A History of Brazil

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In history we only point to the dominant figures, those who destroyed or constructed, leaving behind a trail of blood or a ray of light. We do not remember whose shoulders bore them, the courage of the masses which gave them their strength, the collective mind which exalted their minds, the unknown hands which pointed out to them the ideal which only the most fortunate attained. And often the unknown person is the one whose cooperation was the most vital in bringing about the great event.

—João Capistrano de Abreu, 1889

A people cannot be free if they do not control their own sources of wealth, produce their own food, and direct their own industry and commerce.

—Alberto Tôrres, 1914

The entire structure of our colonial society was rural. That fact is essential to understanding our development until the fall of the monarchy or more precisely until the abolition of slavery. 1888 divides two epochs, the most decisive year in our evolution as a people. From that moment Brazilian life shifted from one pole to another, the transition to urbanization which only after 1888 plays a decisive role.

—Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, 1936

We espouse a nationalism based upon our aspirations for economic development. The proper nationalism for Brazil seeks to elevate our country to the level of the developed countries of the world so that it can speak as an equal without subservience, without fear, and without any feeling of inferiority.

—Juscelino Kubitschek, 1956

A mestizo culture is taking shape, so powerful and innate in every Brazilian that in time it will become the true national consciousness, and even the children of immigrant fathers and mothers, first-generation Brazilians, will be cultural mestizos by the time they are grown up.

—Jorge Amado, 1969

We have two countries here under one flag, one constitution, and one language. One part of Brazil is in the twentieth century, with high technology computers and satellite launches. And, beside that, we have another country where people are eating lizards to survive.

—Wilson Braga, 1985

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everywhere anyone might want to go in that vast land. The facility of access to Brazilian museums, libraries, and archives—public and private—and the generosity of Brazilians in sharing their resources enhanced the pleasures of research and study. I extend my warmest thanks to those institutions and people. They have made my visits to their country delightful, rewarding, and memorable experiences.

For the information, facts, and interpretations set forth in this history of Brazil, I bear responsibility. Whatever errors exist also bear my imprint.

E. Bradford Burns
Muscatine, Iowa
April, 1993

Introduction

Brazil, the affable and amiable giant, attracts attention. It excites the imagination. It dazzles the beholder. The intensity of the light, the brightness of the color, the richness of the vegetation, the vastness of the landscape, the beauty of the people combine to make a seductive sight few have been able to resist. The alternating simplicity and complexity of the land and its inhabitants further intrigue any who delve even shallowly beneath that alluring surface. It has always been so.

Not immune to the attractions of the land, the Portuguese who discovered, explored, and settled Brazil saw it as a terrestrial paradise. The first description of the newly discovered domain spoke of it as "so well favored that if it were rightly cultivated it would yield everything." A Jesuit father, dazzled by what he saw, wrote back to the metropolis in 1560, "If there is paradise here on earth, I would say it is in Brazil." A chronicler later in that century prophesied, "This land is capable of becoming a great empire." The Brazilians expressed equal confidence. In the first history of Brazil, written in 1627, Frei Vicente do Salvador confided, "This will be a great kingdom." The enthusiasm continued. In the history published by Sebastião da Rocha Pita in 1730, that Bahian rhapsodized, "Brazil is the earthly paradise regained." Within

a century, one Brazilian poet, Francisco de São Carlos, had reversed the comparison. In his long poem *A Assunção,* he depicted Paradise in terms that made it sound strikingly similar to Brazil.

The attractions of Brazil did not go unnoticed by other Europeans. At various times, the French, Dutch, and English sought their fortunes in Brazil. Indeed, the British presence was a major economic reality of the nineteenth century.

Although throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Brazil attracted only limited and sporadic attention from the United States, the years since World War II witnessed a burgeoning interest and concern on the part of the North Americans. U.S. investments in Brazil during this century rose spectacularly. When it became evident by the late 1950s that Brazil would exercise a major international role not only in the Western Hemisphere but on a global scale as well, U.S. government leaders, military officials, scholars, and businessmen rushed to learn more about the South American giant. President John F. Kennedy reminded his listeners that one had only to glance at a world map to appreciate the geopolitical importance of Brazil.

North Americans glanced at that map. They focused attention on the Portuguese-speaking people of South America. As one consequence, studies of Brazil, popular and erudite, cascaded off the presses. This history, now in its third edition, testifies to that reality.

Brazil offers a fascinating history. It records the dramatic struggles for survival against natural elements, for independence from foreign domination, and for the creation of a viable national state. Most impressive, it reveals the transference of European ideas and institutions to South America where, albeit challenged and influenced by the Indians and Africans, they tenaciously took root and flourished. They prevailed over the centuries, providing an astonishing continuity to the flow of Brazilian history. For anyone interested in the history of the nations of the New World, Brazil offers valuable points of comparison, as well as significant contrasts, with Spanish America and Anglo-America. While the nations of the New World might not have a common history, they do share

some common historical experiences. Europeans arrived in the Americas during an era of rapid commercial expansion. Throughout this hemisphere, they encountered and confronted Indians whose civilizations varied widely. Exploration, conquest, and settlement challenged the English, Spanish, and Portuguese and elicited different responses from each of them. They transplanted European institutions to the Western Hemisphere, and those institutions' adaptation and growth here took various courses. The Europeans hoped to resolve the pressing labor shortages by coercing the natives to work for them and, where that failed, by importing legions of African slaves. The metropolises all tried—once again with differing degrees of success—to impose mercantilism on their American domains. Within a span of less than half a century, colonies from New England to the Viceroyalty of the Plata revolted, threw off their European yoke, and entered the community of nations. The struggles to establish national states, to develop economically, and to assert self-identity absorbed the energies of the newly independent peoples.

In the course of their growth, the colonies and then the nations of the New World often responded quite differently to similar stimuli. The English in North America and the Spaniards in Argentina fought the Indians, in effect excluding them, while the Spaniards in Mexico incorporated them as an integral part of the colony. The Peruvians bitterly debated in the early nineteenth century the type of government they wanted; the Brazilians quietly coronated the resident Braganza prince as their emperor. The North Americans and Brazilians expanded westward, incorporating territory claimed by others; the Bolivians, Ecuadoreans, and Venezuelans ignored their hinterlands. The military played a predominant role in the first half-century of Peruvian independence, while during approximately the same years the military of Chile and Brazil exercised minimal influence.

Within the framework of hemispheric experiences, Brazil displayed some unique characteristics. For example, in the nineteenth century, its changes from a colony to an independent empire, from a monarchy to a republic, and from a slaveholding society to a free society occurred essentially

without violence, thus giving it an evolutionary character rare in the New World. Further, its ability to homogenize the three diverse racial elements into a single society on such an immense scale aroused the world's admiration. Although not free of racial tensions and inequities, Brazil nonetheless serves as one of the best examples of extensive miscegenation and racial harmony. It would seem to have much to teach the rest of the world on the difficult topic of racial relations. Thanks to the varied racial contributions, Brazil boasts a unique civilization. Indeed, on that fascinating level alone, it merits study. Certainly Brazil provides many useful insights into the problems faced by a nation whose governments have been determined to "modernize," that is, to recreate their nation after the image of Western Europe or the United States. No one disputes that Brazil possesses all the elements to facilitate economic development. The economic reality—that development thus far has eluded Brazil—constitutes one more cogent reason to study it.

The Visconde do Pôrto Alegre once remarked, "To know the biographies of all the outstanding men of a period is to know the history of those times." Much of Brazil's historiography reflects that view. A later nineteenth-century Brazilian historian, João Capistrano de Abreu, suggested an alternative approach to history: the study of ordinary people and their contributions to the historical process. The unnamed too deserve their place in history. It was not only princes, prelates, and politicians who built Brazil, but also the anonymous *bandeirantes* who explored, conquered, and opened up vast tracts of the interior, the forgotten black slaves upon whose skill and muscle the growth of Brazil depended, and the ignored women who provided the sinew and cohesion of society.

Heroes appear as they must, but they serve to illustrate and to particularize the broad trends of their times. Often historians of Brazil emphasize the individual and slight those broader trends. As a refreshing change, Capistrano de Abreu, whose *Capítulos de História Colonial* ranks as the most perceptive history of colonial Brazil, prided himself on being able to write the history of Brazil without a single reference to Tiradentes, the overly eulogized precursor of indepen-

dence. His works emancipated the study of Brazilian history from its overreliance on the biographies of the great and on political events to pay at least equal attention to social, cultural, and economic movements. Indeed, Brazil is far too complex for its history to be treated as a political chronicle.

Among the many themes that constitute Brazilian history some deserve particular attention in order to highlight the significance of modern Brazil. Territorial expansion—the real epic and major accomplishment of the past—commands a priority. Capistrano de Abreu singled this theme out as the dominant one of the colonial period, but its importance extends into the early twentieth century as well. The Luso-Brazilians swept across the South American continent from the Atlantic coast to the foothills of the Andes. Missionaries, cattle herders, and gold prospectors made good the seemingly exaggerated claims of the explorers.

The continuous fusion of European, African, and Amerindian populations into a homogeneous society is a second important theme. Thanks to the peaceful and thorough amalgamation of the three races in the tropics a unique civilization emerged and flourished.

A third theme is political evolution from colony to viceroyalty to kingdom to empire to republic. This process continues in the twentieth century in the drive to democratize Brazil, a goal more the ideal of selected intellectuals and the aspiration of the masses than a reality. Seemingly the period 1945–64 witnessed some effort and some success in the realization of that goal. But in the mid-1960s the effort at democratization was dashed against the rocks of economic realities. The fearful privileged classes and foreign interests pushed the military to seize the government and rule for their benefit. A return to democracy in 1985, a formality that effectively marginalized the majority, has failed to dissipate economic frustrations.

Urbanization, yet another significant historical theme, got under way in the eighteenth century, spurred by the discovery of gold and increasing commerce. The opening decade of that century had not ended before the first urban-rural clash occurred. Antagonisms have not abated. In the last

half of the nineteenth century the cities emerged as a major force, and thereafter they shaped the course of Brazilian growth. Within the cities, both modernization and industrialization took place, becoming significant forces in the shaping of Brazilian history by the end of the nineteenth century, and accentuating the differences between the cities and the more traditionally oriented countryside. Nationalism, a force that can be considered seriously in the twentieth century, is also nurtured in an urban environment. Urbanization, modernization, industrialization, and nationalism mutually interact, and their combined strength accelerates the rate of change. By the end of the nineteenth century, dynamic new groups appeared in Brazilian society in sufficient numbers to play influential roles: industrialists, European immigrants, a middle class, and a proletariat. The middle class, coopted by and supportive of the economic, political, and social elites, exercised a major influence over events in the twentieth century.

As elsewhere in the underdeveloped world, a desire for change pervades contemporary Brazil. The masses now understand the difference between their own afflictions and the affluence of the privileged few. Fully aware of that difference, they seek to diminish it by improving their own conditions. To do so means to challenge the past, those conservative, oligarchical, and paternalistic traditions, patterns, and institutions which have governed Brazil for so long. The challenge intensifies.

Bitterly opposed to each other are those who strive to maintain the old structures and those who struggle to destroy them. Change and continuity provide the dialectic and drama of modern Brazil. In the opinion of the eminent Brazilian historian José Honório Rodrigues, "The struggle which is now taking place is not between liberals and conservatives, it is between progressive reformers and counter-reformers." He affirms that two principal characteristics of the Brazilian people are a desire for progress and an optimism about the future.

It takes a strong dose of faith and courage to be optimistic in the face of alarming conditions. As this text will point out, illiteracy remains high, wages low, nutritional levels min-

imal, under- and unemployment endemic. The social and economic statistics forge a harsh reality at the close of the twentieth century and present a gloomy picture. When the American visitor Herbert H. Smith surveyed Brazil at the opening of the last decade of the empire, he remarked, "If ten American travellers were asked to give their views of Brazil, we would hear ten different opinions, grading all the way from paradise to despair." Neither "paradise" nor "despair" should be emphasized to the exclusion of the other.

Despite many handicaps, growth in Brazil has been steady if perhaps slow and erratic. Brazil has maintained its unity in the face of every obstacle, emancipated its slaves without civil war, evolved from a monarchy to a republic without bloodshed, and laid the foundations for a modern and industrial society. The ever diversifying economy is no longer a simple extractive one. The illiteracy rate has fallen gradually. The nation has shown that it can exercise greater independence in its international relations. The population in general is becoming aware of those advancements, is proud of them, and is enticed by the mystique of a greater Brazil that will provide a fuller life for all. In the past centuries, Brazil has had more than enough prognosticators who foresaw a brilliant future for the country, often very unrealistically. It is not the task of the historian to dispense prognostications, but no historian who has followed Brazil's versatile adaptation and its bold resolution of some of its problems can fail to be affected by some Brazilians' enthusiasm and optimism about the future of their country.

Chapter One

Interactions: New Challenges and Continuities

The recorded history of Brazil began with the arrival of the Portuguese. The sudden discovery of unknown land in the West surprised the experienced sailors. What they saw impressed them. They puzzled over the Indian, unlike the African and Asian they already knew, and they marveled over the lush tropical coast. The new arrivals aroused the curiosity of the indigenous Americans and also must have fired their suspicions. Although generally peaceful, the first encounters challenged both the natives and the intruders to revise their views of their environments and their world. For both, they heralded a new age, new ideas, and a new order.

The land promised the Portuguese much, but the natives traded reluctantly. To exploit the potential wealth and to protect the extensive coastline from foreign interlopers, the Portuguese resolved to settle Brazil. They thus began their largest colonizing effort and in the process transferred Portuguese civilization to a South American environment.

The Land

On any global map, Brazil stands out. It is huge, the world's fifth largest nation. It dominates South America and the South Atlantic, and geopolitical realities confer on it a prominent international role. Occupying nearly half of South America, it stretches from the Atlantic in the east to the Andes in the west, from the Guiana Highland in the north to the Plata Basin in the south. Most of this territory lies in the tropics. In a certain sense this subcontinent of 3,200,000 square miles is an island surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Amazon and Plata river networks, for those fluvial systems reach inland from the ocean like giant, clutching hands whose fingers come within a few miles of touching each other in the west of Brazil. (See Map 1, Brazil, Showing States and Their Capitals, and Map 2, Rivers of Brazil.)

The Atlantic, bathing 4,600 miles of coastline, serves as the highway to the world, carrying immigrants and merchants, capital and ideas to Brazil and bearing the products of the land away. The obvious importance of that vital connection has exerted a powerful influence on the formation of Brazil. For one thing, the Portuguese and their American descendants preferred to remain close to the sea. In the picturesque language of a seventeenth-century historian, "They cling crablike to the beaches." Unlike Hernando Cortés in Mexico, they never performed the symbolic act of burning their ships.

That coastal belt is narrow. North of the Amazon it confronts the Guiana Highland, gently rounded hills with stumps of eroded mountains. South of the Amazon it is pressed between the ocean and the Brazilian Highland. Between Salvador and Pôrto Alegre the shore is bordered by a steep, wall-like escarpment. Some deep bays, such as Todos os Santos, Vitória, and Guanabara afford excellent harbors. A few rivers provide possible routes of penetration inland. South of Santa Catarina the coastal barrier gives way to lowlands.

It was this luxuriant coastal plain that led some Europeans during the early years of exploration to believe they had

Map 1. Brazil, Showing States and Their Capitals

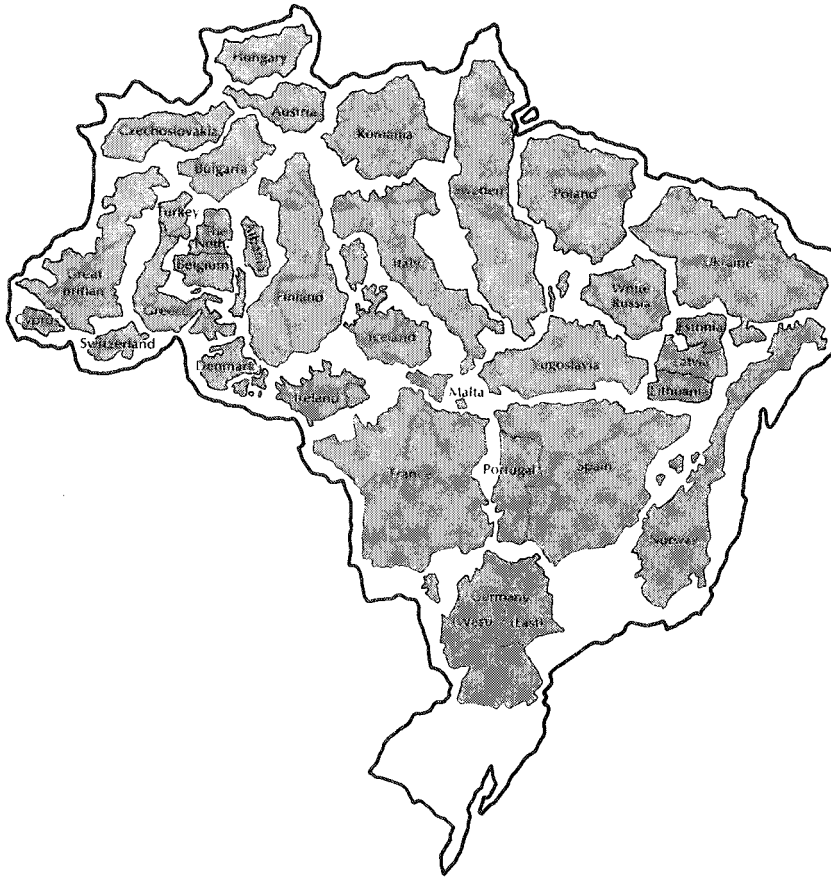
located, at long last, the elusive earthly paradise. The learned Jesuit missionary Manuel da Nóbrega reported in the mid-sixteenth century on the pleasant climate, neither hot nor cold, on the ever green foliage, and on the abundance of nature that provided a large variety of fruits, fish, and animals. His descriptions match perfectly those given of the terrestrial paradise by medieval scholars. To Nóbrega's way of thinking, the Creator had made of Brazil a showpiece. Foreigners and Brazilians alike agree. The varied geography provides an always dramatic backdrop for the historical drama.

Westward, beyond the plain and the escarpment, stretches an extensive and uneven plateau, comprising roughly five-eighths of the national territory. Of the two extravagant river networks draining the interior, the Plata system is the less important. Only the upper reaches of the Paraná and Paraguay penetrate Brazilian territory, thereby linking Brazil with Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay. Historically they have served as important highways of commerce and routes of communication with the interior.

Unquestionably, the dominant river is the Amazon—referred to very aptly and descriptively in Portuguese as the "river-sea"—the largest river in volume in the world, with fourteen times the volume of the Mississippi. In places it is impossible to see from shore to shore and over a good part of its course it averages one hundred feet in depth. Running eastward from its source eighteen thousand feet above sea level in the Andes, it is joined from both the north and south as it rushes across the continent by more than two hundred branches, some of them mighty confluents. Together this majestic river and its tributaries provide twenty-five thousand miles of navigable water. Small ocean-going vessels can navigate as far inland as Iquitos, Peru, some twenty-three hundred miles from the sea, where the river is already two thousand feet wide. This entire network of rivers furnished the means of penetrating both the north and far west of Brazil.

The magnitude of the river always has excited the imaginations of those who traveled on it since Francisco de Orellana first discovered and descended it in his expedition of 1541–1542. William Lewis Herndon, who made a similar jour-

Map 2. Rivers of Brazil with Amazon and La Plata Networks



Map 3. Comparative Size of Brazil (The boundaries of Brazil easily encompass all the European countries.)

ney down the river a little over three centuries later, marveled, as many had before and would thereafter: "The march of the great river in its silent grandeur was sublime, but in the untamed might of its turbid waters, as they cut away its bank and tore down the gigantic denizens of the forest it was awful. I was reminded of our Mississippi at its topmost flood."

In order to better study this vast, diverse land, geographers have divided it into several more or less cohesive regions. Although the number of these regions depends on the criteria of classification each geographer employs, one of the most commonly used divisions, by the National Council of Statistics of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, designates five regions: the North, which includes the Amazon Basin, the southern slopes of the Guiana Highland, and the northern slopes of the Brazilian Highland; the Northeast, whose principal characteristic is the arid *sertão,* although there are also forested coastlands and rich coastal sugarlands; the East, historically important because it contains the two old capitals of Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, and economically important for its fertile lands that produce more of the country's agricultural output than any other region; the South, a temperate zone extending from São Paulo to Rio Grande do Sul, essentially a region of high plateaus; and the Center West, a huge, underpopulated region, whose high plains support isolated mountain ranges.

From the time of first discoverers until the present, the potential of this immense area has impressed all who have considered it. The epithet "Land of the Future" was fastened on Brazil early in its history and remains to taunt its inhabitants. The challenge of the land has been all the greater because of the relatively few humans who have inhabited it.

The Indian

Various estimates place the number of Indians inhabiting Brazil at the opening of the sixteenth century at somewhere between two and four million. Whichever estimate one favors, that vast area of South America was strikingly under-

populated. In fact, large parts of it were uninhabited. The ancestors of the indigenous population probably migrated to the Western Hemisphere from Asia over forty thousand years ago. Most evidence seems to indicate that they crossed from one continent to the other at the Bering Strait, slowly moved southward, and dispersed through North and South America.

In the immensity of Brazil those few groups of Indians fragmented into innumerable small tribes. For general purposes of classification, the Portuguese tended at first to divide the diverse tribes into two categories: the Tupí-Guaraní and those once called the Tapuya. The Tupí predominated along the Amazon and in the coastal area from the mouth of Amazon to that of the Plata under a variety of tribal names. They spoke related languages, later referred to by the Portuguese as the "língua geral," which gave a very superficial cohesion to them. Located more in the interior, although in some places found along the coast as well, were the Tapuyas. They spoke various languages that seemed to exhibit little or no apparent relationship to one another. All the Indian groups shared a few physical characteristics. They tended to be short in stature, to be bronze in skin color, and to have straight, black hair. Beyond that their physiognomy varied considerably.

Modern anthropologists have abandoned the earlier classification of the Indians as Tupí or Tapuya. Although they emphasize the heterogeneity of the indigenous peoples, they suggest, for purposes of convenience and simplicity, another classification dividing the natives into two main groupings: Tropical Forest cultures—inhabitants of rainforest areas, dependent primarily on agriculture and fishing—and Marginal cultures—inhabitants of the plains and arid plateaus, dependent on hunting, fishing, and gathering.

Because of their predominance along the coast, the Tupí tribesmen—a major component of the Tropical Forest cultures—were the first natives the Europeans encountered and, for a long span, the only major Indian group with which the new arrivals maintained sustained contact. The Tupí, willingly or unwillingly, wittingly or unwittingly, facilitated the European adaptation to the new land, and this group appears to

be the single most important native element contributing to the early formation of a Brazilian civilization. The anthropologist Charles Wagley concluded, "the Indian heritage of Brazil is, then, in the main a Tupí heritage."

The Tupí tribes tended to be very loosely organized, with populations estimated at between four and eight hundred. Their small and temporary villages, often surrounded by a crude wooden stockade, were, when possible, located along a riverbank. The Indians lived communally in large thatched huts, approximately 250 to 300 feet long and 30 to 50 feet wide, in which they strung their hammocks in extended family or lineage groups of as many as one hundred persons. Patrilineal kinship was central to their societal organization. They usually practiced monogamy, but polygamy was not unknown. Most of the tribes had at least a nominal chief, although some seemed to recognize a leader only in time of war, and a few seemed to have no conception of a leader. Some tribes had councils of warriors or groups of respected elders, or both, who met with the chief to advise him on important matters.

More often than not the shaman, or medicine man, was the most important and powerful tribal figure. He communed with the spirits, proffered advice, and prescribed medicines. The religions abounded with good and evil spirits. Thunder, wind, rain, the sun, the moon—in short, nature—received major attention. The Tupí demonstrated a dread of forest spirits who could bring sickness, misfortune, and defeat in warfare. Because the spirits displayed a fondness for the night and prowled about under cover of darkness, the Tupí stayed close to the fireside after sundown. Part of their rich mythology still lives in Brazilian folklore. Still told, for example, are the tales of Saci-perere, the one-legged Indian who creates mischief; of Iracema, the captivating beauty with long green hair and a seductive voice, who lures young warriors into the depths of the waters; and of Uirapurú, the Amazonian bird that gives happiness in love. Less romantic aspects of tribal rites included ritual cannibalism. Prisoners taken in battle were pampered while being fattened. Later they were ceremonially clubbed to death, cooked, and eaten. Anthropolo-

gists heatedly debate how far cannibalism extended beyond ritualism.

Constant warfare provided the tribes with frequent opportunities to capture prisoners. The warrior with his bow and arrow, spear, club, or blowgun held a place of high esteem.

Warfare, however frequent it might have been, occupied only a part of the Tupí male's time. The men also hunted and fished. They cleared away the forest to plant crops. Nearly every year during the dry season, the men cut down trees, bushes, and vines, waited until they had dried, and then burned them. The burning destroyed the thin humus and the soil was quickly exhausted. Hence it was constantly necessary to clear new land, and eventually the village moved in order to be near virgin soil. In general, although not always exclusively, the women took charge of planting and harvesting crops and of collecting and preparing the food. Manioc was the principal cultivated crop. With a wide variety of uses, it served mainly as a flour. Maize, beans, yams, peppers, squash, sweet potatoes, tobacco, pineapples, and occasionally cotton were the other cultivated crops. Forest fruits were collected. The self-sufficient tribes produced, gathered, and hunted food for themselves, not for trade. They attached scant importance to surpluses. The Tupí made ceramics, wove baskets, and developed loom weaving.

To the first Europeans who observed them, those Indians seemed to live an idyllic life. The tropics required virtually no clothing. Generally nude, the Indians developed the art of body ornamentation and painted elaborate geometric designs on themselves. Into their noses, lips, and ears they inserted stone and wooden artifacts. Feathers from colorful forest birds provided an additional decorative touch. Their gay, nude appearance prompted the Europeans to think of them as innocent children of nature. The first chronicler of Brazil, Pero Vaz de Caminha, marveled to the king of Portugal, "Sire, the innocence of Adam himself was not greater than these people's." On the basis of information about Brazil and its natives provided by French colonist Durand de Villegaignon, who was in the Guanabara Bay region between 1555 and 1559,

Montaigne wrote *Des Coches*. He advanced the theory of natural human goodness, a condition to which primitive peoples—in this case the Tupí—corresponded more closely than others. Repeated contacts with the Indians caused later chroniclers to tell quite a different tale: one in which the Indians emerged as villains, brutes who desperately needed the civilizing hand of Europe.

The Europeans failed to appreciate the harmony of the Indians with their environment and the high degree of their self-sufficiency. Indeed, the Indians' economic behavior contrasted sharply with the capitalistic motivations of their "discoverers." The Indians maintained a communal or reciprocal attitude toward production and consumption. The notion of private ownership hardly existed, and nature was to be revered, not exploited. Tribal status did not derive from material affluence, and economic considerations were less important than kinship, social dictates, religion, and community. The Europeans never succeeded in comprehending these Indian values.

The Indians had adapted well to their tropical environment and had much to teach the European invaders about the utilization of the land, its rivers, its forests, and their products.

The European

As the sixteenth century approached those European invaders were not far off. Europe, on the eve of a commercial revolution, searched for new trade and new lands. Portugal led that quest.

A crossroads of many peoples—Iberians, Celts, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, and Moslems—Portugal mingled many cultures. From that mixture, the first modern European nation emerged. To assert its independence, Portugal had to free itself of both Moslem control and Castilian claims. In 1139, Afonso Henriques of the house of Burgundy used, for the first time, the title "King of Portugal," a title officially recognized in 1179 by the pope,

then the arbiter of such matters. The struggle to expel the Moslems from Portugal lasted until 1250, when their remaining armies were driven from the Algarve region in the south. Neighboring Castile then conceded recognition of Portugal's claim to the Algarve and the national boundaries were delineated much as they remain today. The task of consolidating the state fell to King Denis, whose long reign, 1279–1325, marked the emergence of the truly modern national state. Desiring to create a stronger secular state, he challenged the Roman Catholic Church by curtailing its land holdings. His success encouraged the growth of the relatively weak State at the expense of the more powerful Church. Furthermore, he substituted Portuguese for Latin as the official language of government.

In the fifteenth century, Portugal became Europe's foremost sea power. Lusitania (as the Romans named that province of their empire perched on the westernmost tip of continental Europe) was well situated for its maritime role. Most of the region's sparse populace, less than a million in the fifteenth century, inhabited the coastal area. They faced the great, gray, open sea and nearby Africa.

At that time European knowledge of the world beyond the Continent was vague and contradictory. Educated men accepted the idea that the earth was a sphere. Norsemen had reached some unknown world beyond the seas. The travels of Marco Polo in Asia at the end of the thirteenth century had excited considerable speculation and interest. Knowledge of Africa was imperfect, limited to northern Africa only. Primitive navigational aids, frail ships, and fear of the unknown had kept men off the high seas and confined to European waters. In Portugal, however, there developed an urge to venture and expand into distant and either little-explored or totally unknown regions. By the end of the fourteenth century, the nation was at relative peace: the state had been consolidated; internal struggles had ended; foreign threats were not imminent. Thus Portugal could turn its attention outward, and the Portuguese initiated their overseas expansion in Africa, with the conquest in 1415 of strategic Ceuta, guardian of the opening to the Mediterranean.

In a society dominated by the Church, religious motives for expansion played at least a superficially important role. The Lusitanians hoped to defeat the enemies of their faith in Africa and to carry the word of God to that continent. Commercial reasons for expansion were probably even more compelling. Direct trade with the fabled Orient via an all-water route would break the Italian commercial monopoly and bring cascades of riches to Portugal. Lisbon as the entrepot of Eastern pepper, cinnamon, ginger, nutmegs, cloves, tapestries, and porcelains created a vision of wealth alluring to people of all classes.

The first to understand fully that the ocean was not a barrier but a vast highway of commerce, Prince Henry (1394–1460), known as "the Navigator" to English writers, was a confirmed landlubber. That provident prince, significant as the symbol of Portuguese expansion, surrounded himself with navigators, cosmographers, and maritime scholars at his residence on Sagres Peninsula, the harshly beautiful westernmost tip of Portugal. Listening to the expert advice of his day, he defined Portugal's policy of exploration: systematic voyages outward, each based on the intelligence collected from the former voyager and each traveling beyond its predecessor.

The improvements in geographic, astronomical, and navigational knowledge which characterized a century of accelerating sea-borne activity facilitated the task of the men of Sagres. Throughout the fifteenth century, improved, practical charts, the *portolani,* kept the sailors abreast of the latest maritime experience and were reasonably accurate in showing distances and coastal configurations. Through careful study, the heavens became a guide to the navigator out of sight of the land. Stars, particularly the North Star, were observed in order to take latitude fixes. Later the experts learned to calculate latitude by observing the sun's zenith north or south of the equator at noon. For that, tables of the sun's declination were carefully worked out. Still with no means of finding longitude, the navigators continued to rely on dead reckoning, but with a firmer knowledge of latitude and the help of improved charts that calculation was made both easier and

more accurate. The compass, in use before 1300, continued to undergo refinements. The astrolabe, which permitted the navigator to take a fix on a celestial body, was cumbersome and tended to work far better ashore than aboard a rocking ship. Nonetheless, it was helpful for determining latitude. The invention of the quadrant in the fifteenth century facilitated taking sightings, usually on the North Star, to enable the navigator to locate the ship's latitude. Though inventors of neither the compass, the astrolabe, or the quadrant, the Portuguese were the first Europeans to experiment with their use on the open seas. Their mastery of the science of ocean navigation made them tutors to the rest of maritime Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In a moment of great maritime triumph, the Portuguese launched the caravel, a ship that could tack, and thus sail against the wind. As a direct consequence of those improvements and with the encouragement of Prince Henry, the Lusitanians sailed farther and farther out to sea and away from their base. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope and pointed the way to a water route to India.

The Lusitanians were shaken momentarily in 1492 when Columbus reported—mistakenly—to João II that he had reached India by sailing west, sad news to a Portugal on the verge of reaching Asia by circumnavigating Africa. Both Spain and Portugal jealously guarded their sea lanes and each feared the incursion of the other. War threatened until diplomacy triumphed. At Tordesillas in 1494, representatives of the two monarchs agreed to divide the world. An imaginary line was established, running pole to pole 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands. The agreement gave Portugal everything discovered 180 degrees to the east of that line and Spain everything 180 degrees to the west. Then, within the half of the world reserved for Portugal, Vasco da Gama discovered the long-sought water route to India, when his protracted voyage in 1497–1499 joined East and West for the first time by sea. It was a profitable discovery. The cargo he brought back to Lisbon repaid sixty times over the original cost of the expedition, and the new lucrative trade promised to enrich the realm.

In the decades following the return of Vasco da Gama, Portuguese vessels appeared in the most distant ports. The monarchs abandoned the agricultural policies of the past to become merchants. Indeed, under Manuel I (1495–1521), the commercial interests of the kingdom became inextricably intertwined with national interests. Along the distant coasts of Africa and Asia, the Portuguese eagerly established their commercial—not colonial—empire. Trade attracted them rather than settlement. Lisbon and other Portuguese ports served as great warehouses through which the trade of three continents passed, to the delight and profit of the Portuguese. They succeeded in setting up a global trading empire in the sixteenth century and reaped substantial rewards from the crown's maritime policies.

Within a short period of far less than a century, the Portuguese seaman landed on three distant continents bearing a cross in one hand and carrying a market basket in the other; when the native inhabitants challenged him, he readily substituted sword and lance for both. As a hearty, robust, adventurous, and resourceful knight-errant with the whole world as his stage, it was little wonder that he believed in his privileged and special position. In the most admirable fashion, the Portuguese seafarer proved himself to be adaptable in both time and space. And nowhere was he more adaptable than in Brazil.

Discovery and Challenges

Manuel I appointed Pedro Alvares Cabral to command the fleet being prepared to follow up the discovery made by Vasco da Gama. Amid colorful pageantry and with the kingdom's best wishes, thirteen ships with twelve hundred men sailed from the mouth of the Tagus River on March 8, 1500. The voyage to India began routinely. Then, on the 20th of April, the sailors unexpectedly sighted weeds and reeds in the ocean and an occasional bird in the sky. Two days later, at 17° south latitude, land unexpectedly appeared in the west. Cautiously the fleet approached the coast. After landing to

explore, the curious Cabral claimed the newly discovered island (for so he thought it) for his sovereign. Then he spent a week reconnoitering the coast. Before continuing to Asia, Cabral dispatched news of his find to the king in a literate and highly descriptive letter written by the scribe Pero Vaz de Caminha. That letter is the official chronicle of the birth of Brazil, although that was not the first name the new land bore. Cabral christened it Ilha de Vera Cruz, and it was also known as Terra or Provincia de Santa Cruz. But none of those names entered into popular usage. The merchants who were soon attracted to the plentiful stands of brazilwood, the source of an excellent red dye, called it *Terra do Brasil,* and the name Brazil quickly gained popular acceptance. That name first appeared on a map in 1511.

At first the Portuguese imagined that Brazil would be a convenient way station for the India fleets, but winds, currents, and distances made that impossible. As a matter of fact, between 1500 and 1730 only about twenty ships, all separated from main India fleets by some extraordinary circumstance, took shelter in Brazilian ports. On the other hand, Brazil strategically provided excellent flank protection for the vital and profitable sea lane to the East. Brazil initially served as a sentinel.

Of the native reaction to the arrival of the bearded, white adventurers, no account exists. The Indians at first were shy—but not astonished. They maintained a certain distance between themselves and the strangers, reluctant at first to receive the *degredados* (those criminals exiled to serve their sentences) who were ordered to live among them to learn their languages. Later, an increasing number of *degredados,* deserters, and shipwrecked men found their way into Indian tribes where they apparently flourished. Some of them became almost legendary figures. They sired an army of mestizo offspring, exerted a powerful influence over the Indians in their areas, and later helped the Portuguese establish their first colonies. They adapted perfectly—and it would seem happily—to their new surroundings. According to João Capistrano de Abreu, Brazil's foremost historian of the colonial period, each became "morally a mestizo."

Expeditions with the dual purpose of trade and exploration followed the discovery. Although the extent of those activities during the early years remains undetermined, it would appear that within a decade after its discovery the coast had been at least cursorily explored, and a few trading posts had been established to traffic in the lucrative brazilwood. During those first decades dyewood was an easy export, since it grew abundantly along the coast from Rio Grande do Norte to Rio de Janeiro. The Crown established a monopoly over its exploitation and eagerly sold its rights to merchants. Fernão de Noronha was the first to buy the contract and in 1503 he dispatched ships to fetch the dyewood. The ship captains bartered with the Indians, exchanging trinkets for the brazilwood they cut. The welcome the new European textile industries accorded the red dye spurred that trade, and by the end of the sixteenth century about a hundred ships sailed annually from Brazil to Lisbon loaded with the wood. When the coastal stands were gradually exhausted it became necessary to search inland.

The handsome profits from the brazilwood trade not only enticed Lisbon merchants to pursue it but awoke the interest of foreigners as well. As the era of commercial expansion got underway, other Europeans resented and challenged the Iberian claims to international trade monopolies. Increasing numbers of French ships explored the extensive Brazilian coastline in open challenge to Portuguese claims. To discourage the interlopers, the Crown ordered a coastguard detachment to Brazil from 1516 to 1519 and again from 1526 to 1528. Those tiny fleets found it impossible to police effectively the three thousand-mile coastline with its innumerable coves, bays, and inlets. When diplomacy and coastal patrols failed to eliminate the French threat to Brazil, and hence to the Asian sea lane it guarded, King João III (1521–1555) decided upon a third method: colonization. Colonization was a novel undertaking in the Portuguese commercial empire. Up until that time, with the notable exception of the Atlantic islands, the Portuguese preferred simply to establish trading posts. Nonetheless, the monarch sent Martim Afonso de Sousa with five ships, four hundred crewmen and colonists, seeds, plants,

and domestic animals to establish one or more colonies and, in the process, to destroy French trade and explore the coast. After reconnoitering the coast from Pernambuco to the Plata, Martim Afonso founded the settlement of São Vicente in 1532 in the area near present-day Santos. A chapel, a small governmental headquarters, two tiny fortresses, and quarters for the men were built. Using the broad powers delegated to him by the king, the captain appointed municipal officers and distributed land. Wheat, grape vines, and sugarcane were planted; cattle were introduced; the first sugar mill was put into operation in 1533. On the plateau above São Vicente, those first colonists founded a second small settlement, Piratininga, the future São Paulo. They constituted the first permanent settlements in Portuguese America.

Martim Afonso established the pattern of land distribution to be followed thereafter. Because Brazil was vast and the colonists few, he distributed the land with lavish generosity. In Portugal, quite to the contrary since 1375, the king sparingly parceled out the *sesmarias,* the traditional, individual land grants, so that no one person would receive more than he could effectively cultivate. Martim Afonso ignored such a precaution, and set a precedent followed thereafter in colonial Brazil. As one consequence, the good coastal land was quickly divided into immense sugar plantations, and not many more decades elapsed before huge *sesmarias* for cattle ranches in the interior put much of the backlands under claim as well. Grants along the coast of twenty to fifty square miles of land were common, and in the interior they frequently encompassed areas ten to twenty times that size. Realizing that the gigantic estates created a type of semifeudalism in practice, if not in name, and that they kept most of the best land fallow and hence unproductive, the king belatedly tried to reverse the course. Repeatedly promulgated decrees—in 1695, single *sesmarias* were limited to four leagues by one league in size; in 1697, they were reduced to three by one; in 1699, all land not under cultivation was to be expropriated, and so on throughout the eighteenth century—sought vainly to limit the size of the estates. Late in the eighteenth century one of the viceroys, the Marquês de Lavradio, complained

bitterly that those huge estates, poorly managed and only partially cultivated, retarded the development of Brazil. He pointed to the unused fields held by their owners as symbols of prestige, while at the same time he noted that farmers petitioned him for land to till. Some of the captaincies had to import the food they were perfectly capable of producing themselves. The *latifundia* (large estates) originated at the birth of the colony and remained a dominant characteristic of Brazil thereafter.

Patterns for the Future

Brazil challenged the Portuguese commercial empire. The Indians proved to be at best reluctant and unreliable traders. The French scoffed at Lusitanian claims of exclusivity. The Portuguese government realized that, in order to keep Brazil and carry on trade with it, it would have to colonize on a much broader scale. Yet, the Crown, already overextended in Asia and Africa, had no resources to do so. In view of that, the king resolved to implement the donatary system used successfully in the Atlantic islands. Given enormous territory and broad powers, each donee bore the responsibility to colonize his own captaincy at private expense. Between 1534 and 1536, João III divided Portuguese America into fifteen captaincies distributed among twelve donees. Each averaged fifty leagues in width and extended inland to the nebulous Tordesillas line. Those land grants, inalienable except by transmittal by inheritance to the oldest son, brought to the New World some of the residue of a feudalism long on the wane on the Iberian peninsula. In effect, the donatary system interposed between the king and his subjects a hierarchy of landlords who enjoyed certain attributes of government: they could tax, impose law and justice, make appointments, and distribute the land in their captaincies in *sesmarias*. Like the medieval vassal required to render military service to his lord in return for his fief, the donees were expected to defend their captaincies from attack and thus to hold Brazil in the name of the monarch. Some characteristics of feudalism were

undeniably present, although, of course, it was a long way from the classical feudalism of the Middle Ages. Those who would minimize the charge that the donatary system introduced feudalism into Brazil argue that the king, at least in theory, did fix, limit, and regulate the powers of each donee and that the captaincies were expected to engage in imperial trade rather than pursue the self-sufficient household economy of the medieval manor. In one sense surely, the donees were capitalists investing their money in the New World with the expectation of reaping handsome profits. Thus, despite vestigial feudal characteristics, the captaincies were supposed to be partially linked to the emerging capitalist system as well.

Few of the donees rose to the challenge confronting them. Representatives of the minor nobility and middle class, their incomes from Asian ventures, governmental salaries, or landholdings proved inadequate to cover the expense of the services demanded. As a group, they lacked the experience and ability as well as the capital to execute their heavy responsibilities. Furthermore, they confronted a hostile, untamed—indeed, unknown—environment. Lack of discipline among the colonists, Indian attacks, and French harassment compounded the difficulties. A majority of the captaincies failed. Only two of them, Pernambuco and São Vicente, achieved prosperity.

Pernambuco was by far the richest and most important of the sixteenth-century captaincies. The captaincy closest to Portugal, it offered extensive stands of brazilwood along the coast and excellent soil, the *massapê,* for sugarcane. The intelligent and aggressive donee, Duarte Coelho, took advantage of the presence of Vasco Lucena, a Portuguese who had lived for years among the local Indians and knew their language well, to avoid many of the wars with the native population that decimated other colonies. He understood the importance of commercial crops and ordered cotton, tobacco, and sugarcane planted at once. He proudly reported to the king, "We have extensive fields planted with sugar cane. The people here have all worked as hard as possible and I have given them all the aid possible and soon we will complete a very large and excellent sugar mill." By mid-century, fifty

mills were producing enough sugar to load annually forty to fifty ships for Europe. By 1580 Coelho's son was the richest man in Brazil and one of the wealthiest in the empire. In Pernambuco the operation of an agricultural colony for profit enjoyed its greatest success.

The São Vicente captaincy, initially established by Martim Afonso de Sousa, also flourished, with sugar the basis for prosperity. Families of Italian sugar growers from the Madeira Islands immigrated to that southern captaincy bringing much needed agricultural and technical skills. By 1545 the colony possessed six sugar mills. Together Pernambuco and São Vicente implanted the sugar industry in Brazil. Likewise they accounted for much of the brazilwood trade. The first to cultivate the soil of the New World on a commercial basis, the two captaincies proved that profitable agricultural colonies could be established far from the motherland and could provide a relatively constant source of wealth for crown, landowner, shipowner, and merchant, a novel concept for mid-sixteenth century Europe and one which did not go unobserved. Spurred first by the examples of rich mines in Spanish America and then by lucrative agricultural settlements in Portuguese America, Europe moved to change its far-flung trading routes into more complex overseas mining, agricultural, and commercial empires. Such a move resulted from and reinforced Europe's adoption of modern capitalism.

However, those two prosperous captaincies were exceptions to a general trend all too evident in the rest of Brazil. The other captaincies were reduced in a short time to a sad spectacle, as their surviving colonists degenerated into a demoralized lot. Bickering and insubordinate, they engaged in smuggling and other criminal activities. Moreover, French interlopers continued to violate the coast with impunity. The captaincy system had failed to produce the expected results.

After studying the unhappy situation in his overseas domain, King João III concluded that a centralized administration was needed to coordinate further colonization, to provide effective protection, to unify the execution of justice, to collect taxes properly, and to prohibit French contraband trade. He thus intended to limit the independence as well as

the powers of the donees. In 1548 he bought back the captaincy of Bahia to make it a crown captaincy, seat of the new general government for Brazil. He appointed Tomé de Sousa, a loyal soldier who had served him well in Africa and India, as the first governor-general in charge of all civil and military administration. The king also named a *provedor-mor,* a chief treasurer, and an *ouvidor-geral,* a chief justice to assist de Sousa. One thousand soldiers, government officials, carpenters, masons, artisans, and colonists accompanied the new governor-general to South America.

The fleet of six ships dropped anchor in the splendid Bay of Todos os Santos on March 29, 1549. Caramurú, the white adventurer who had settled in Bahia, presented himself to offer assistance and to guarantee the cooperation of the local Indians. Tomé de Sousa set about constructing the new capital, giving form and substance to the central government. Scattered along the extensive coast were approximately fifteen Portuguese settlements. De Sousa dispatched the chief justice and the chief treasurer to the various captaincies in an effort to eliminate abuses and to regularize administration. He himself paid a prolonged visit to the South. To accelerate economic development, he generously distributed *sesmarias,* imported cattle from the Cape Verde Islands, and encouraged the construction of more sugar mills. The Indians reluctantly provided the labor force during the early decades of the colony. The governor-general was particularly concerned with the regulation of that labor force—an obvious source of wealth for the colony—and with the welfare, particularly the Christian indoctrination, of the Indians. After all, the monarch had written specifically in his orders to Tomé de Sousa, "The principal reason motivating my decision to settle the land of Brazil was in order that the people of that land might be converted to our Holy Catholic Faith." To fulfill Portugal's obligations to those natives, de Sousa relied heavily on the Jesuits.

The official party of 1549 included six Jesuits under the leadership of Manuel da Nóbrega. True, clerics had accompanied all the expeditions to Portuguese America from the visit of Cabral onward, the Franciscans being particularly evi-

dent in those early decades. But until 1549 the Church played a minor role in Brazil. With some exceptions, the clergy attended more to the affairs of the Portuguese colonists than to the Christianization of the Indians. The king desired to propagate the Catholic faith in the New World and chose the Jesuits to be his instruments. Only 128 Jesuits arrived between 1549 and 1598, but with exceptional zeal they left a lasting imprint on the new land. They carried European church-centered civilization to the Indians and nurtured it in the tropics by establishing—and for two hundred years maintaining—the best educational facilities of the colony. In a very real sense they conquered Brazil spiritually.

To be Portuguese was to be Roman Catholic. The populace embraced the Catholic faith unquestioningly, and, whether understanding its dogmas or not, defended it devotedly. The Luso-Brazilians were born, reared, married, and buried Catholics. The Church pervaded every aspect of their lives. The king defended the faith within his realm, in return for which the pope conferred royal patronage upon the Crown, temporarily in 1515 and permanently in 1551. Holding power in all but purely spiritual matters, the king collected the tithe and decided how it was to be spent, appointed (and at times recalled) the bishops, priests, and other officials, authorized the construction of new churches, determined the boundaries of the bishoprics, and—of great significance—approved and transmitted papal messages—or refused to.

To the degree that Portuguese control expanded in the New World, so did that of the Roman Catholic church. The establishment of the general government of Brazil was followed in 1551 by the creation of the bishopric of Brazil. Previously Brazil had belonged to the diocese of Funchal in the Azores. Fittingly, the bishop resided in Salvador alongside the governor-general. In 1676, the archbishopric of Brazil was created with Salvador as the metropolitan see. Two new bishoprics, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco, were established at the same time. By the end of the eighteenth century, four others existed: Pará, Maranhão, São Paulo, and Mariana (Minas Gerais). Throughout the colonial period—indeed, until 1907—Salvador remained the religious capital of Brazil. Its arch-

bishop headed the Roman Catholic church in Brazil, and the religious orders maintained their principal representatives there. The Church structure in Brazil, with its well-defined hierarchy, its regular and secular clergy, its bishoprics and parishes, followed perfectly the European model.

The African bishoprics of São Tomé and Angola also were suffragan to the archbishop of Bahia. The Church in Angola depended heavily on Brazil. Serafim Leite, distinguished historian of the Jesuits in Brazil, affirmed, "The evangelization of Angola was in the hands of the Jesuits of Portuguese America." Actually the ecclesiastical traffic moved both ways. A few Jesuits crossed from Angola to Brazil, and some Portuguese born in Angola moved to Brazil to study in Jesuit colleges. A number of Brazilian Jesuits mastered African languages, a skill that most of those from Angola already had, so that they could catechize the newly arrived black slaves.

The Jesuits have already been singled out as the most important religious order contributing to the formation and development of Brazil, but they were by no means the only representatives of the regular clergy. The Franciscans had been the first to reach Brazil, and they too played an important role. The Capuchins, Benedictines, and Carmelites were all represented in Brazil before the end of the sixteenth century. The Crown hesitated to sanction the building of convents for nuns in Brazil, feeling that the relatively few women in the colony should be encouraged to become wives and mothers rather than virginal recluses. Not until 1665 did the king grant permission for the establishment of a convent, and authorization for a second did not come until seventy years later. By the mid-eighteenth century, a half-dozen convents could be found in the major coastal cities.

Of major importance for Brazil were the *irmandades,* voluntary associations of the faithful that became an integral part of colonial social life. They built handsome churches, merrily celebrated the feast days of patron saints, and dutifully maintained charitable institutions such as hospitals and orphanages. Indeed, works of charity, education, and social assistance compose some of the noblest chapters of the history of the Roman Catholic church in Brazil.

The Church maintained as careful a vigil as possible over its flock in Brazil. Nonetheless, some examples of moral corruption among the clergy provided bawdy gossip for colonial ears. Backsliders—especially Jewish converts, the New Christians—could expect to account for themselves before the Inquisition. As an institution it was never established in Brazil, but it operated there through the bishops and through three visitations: to Salvador da Bahia and Olinda, 1591–1595; to Salvador, 1681; and to Belém, 1763–1769. Still, the hand of the Inquisition rested lightly on Brazil, where a liberal degree of toleration developed.

A major challenge to the Church was the conversion of the Indians. The Jesuits, under the skilled and dedicated leadership of Manuel da Nóbrega and José de Anchieta, rose to meet that challenge. They deemed it wisest to gather the nomadic natives into villages, the *aldeias,* where they could more easily be instructed, Christianized, and protected under the watchful eye of the Church. Some would add that the *aldeia* system facilitated the exploitation of Indian labor. The system permitted the maximum use of the few regular clergy in Brazil: usually one or two brothers administered each village and in that way supervised many Indians. Each *aldeia* centered on a church, built of course by the indigenous converts themselves. Around it were a school, living quarters, and warehouses. The ringing of church bells awoke the neophytes each day, summoning them to Mass. Then, singing hymns along the way, they marched outside the village to cultivate the fields. The brothers taught reading, writing, and the mastering of useful trades to the young and able. Indian sculptors, painters, masons, carpenters, bakers, and locksmiths, among others, were soon practicing their trades. Many of the villages achieved a high degree of self-sufficiency, and most sold some of their products to outside markets. Although the brothers administered the missions through various Indians whom they appointed to office and invested with the customary symbols of that office, the churchmen, in the final analysis, rigidly controlled the lives of their charges. It was not a simple figure of speech when they spoke of the neophytes as "their children," for that was exactly how they

regarded them. Under their guidance, the Indians contributed to the imperial economy, worshiped as Roman Catholics, dressed like Europeans, mastered European trades, and paid homage to the king in Lisbon. Thus, those touched by the *aldeia* system were brought by the determined hand of the missionaries within the pale of empire.

To increase the base of economic prosperity, the governors-general encouraged agriculture in general, and sugar cultivation in particular. The number of sugar mills multiplied, particularly in the captaincies of São Vicente, Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo, Bahia, and Pernambuco, where the huge sugar plantations and mills quickly became powerful agricultural, industrial, and social organizations. The labor shortage continued to harass the colony. At first the only readily available workers, the Indians proved to be unsatisfactory plantation hands. The Portuguese tried three methods to incorporate the Indians as laborers into their agricultural system: first as slaves, second as a type of indigenous "peasantry" through detribalization and acculturation in the *aldeias,* and third as wage earners slowly integrated into the capitalist system. The controversy over Indian labor sparked acrimonious debates between the Jesuits and the planters. The vocal Jesuits—and the Church in general—regarded the enslavement of the Indians as contrary to the Christian intentions of the king and intensified efforts to save them both physically and spiritually by gathering them into the villages. The planters loudly criticized that interference with their labor supply. In the end, all the methods used to incorporate the Indians failed. The Indians refused to surrender their life style for the inexplicable work demanded by the Portuguese, work that had few if any rewards for them. The gap between the communal, self-sufficient Indians and the capitalistic Portuguese could not be bridged.

Internal concerns gave way before external threats. Governor Mem de Sá devoted much of his attention and resources to the perennial French threat. In 1555, Vice-Admiral Durand de Villegaignon founded France Antartique around Guanabara Bay, an area rich in brazilwood. The French presence there isolated São Vicente from the rest of Brazil. Mem

de Sá attacked the invaders on several occasions. On March 1, 1565, he established Rio de Janeiro as a base from which to fight the stubborn French, and, after a prolonged siege, expelled them in 1567. After the defeat of the French, Rio de Janeiro grew rapidly in size and importance, partly because of its excellent harbor and partly because of the sugar industry which prospered on the fertile soil of the region. The Crown manifested its delight with the accomplishments of Mem de Sá's administration by retaining him as governor-general long after his four-year appointment expired in 1562. He stayed on until he died in office a decade later.

The last of the Aviz kings died in 1580, after which the Spanish monarchs ruled Spain and Portugal jointly for sixty years. By then, however, the patterns of colonial Brazil already had been well established. The economic and social domination by large estates and their owners, agriculture for export, subservience and exploitation of labor, and responsiveness to European demands—characteristics well implanted during the period from 1530 to 1560—held sway. If anything, the long years of Spanish rule fortified them.

Chapter Two

The Colonial Experience

Brazil's official colonial apprenticeship lasted more than three centuries. Social amalgamation, territorial expansion, and economic and political dependency characterized the South American colony during that long era. Portugal imposed its language, religion, and institutions, and during the last half of the sixteenth century they sent roots deep into the Brazilian soil and soul. Although other influences wrought some modifications over the following centuries, the Portuguese language and Roman Catholicism remain dominant, while the institutions, subject to differing nomenclatures and embracing superficial changes, display a startling degree of historical continuity. They still shape the present.

Social Amalgamation

The Portuguese adapted quickly to the new environment, whose geography and climate approximated those they had encountered in their extensive travels in other parts of the world. They evidenced a flexibility, both physical and psychological, that seemed to make them sufficiently malleable to learn from the conquered. In the case of Brazil, the blending

of the Lusitanian and Amerindian cultures was facilitated by the favorable attitudes of both toward miscegenation.

The Portuguese monarchs customarily sent out on their global expeditions a combination of soldiers, adventurers, and petty criminals condemned to exile. The Portuguese female was noticeably rare during the first century of Brazilian history. Her scarcity conferred a sexual license on the conquerors, already well acquainted with Moorish, African, and Asian women. The Indian women submitted to the desires of the European males. Men like Caramurú attested to the Iberian potency by siring villages of miscegenated offspring. As a result, there appeared almost at once a "new race," the *mameluco* or *caboclo,* a blend of European and Indian well adapted physically and psychologically to the land. Drawing the essential from the diverse cultures of both parents, the "new race" accelerated the amalgamation of the two civilizations.

The Indians provided more than sexual gratification: they facilitated Portuguese adjustment to the new land. They taught the invaders the best methods of hunting and fishing, the value of the drugs the forests offered, the quickest way to clear the lands, and the methods of cultivating the crops of the New World. They introduced them to new foods such as the manioc, soon the dietary staple of the Luso-Brazilians. The Lusitanians quickly adopted the light boats skillfully navigated by the Indians on the inland waters. They copied the methods used by the Indians to build simple, serviceable structures. In time, Portuguese domestic architecture underwent some significant modifications in the tropics: the severity and exclusiveness of the Portuguese house gave way to the open, outwardly oriented Brazilian residence with its extensive veranda communicating with the world. Another concession to the tropics was the universal adoption of the Indian hammock. One early arrival noted his delight with the hammock in these words: "Would you believe that a man could sleep suspended in a net in the air like a bunch of hanging grapes? Here this is the common thing. I slept on a mattress but my doctor advised me to sleep in a net. I tried it, and I will never again be able to sleep in a bed, so comfort-

able is the rest one gets in the net." Words from various Indian tongues, such as *hamaka* (hammock), *tobako* (tobacco), *manioca* (manioc), and *typyoca* (tapioca), slipped into the Portuguese language (and, subsequently, into English as well). In the seventeenth century, the Luso-Brazilians began to substitute Indian for Portuguese place-names in geographic nomenclature. A modern dictionary, *Pequeno Dicionário Brasileiro,* lists some twenty thousand words of Indian origin. In truth, the Europeans depended heavily on the Indian during the early decades of settlement in order to accommodate successfully to the novel conditions. Thomas Turner, an Englishman who lived in Brazil for two years at the end of the sixteenth century, summed up that dependence in his observation: "The Indian is a fish in the Sea, and a Foxe in the Woods, and without them a Christian is neither for pleasure or profit fit for life or living."

The newly arrived also depended on the Indians as the labor force in the growing colony. The Portuguese, for their part, revealed a reluctance to engage in common labor and a persistence in forcing others to do it for them. Under increasing pressure that soon resulted in enslavement, the Indians paddled canoes filled with Portuguese along the rivers; guided them through the interior; planted, tended, and harvested their sugar, tobacco, and cotton; and waited upon them in their homes. They were the instruments by which wealth was created in the new colony and, as such, indispensable to the Europeans.

The Crown, eager to see the Indians brought within the pale of the empire as Christianized subjects, resisted their enslavement. The papal grant authenticating Portuguese territorial claims had made it clear that the monarch must Christianize, civilize, and protect the Indians, a responsibility the kings took very seriously. At great expense, missionaries were dispatched to preach to the heathen, to convert them, and to induce them to live in villages under the guidance and protection of Church and Crown. The Jesuits were the most active of the religious groups fulfilling those obligations. They ardently defended the Indians and rigorously prodded the royal conscience. In their concern, the Jesuits took their defense

of the Indians directly to the king to whom they vividly reported the mistreatment and enslavement of his American subjects. The planters dispatched to the court their own representatives who emphasized the barbaric nature of the Indians, their indolence and refusal to work without coercion. Unfortunately we do not have records of the Indian view, but their predilections to flee Portuguese colonization indicate their rejection of labor demands. The debate over the role and place of the Indian within the empire, much like the one already underway in Spain, raged for several centuries.

By and large the monarchs sympathized with the Jesuits' case. As early as 1511, King Manuel I had ruled that no one was to harm his Indian subjects upon pain of the same punishment as if he had injured a European. In his instructions to the first governor-general of Brazil, King João III called for tolerance, understanding, and forgiveness toward the Indians. Relations with them were above all else to be peaceful so they might more easily be Christianized. Permission was granted, however, to enslave any Indians who fought against the Portuguese, a provision that offered a gaping loophole through which the colonists could obtain their native slaves. Predictably the colonists righteously swore that their Indian slaves had been taken in a "just war." The Mesa da Consciência e Ordens (Board of Conscience and Orders), a religious council in Lisbon, handled, in theory at any rate, questions arising from the interpretation of these laws, and one of the thorniest questions before it was to determine which slaves were held justly and which unjustly. It rigorously declared that peaceful Indians living in harmony with the Portuguese could not be enslaved. Theoretically the law punished any planters found guilty of unjustly holding Indians as slaves.

The theological and judicial debate over the enslavement reached its first climax during the reign of the devoutly religious King Sebastião (1557–1578). In 1570 he prohibited the enslavement of any Indians except those taken prisoner in a just war. King Philip II in 1595 confirmed that decree and reduced the term of slavery for prisoners to ten years. In 1605 and again in 1609 King Philip III went even further. He declared that all Indians, whether Christian or heathen, were by

nature free, could not be forced to work, and must be paid for their work when they volunteered it. Strong pressures from the planters, including riots in Brazil, induced him to modify his position in 1611 in order to permit once again the enslavement of war prisoners, a concession much abused. The high death rate among the Indians exposed to European demands and diseases, their retreat into the interior, their amalgamation into the new Brazilian society through miscegenation, and the increasing importation of Africans to meet the growing labor needs of the colony did more to solve the complex question of Indian-European relations than did all the altruistic but impractical or ignored legislation of the Portuguese kings.

The final word on European-Indian relations came from the authoritative Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, better known by his title, the Marquês de Pombal, an enlightened but despotic ruler of the Portuguese empire in the name of José I from 1750 to 1777. That prime minister expelled the most tenacious protectors of the Indians, the Jesuits, in 1759, accusing them, among other things, of isolating the Indians and thereby inhibiting their incorporation into the empire. Pursuing the centuries-old desire to incorporate the Indians into the empire, he raised them to the rank of equality with all the king's other subjects. A new law guaranteed the personal freedom of each Indian (who thereafter received a Portuguese surname and was required to speak Portuguese). Henceforth, each Indian village was to have a school where Portuguese was taught rather than the native language. To assimilate the Indians more quickly, Pombal decreed that any Portuguese who married an Indian would improve his (or her) chances of preferment and promotion. Under severe penalty, he forbade the use of any pejorative adjectives or nouns to describe a person's mixed Indo-Portuguese background. He hoped through that varied legislation to make the Indian an integral and active participant in Brazilian life. In at least one way he partially accomplished that goal. To the degree that Pombal broke down the Indians' isolation and made them a part of the empire, he integrated the North, where the majority of the remaining Indians could be found in the late eigh-

teenth century, into the rest of the colony, an accomplishment that helped to insure the future unity of Brazil. Of course, practically speaking, whatever the intention of those laws, they simply facilitated the exploitation of the Indians.

The planters soon realized that the Indian was not a satisfactory answer to the labor problem. At the same time, the rapid growth of the sugar industry sent the demand for workers soaring, thereby intensifying the labor shortage. The planters soon focused on Africa as the most likely source for labor. Blacks had been imported into Portugal at least as early as 1433, and by the mid-sixteenth century the Portuguese were well acquainted with the West African coast and its inhabitants. The blacks proved well adapted to the tasks required by the colonists. Furthermore, the troublesome reservations about using Indians as slaves rarely extended to the use of Africans. For those reasons a forced migration of millions of Africans began in the mid-sixteenth century and continued apace until 1850. It is believed that the first black people directly imported from Africa arrived in Brazil in 1538. In that year a ship of Jorge Lopes Bixorda, an experienced and well-known slave trader, unloaded its human cargo from Guinea. One Jesuit father wrote from Pernambuco in 1552, "There are in this captaincy a great number of slaves, both Indian and African." Thereafter a deluge of slaves poured out of Africa.

Once the traffic became well established, the cargo of blacks moved uninterruptedly across the Atlantic. Brazil sent its tobacco, sugar, manioc, beans, flour, spirits, cloth, and sweetmeats eastward in exchange for the slaves and, to a lesser extent, for palm oil, rice, ivory, gold, and the products of Asia. The trade between Angola and Brazil reached such proportions that the former became practically a dependency of the latter. The Portuguese historian Jaime Cortesão affirmed, "Angola was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a Portuguese province of Brazil." At one point in the mid-seventeenth century, from 1658 to 1666, two successive governors of Angola, João Fernandes Vieira and André Vidal de Negreiros, were Brazilians. By the close of the eighteenth century, the merchants of Rio de Janeiro alone were

dispatching some twenty-four ships a year to that African colony. The direct trade route was not the only one followed. About a half-dozen European nations, principal among which were Portugal and the Netherlands, used a triangular route: European goods to Africa, African slaves to Brazil, Brazilian sugar to Europe. By whatever means they came, the number of Africans imported was staggering. A conservative estimate of the number of blacks surviving the Atlantic crossing to Brazil, over the span of three centuries, was about 3.5 million. By centuries, the estimated numbers were: sixteenth, 100,000; seventeenth, 600,000; eighteenth, 1,300,000; nineteenth, 1,600,000. Thus, the Portuguese imported into Brazil more blacks than the Indians they found there.

The African origins of Brazil's slaves were extremely varied. They came from Guinea, Dahomey, Nigeria, Ghana, Cape Verde, São Tomé, Angola, the Congo, Mozambique, and many other parts of Africa. Precise origins are difficult to ascertain because of the mixing of the slaves in Brazil as well as miscegenation with whites and Indians, and because the government in 1890 ordered destroyed many official records relating to slavery. A study of African cultures surviving in Brazil enables anthropologists to identify three major contributors to Brazilian society. The first are the Sudanese groups of which the Yoruba and Dahoman predominated. They originated in the African areas that later became Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Dahomey. Although scattered throughout Brazil, the Yorubas seemed to be concentrated principally in Bahia; the Dahomans, in Bahia and Maranhão. The slave buyers considered these Sudanese blacks particularly desirable because they were tall, strong, brave, intelligent, and reputed to be hard-working and good-natured. The Mohammedanized Guinea-Sudanese groups composed the second classification of African contributors. Those Malé blacks, of whom the Hausa were probably the best known, were found mainly in Bahia. They followed the austere precepts of their religion. Some of them were literate in Arabic, and they possessed numerous skills, including much-appreciated gold-mining techniques. Among slave-owners they had the reputation of being intelligent and industrious but somewhat sullen, resentful, and

rebellious in captivity. The Bantu from Angola, the Congo, and Mozambique were the third group of contributors. They were found principally in Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. Regarded as peaceful and adaptable, they knew how to work metals, weave, and make pottery. They also tended livestock and farmed.

Africans could be found in every part of the colony, with the greatest concentrations in Maranhão, Pernambuco, Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro, where they worked at various agricultural tasks, and in Minas Gerais, where they mined gold and diamonds. With the exception, then, of Minas Gerais, they exerted their greatest influence in the coastal areas and their presence and influence were less obvious in the interior.

The African contribution to Brazilian evolution was great and varied. The cooks introduced into the diet new staples such as red peppers, black beans, and okra and new culinary concoctions such as *caruru* and *vatapá,* and into the kitchen new utensils such as the wooden spoon and the mortar and pestle. The "mammies" who raised all the children of the planter told them stories of African origin and sang them songs of that continent. The children in their formative years were intimately exposed to the pronunciation, habits, and ideas of the Africans. The lady of the mansion chose favored black women to be her companions, and they amused her with tales and songs of Africa. The plantation house was a logical place for African and European cultures to meet and mingle. Before too many decades had passed, African cultural traits were easily visible in the colony's dress, music, dance, and religion. On one level a syncretized Afro-Brazilian religion developed, known as *Candomblé* in Bahia, *Xangó* in Pernambuco, and *Macumba* in Rio de Janeiro. On another level, the Afro-Brazilians softened some of the asperity of Roman Catholicism. They enlivened church festivals, drawing them out into the street to commemorate the patron saint's day and adding folk plays and dances of a religious nature rooted in syncretism.

Doubtless the Africans' major contribution was their labor. Their muscles supported Brazilian civilization. They did much more than simply work in the fields. They brought with them, or learned in the New World, many skills essential to

the growth of Brazil. They were the carpenters, painters, masons, jewelers, sculptors, locksmiths, tailors, cobblers, and bakers. They made technical contributions in metallurgy, mining, cattle-raising, and agriculture. In the judgment of Prince Johan Maurits, the famed viceroy of Dutch Brazil, "It is not possible to effect anything in Brazil without slaves . . . and they cannot be dispensed with upon any consideration whatsoever; if anyone feels that this is wrong, it is a futile scruple."

The Africans helped explore and conquer the interior and defend Brazil from attack. In times of war, they were the soldiers who fought the hostile Indians or the foreign invaders. Black regiments under black leaders—notably the much-praised Henrique Dias—struggled against the Dutch in the seventeenth century. When the French sacked Rio de Janeiro in 1711, the governor of Minas Gerais rushed to the aid of the city with fifteen hundred horsemen and six thousand armed Afro-Brazilians. They were an indispensable ingredient of colonial Brazil. In truth, the conquest, settlement, and growth of Brazil were Afro-European joint ventures.

Few Europeans felt slavery was wrong. Portuguese law sanctioned it. The attorney-general of the state of Maranhão, Manuel Guedes Aranha, expressed a typical view in 1654, when he wrote, "It is a known fact that different men are fitted for different things: we [the whites] are meant to introduce religion among them [Indians and Africans]; and they to serve us, hunt for us, fish for us, work for us." Such a classic statement of racism constituted the core of European imperialism for centuries. Always solicitous of the welfare of the Indians and uncertain of the morality of their enslavement, the Roman Catholic Church accepted African slavery so long as the blacks were Christianized. However, a few voices—principally from the Jesuits—did eventually speak up in defense of the Afro-Brazilians. In the seventeenth century, the humane Padre Antônio Vieira on several occasions denounced brutal punishments and abuse of the black slaves. During one famed sermon, he cried emotionally,

> O inhuman traffic in which the merchandise is men! Few masters, many slaves; masters richly dressed, slaves despised and