

The circulation of the first handwritten and printed masonic rites in Brazil (1810-1836)

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Translated by Eoin O'Neill

Abstract: This article offers an analysis of the production and circulation of the first masonic rites in Brazil. Initially, by means of heavily copied manuscripts or clandestinely printed pamphlets brought into Portuguese America, Masonic rites circulated among freemasons, starting in the northern captaincies, especially in Bahia and Pernambuco, at the time when the first Masonic lodges established political influence (1810-1820). With the introduction of printing presses in Brazil, these rites began to be printed in the Rio de Janeiro, maintaining their production and circulation restricted during the *Primeiro Reinado* (1822), but becoming more accessible to the public with the expansion of printing propelled by a new generation of printers in the Regency period (1831-1840).

Keywords: History of the Book; Clandestine Books; Masonry.

A circulação dos primeiros ritos maçônicos manuscritos e impressos no Brasil (1810-1836)

Resumo: O presente artigo oferece uma análise da produção e circulação dos primeiros ritos maçônicos no Brasil. Inicialmente, por meio de manuscritos ultracopiados ou por impressos clandestinamente introduzidos na América portuguesa, os ritos maçônicos circularam entre pedreiros-livres iniciados nas capitânicas do norte, especialmente na Bahia e Pernambuco, ao tempo em que as primeiras lojas maçônicas estabeleceram influência política (1810-1817). Com a introdução de tipografias no Brasil, os ritos passaram a ser impressos no Rio de Janeiro, mantendo sua produção e circulação restrita durante o Primeiro Reinado (1822), mas tornando-se mais acessíveis ao público com a expansão das tipografias dirigidas por uma nova geração de impressores na Regência (1831-1840).

Palavras-chave: História do livro; Livros clandestinos; Maçonaria.

The first rituals (1810-1822)

In Portuguese America little is known about the circulation of masonic rituals of the Symbolic and Higher Degrees, in either the Adonhiramite Rite and the French (or Modern) Rite. These rites were the only ones used by Brazilian freemasons before 1822 and continued to be used until the beginning of the regency period (1831-1840). The historiography, whether masonic or academic, has not managed to advance in this area, due to the difficulties of finding documentation that can provide studies with greater security. The history of the book and reading in Portuguese America completely ignores texts of a masonic nature, but this is justified by the high level of discretion with which these rituals were produced and transmitted.

In relation to the methodology used here, the observation of the material aspect of printed materials is a condition for this study. The history of the book is concerned with understanding the production of printed material and publishing techniques, as well as the specificities in the circulation of a book in the social context in which it was produced. In this way:

Manuscripts, printed material, images, and behavior are valuable sources for this historiographic approach, contemplating literary and publishing practices, and expanding their scope for systematic studies which aim to identify and analyze, with a historic focus, the actions of agents producing printed material and correlations of their actions with reading circuits (Magalhães, 2018a p. 571).

It is also necessary to consider and apply the perspective of the history of the book based on the understanding of its use, which implies “recognizing the essential connection between the text in its materiality, which supports texts, and the practices of appropriations, which are the readings” (Chartier, 2001, p. 29), the perspective of the materiality of cultural objects and their participation in social processes, thereby analyzing material aspects of the book and their conditions of production. The analysis of the materiality of the text requires the examination of the physical aspects of the book, contemplating the disposition of the text, the type of printed material, the choice of support, the binding, and the size of the book. It should be noted that illustrations and symbolic and graphical elements also add relevant information for those who investigate books, even though this is not looked at in this study. According to Roger Chartier, books “do not exist outside of a materiality”, moreover this materiality “is generally an object, a manuscript, or an pamphlet, but it can also be a form of representation of the text on the stage, a form of transmission linked to practices of orality: recite a text, read it out loud.” All these material ele-

ments, corporal or physical, belong to the process of producing meaning for the book (Chartier, 2001, p. 30).

Questions about the material elements of the book, for the reasons indicated above, occupy “a central place in the field of the cultural history of more classically erudite knowledge: for example, *bibliography*, paleography or the codicology” (Chartier, 1991, p.179). These allow the material and formal mechanisms by which printed material reaches readers to be rigorously delineated, thereby forming a fundamental resource for cultural history. In this sense, identifying and understanding the production of masonic rituals, considering the material aspects of their books, allows a significant advance in the understanding of educated culture in the transition from Portuguese America to Imperial Brazil.

Unlike the books prohibited or censored by institutions which restricted the circulation of information, such as the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition (1536-1821), the Royal Board of Censorship (1768-1787), the General Royal Commission for the Examination and Censorship of Books (1787-1794), the *Desembargo do Paço* in Rio de Janeiro (1808-1821), and the Commission of Censorship of Bahia (1811-1821), heavily copied and accessible to Luso-Brazilian intellectual elites, masonic rituals only circulated among the initiated, in other words in a manner that was much more restricted than other forms of literary production. In situations of political threats, against lodges or masons, these documents were destroyed, to preserve both the secrecy of the rituals and the physical integrity of initiates, avoiding arrests and even executions. For example, the destruction of masonic documents occurred in the city of Cachoeira, in the captaincy of Bahia, after the Pernambuco Revolution (1817) (Felner, 1846, p. 66-71).¹

Despite the difficulties indicated above, the theme has recently begun to be studied, based on copies of masonic rituals clandestinely brought into Portuguese America, particularly in the captaincy of Bahia. The copies of these rituals were found in 2016 in the Freemason Museum in London (Magalhães, 2017, p. 73-138). Added to these rituals for the symbolic degrees (Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master) is information which emerged from a court case against a freemason, arrested in the context of the 1817 Pernambuco Revolution. This information has become relevant for illuminating both the history of the book and of ideas in relation to masonry in Brazil.

There are no precise records of the use of rituals in the first lodges in Rio de Janeiro

¹ Lima Felner's source was the Bahian freemason José Mendes da Costa Coelho, who sent the Portuguese columnist a letter and two pamphlets, possibly of his own authorship. One of the pamphlets could have been *Discurso recitado no 3º dia do sétimo mez do anno 1837 da V. L. Cap. Humanidade em o acto da posse do presidente*, referenced by Sacramento Blake. Little is known about José Mendes da Costa Coelho, though he was from Bahia and served in the War of Independence in 1822, for which he was awarded the medal of the Independence of Brazil campaign in Bahia, where he served as an official in the Secretariat of the Provisional Government.

(c.1801), Bahia (1802), and Pernambuco. No printed pamphlets or manuscript translations were found related to the rituals or catechisms used in Portuguese America before 1810. However, it is possible that French rituals had been clandestinely introduced by masons, whether foreign or Brazilian. Only in the following decade are there reliable reports about the circulation of rituals in the main Brazilian captaincies.

The first rituals introduced into Portuguese America were printed around 1810 in London by Hipólito José da Costa Pereira Furtado de Mendonça (1774-1823), whose biography is well known in general terms. Born in Colônia do Sacramento, then under the rule of the Portuguese crown (it now belongs to Uruguay), Hipólito José da Costa studied first in Porto Alegre, later going to Coimbra University, where he completed the courses of Law, Philosophy, and Mathematics (1798). He was sent by the Portuguese government to the United States, where he lived between 1798 and 1800, observing and collecting information about US and Mexican agricultural and manufactured goods. He was initiated in masonry in Philadelphia in 1799, and after returning to Europe, he became close to English freemasonry, being persecuted and arrested by the *Corregedor* José Anastácio Lopes Cardoso.

After fleeing from the Inquisition prison, he secretly went to Gibraltar and afterwards embarked for London, where he became close to the Grand Master Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex (1773-1843). In the English capital he published *O Correio Braziliense ou Armazém Literário* from 1 June 1808 to 1823, with a total of 29 volumes. In addition to being known for this periodical, Hipólito José da Costa also used the printing press to print works of a masonic nature, including the rituals clandestinely introduced in Bahia.

All those who have written about Hipólito da Costa have doubted the existence of the printed catechisms. According to Rubens Borba de Moraes, the renowned collector of printed material about Brazil, “the catechism printed in Portuguese in London does not appear to me to have been published, I never saw a copy mentioned and not even the biographers of Hipólito da Costa cite the existence of any” (Moraes, 1968, p. 244-245).

Despite Moraes, Carlos Rizzini, and Mecenas Dourado’s doubts about the existence of this “catechism”, it proved possible to locate a complete collection of the three volumes in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry in London (Works..., 1882, p. 10). This is the COMPENDIUM // OF MASONIC INSTRUCTIONS // FOR THE USE // OF // G.: O.: B.: [masonic insignia] // COMPILED BY A KNIGHT OF // ALL THE MASONIC ORDERS. // [Line] VOLUME I // BLUE ADONHIRAMITE MASONRY. // [Line] // Impressão do Silencio // Year L. In addition to including the initiate degrees of Adonhiramite masonry, the third volume includes a surprising ritual for “ADOPTIVE ADONHIRAMITE MASONRY”. The three volumes do not have any print date, stating instead “Anno L.”, Year L or *Ano Lucis* (Year of Light), in compliance with the type of calendar used by masonry.

Impressão do Silencio was the Wright printing house in Saint John's Square, the same place where *Correio Braziliense* was printed.

In relation to the authorship of these three volumes, the most important in Brazilian masonry, there is no doubt that it was produced in London under the orders of Hipólito José da Costa, editor of *Correio Braziliense*. Hipólito da Costa himself reveals this in a letter dated 5010 [1810] to the leaders of the Virtue and Reason lodge. A document of great importance for the history of masonry, it highlights the moment when the Brazilian lodges, of which there were two in Bahia and one in Pernambuco, moved to the sphere of influence of English masonry. This letter was transcribed in its entirety for the first time in 2022 (Magalhães, 2022, p. 225-230), and it is necessary to present some quotes here proving the protagonism of Hipólito da Costa in the clandestine production and distribution of the Adonhiramite Compendia:

If indeed you resolve to take this step; I would be very happy to send you the book of the constitutions of Gr.: English and other interesting works which are printed both in English and in French; which will help you illustrate our works. [...] And for now I will ask you to accept as a small sign of veneration and love that I give you, the two small works which will be sent with this letter: *one is the compendium of masonic instructions which I wrote and had printed, as a summary work, for the purpose of serving the Gr.: Or.: Br.:* the other is a series of letters which I wrote when I was imprisoned by the Inquisition, and which I had printed, helped by the offers of some friends, with the sole purpose of distributing and having read to the profane; to have some fair idea of M.: since in Portugal there is nothing to serve for this; so I do not say anything in these letters which might reveal any of our secrets to the profane; at the same time that they might have a fair idea of the institution. [...] Undoubtedly you would like to have a masonic library in the archive in your G and in my opinion in no way can you better employ part of the funds of your G; I will not send you from here the works you want for that purpose; but with great pleasure I will take charge of writing the statutes of this library; stipulating those who will have access to it, the conditions under which books will be loaned; and an establishment of this nature can even supply other works which are not masonic; in such ways that G has a kind of circulating library for the use of masons; which would be an incalculable benefit in this country.² Finally, count on me for everything that my debile force can

² The Patriarchal Cross, or the Cross of Lorraine, or also the Cross of Caravaca. It is placed at the beginning of the signatures of Level 33 Grand Inspector masons of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

achieve. [...] The G[reat] A[rchitect] guard and congratulate you as your Br[other] wishes, who m[uch] loves and respects you.³

After this 1810 correspondence, Hipólito José da Costa developed a closer relationship with the intellectual and masonic circles of the city of Baía. In 1811, a clandestine printing press was sent to Bahia thanks to the efforts of Hipólito da Costa, but was intercepted by the Portuguese authorities. In the same year, another clandestine printing press was sent to the same captaincy, transported secretly by Domingos Borges de Barros from the United States. However, this was also denounced to the authorities. The interception of these two clandestine printing presses, which certainly did not submit their printed material to the recently created Commission of Censorship of Bahia, may have aborted a plan to produce masonic documents, amongst others of a political nature. Thus, the printed masonic rites needed to be brought from Europe, particularly from London.

In 1812, Luzitana Lodge No. 184 was created, linked to the Grand Orient lodge of London. Its venerable master was Hipólito José da Costa himself. The statutes were printed on the press of L. Thompson and the same year the editor of *Correio Braziliense* had the initiative of inviting influential Portuguese men from politics and the press to join the lodge, even calling on former political adversaries. English masonry increased its presence in Bahia and Pernambuco, through Luzitana Lodge No. 184, notably through one of its founding partners, the businessman Domingos José Martins (1781-1817). Martins travelled to Salvador at the beginning of 1812, possibly to link the two lodges already existing there, Virtue and Reason (1802) and Humanity (1808), to the autonomist project for Brazil, raised in the English press by Hipólito da Costa. In 1813 Martins went to Recife, also with the aim of connecting with the lodges in that captaincy.

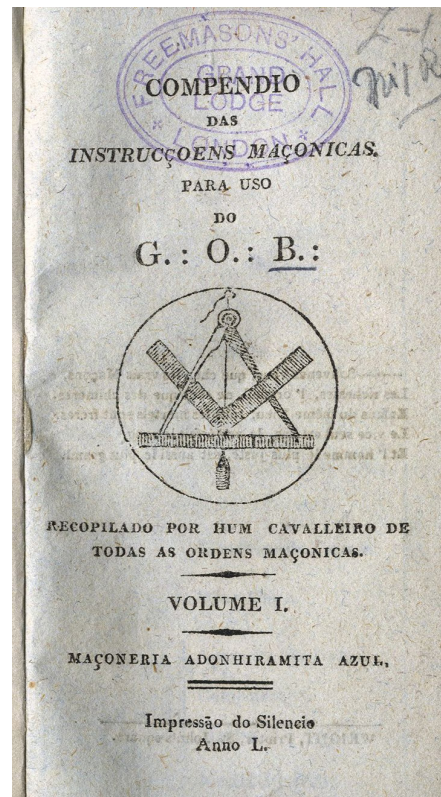
Despite the interception of the printing press sent by Hipólito da Costa, as well as that brought by Borges de Barros, the first printed masonic rites in Portuguese were successfully introduced clandestinely, to some extent by the efforts of Domingos José Martins, for the use of the members of the first Grand Orient lodge of Brazil (1813-1817), in Salvador and Recife.

In Salvador, Fr. Ignacio José de Macedo (1774-1834) (Magalhães, 2013) and the former regal teacher José Francisco Cardoso de Moraes (1761-1841), friend of the poet Manoel Maria Barbosa du Bocage, were denounced to the government by a certain Friar Amador da Sancta Cruz in 1817, because of the “Explanation of the catechism, and Ritual of mason-

³ Letter from Hipólito José da Costa Furtado de Mendonça to the Venerable Master of the Virtue and Reason Lodge, in the captaincy of Bahia. London, Post. 16/03/1810. Library and Museum of the United Grand Lodge of England (London), cota 25/B/5. Fl. 2v.

ic functions, the book of which was printed in London with the title = Compendium for the Orient of Bahia = by *Impressão do Segredo* = (Pereira, 1956, 251-252)". Since 2017, the existence of these rituals printed by "*Impressão do Silencio*" has been proven, with the discovery of copies in the Freemason Museum (London), although these have not been duly examined (Magalhães, 2017, p. 73-138).

Figure 1 – Compendio das Instrucçoens Maçonicas para uso do G.: O.: B.:



Source: Library of the Freemason Museum (London).
12 x 7.5 cm. Call Number: VBR 200 BRA; ID: L4297.

This material was also used by Pernambuco masons before and during the 1817 Revolution. In a letter written by the freemason and the notable dictionary writer, Antonio de Moraes Silva, to his uncle, Dr. Rodrigues de Miranda, dated Pernambuco, 11 July 1817, he notes that "he saw the catechisms found in the house of the infamous Martins"

(Documentos..., 1953, p. 40-41). Very possibly copies of Hipólito da Costa's catechisms printed in London.

Even after the fiasco of the 1817 Revolution, its violent repression, and the disappearance of the Grand Orient of Brazil, Hipólito José da Costa continued sending printed material to Bahia. He was represented by the Portuguese trader José Joaquim da Silva Maia (1776-1832). The latter had been settled in the captaincy since 1795 and according to the columnist Emílio Maia, reached the position of Venerable Master of the Humanity Lodge, reestablished in 1820.

In addition to the clandestine material made by Hipólito José da Costa, the expansion of intellectual networks of freemasons also increased the demand for and circulation of masonic rituals through manuscript copies in Portuguese America. Of greater importance was the identification, due to the interception by the authorities of a set of manuscripts which were being transported from the captaincy of Maranhão to the City of Bahia in 1817.

In 1817, in the sequence of the agitation caused by the Pernambuco Revolution, Captain Dionísio Barreto Lima arrested a certain Manoel Ferreira Lima da Silva (?-1822) in Vila de Pilão Arcado, then the *comarca* of Sertão de Pernambuco, on the banks of the São Francisco River. Under the false name of Manoel dos Anjos, Ferreira Lima da Silva transported from São Luís do Maranhão to Salvador “nine notebooks in the same package in which the proclamation [of the Pernambuco rebels] came” (Magalhães, 2018, p. 169-192). These nine notebooks apprehended form a strong register of the circulation of masonic rites in colonial Brazil, consisting of manuscript translations of *Recueil Précieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite* (the Precious Compilation of Adonhiramite Masonry), whose authorship is attributed to Louis Guillemain de Saint-Victor. The *Termo da Achada* [Apprehension Document], included in the legal records kept in the Public Archive of the State of Bahia, describes everything that was found in the belongings of the suspect:

in the bundle of paper, both loose and in packets, a draft was found, which appears to have come from the writing of the same prisoner, having been checked against and confirmed with many other examples of his writing. It is a proclamation of the Infernal Conspirators of Pernambuco against the Sacred Person and power of His Most Faithful Majesty, *El Rei*, Our Lord, and the said judge ordered that this draft be included in the *Devassa* that will be carried out; And examining another nine notebooks in the same set which contained the said proclamation, with the first notebook beginning with these terms = Great God Architect of the Universe = the second begins with = Opening of the Fellowcraft Lodge, the third states = Opening of the Master Lodge = the fourth begins with = Opening of the perfect Master Lodge = the fifth says = First Elect or the Elect of nine = the sixth begins = Second Elect = the seventh = third

Elect called the fifteen = the eight = Catechism of the perfect Elect, and the ninth finally begins [sic] = Sam João having been brought [fl.05] brought by a shipwreck to the Island of Patmos whose notebooks were ordered by the said Judge to be attached to the said *Devassa*. Another piece of paper was found in the bundle with a role of names, and another quarter of Paper, on top of which were four scratches crossed with various points and below an ABC with various *giograficos* with different characters corresponding to each of the letters of the ABC.⁴

These notebooks were attached to the case, along with other manuscripts encountered, however their current location is unknown. There is no doubt that the masonic ritual copied in the notebooks was Adonhiramite, formed by a hierarchy with 12 degrees. The first three were formed by the symbolic degrees of Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master. In total, there were seven degrees. Undoubtedly, they were copies extracted from the two volumes of *Recueil Précieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite*, published in four parts, possibly in 1781. The uncertainty of the printing date is due to the non-declaration of a year and the false attribution of the place of printing, with Philadelphia being stated, when it is well known that it was printed in French territory. The collection was afterwards reprinted in 1783, 1785, 1786, 1787, and even in 1803 and 1809. It is impossible to know which edition served for the translations confiscated in the possession of Manoel Ferreira Lima da Silva.

The first part of *Recueil* presents the three symbolic degrees of Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master, as well as Perfect Master. The second part of the work presents the degrees of perfection: First Elect or Elect of the Nine, Second Elect Chosen of Pérignan, Third Elect Chosen, Elect of the Fifteen, Small Architect, Grand Architect or Scottish Fellow, Scottish Master, Knight of the Sword Appointed Knight of the East or of the Eagle, Knight of the Rose Croix, and the Noachite or Prussian Knight. Parts three and four of the work were composed of *La Vraie Maçonnerie d'Adoption* and a collection of *Cantiques Maçonniques Dédiés aux Dames*. The description in the *Termo da Achada* indicates that Manoel Ferreira Lima da Silva only possessed the translation of the first two parts of the work, related to the masonic degrees.

⁴ Public Archive of the State of Bahia (Salvador). Seção Colonial/Provincial; Fundo: Governo Geral/Governo da Capitania. Série: Justiça; Livro 583-1, Revolução Pernambucana 1817, fls. 4-4v.

Chart 1 – Comparison between the manuscripts described in manuscript 513-A in the Public Archive of the State of Bahia and the 1783 edition of *Recueil Précieux*

Notebooks confiscated from Manoel Ferreira Lima da Silva – 1817	Degree	Recueil Précieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite
Great God Architect of the Universe	1 st Degree – Apprentice	1 st part: p. 10-12, Ouverture de la Loge d'Appentif; p. 13-26, Catéchismedes Apprentifs.
Opening of the Fellowcraft Lodge	2 nd Degree – Fellowcraft	1 st part: Ouverture de la Loge des Compagnons, p. 52-53; Catécisme des Compagnons, p. 54-64.
Opening of the Master Lodge	3 rd Degree – Master	1 st part: Ouverture de la Loge de Maitre, p. 81-83; Catéchisme des Maitres, p. 84-96.
Opening of the Perfect Master Lodge	4 th Degree – Also appointed Ancient Master	1 st part: Catéchisme des Maitres Perfais, p. 99-102. NB: In <i>Recueil Précieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite</i> the “Ouverture de la Logedes Maitres Perfais” do not appear, but the “Réception” does, p. 97-98.
First Elect, or the Elect of Nine	5 th Degree – Also called Small Elect	2 nd part: Premier Élu, ou L'Élu des Neuf, p.1-18 Catéchisme de Premier Élu, p. 19-22.
Second Elect	6 th Degree – Called the Elect of Pérignan or Unknown	2 nd part: Second Élu, Nommé Élu de Perignan, p. 23-25. Catéchisme de Second Élu, p. 26-31.
Third Elect called the fifteen	7 th Degree – Called the Grand Master Elect	2 nd part: Troisième Élu, nommé Élu des Quinze, p. 32-43.
Catechism of the Perfect Elect	-	2 nd part: Catéchisme de l'Élu Parfait p.44-46
Sam João having been brought by a shipwreck to the Island of Patmos	-	It was not possible to identify this manuscript notebook

Source: elaborated by the author.

After March 1817 Brazilian masonry, despite being persecuted by Minister Thomas Antonio de Villa-Nova Portugal and officially condemned by a Royal Charter on 30 March 1818, maintained its members. However, a large part of Pernambuco masons was imprisoned in Bahian jails between 1817 and the first months of 1821. The central axis of masonic

groups thus migrated from Salvador and Recife to Rio de Janeiro. This change was materialized in the creation of the three Fluminense lodges from 1821 onwards, namely Commerce and Arts, Union and Tranquility, and Hope of Nictheroy, which had 95 members and gave rise to the second Grand Orient, based in Rio de Janeiro, on 17 June 1822. Due to this change, Rio de Janeiro gradually became the center of intellectual agitation of masonry. In this context, the Adonhiramite Rite lost space to the French or Modern Rite.

The first record of a masonic ritual printed in Brazilian territory dates from 1822, immediately after the independence process. This Catechism of the freemasons of the degrees of apprentice, fellowcraft, and master, containing more news of the position they have in England. Rio de Janeiro, na Impr. Nac., 1822. In-8°. Alfredo Valle Cabral, in *Annaes da Imprensa Nacional*, noted that this was a “reprint” (Cabral, 1881, p. 247). It is certainly a reprint of the work published that year by Typographia Maigrense, in Lisbon. However, the Bahian bibliographer did not find a copy of the Fluminense edition and only states that there had been one in the National Library of Rio de Janeiro, but had disappeared before 1881. One of the sources of Valle Cabral, as well as the records of the Library itself, was the *Diario do Rio de Janeiro*, which announced on 1 October 1822:

New: Cathecism of Freemasons of the degrees of Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master, containing more reports of the procession they will carry out in England, a work which everyone should read, which serves as confusion for the servile, and dismay for the unwary. The secret of the society is the stumbling block of its antagonists, this Work proves that that society is the enemy of neither the throne nor the altar, and that its base consists of the performance of all social and religious virtues. It is sold in the shop of Paulo Martin, Rua da Quitanda No. 33 for 800 reis.⁵

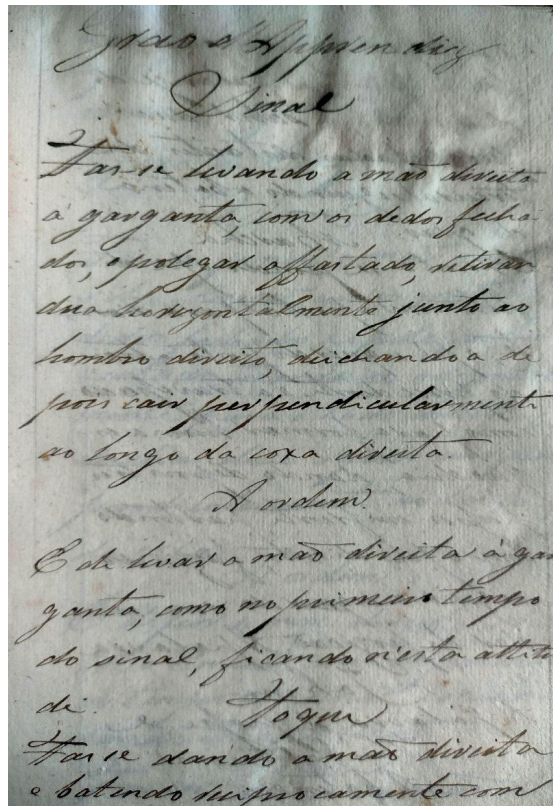
The demand for the translation of the symbolic degrees of the French Rite increased as its use expanded in Rio de Janeiro during the Independence period. Despite the report above, there is no evidence of printed translations of the higher degrees in Brazil at that time, although manuscripts must have continued to circulate there. The political turbulence which impacted on Fluminense lodges after 1822 aborted any project to continue the printing of masonic documents. The reinforcement of the absolutist institutional apparatus in Portugal and Brazil, with Pedro I's 1823 prohibition of secret societies in the recently independent country limited the production and circulation of printed masonic works. In addition, the “forbidden decade” of masonry in Brazil, subject of an excellent study by

⁵ *Diario do Rio de Janeiro*, no. 1, 1 Oct. 1822, p. 2.

Pilar Ferrer Gomez (2022), meant that Brazilian masons returned to the practice of circulating their documents through manuscripts.

Portuguese translations of rituals printed in France or England, copied in discrete manuscript notebooks, were the most secure manner of recording and disseminating, only among initiates, the necessary procedures for use in lodges between 1823 until at least the middle of 1832. Manuscript copies, made in a private forum, avoided the greater exposition resulting from the use of the printing press. In relation to the Kingdom of Portugal, it was possible to identify a manuscript notebook with 39 pages from the 1820s which contained the translation of the Symbolic Degrees and the Higher Degrees. It reproduced the

Figure 2 – Handwritten notebook with the translation of the High Degrees



Source: Author's private collection.

“*Thuileur*”.⁶ The filigree of the “rag” paper, reveal that it was produced in Góis, in a factory opened in 1822. This document deserves its own study as it does not fit into the scope of this article (Santos, Magalhães, 2021).⁷

Printed rituals after 1832

In Brazil after 1832, since the Regency allowed greater political flexibility, the presses of Seignot-Plancher, Rene Ogier, Pierre Gueffier, and Jean Soleil Saint-Amant began to flood the Fluminense publishing market with Masonic publications. The first printshop was created by Pierre René François Plancher de la Noe (1779-1844), a bookseller and publisher who arrived in Rio de Janeiro on 9 February 1824, accompanied by the printer Justin Victor Cremière, who established a bookshop and Typographia de Plancher at Rua do Ouvidor, no. 80. In 1832, in his *Manual de Typographia Braziliense* the printer and mason Rene Ogier listed nine printshops in Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia Nacional, owned by Nicolau Lobo Vianna, and those of Émile Signot-Plancher, Torres, Ogier, Souto, Lessa and Pereira, Pierre Gueffier, and Thomas B. Hunt. However, the printer stated that “In addition to the above-mentioned printers, there exist one or two which were not listed as they are very small, and more private than public” (Ogier, 1832, p. 34). These two workshops “more private than public” were possibly used by Masonic groups, but there is no greater information about any of them.

With the exception of Rio de Janeiro, the presence of French printers was almost null in the other provinces of the Empire of Brazil. Unlike Rio de Janeiro, in Bahia for example, no other French run printers became established. In Salvador, there was an ephemeral attempt to establish a branch of Pierre Gueffier’s printers (October 1833), purchased by Precourt e C.^a (May 1834) (Tavares, 2009, p. 11). This firm was owned by Camille Leschevin de Précourt, coming from the aristocracy, a former army officer, was obliged to “abandon

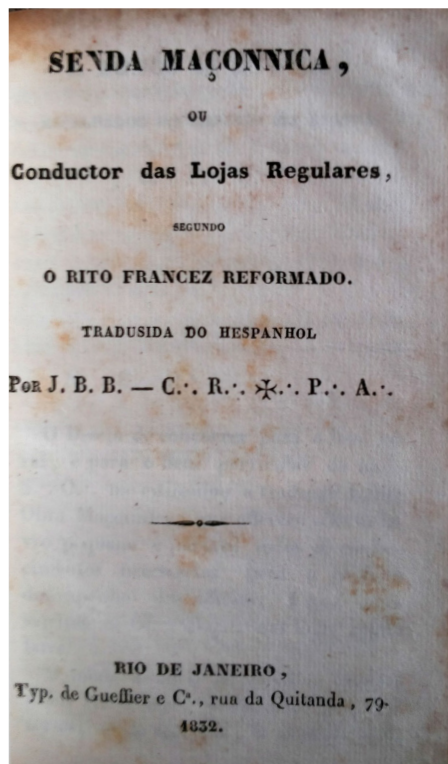
⁶ The “*Thuileur*” consisted of the compilation of the Secrets (Words, Signs, and Touches) of each Degree used in Masonic recognition. According to the article by Joaquim Graves dos Santos, this notebook contains a translation of the book *Maçonnerie Symbolique suivant le Régime du G.: O.: de France*, a qual agrega uma parte relativa aos Altos Graus (Maçonnerie des H.: Grades, suivant le régime du G.: O.: de France), whose first edition dates from 1804, followed by reprints in 1808, 1811, and 1822. This work also reached the Portuguese speaking world, by being published in translation in Brazil, with the title *SYMBOLIC / MASONRY. / and the Superior Degrees / Allegorical Engraving/ RIO DE JANEIRO. / TYP. IMP. e CONST. DOS II.: SEIGNOT-PLANCHER e C. / rua d’Ouvidor, n. 95. / 1833 / 40,[1] pag.: 16 cm., of which a copy can be found in the National Library, with record no. S.C. 14233 // 12. P.*

⁷ Author’s private collection. The manuscript notebook containing the Higher Degrees was acquired in Porto, Portugal, in 2020. It is not dated, but it was made from linen paper, originating, according to the watermarks, from Góis (or Goes) paper factory, opened in 1821. The notebook contains an *ex-libris* with the name of Danilo Barreiros (1910-1994).

France to seek asylum in the land of Santa Cruz”.⁸ He went first to Rio de Janeiro, from where he left for Bahia on 10 November 1832.⁹ In Salvador he established Typ. do Correio Mercantil, but he died in this city on 4 September 1836, leaving the printing works to the Widow Precourt, who kept the property until the end of 1836. However, there are no records that masonic documents were printed in the City of Bahia.

French booksellers effectively propelled in the capital the production of Masonic production from 1832 onwards, notably guides and rituals. An example of this is a book entitled *MASONIC PATH, // OR THE CONDUCTOR OF THE REGULAR LODGES, // ACCORDING*

Figure 3 – Senda Maçonica



Source: Author's private collection.

⁸ *Correio Mercantil*, no. 108, 6 Sep. 1836. Camille Leschevin de Précourt was born in Dijon, France, son of Philippe Xavier Leschevin de Précourt and Elisabeth Delaporte.

⁹ Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro). Polícia, Legitimações, Passaportes, Cód. 423, vol. 6, f. 207 and Cód. 381, vol. 2, fl. 52 v.

TO THE REFORMED FRENCH RITE. // TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY J. B. B. – C. . R. . +. . P. . A. . // [Line] // RIO DE JANEIRO, // Printed by Gueffier e C^a., Rua da Quitanda, 79. // 1832.¹⁰ It contained 216 pages and measures 15.7 x 9.6 cm, published in Pierre Gueffier's printworks. The historian Kurt Prober, a scholar of Brazilian masonry, was unaware of this work. It is a translation of *Senda de las luces masónicas por J. Cerneau*. New York: En la Imprenta de J. Kingsland & Co., A.: L.: 5821 [1821]; 236 p., [1] f.. Joseph Cerneau, born in France in 1765, migrated to San Domingo and became Master of the La Reunion Desiree Lodge, there establishing a Supreme Council in 1801 and then going to the United States in 1806 (Cerneau, 5821 [1821]). The influence of "Cerneuarism" on Brazilian masonry passed unperceived, possibly due to the rarity of the book in question, of which it was only possible to locate two examples.

The name of the translator, hidden under the initials J. B. B. – C. . R. . +. . P. . A. . could be José Bernardino Baptista Pereira de Almeida Sodré, the peak of whose career was occupying the positions of ministers of finance and justice in the government of Pedro I. Son of Manuel Baptista Pereira and Anna Joaquina (Campos, then belonging to the captaincy of Espírito Santo, 20 May 1783 – Fazenda da Boa Vista, Niterói, 29 January 1861), he received a Bachelor in Law from the University of Coimbra. After returning to Brazil, he served in the Judiciary as circuit court judge in Santo Antônio de Sá and Vila de Magé and then *provedor* in the *Provedoria da Fazenda dos Defuntos e Ausentes, Capelas e Resíduos*, abandoning this career in 1821. He was elected deputy in Espírito Santo in the first two legislatures and was part of the cabinet of 18 June 1828, occupying at first the position of Finance and afterwards Justice, becoming part of the emperor's council, being awarded the Order of the Rose and being made commander of the Order of Christ. The introduction to the Brazilian translation, however, is signed by D. . V. . M. . A. . E. . S. . L. . , whose identity it has not been possible to specify.

However the *Masonic Path* only presents the initiatory degrees for the use of the French Rite. Only in the following year, 1833, was the next book published, namely Book S.: containing Symbolic Masonry, according to the Regulation of G.: O.: from France, and the Masonry of the Superior Degrees, or the Explanation of the Signs and Symbols of the Seventh Degree. It was possible to find a copy of this pamphlet, which contained 39 pages, in the National Library of Lisbon.¹¹ It was announced for sale in the first half of the year in question:

¹⁰ Only two copies are known, one in the collection of Prof. Pablo Magalhães and another in the Brasiliana Guita and José Mindlin Library in São Paulo, which belonged to Rubens Borba de Moraes.

¹¹ I would like to thank Joaquim Graves dos Santos, for providing a copy, allowing bibliographic analysis.

New, and for sale in the same publishing house [Seignot-Plancher] Book S.: containing SYMBOLIC MASONRY, according to the Regulation of G.: O.: from France, and the MASONRY OF THE HIGHER DEGREES, or the Explanation of the Signs and Symbols of the seven Degrees; in a volume with stamps.... Price 640 rs.¹²

Another element to be observed is the printing of guides to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the third type introduced in Brazil. This was done in 1832 by Francisco Gê Acaiaba de Montezuma (1794-1870) from Bahia, who founded the Supreme Council in Rio de Janeiro. In general terms, the establishment and development of the Supreme Council was studied by Kurt Prober (1982). The Fluminense printers must have been seeking to respond to a new demand for rituals, resulting from the establishment of a new masonic potential in the capital. Inocência Francisco da Silva (v. VII, p. 416) registered a “Catechism of the first three degrees of the Scottish R.:, preceded by instructions, etc. etc. Rio de Janeiro, printed by L.:, R. Ogier 5833 [1833]. 8.º 64 pages”. There seems to have been some confusion on the part of the Portuguese bibliographer. In 1832, Rene Ogier printed a Catechism for the apprentice mason, following the opening and closing of the Lodge, and the instructions of the Table. For the use of the G. Orient of Brazil, with 62 pages, plus a blank page, of which I only have seen one copy, which belonged to Rubens Borba de Moraes.

The three volumes of the guides to the Scottish Rite, covering the functions of the Venerable Master, 1st Warden, and 2nd Warden were actually printed by Seignot-Plancher in 1834. In relation to them, there is a question to observe, to the extent that:

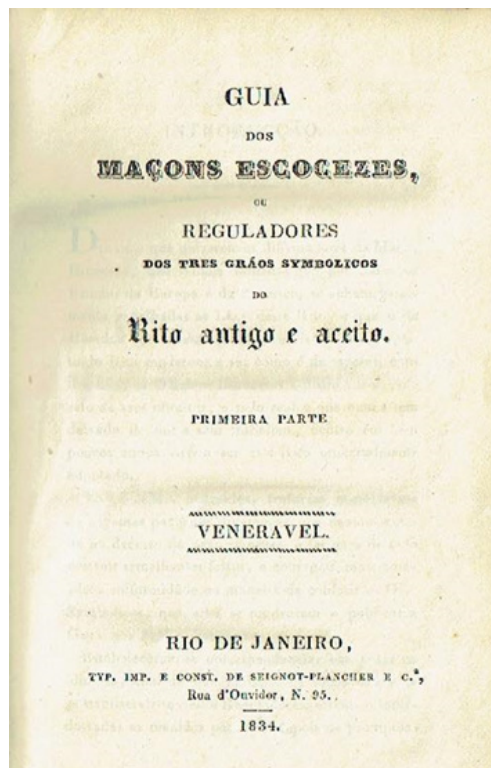
The first ritual of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in our country was printed in 1834 [sic], in the previously mentioned printers [Seignot-Plancher], at its own initiative. In the same year it printed a second edition, commissioned by the Brazilian Grand Orient, which came to be better known as the “Grand Orient of Passeio”. In the first Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite ritual printed in our country (in 1834, at the private initiative of Typ. Imp. e Const. de Seignot-Plancher & Cia.), located at Rua do Ouvidor no. 95, Rio de Janeiro, the Candidate, immediately after the Obligation (the word oath was not used), kissed the Bible three times. In the second ritual in the above mentioned Rite (equally printed in 1834, in the above mentioned printing house, not at their own initiative, but ordered by the Brazilian Grand Orient, as has also been seen in previous pages), the Candidate, in the moment of ritual in question, kissed the Constitution (and not the Bible), three times. Which Constitution? The text does not clarify this! Was it the Constitution of the Empire of Brazil, in other

¹² *Jornal do Commercio* no. 105, 4 May 1833, p. 3.

words the Charter of the Law enacted by Pedro I on 25 March 1824? Or was it the Constitution of the Brazilian Grand Orient of 1832? (Cavalcante, 2011, p. 292).

The three copies which we examined, including from our own collection, contained the word “Bible” and we were unable to find copies with the word “Constitution”. Were these different editions or the same edition only with this variant? The Scottish Rite was also printed in Recife in 1841, indicating its rapid acceptance in the northern provinces of Brazil (Ch’an, 1993, p. 231-238; Grande Oriente Brasileiro, 1996, p. 9 and 17).

Figure 4 – Guia dos Maçons Escocezes

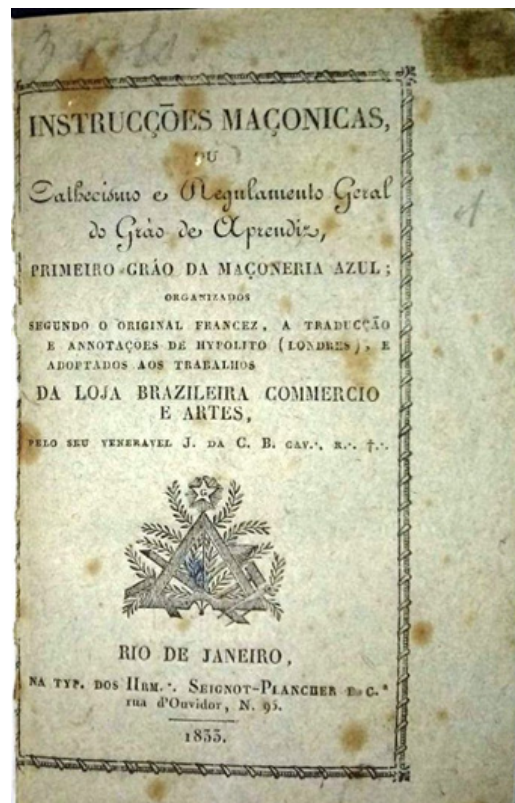


Source: Author's private collection.

In relation to the French Rite, between 1833 and 1834 Seignot-Plancher was responsible for publishing the rituals. From its presses came the MASONIC INSTRUCTIONS, // OR // Catechism and General Regulations // of the Degree of Fellowcraft, // SECOND DEGREE OF BLUE MASONRY; // ORGANIZED // ACCORDING TO THE FRENCH ORIGINAL, THE TRANSLATION // AND ANNOTATIONS OF HYPOLITO (LONDON),

AND // ADOPTED FROM THE WORK // OF THE BRAZILIAN LODGE COMMERCE
// AND ARTS, // BY ITS VENERABLE MASTER J. DA C. B. CAV.: R.: +.: // [masonic in-
signia] // RIO DE JANEIRO, // PRINTED BY IIRM.: SEIGNOT-PLANCHER E C.^a // Rua
d'Ouvidor, No. 95. // [Line] // 1833. This three volume set was made at the initiative of
Januário da Cunha Barbosa (1780-1846), using the above mentioned primitive Compendia
sent to Brazil by Hipólito José da Costa in the colonial period.

Figure 5 – Instruções Maçônicas
da Loja Brasileira Commercio e Artes



Source: Copy which belonged to Kurt Prober.

In addition to the three volumes that formed the Instructions, in the following year in 1834, Seignot-Plancher prepared small guides with the regulators of the Symbolic Degrees and the Mysterious Degrees. These are the REGULATORS // OF THE // MYSTERIOUS DEGREES, // OR THE // FOUR SUPERIOR ORDERS// of the French Rite, with volumes about the functions of Master, 1st Warden and 2nd Warden.

New and for sale at Seignot-Plancher e Comp., THE REGULATORS OF THE SYMBOLIC AND MYSTERIOUS DEGREES OF THE FRENCH RITE, With the detailed explanation of all the obligations of the Grand Officials in the Lodge, accompanied by instructions and catechisms appropriate to each of the seven Degrees of the Modern Rite, etc., etc. 8 Pamphlets, in the brochure - 8,000 Rs. This work is the translation of the Regulators published a few months ago in France, the most complete and perfect of those which until now have served as the base for the work of the lodges from the French Rite. Nothing has been published in Rio de Janeiro about this material which could meet the expectations of the most instructed initiates in the Order of Masonry: the REGULATORS now offered to the Public are recommended both for the importance of the subject and the clarity of the explanations, the purity of languages, and the sharpness of the printing.¹³

Figure 6 – Reguladores do Rito Francez



Source: Author's private collection.

¹³ *Jornal do Commercio* no. 225, 8 Oct. 1834, p. 4.

At the same time that Seignot-Plancher reduced the printing of masonic rituals, around 1835, another printer in Rio de Janeiro began to meet this demand: Typographia Austral (1836-1846). Ignored by researchers of the Fluminense press, this printing house remains obscure and its owner unknown. Thanks to a note in the *Pequeno Almanack* in 1843, it is possible to identify it: “Typ. Austral — owner Antonio Luiz Fagundes, Beco de Bragança no. 15” (*Pequeno Almanak*, 1843, p. 64). In relation to Antonio Luiz Fagundes (? – c.1846), neither Inocência Francisco da Silva nor Sacramento Blake have reliable information about him. However, it was discovered that he translated a book of music in 1824, printed by Pierre Plancher, and died in 1846, after which his printers was closed down:

Thursday, 27 of this month, the Austral printworks belonging to the estate of the late Antonio Luiz Fagundes will be auctioned at the gates of the residence of his honor the Judge of Orphans, with a printing press, new print types, and little used, and all the other belongings, since it is assembled; those interested can see it at Rua de S. Pedro no. 57.¹⁴

The translation of the Adonhiramite rites come from Typographia Austral. A report exists of a printed translation of the referred rite in Portuguese, dated September 1822, in Lisbon, which was still going through the influxes of the Constitutional Revolution of August 1820.¹⁵ Apart from the advertisement in the *Diário do Governo*, there is no other reference to this pamphlet and it was not possible to locate any other copy or discover who was its translator.

The Adonhiramite rite in Brazil was the only usual one in the colonial period. In line with Hipólito José da Costa’s compendia and the apprehension of the notebooks in Pilão Arcado in 1817, the Sardinian José Estevão Grodona stated six years later in 1823, that “By Freemason we mean Members of the Masonry, and with this we can speak *ex cathedra*, we cover the Masons in all the symbolic Hierarchy and up to the eighteenth degree (which is what there were and are of Masons in Brazil)” (Barata, 1823, p. 125). Undoubtedly, he is referring to the Adonhiramite rite, although the rite in question only reached the twelfth degree, the Rosa Cruz Knight, the *nec plus ultra*.

In relation to the printing of this rite in Brazil, Kurt Prober stated that “Only in the year of 1836 did Tipografia Austral, Rio [de Janeiro], print the first ritual in our language ‘The

¹⁴ *Diário do Rio de Janeiro*, 1846, no. 7289, p. 4.

¹⁵ *Diário do Governo*, Lisbon, Supplement no. 50, 14 Sep. 1822, p. 2 [annexed to no. 217]: “The Translator of the important Work of the 1.st Volume of the Compendium of Adonhiramite Masonry, which has recently come to light, which is sold in Praça do Rocio in Casa de Cambio No. 61, and wanting it to reach everyone reduced its price with good sense, even to facilitate its prompt trade, and to make all participant of the enlightening and true principles, which are included in it. From now on, its price is 360 reis”.

Precious Collection of Adonhiramite Masonry’, in 11 chapters”. Marco Morel also stated that “Under the responsibility of Adonhiramite Masonry new pamphlets were printed in Rio de Janeiro between 1836 and 1840, with the detailed description of rites and symbolologies, but without any mention of people, lodges, or dates”. Morel consulted the copy in the National Library, which is incomplete (Morel, 2005, p. 274). There are mistakes, however, in both these affirmations. To correct them, initially, it should be pointed out that the first initiative recorded until now of printing the Adonhiramite ritual in Brazil dates from 1833. It was Seignot-Plancher, who acquired the ownership rights over the work:

THE PRECIOUS COLLECTION OF ADONHIRAMITE MASONRY, by one C... of all the Ord.: Maç.: translated from French, by Sartorio, per vol. – 2\$000 rs. [...] Seignot-Plancher e Comp. make public that having purchased from the Author the ownership of the PRECIOUS COLLECTION OF ADONHIRAMITE MASONRY, and having obtained all the copies which remained from the first Edition, this work from today will only be sold in its House at Rua do Ouvidor, no. 95, at the price announced, and to prevent any illicit printing, makes this declaration, and puts its rights under the protection of the Laws. [...] The Work will be continued: the third volume is already being printed and will soon be ready.¹⁶

Plancher’s announcement states that “all the copies which remained of the first Edition” of the *Coleção Preciosa da Maçonaria Adonhiramita* had been obtained. According to the announcement in September 1833 it appears that the first two volumes had been printed and the third was in the process of being printed. Was this first edition completed?

His announcement also stated that this translation was the work of “Sartorio” or Sertório. This is the initiate name of José Rodrigues Gonçalves Valle (Barata, 2006, p. 309). A member of Hope of Nictheroy Lodge, one of the three which gave rise to the Grand Orient, he asked on 12 July 1822 that “there appear in the Grand Lodge, that he had stated, on some occasions, that our work was aimed at the august purpose of the Reunion, Reconciliation, and Independence of Brazil, under the auspices of its August Defender”.¹⁷ It was not possible to locate examples of the Adonhiramite Rite produced by Plancher, if indeed it was really printed.

In 1836, Tipografia Austral effectively began to print the most complete edition that it was possible to find for the Adonhiramite rite, not in 11 or 9 pamphlets, as stated by Kurt Prober and Marco Morel, but in 16, with the frontispiece being printed in 1837, to

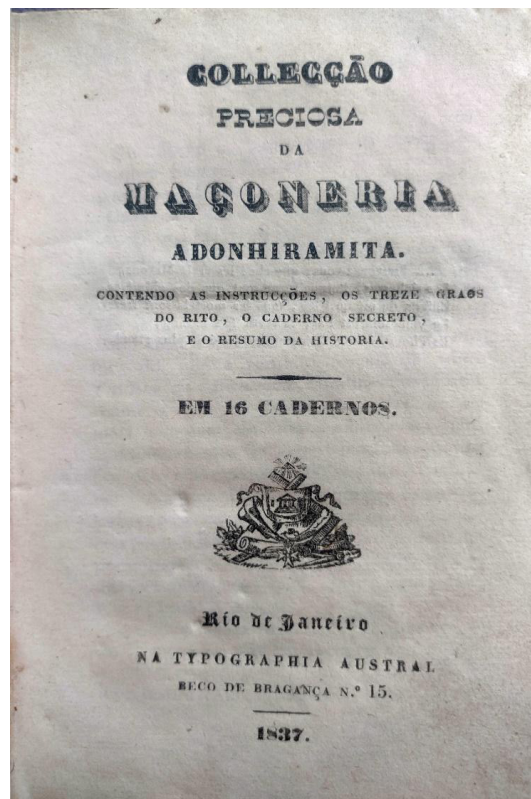
¹⁶ *Jornal do Commercio*, Rio de Janeiro, no. 221, 28 Sep. 1833, p. 4.

¹⁷ Arquivo Histórico do Museu Imperial (Petrópolis, Brasil). Casa Imperial do Brasil. Atas (minutas) de sessões maçônicas, 1822. (com anexos). II – POB – 1822 – Mac. at 110.

be attached to the relevant volumes. A note from the anonymous editor (and translator) reveals that:

When I was translating the work *Recueil Precieux de la Maçonnerie Adonhiramite*, fortunately there came into my hands the *Compendium of Masonic Instructions for the use of G.:O.:B.:;* and convinced of its identity, and the better disposition of some of its parts, I did not hesitate in using a work that was already completed; but without losing sight of the French original, and even more collecting what was necessary for me, from what appears in Tuilleur de l'Écossime's work, having managed to give this edition the advantage of being more complete than the other one, or by the improvement of some points, or by finally adding the Noachite or Prussian Knight Degree, as well as the Secret Notebook of the Thirteen Degrees, which compose the Rite in question. I made an effort to

Figure 7 – Collecção Preciosa da Maçonneria Adonhiramita



Source: Author's private collection.

enrich it with the ritual formalities of the first three Degrees, but to my regret I did not manage this. Since the old edition of the Compendium of Masonic Instructions is very rare, the current edition is much more worthy of a favorable reception.

In the above quotation, José Rodrigues Gonçalves Valle must have been referring to the compendia printed by Hipólito José da Costa in London two decades earlier, indicating that they still circulated in Fluminense lodges in the Regency. According to the translator, they needed to be expanded. This also demonstrates the durability and importance of the first rituals printed in Portuguese by Hipólito José da Costa in London.

Final considerations

These brief lines will bring to an end this study of the circulation and production of masonic rites in Brazil, one that is not intended to be definitive. Rather it is an attempt to identify books, as well as the agents which produced them, who largely did so anonymously.

However, some conclusions can be drawn. First, the increase in rituals and the number of roles that guided the initiates of masonic degrees reveals that in just three decades masonry changed from being a persecuted secret society in Portuguese America to the center of political power in the Brazilian Empire. Second, this centrality is also perceptible through the publication of these rituals, to the extent that they were done by subjects who having been previously persecuted now came to exercise great influence on governments and the state, such as the previously mentioned José Bernardino Baptista Pereira de Almeida Sodré, José Rodrigues Gonçalves Valle, Francisco Gê Acaiaba de Montezuma, and Januário da Cunha Barbosa, amongst others.

In relation to the material support for the rites, they became increasingly sophisticated. From rustic notebooks using rag paper, with manuscript translations, from 1832 onwards, they came to be produced with a high degree of technical and graphical care, particularly by French printers based in Rio de Janeiro.

The regency period thus offers a singular perspective on the production of the three masonic rites (Adonhiramite, French, and Scottish) then used by freemasons in Brazil, to the extent that, exclusively in that scenario, they were widely announced in newspapers and also accessed by non-initiate readers, who were curious about the mysteries of masonry. After the beginning of the Second Reign (1840-1889), which created a period of internal stability, the production of masonic rituals was continued, but in a more discrete manner, little accessible to non-initiate members.

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