospered. The tolerance seen for over twenty years, along with the diverting of the products of the missions, suggest that there was a wide network of beneficiaries, including the royal officers (cf., *mutatis mutandis*, MOUTOUKIAS studies, 1988a, 1988b). the reports from Lazaro de Ribera on the productive capacity of the missions and what was being lost— inclusively benefitting the building of Fort Príncipe da Beira, directed precisely against the interest of the Spanish Crown to keep the Guaporé river's navigation common —, demanded a more energetic decision. However the reach of the reforms suggested by Ribera, that aimed to completely ban the participation of the Spanish colonizers in the commerce of the missions, now entirely monopolized by the State, certainly produced dissatisfaction in several sectors of the local elite, so much so that there were discussions on abandoning the “Plan de Gobierno” and opening the Mojos and Chiquitos missions to free trade with Santa Cruz and Cochabamba.<sup>112</sup>

On the other hand, whether the goods were diverted to Santa Cruz or Brazil, or were monopolized by the Spanish Crown, it was certain that this competition intensified the demand for higher productivity of the missions and increased the use of violence against the indigenous workers. The answer from the Indians in this context, surprised the authorities: they started sending petitions to the governors asking for the removal of corrupt curators; organized themselves to desert to the missions of Apolobamba,<sup>113</sup> to the Portuguese fort or even to the bush, in all cases a harsh blow to the expected loyalty; and resorted to force in Chiquitos, in 1790, against the Spanish troops that were assigned to San Ignacio, ignoring the ancient pact done with the Jesuits, according to which the

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<sup>112</sup> AGI, Charcas, 726. Report by Tadeo Haenke to the act referreing to the request by Santa Cruz de la Sierra for permission for free trade with Mojos and Chiquitos, Cochabamba, 28 mar. 1798; AGI, Charcas, 581. Consultation of the *Consejo de Indias*, in 29 jan. 1805, on the new government system on the Mojos and Chiquitos missions, defining the end of the community system and the sharing of lands and goods among the Indians, but not defining the creation of an intendance in Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

<sup>113</sup> AGI, Lima, 1011. “Testimonio”, f. 27, Don José Salvatierra, curator of Loreto, 3 abr. 1800.

Lieutenants would not remain in the missions,<sup>114</sup> and in Mojos, in 1801, when they expelled the governor Miguel Zamora, whose management was known for the use of violence as a way to force higher production.<sup>115</sup> The rivalry between the two powers for the exclusive commercial control seems to have manifested itself in commercial policies that did not exempt from being watchful to the loyalties issue of these distant vassals.

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<sup>114</sup> AGI, Charcas, 445. "Testimonio de las diligencias practicadas por el gov.r de Chiquitos D. Antonio Lopes de Carvajal, consequentes al suceso acaesido en el pueblo de San Ignacio, y prociencias tomadas por la Real Audiencia", f. 5v-7. Letter in Chiquita language by the Inspector, lieutenant, second lieutenant, and other judges of San Ignacio, received and certified by the governor Antonio Lopes Carbajal, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, 16 ago. 1790; f. 7-9: version of the same letter in Spanish.

<sup>115</sup> AGI, Charcas, 581. Draft of the letter from Real Audiência de Charcas, Plata, 20 dez. 1803.



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### **Fontes Manuscritas**

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AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid
AHU	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa
	MT: Avulsos Mato Grosso
	PA: Avulsos Pará
ANA	Archivo Nacional de Asunción, Paraguai
APMT	Arquivo Público do Estado de Mato Grosso, Cuiabá
BNL	Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisboa
IANTT	Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais/Torre do Tombo, Lisboa
RAH	Real Academia de la Historia, Colección Mata Linares, Madrid

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