

New perspectives on the French presence in Bahia in 1798

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of correspondence now available on a Plan for the Invasion of Bahia, sent by naval captain Antoine-René Larcher to the Directorate of the French Republic in 1797, sheds new light on episodes of the so-called Bahian Conspiracy, as much with respect to the conspirators' social penetration as in regard to aspects of wideranging attempts to the expand the French Revolution previously unknown to historiography.

Introduction

French documents recently discovered by researchers related to events in Bahia in 1798 not only shed new light on these episodes, but also allowed new interpretations that added a dimension that until then was unknown or little understood about the so called *Conjuração Baiana* or the *Alfaiates*, as it was traditionally understood. Even though these readings have been slow to make their mark as points of reference for historians and in teaching material, for example, or precisely for this reason, the publication of these two documents is justifiable - which are until the present the most substantial in this sense. They involve a Project and a letter written to the authorities of the French Republic in 1797 covering the same theme and written by the Captain and Division Commander in the French Navy, Antoine René Larcher (1740 – 1808): the request that revolutionary France intervene politically and militarily in Bahia to support the sedition that was being preached there against the monarchy and Portuguese rule¹. These are the documents transcribed below in a bilingual version (French and English) with explanatory notes².

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The content of these letters offers new possibilities for the analysis of fundamental problems related to the events that culminated dramatically in the hanging on 8 November 1799 in Largo da Piedade, Salvador, of the soldiers Luís Gonzaga das Virgens e Veiga and Lucas Dantas do Amorim Torres, the ensign João de Deus do Nascimento and the Manuel Faustino dos Santos Lira, barely out of his teens, for the crime of sedition. In first place, because they provide new information about the potentially operational dimensions of the *francezia* attributed to those involved in the conspiracy. In second place, because they add variables that are still unknown about the social circulation of seditious ideas in Bahia at the end of the eighteenth century, and finally because they illuminate from another angle the recurrent historiographical problem of the social scope of the attempted sedition in Bahia in 1798, in the words of Luis Henrique Dias Tavares.

In relation to the last point, it should not be forgotten that from contemporary records, from the example of Luis dos Santos Vilhena³, to the anonymous author of *Notícias da Bahia*⁴, Armitage⁵ and Varnhagen⁶, the canonic version of facts was based on their restriction to the universe of men of ‘*menor valia*’ (lower worth) in the *Capitania*, following the model established by D. Fernando José de Portugal, Governador at the time of the occurrences⁷. And apart from Accoli, the painstaking chronicler, who noted that “it was said at this time that people of consideration influenced the intended revolt”⁸, this legacy of D. Fernando went undiscussed until the historiographical revision in the Republican context made by Francisco Borges de Barros⁹, which was given better treatment in relation to the relevant documentation by Braz do Amaral¹⁰, both arguing that members of the Bahian elite participated in the 1798 sedition, a line of thought also followed by the Bahian historian - Afonso Ruy, author of the best known and most cited study among those that intend to show that it was part of what he called, with the engaged sense of political marketing, “the first Brazilian social revolution”¹¹.

Ruy’s thesis is surprising in its daring. He argues that what happened in Bahia in 1798 “would be best called by us a Proletariat Revolution, arising out of the environment of workers, artisans and soldiers who preached and guided, indoctrinated in the political, socialist and irreligious principles of France¹²”. The hard core of this doctrinaire flux was formed by “elements of the highest worth in the *Capitania*, by their assets both in terms of education and wealth, [concerned with] studying and discussing the political and economic problems that had revolutionized the world”¹³, ideas whose diffusion among the lower classes

proved to be the weak point of the political enterprise due to the loss of control of the process by the group of ‘good thinkers’.

Ruy’s logic is precise: in the case of Bahia at the end of the seventeenth hundreds the ideas of European modernity, by breaking the closed circuit of the elites, liberated social practices and politics incompatible with the objectives that they justified. With the organizing nexus of the hierarchy between classes having been undone, failure *became/would become* inevitable. In this way Ruy simultaneously takes into account the question of the social coverage of the events of 1798 and the lesson that these events taught, drawing on – *et par cause* – the authority of Gustavo Barroso, for whom “the revolution of the *alfaiates* clearly revealed the socialist tendencies not only through acts, but also through badly heard and never absorbed words”¹⁴.

Afonso Ruy’s study was severely criticized by Luís Henrique Dias Tavares, the historian who has certainly dedicated most time to the documentary research of the *Alfaiates*¹⁵, however, Tavares’ overall vision of the social makeup of the Bahian sedition corresponds to the basic explanatory scheme of those whom he criticized.

According to Tavares, “from the end of 1793 and the beginning of 1794 until July, August, or September 1797, in the city of Salvador a small group of ‘men of consideration’ acted, Brazilians who repudiated colonial exploitation and who were attracted by France and its democratic-bourgeois ideas”¹⁶. The ideas that were circulating among them reached the *common people* who became enchanted with them. Sedition, understood as the preparation of a project of political action aimed at altering the current relations of power, is thus circumscribed to this means, which allows it to affirm that “free men, but socially discriminated against, mulattoes, soldiers, artisans, former slaves and descendants of slaves, conceived the idea of a republic that would guarantee equality. These are the people talking about a rising in 1798”¹⁷.

His circumscription of the facts to an attempted uprising – and the subsequent repression in the wake of the dissemination of the revolutionary pamphlets in the city and the failure of the subsequent meeting of the conspirators near Dique on the night of 25 August 1798, led Tavares, keen on respecting the limits of the empirical documents with which he was dealing, to abandon the search for the connections of those implicated in the *Devassa*¹⁸ with those known to have participated in the persistent seditious secret meetings in the circuit of the elites. This interpretative approach has been supported by many of the historians who have revisited the question¹⁹, which has not prevented Tavares from calling attention to how significant it was that most of the slaves who were connected in some form with the *Devassa*

belonged to José Pires de Carvalho e Albuquerque, General Secretary of State and War for Brazil (*Secretário Geral do Estado do Brasil e da Guerra*) and owner of sugar mills and cattle ranches in Bahia.

As can be perceived the legacy of D. Fernando José de Portugal, supported in addition by the repercussion of important works of prestigious foreign historians²⁰, remains to the present as an almost irremovable circle of historiographical chalk, the efforts to breach it notwithstanding.

The fact is that the circumscription of the seditious events to the lower strata of the ‘mass’ of free men in the *Capitania* (as argued by some), or to those from the “medium and lower categories”²¹ as argued by others, does not take into account the widely available evidence, for example in the already mentioned account of Accioli, or what is available in the ‘biographical entries’ of the pharmacist João Ladisláu de Figueiredo e Mello published in 1866²², or also various passages from the *Devassa*, in related papers, such as those of the investigations ordered by D. Fernando José de Portugal about the supposed *francezia* of Francisco Agostino Gomes²³.

The confrontation between what appears in the *Devassa* and the information dispersed through the documentation with other origins provides consistent evidence of white men and landowners being involved in seditious activities in Bahia at the end of the eighteenth century. It can also be seen that as well as those with these attributes who were arrested, tried and condemned to various penalties²⁴, others – to whom the description of middle class cannot be applied – were cited in the *Devassa*, such as José Borges de Barros, Francisco Agostinho Gomes, João da Rocha Dantas. The latter was the son of the *desembargador* (judge), councilor, and chancellor Antônio da Rocha Dantas, an important character in the local power structure. Neither were Ignacio de Cerqueira Bulcão, a large landholder and owner of sugar mills, or Francisco Agostinho Gomes, owner of a large fortune, left untroubled, as is widely known.

However, there are some exceptions: José Borges de Barros, cited various times as a member of the intimate circle of Raimundo Moniz Barreto de Aragão, the condemned *professor régio*, was not even listed as a witness, having apparently disappeared without a trace only to reappear a few years later in Europe as the translator of Thomas Payne to Portuguese, a mason and a money forger moved by the intention of raising funds to finance the revolution in Bahia²⁵, from where he had fled on the eve of the inauguration of the *Devassa*, as had João Ladislau in the interval between the dissemination of the pamphlets and

the imprisonment of Cipriano Barata²⁶, all afraid of being implicated in seditious practice for reasons they, more than anyone else, were well aware of.

Borges de Barros, João Ladislau, Gomes and Cerqueira Bulcão are evident cases of upstanding men in the colonial elite in Bahia at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition, although lists naming all the participants are lacking, it should be noted that several of them had been part of the group of young Bahians²⁷ who had lived with Antoine René Larcher when he stayed in Salvador²⁸.

In addition, the letters of the French official illustrate the meaning of the passages that until now have remained obscure in the *Devassa*, especially the references to the hypothesis of external assistance for the badly conceived revolutionary project in Bahia, in general attributed by historiography to political rhetoric or simply to delusions without any basis in reality. This is the case in question of the seditious pamphlets which stated “we will soon have foreign help”²⁹, the “revolution and its conclusion will take place in this city”³⁰, and “all the foreigners will come here because the port will be open, most notably the French nation”³¹. In addition, there is the fleeting reference by Manuel dos Santos Lira in the records of the *Devassa* to Cipriano Barata, with the latter having told the former to be prudent in his actions due to the ill-preparedness of “the greater part of the inhabitants of this continent” for a venture on the scale of a revolution, with it being wiser “to wait for the French to come”³².

The path that this information – i.e., possible French aid – followed must have been torturous, from those who first thought of it to Manuel dos Santos Lira or Luís Gonzaga, a paradigmatic figure from the politically radicalized poor creoles in Bahia at the time and the probable author of the papers that triggered the repressive actions. What can be admitted is that, despite the very low possibility of Larcher having fraternized with people of a social level so distinct from his own, both because of the limitations imposed by languages and values and due to evident questions of security, his level of understanding with his interlocutors from the higher strata in local society ran through the ducts of a political capillarity that interconnected men who, despite being in different social conditions, held in high regard the ideas coming from revolutionary France.

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The fact that someone with the position and importance of Captain Antoine René Larcher agreed to be the intermediary between the Bahian conspirators and the French Republic (proclaimed only four years previously) and, even more than this, to have assumed and advocated the proposal, can be understood through the context and the actors involved,

also, in relation to the French, by the lack of any consequential impact of these pretensions on the Directorate.

That historic moment was marked by a dual question: on the one hand enthusiasm for the military expansion of the French Revolution and the victories obtained against both internal and foreign adversaries; at the same time it was a delicate period regarding colonial policy and foreign relations, with the expansionist tendency strengthening following the abolition of slavery in French colonies in 1794. In other words, drawing on the expression used in Jacques Godechot's well known study³³, it was the moment when the perspective of the *Grande Nation* was being affirmed, i.e., the possibility of exporting revolutionary ideals and the administrative, military, cultural, economic and political authority of France. The construction of this *Grande Nation* took place through conflict and internal conflicts in the French nation itself.

The Minister of the Marine and the Colonies, to whom Larcher initially addressed his letters was Count Laurent-Jean-François Truguet (1752-1839), nominated by Lazare Carnot, the principal figure in the Directorate and an important military leader in this period that marked the ascension of French military might which reached its apogee with Napoleon Bonaparte³⁴. Truguet entered the French Royal Navy under the *Ancien Regime*: he took part in the American War of Independence, was promoted to rear admiral in 1792, aligned himself with the French Federalists and Girondins, and was arrested by the Jacobins in 1793. Following the fall of the latter he was nominated Minister of the Marine and the Colonies in November 1795, a position he held until 18 July 1797, when he was removed following the *coup d'état*, which strengthened the Directorate and resulted in the arrest of various monarchists. Truguet was nominated a councilor by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1801, for whom he commanded the French squadrons in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Following the restoration of the monarchy in France, Truguet aligned himself with the government of Luis XVIII. When he left the ministry of the Marine and the Colonies in 1797, Truguet was succeeded by Georges René Pléville le Pelley, who held the post until April 1798; the position was held temporarily by Talleyrand in 1799.

The Directorate of the French Revolution at the time of Larcher's correspondence consisted of Lazare Carnot, Jean-François Reubell, Paul Barras, Louis-Marie de la Révellière-Lépaux and François de Barthélemy. Carnot and Barras were the two most important figures by far. Carnot was the outstanding military leader, who had been responsible for important military victories during the Revolution, opening the way for the Napoleonic expansion, in which, however, he did not participate directly due to

disagreements. Coming from the *Montagnards*, the most left wing group in the French Revolution, Carnot moved away from them with the ascension of Robespierre, later serving Napoleon, and was definitely banished from public life following the Restoration, dying in exile³⁵.

The Directorate followed a *juste milieu* type of policy, which on the one hand sought to prevent the return of the forces of the *Ancien Regime* and, on the other hand, combated what they considered to be revolutionary ‘excesses’, seeking to stabilize the achievements of the revolution, but without expanding them. The Constitution that had been enacted in France in September 1795, a copy of which was left by Larcher in Salvador, expressed this situation: Republican government was maintained, but some revolutionary and social principles contained in the 1793 Constitution, written by the Jacobins, were eliminated, such as mechanisms of democracy and direct participation. The French Constitution that was divulged in Bahia was based on the division of power between the members of the Executive, formed by a collegiate of five people (the Directorate) and between the latter and the Legislature formed of two bodies, equivalent to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. By its rejection of the universal vote this constitution reestablished indirect suffrage (in two stages) based on the payment of tax.

It should be noted that Larcher’s interlocutors in the French government had positions with a variety of influences which resulted in differentiated attitudes. While Carnot from the Directorate, had a Jacobin background and would never agree with the Monarchists, Truguet, the Minister of the Marine, came from the Girondins, and in the future would serve the Restoration monarchy. The expectation that Larcher developed for Portuguese America would find an echo in certain sectors and resistance in others, but nevertheless, they were all limited by questions related to this context.

Between 1795 – 1799 France won important political and military victories (in Holland, Switzerland and Italy) and signed peace agreements with Spain and Prussia, which may have justified Captain Larcher’s enthusiasm in seeking to open paths in the Americas. However, the campaign in Egypt in 1798, as is well known, when Napoleon, despite the victories he won, was defeated by the English fleet, marked the geo-political limits of the *Grande Nation* at that time and highlighted its difficulty in expanding outside the European continent. Social conflicts were also striking. During 1797 Gracchus Babeuf was executed in Paris for attempting a popular rising that would implement an agrarian communism. In the same period that the freedman Toussaint Louverture won the position of Governor General

and head of the armed forces in Santa Dominica in the French Caribbean at the head of thousands of armed men, most of whom were also former slaves.

One question that permeated the project for Bahia supported by Larcher was slavery. Although the soldier did not deal with this point in his correspondence with the French authorities (nor did the manifestations that we know of in 1798 in Bahia highlight in any consistent form an abolitionist solution), the large scale slave insurrections that began in the French colony of Santa Dominica in 1791 made the question unavoidable at that time. At the time of his trip to Brazil in 1796, as is well known, Larcher was carrying with him the official report of the abolition of slavery in the French colonies for Mauritius, from where he was expelled by French colonists dissatisfied with this measure.

The abolition of slavery by the leaders of the French Revolution occurred after much hesitation and contradictions between the ideals of universal equality and the commercial and agrarian interests of sectors of French society and was, above all, the results of the events on Santa Dominica when the long and wide ranging slave insurrection was transformed into a revolutionary movement that destroyed slavery in practiced, later eliminating French colonial domination. However, as a result of these internal tensions, in 1802 Napoleon reestablished slavery in the French colonies, except in Santa Dominica where it had been eliminated by force³⁶.

The attempts of Captain Larcher occurred simultaneously to other initiatives at negotiation using diplomatic means in which France tried to obtain part of Brazil. This was the case involving the *enlighted fidalgo* Antonio de Araújo de Azevedo (1754 - 1817), future Count of Barca (he would receive the title in 1815), who was a rival of D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho (the future Count of Linhares). Within the Portuguese court these two nobles were the respective exponents of the French and English 'parties'. In other words, in the wake of the crisis caused by the French Revolution and the later invasion of the Iberian peninsula by the French, both adopted antagonistic positions in relation to the two European powers. With the reinforcement and strengthening of British dominance in Portugal, D. Rodrigo came out best. Perhaps the worst incident between both occurred in 1797, when Araújo de Azevedo was sent to Paris by the Portuguese government to negotiate a treaty with the Directorate. The agreement he consented to included, among other aspects, ceding part of the Brazilian Amazon to France. When news arrived in Portugal of this treaty, D. Rodrigo, who had just been promoted to minister, managed to veto it, with the results that the French revolutionary authorities, unhappy with this wavering, arrested Araújo de Azevedo for a number of months³⁷.

More specifically in the Brazilian case the eighteenth century had witnessed some concrete unsuccessful attempts at French military occupation, such as Rio de Janeiro in 1710, as well as constant corsairs and smugglers along the coast. In 1794, for example, seven Luso-Brazilian ships from Bahia were seized by a French squadron off the African coast³⁸. Also of importance was the attempt to land 200 men on the southern coast of Bahia by a French ship and brig in 1796, repelled by the local inhabitants³⁹.

The project for the invasion of Bahia written by Larcher, however, was not the fruit of an revolutionary outburst or delirium, rather it was an attempt, no matter how daring, that emerged out of a determined context. Nor was it unilateral, but based on the demands of sectors of local society. In this way it can be seen how Captain Larcher, holding the important position of Head of Division in the French Navy, had glimpsed and tried to implement the extension of this revolutionary *Grande Nation* to Bahia, where he had arrived through unforeseen circumstances and had been welcomed by various groups and people. If the project had been successful Larcher would have been a leading figure in the new form of relations to be implemented between Bahia and France, which would have had effects on the rest of Brazil as well as significant political and commercial consequences. On the other hand, it would have brought the war directly to the American continent and would have placed thousands of muskets in the hands of the poorer social groups. For this reason it is possible to understand the geo-political, military and social obstacles that aborted this project on the French side.

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Captain Larcher's journey lasted almost two years, full of dangerous twists and turns, from his departure from France in September 1795 to his return in June or July 1797. The trip through Bahia, although unscheduled, represented an episode that was triggered by the others. Although it is not part of the aim of this paper to contextualize the route of his journey, it is worth highlighting some points of interest to the case being discussed.

Commander of the frigate *La Preneuse*, in December 1795 Larcher led the successful attack on the Luso-Brazilian vessel *Santo Antonio de Polifemo*, commanded by Manoel do Nascimento da Costa, which was involved in trade with India. In the fight that lasted four and half hours eight men were killed on the Luso-Brazilian side: five soldiers, a sailor, Lieutenant João Cordeiro do Vale and Friar Agostinho de Newfonte, as well as six injured, included Antonio José de Almeida, Secretary of State for Goa who was on board. The cargo

confiscated by the French soldiers consisted of sugar, liquor, tobacco, iron and uniforms for Portuguese troops in Asia. After the violent confrontation and when the prey had been captured, including the armament and munitions, Larcher negotiated in a courteous manner with the defeated captain, giving him a safe conduct in relation to all other French vessels, asking them not to attack again the vessel, which allowed Santo Antonio de Polifemo to return to Bahia without being further attacked and with the survivors being freed⁴⁰. This attitude in the negotiations helps understand how a few months later Larcher would be well received in Salvador, which he reached in November 1796, now as a simple passenger on the Luso-Brazilian ship *Boa Viagem*, coming from Asia which he had left without his vessel *La Preneuse*, having been expelled by the French slaveholding colonists, as has already been mentioned⁴¹.

It was during his time of approximately one month in Salvador, that the contacts occurred between Captain Larcher and the highest ranking authorities, such as the Captain General D. Fernando José de Portugal, as well as with the local conspirators, which led to the writing of the two letters transcribed here, an episode which, as has been mentioned, has already been the subject of various historical interpretations. Furthermore, it was actually on a Portuguese ship, *Bom Jesus*, that Larcher returned to Europe in January 1797, getting stuck against his will in the Portuguese capital, lacking the resources to return to his native country.

While he waited in Lisbon, at least between March and June 1797, Captain Larcher seemed anxious to advance the projected French support for the Bahian conspirators. Larcher's time in the Portuguese capital was painful and tense due to the developments of the European crisis caused by the French Revolution and its consequences, as can be seen in three other letters he wrote to his superiors⁴². On the one hand, Larcher found himself in the uncomfortable position of remaining in Lisbon at the mercy of the negotiations (full of alarmist rumors) between the powers and under the vigilance of the Portuguese government, from whom he also received a proposal to come over to their side⁴³. On the other hand, he remained loyal to the government of his country and his letters were close to spying: he even sent the Directorate detailed information about the movements of English, Portuguese and French émigré vessels and troops in Portugal, despite receiving a formal request from the Portuguese authorities not to discuss this with the government of revolutionary France⁴⁴. Larcher let escape a snide comment about the military capacity of soldiers from Brazil who had been brought over to assist with the war in Europe, when he stated that if they were the same as the Bahians there would be nothing to fear in them⁴⁵. While the future Count of Barca negotiated treaties with the Directorate in Paris that would never be fulfilled, Larcher

remained in Lisbon at the mercy of events, without receiving a reply from France and above all lacking money for his expenses and for his journey home. He even formally requested this money from the Portuguese government in the form of a loan, a request that was denied⁴⁶.

It can thus be seen that the profile of Larcher that emerges from this situation is not that of an adventurer or a mercenary, so common at those times, nor that of a dubious aristocratic officer, or even a crazy lone revolutionary, but rather that of a military professional who identified with the expansionist projects of his own country. It would have been strange for him to spend time and ink writing and placing his own personal prestige in play if he had not been really convinced and encouraged by the contacts he made in Bahia to follow through the request for support for the intended uprising.

The Project transcribed below, dated 24 April 1797 and sent from Lisbon to Paris, is to a certain extent self-explanatory, at least in relation to the invasion plans, in other words what the Bahian conspirators requested from French Republic and what they promised it in return through Captain Larcher. In general terms it involved military support for the proclamation of independence of Bahia in exchange for privileged trade agreements.

In the same Project can be noted the expectation that all of Brazil would, as a result of events in Bahia, also proclaim independence in a unified form, stating that “the other *capitanias* Brazil” would form “a free people”. It still remains to be known if this statement written by Larcher was just the fruit of his own individual perception or if he picked it up from the Bahian conspirators. Nor is it known if this ‘Brazilian’ perspective was based on previous contacts with other *capitanias* or mere speculation, as a scenario seen as possible. Nevertheless, this testimony referring to 1796 is one of the first explicit manifestations of the possibility of the various Brazilian *capitanias* proclaiming independence from Portugal in a unified manner from protagonists favorable to this. Moreover, in the records of the 1798 Devassa there appears in a constant form, though inconsistent in relation to the evidence, the accusation that the Bahian conspirators wanted the entire “continent of Brazil” to rebel.

Another point to be emphasized is that France, at least in the words of Captain Larcher, intended to exercise exclusivity of trade with Brazil, in substitution of the one exercised by Portugal, an aspect that appears in the two documents transcribed here, as will be seen below. Despite the revolutionary conjuncture, this involved the maintenance of the old monopolistic practices, an ambivalence that would in fact be maintained by France on the same occasion in other locations, such as the Caribbean colony of Santa Dominica, for example, configuring the paradox of the French Revolution in relation to what came to be considered as the “colonial problem”⁴⁷. Furthermore, the French soldier repeated in the two

texts transcribed here that he had discussed these parts of the conspiracy with sectors from the Bahian elite.

The letter also written in Lisbon to the Directorate of the French Republic about the same theme and dated 15 June 1797 (almost two months after the Project and also transcribed below) has some interesting characteristics. As a precaution (there was a fear that the correspondence would be intercepted on its journey between Portugal and Paris, as stated by Larcher himself) there is no explicit reference to the place of the conspiracy, although its terms and date leave no doubt that it also involves Bahia. The initiative of this new message results from a mixture of reinforcement and insistence on the proposal, alongside the fear that the previous correspondence that gone astray and, though more subtly, the fear that the Minister of the Marine and the Colonies, Truguet, identified with the moderate Girondinist and even Monarchist wing of the Revolution had left the Project somewhere to gather dust⁴⁸. Moreover, Larcher appeared to have many motives for his suspicion, since he was abandoned in Lisbon without the support of the French authorities, as has already been mentioned.

At the same time Larcher included in this second letter details that suggested that the Bahian conspiracy was well advanced (“The Plan is ready and implemented”), including in relation to the possibility of French military intervention. He also stated that there were two men (whom he did not name) among the conspirators willing to go to France to negotiate personally and that the signals (conventions) for communication between the conspirators had already been defined. Some of the occupations of those involved are specified (‘educated persons’, traders and soldiers), evidence that his contacts had been with sectors of local elites, as was most plausible. This also is connected to the social range of the conspirators, which was, thus, not limited to the poorer or middle class parts of the population.

In relation to the role to be exercised by France in Bahia, in this new projected situation the French intention, as expressed by Larcher, of implementing exclusive French trade in substitution for the Portuguese was symptomatically highlighted, even though it was to be for a still to be decided period. It can be seen that the perspective of the French Revolution did not accompany the much talked about ‘new ideas’ in economic relations.

We can find in these two documents produced by Larcher, suggestive elements to our knowledge of the *Conjuração Baiana*, which move away from its characterization of being seen as just a regional episode and led by a plebian as a result of dissatisfaction for ethnic and social reasons. Potentially at least, it raises the possibility of the insertion and articulation of the *capitania* of Bahia in new times in Portuguese America and in Europe, in other words in the Age of Revolutions. Obviously the poorest and most mobilized sectors in

the Bahian population (even though a minority in society as a whole and perhaps even within the conspiracy itself) assumed and reinterpreted in their own fashion not only the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, but also information about the articulations made with a figure of authority from the French Republic. But everything indicates that these contacts, as has already been looked at, were made by members of Bahian elites who ended up outside the repression implemented by Portuguese authorities and even outside part of historiographic comprehension.

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1) Project for the invasion of Bahia by troops of the French Revolution.

1.1 – Translation to Portuguese

[p.1]

South America

Brazil

Project for an expedition against San Salvador (Brazil) by Captain Larcher – 24 April 1797

[p.2]

Copy of a memorial I sent to the Executive Directorate¹ from Madrid on 7 Frutidor² 5³

Operation
Projects

Sirs: the
memorial of 27
Prairéal was
written in Lisbon
and sent from
there; I had to
be very prudent
towards the
Council with its
inhabitants

The people whom I had the honor of describing to you in my memorial of 27 Prairéal⁴ 5, are those of São Salvador in the Bay of All Saints, capital of the biggest *Capitania* in Brazil, whose population is evaluated at sixty thousand souls.

The inhabitants invested with the rights of man clamor for their independence; they ask it from the French Republic and do not want it except from you.

A minimum of fifteen million in materials such as gold and silver, diamonds, precious wood for construction, sugar, coffee and coffee will be the testament of your good will, and you can judge the importance they give to this: they are so tired of the theocratic royal government, they have had so many displeasures that all their possible sacrifices would seem small to them if they could attain their objective.

Immense
resources
guaranteed
immediately to
the French
Republic

¹ The Directorate was the name given to the executive government that functioned for almost four years in Revolutionary France from 27 October 1795 to 19 November 1799.

² Twelfth month of the French calendar enacted with the installation of the Republic on 21 September 1792, which began on 18 August and ended on 17 September. The date above corresponds to 24 August.

³ Fifth year of the French Republic.

⁴ Ninth month of the French revolutionary calendar which began on 20 May and ended on 18 June.

Means of Execution

The means for the execution of this are easy and require little expenditure: 4 ships of the line, 3 frigates and 2 *flutes*⁵ will be sufficient to transport 1500 soldiers and 300 gunners.

Requests and needs of the inhabitants

4000 muskets with bayonets, the same for sabers, gunpowder (the Government does not allow them to manufacture it) and cannonballs of different calibers: these are their needs for the moment: they want an engineer, an architect, a blacksmith and a mechanic: these are the request that I was encumbered with asking you in their name.

This Division can land in All Saints' Bay near the gate to the forts, they are not dangerous; there was less than 700 kg of powder on my departure, and the Government is afraid to send them more, because things are so heated.

[p.3]

The signal is in my mind

As soon as the division commander has given the agreed signal, the colony will rise en masse, the troops will join the inhabitants who will take the mint, safes and storehouses, and the arsenal: they will depose all Government authorities and create new popular ones: a deputation of Citizens will go to the French commander to ask for the protection of the French Republic; You shall tell the verdict that he ought to give: if this revolution were an opera, as it is designed to be, he will only feel the fire of the manifestations of jubilee.

Combined manner according to which the inhabitants should act

This revolution will have an electric effect on the other *capitanias* in Brazil as experience proves to us: they will all unite to form a free people.

Effects of this revolution on Brazil

A treaty of alliance with the French Republic will be drawn up immediately: one concerning trade shall follow: the French Republic shall demand exclusivity during those years when its protection is indispensable to this new people, in other words until it has decided the form of its government, organized and consolidated it and had its independence recognized: this expedition, which requires the greatest secrecy, can be disguised; it can even have a dual utility of greater interest.

Advantages for the trade of the French Republic that the state of its colonies makes even more precious

Precautions

Objections are often raised against the best designed plans that escape the most experienced eye: From the great political theater that you occupy, it will be easy for you, Citizen Directors, to calculate the great advantages that this revolution will provide to the trade of the French Republic, the losses that could result for our enemy, as well as the inconveniences that a political consideration could raise.

Political Reflections

[p.4]

(a) In the first days of Germinal

If I could have left for France at the same instant of my arrival in Lisbon, and if you are wanted to hear the Voice of this People, this Revolution would have already been enacted and it would not have taken long for You to enjoy the promised advantages.

⁵ An old warship that was used for the transportation of material.

What is happening in this colony leaves no doubt about its determination

Citizen Directors, Body of this People, I am carrying out the mission to you which I was entrusted by them, I am doing my duty and I can assure you that peace will change in no way the determination that they be free.

Signed Larcher, Captain.

1.2 – French Original:

[p.1]

Amérique Méridionale

Brésil

Projet d'expédition contre San Salvador (Brésil) par le Cap. de V^{au} Larcher – 24 avril 1797

[p.2]

Copie du mémoire que j'ai adressé au Directoire Exécutif de Madrid Le 7 frutidor au 5^e

Projets

d'operation

V.S^a : le mémoire du 27 Prairéal a été fai à Lisbonne et envoié déla; j'ai du être très circonspect

Le Peuple, que j'ai eu l'honneur de Vous désigner dans mon mémoire du 27 Prairéal 5^e, est celui de San Salvador dans la baie de tous les saints, capitale de la Capitainerie la plus considérable du Brésil dont la Population est évaluée à soixante mille ames.

Voeu Politique des ces habitants

Les habitants pénétrés des droits de l'homme Réclament leur indépendance; ils la demandent à la République française, et ne Veulent la tenir que de Vous.

Ressources immenses assurées, au moment même, à la république française

Quinze Millions au moins en matieres d'or et d'argent, des diamants, des bois précieux de construction, des sucres, du caffé, et des cotons seront le témoignage, et Vous pouvés juger par là de l'importance qu'il y attachent: ils sons si fatigués du Gouvernement roial et théocratique, ils l'ont tellement eu exécration que tous ses sacrifices possibles leurs paraîtront légers, s'ils peuvent parvenir à ce but.

Moiens d'Executions

Les moiens d'exécution sont faciles et peu dispendieux: 4 Vaisseaux de ligne, 3 frégates, et 2 flûtes suffiront pour transporter 1500 hommes de troupes et 300 artilleurs.

Demandes et besoins des habitants

4000 fusils avec leurs baionnetes, autant de sabres, de la poudre (le Gouvernemnet ne leur permet pas d'en faire) et des boulets de différents calibres: Voilà leurs besoins du moment: ils désirent um ingénieur, un architecte, un fondeur et un mécanicien: telles sons les demandes que je suis chargé de Vous faire en leur nom.

Cette Division pourra mouiller dans la Baie de tous les saints à la porte des forts, ils ne sont pas dangéreux; il n'y avait pas plus de 700 kg de Poudre à mon départ, et le Gouvernement craignait d'y en envoier[sic], tant les têtes sont en effervescence.

[p.3]

Le signal est dans ma tête

Dès que le commandant de la division aura laissé le signal convenu, la colonie se leve en masse, les troupes ses réunissent aux habitants qui s'emparens de la monaire, des caisses, des

Manière convenue dont les habitants doivent s'y prendre

magazins[sic], et de l'arcenal: on destitue toutes les autorités du Gouvernement, et on en crée de Populaires: une députation de Citoyens se rendra à bord du commandant pour demander la protection de la République française; Vous lui dicterés la réponse qu'il devra faire: si cette révolution s'opere, comme elle est projeté, il ne sera pas brulé d'autres annonces que celle de réjouissance.

Effets de cette révolution sur le Brésil

Cette révolution aura un effet électrique sur les autres capitaineries du Brésil; l'expérience nous le prouve: elles se réuniront toutes pour former un peuple libre.

Avantages pour le commerce de la République française que l'état de ses colonies rend encore plus précieux

Um traité d'alliance avec la République française aura lieu sur le champ: un autre de commerce doit nécessairement s'en suivre: la République française pourra éxiger l'exclusif pendant un certain nombre d'années que sa protection sera indispensable à ce nouveau Peuple, C'est a dire, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait déterminé la forme de son Gouvernement l'ait organisé, consolidé, et fait reconnaître son indépendence: cette expédition, qui exige le plus grand secret, peut être masqué; elle peut même avoir une double utilité du plus grand intérêt.

Précautions

Il est souvent contre les plans les mieux combinés des objections qui échappent à l'ocil le plus exercé: Placés sur le grand théâtre Politique, il Vous sera facile, citoyens Directeurs, de calculer les grands avantages que cette révolution procurerait au commerce de la république française, l'affaiblissement qui pourrait en résulter pour celui de nos ennemis, ainsi que les inconvénients dont des considérations politiques pourraient être la base.

Réflexions Politiques

[p.4]

(a) dans les premiers jours de Germinal

Si j'avais pu partir pour france, aussitôt mon arrivéé à Lisbonne(a), et que Vous aimés Voulu seconder les Voeux de ce Peuple, cette Révolution serait opéréé, et Vous ne tarderés pas a jouir des avantages promis.

Ce qui s'est passé dans cette colonie ne laisse aucun doute sur sa détermination

Citoyens Directeurs, Organe de ce Peuple, je remplis la mission dont il má chargé auprès de Vous, Je fais mon devoir, et je puis Vous assurer que la paix ne changera rien à la détermination qu'il a prise d'être livre.

Signé Larcher Cap. de V^{au}

2) Letter to the Directorate of the French Republic

2.1- Portuguese Translation:

15 June 1797

To the Executive Directorate of the French Republic only,
Citizen Directors⁶,

I believe that I am in debt to the Minister of the Marine and the Colonies and I have taken the liberty of occupying you with the case that he certainly has reported to you.

A greater interest has made me break the silence that I have kept for more than two months, since I am here in the hope of an immediate return to France; but I must suppose that my letters to the Minister of the Marine have been intercepted, since I have obtained no reply.

A People, buried by the dual Despotism of Monarchy and theocracy, comes to beg you to give them Freedom. They want to adopt the current Constitution of the French Republic, of which I was happily able to give them an example⁷; They chose me to be their messenger to you; Educated people, traders and soldiers are awaiting your good will ; Two of them are ready to meet you once they are summoned; it will mean no sacrifice for them; The Plan is ready and implemented; They have even given me the signals of the Convention. Therefore, the despair must be so close to their souls, since they are a year, counting from my departure, without receiving any hope, it is only to be expected to see this people resort to some extremism that could be ominous, if they are abandoned and left to themselves. You can judge in your wisdom, Citizen Directors, if the proposal with which I have been entrusted to bring to you is easy to implement; allow me to wait for my return to France to provide more detailed clarifications; all I can assure you is that nothing in this world can be as useful to the prosperity of the French Republic, especially when it is due only to small scale initiatives.

I am free here; I am out of place in all senses, especially because of the losses I caused to the state and to trade through my capture of the Portuguese frigate *O Polifemo* after a fight lasting four and a half hours. The minister of the Marine and Colonies will have had you examine the reasons that keep me here.

Head of Division of the Navies of the French Republic,
Larcher.

⁶ The Directorate of the French Republic at the time this letter was written was composed of: Lazare Carnot, Jean-François Reubell, Paul Barras, Louis-Marie de la Révellière-Lépaux and François de Barthélemy.

⁷ This is the Constitution of Year III (1795) then in vigor, which include a collegiate Republican government and an indirect vote based on the payment of tax.

2.2 – French Original:

[fl.1]

15 Juin

1797

Au Directoire Exécutif de La République française Seul

Citoyens Directeurs

Je croirois[sic] manquee à ce que Je dois au Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, si je prenois[sic] La Liberté de Vous entretenir de mon affaire de laquelle Il a vu déjà Vous rendre compte.

Un plus grand Interêt m'oblige a rompre dans ce moment Le silence que je gardois[sic] depuis plus de deux mois que je suis ici dans L'Espérance d'un prompt retour en france; mais je dois présumer que mês Lettres au Ministre de la marine ont été intercepteés, puis que je suis sans Réponse.

Un Peuple, terrassé par le double [fl.1.v.] Despotisme de La Monarchie et de La théocratie, Vous implore pour Lui donner La Liberté; Il Veut adopter La Constitution actuelle de La République française dont j'ai pu heureusement Lui donner un Exemple; Il m'a choisi pour être Son organe auprès de Vous; Gens instruits négociants[sic], militaires attendent de Vous ce Bienfait; Deux d'entre eux sont prêts a se Rendre auprès de Vous au premier ordre; aucun sacrifice ne Leur Coutera; Le Plan est fait et adopté; Ils m'ont même donné les signaux de Convention. Enfin le désespoir est si prés de leur ame[?] que, s'ils sont un an, a compter de mon Départ, sans Recevoir aucune Espérance on doit l'attendre a Voir Ce peuple se porter à quelque extremité qui pourroit[sic] être funeste, s'il est abandonné à lui même. Vous Jugerés dans Votre Sagesse, Citoyens Directeurs, si L'expédition que Je suis chargé de Vous proposer est de facile exécutions; Permettés que je Remetre à [fl.2] mon Retour en france pour entrer dans des plus amples éclaircissemens; tout ce dont je puis Vous assures, C'est que Rien au Monde ne peut parvitre[?] aussi utile à La prospérité de la République française, surtout n'étant obligé qu'à de faibles moiens.

Je suis libre ici; J'y suis déplacé sous tous Les rapports, surtout d'après La perte j'ai causée à L'Etat, et au commerce par La prise que j'ai faite[sic] de la frégate Portugaise Le Poliphême après un engagement de 4 heures $\frac{3}{4}$: Le ministre de la Marine et des Colonies Vous aura sans doute mis sous les yeux les Raisons qui me Retiement ici.

Le Chef de division des armées navales de La République française.

Larcher

Lisbonne

27 Prairéal au 5^{eme}

NOTES

¹ The reference of the documents is: Series BB4, 1050, Archives de la Marine, Paris. The Project of the French invasion was initially cited by J. Potelet, *Projets d'expédition et d'attaques sur les cotes du Brésil (1796 – 1800), Caravelle – Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien*, Toulouse, no. 54, p. 212 and after., 1990; and afterwards by M. Morel, *Tensões entre revolução e escravismo: o caso de Cipriano Barata em 1798*, em U. de Castro Araújo (org.), *II Centenário da sedição de 1798 na Bahia*, Salvador, 1999 and it was also analyzed by I. Jancsó, “Bahia 1798 - a hipótese do auxílio francês ou a cor dos gatos” in Junia Furtado (org.) - *Diálogos Oceânicos - Minas Gerais e as novas abordagens para uma história do Império Ultramarino Português*, Belo Horizonte, UFMG, 2001, p.361-387.

² We would like to thank Frédéric Pili for copying the microfilm of the originals and Andréa Slemian for the transcription of the two documents (and the translation and notes to the former).

³ Luis dos Santos VILHENA – *Notícias soteropolitanas e brasílicas*, Salvador, Imp. Of. do Estado, 1922.

⁴ Arquivo do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro (AIHGB), L.399

⁵ J. ARMITAGE – *História do Brasil*. Belo Horizonte/São Paulo, 1981.

⁶ Francisco A. de VARNHAGEN – *História Geral do Brasil*. Belo Horizonte/São Paulo, vol. III, t.V, p.24-5

⁷ In relation to this, see, de István JANCÓS – “Um problema historiográfico: o legado de D. Fernando José de Portugal” in *Anais do IV Congresso de História da Bahia*, Salvador, Instituto Geográfico e Histórico da Bahia / Fundação Gregório de Mattos, 2001, vol.I., p.297-322; “Adendo à discussão da abrangência social da Inconfidência Bahiana de 1798” in Ilana BLAJ e John MONTEIRO. (org) - *História e Utopias*, São Paulo, ANPUH, 1996 (Proceedings of the XVII National Symposium of History), and *Na Bahia, contra o Império - História do ensaio de sedição de 1798*, São Paulo, Hucitec, 1996.

⁸ Accioli de Cerqueira SILVA – *Memórias históricas e políticas da Província da Bahia*, Salvador, Imp. Of. do Estado, 1931, 6 v. (1st ed. 1835-1852), vol. III, p.17 with precious annotations by Braz do Amaral.

⁹ The essence of what Francisco Borges de Barros thought about the issue can be found in *Os Confederados do Partido da Liberdade*. Salvador, 1922, but it is also useful to consult “Sobre a conspiração de 1798 na Bahia” (*Anais do Arquivo Público da Bahia(AAPB)* no. 2, 1917; “Primórdios das sociedades secretas na Bahia” (*AAPB* no. 15, 1926), and “A bandeira da revolução de 1798”, (*AAPB*, no. 9, 1922).

¹⁰ For Braz do AMARAL see his annotations on the work of I. ACCIOLI, *op.cit*, vol.III, as well as *A conspiração republicana da Bahia de 1798*, Rio de Janeiro, Imp. Nacional, 1926 (Conference held in IHGB on 26 June 1926).

¹¹ Afonso RUY – *A primeira revolução social brasileira (1798)*. 2nd ed. São Paulo, 1978 (Brasiliana vol. 217).

¹² Idem, p.4.

¹³ Idem, p.38.

¹⁴ Idem, p.122. G. Barroso's proposition created a school of thought, cf. see Luiz da Camara CASCUDO - *O Doutor Barata – político, democrata e jornalista*, Bahia, Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1938.

¹⁵ He has written: “As idéias dos revolucionários de 1798” in *Arquivos da Universidade da Bahia*. Salvador, Faculdade de Filosofia, 1955, no. 4; *Introdução ao estudo das idéias do movimento revolucionário de 1789*. Salvador, 1959; “Fontes teóricas do movimento revolucionário de 1798” in *Revista do Instituto Geográfico e Histórico da Bahia*, n.80, 1956, Salvador; *O movimento revolucionário baiano de 1798*. Salvador, Universidade da Bahia 1960 (livre docência thesis); *História da sedição tentada na Bahia em 1798* (a conspiração dos alfaiates). São Paulo, 1975; “Cipriano Barata de Almeida” in *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, vol. 347, 1985, Rio de Janeiro; “Escravos no 1798” in: *Anais da XI Reunião da SBPH*. São Paulo, 1991; “O desconhecido Francisco Agostinho Gomes” in *Anais da XIII Reunião da SBPH*, Florianópolis, 1993; “Jantar de carne em Sexta-feira Santa” in *Anais da XIV Reunião da SBPH*, Salvador, 1994; “Questões ainda não resolvidas na história da sedição de 1798 na Bahia” in *II Centenário da Sedição de 1798 na Bahia*, Salvador/Brasília, Academia de Letras da Bahia/MINC, 1999; “O soldado Luis Gonzaga das Virgens”

in *Estudos Avançados*, USP, vol.13, no. 37, Sept. – Dec. 1999, São Paulo. The author collected his most important recent works on 1798 in the book *Da Sedição de 1798 à Revolta de 1824 na Bahia*, Salvador / São Paulo, EDUFBA / UNESP, 2003.

¹⁶ TAVARES – *História da sedição tentada na Bahia em 1798*, p.95.

¹⁷ Idem, p.96.

¹⁸ The documentation related to the Devassa has been published various times. *Autos da Devassa da Conspiração dos Alfaiates*, 2 vols, Salvador, Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia, 1998, after meticulous critical revision, brought together what had previously been scattered in *A Inconfidência da Bahia: devassas e seqüestros*, 2 vols, Rio de Janeiro, Oficinas Graphicas da Bibliotheca Nacional, 1931, and *Anais do Arquivo Público da Bahia* vols 35 and 36: *Autos da Devassa do Levantamento e Sedição Intentados na Bahia*, Salvador, Imprensa Oficial da Bahia, 1959 and 1961.

¹⁹ With some variations in emphasis, this is the basic explanatory approach on which recent studies of the events in Bahia at the end of the eighteenth century, see Kátia Mattoso - “Bahia 1798: os Panfletos revolucionários. Proposta de uma nova leitura”, in Osvaldo COGGIOLA (org) – *A Revolução francesa e seu impacto na América Latina*, São Paulo/Brasília, EDUSP/Nova Stella/CNPq, 1990 (Simpósio Internacional “A French Revolution e seu Impacto na América Latina, São Paulo, June 1989); Kenneth Maxwell - “A conspiração baiana de 1798” in *Folha de São Paulo – Caderno Mais!*, 26.07.98, Caderno 5, p.6 – 7; Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva - “Conflitos raciais e sociais na sedição de 1798 na Bahia” in *II Centenário da Sedição de 1798 na Bahia*, Salvador/Brasília, Academia de Letras da Bahia/MINC, 1999, p. 37 on; Ubiratan Castro de Araújo - Ubiratan Castro de Araújo – A Bahia no tempo dos alfaiates in *II Centenário da sedição de 1798 na Bahia*, p.7 on; Guilherme Pereira das Neves – “Bahia 1798: uma leitura colonial da French Revolution”, *Acervo* vol. 4, no.1, p.121-4, Rio de Janeiro, 1989; “De 1789 a 1798: percursos da francesia na Bahia” in *Revista da SBPH*, .18, Curitiba, 2000,p.93-101, and albeit indirectly in “A biblioteca de Francisco Agostinho Gomes: a permanência na ilustração luso-brasileira entre Portugal e o Brasil” in *Revista do IHGB*, no. 425, Rio de Janeiro, 2004, p.11-27.

²⁰ Especially Kenneth Maxwell and Valentim Alexandre.

²¹ *Op.cit.* p.348. It should be noted that the first news of the “Larcher documents” came from Kátia Mattoso, who told Luis Henrique Dias Tavares about them, cf. István Jancsó – “Um problema Historiográfico: o legado de D. Fernando José de Portugal” in *Anais do IV Congresso de História da Bahia*, Salvador, Instituto Geográfico e Histórico da Bahia / Fundação Gregório de Mattos, 2001, vol.1, p.297-322.

²² Evaristo L.I. SILVA – *Recordações biographicas do Coronel João Ladisláu de Figueiredo e Mello ordenadas por seu neto Evaristo Ladisláu I. Silva*, Bahia, Typ. de C. de L. Masson & Cia., 1866.

²³ These papers were published by Braz do Amaral in ACCIOLI – *op.cit.*, p.140-150.

²⁴ This group included the lieutenants Hermógenes Francisco de Aguiar Pantoja and José Gomes de Oliveira Borges (condemned to a year in prison), the teacher of Latin grammar Francisco Moniz Barreto de Aragão, condemned to be whipped and transported, a punishment finally reduced to “one year in prison only in the public jail of this city and the loss of the teaching post he had held”, or José Raimundo Barata, brother of Cipriano Barata, a merchant, condemned to transportation for three years to the island of Fernando de Noronha. Cipriano Barata himself was arrested, interrogated and finally absolved, but nonetheless only freed in 1800. Among those who fled, and for which reason they were sentenced in their absence, was Pedro Leão de Aguiar Pantoja – brother of Lieutenant Hermógenes.

²⁵ In relation to this, see “Bahia 1798 - a hipótese do auxílio francês ou a cor dos gatos” in Junia Furtado (org) - *Diálogos Oceânicos - Minas Gerais e as novas abordagens para uma história do Império Ultramarino Português*, Belo Horizonte, UFMG, 2001, p.361-387.

²⁶ Cf. Evaristo L.I. SILVA – *op.cit.*, p.4.

²⁷ In relation to the age breakdown of those involved in the attempted sedition, see, István JANCÓSÓ - “A sedução da liberdade: cotidiano e contestação política no final do Século XVIII” in Laura de Melo e SOUZA (org) e Fernando A. NOVAIS (dir) - *História da Vida Privada no Brasil - Cotidiano e Vida Privada na América Portuguesa*, , São Paulo, Cia. das Letras, 1997.

²⁸ In relation to this, see István JANCÓSÓ - “Contrabandos e idéias” in C.V. DOMINGUES, C.V. LEMOS and E YGLESIAS (org) - *Animai-vos, povo bahiense - A conspiração dos alfaiates*, Salvador, Omar G. Editora, Salvador, 1999 (p.59 - 67).

²⁹ Idem, p.157.

³⁰ Idem, p.151 on.

³¹ Idem, p.155.

³² AAPB vol.35, p.15, cf. Tavares, L.H.D., op. cit., p.85.

³³ The Atlantic conjunctures in relation to the perspectives of the French Revolution were dealt with in the work of Jacques Godechot, *La Grande Nation*, Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1983.

³⁴ For biographical information, see: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accueil>

³⁵ For biographical information, see: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accueil>

³⁶ In relation to the reintroduction of slavery in the French colonies and the situation in Santa Dominica, which two years later would become Haiti, see Y. Bénot and M. Dorigny (eds), *Rétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises. Aux origines de Haïti*, Paris, 2003.

³⁷ J. S da Silva Dias, *Os primórdios da Maçonaria em Portugal*, vol. I, t. 2, 2a. ed., Lisbon: Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica, 1986, especially Chapter IX. See also *Diccionario Bibliographico Portuguez*. Volumes 1 - 23. Innocencio Francisco da Silva and Brito Aranha, edição em CD-ROM, Lisbon: Biblioteca Virtual dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, 09, Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses, n.d.

³⁸ F. Borges de Barros, *Novos documentos para a História Colonial. Bahia – Brasil.*, Salvador, 1931,, p. 46.

³⁹ L. H. Dias Tavares, *História da sedição tentada na Bahia em 1798*, p. 85.

⁴⁰ In relation to the episode between Larcher and the vessel Polifemo, see the documentation transcribed in F. Borges de Barros, *Novos Documentos para a História Colonial*, Salvador: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1931, p. 43 – 49.

⁴¹ In relation to some of the public aspects of Larcher's time in Bahia, see L.H. Dias Tavares, *História da sedição tentada na Bahia em 1798*, p. 79 – 87.

⁴² In addition to the Project and the letter transcribed here, there are another three letters from Larcher in the same documentary file in the French Navy Archive dealing with the Bahian episode, cf., citations below.

⁴³ Cf. L.H. Dias Tavares, 1978, cit.

⁴⁴ Letters dated 29 March and 14 May 1797.

⁴⁵ Idem, ibidem.

⁴⁶ Letter dated 14 May 1797.

⁴⁷ CESAIRE, Aimé. Toussaint Louverture. *La Révolution Française et le problème colonial*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1981; BÉNOT, Yves & DORIGNY, Marcel (eds). *Rétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises. Aux origines de Haïti*. Paris: Maisonneuve & Larosse, 2003; THIBAU, Jacques. *Le temps de Saint-Domingue. L'esclavage et la Révolution Française*, Paris: Éditions Jean-Claude Lattès, 1989.

⁴⁸ Reinforcing the hypothesis of the previous shunting aside of the request, in the top left of the manuscript can be seen the handwritten opinion of Carnot, addressed to the Minister of the Marine and the Colonies “*pour faire rapport*”, as if the minister had not reported the content of the proposal to the Directorate. The minister Truguet would be removed from his position a month after Larcher's correspondence, as part of a wide ranging ministerial shuffle.

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