

**José Pinto de Azeredo. *Essays on Some Maladies of Angola (1799).* Edited by Timothy Walker. Dartmouth: Tagus Press at UMass Dartmouth, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-933227-69-6**

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The Portuguese Atlantic Empire is the framework within which the book *Essays on Some Diseases of Angola (1799)* is inserted. It refers to a time when the attention of the Portuguese crown was increasingly focused on the Atlantic colonies in Africa and Brazil. Throughout the eighteenth century, there was a considerable increase in the slave trade, partly due to the discovery of the immense gold reserves of Minas Gerais (Boxer, 2011; Bethencourt and Curto, 2010). A policy of incentives was implemented to stimulate the production of knowledge about the natural potentialities of the colonies, mainly in relation to their medical elements (Walker, 2018; Conceição, 2018; Domingues, 2001). Within this context, after the expulsion of the Dutch invaders (1648) and until the end of the next century, Angola, whose main port was Luanda, became one of the Empire's most important strategic points (Bethencourt, 1997: 250-269).

As far as the colonies are concerned, the historiography of science has produced a large number of works about the formation of medical knowledge in these regions, largely since the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, with most emphasis being placed on the last quarter of the century. The main focus of such research has been the natural potentialities of the most important strategic territories of that period (i.e. Brazil and Africa).

From the beginning of the reign of Dom João V (1706-1750) onwards, there was a much wider circulation of agents, books, ideas, and correspondence in a variety of environments, not only in Portugal but also in the countries of northern Europe and in the colonies (Furtado, 2012). The different parts of the Portuguese Empire were connected by sea (Alencastro, 2010: 115-144) between them circulated not only commercial goods and slaves, but also texts and knowledge. Both logically and geographically, the Portuguese

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Empire can be considered either as a maritime system that created a social network linking many ports and small villages (Schwartz, 2010: 21-51) or as a network of maritime connections that supported the interests of the Crown's expansionist policies, whether mercantile, religious, or military (Thomaz, 2009: 13-57). From the sixteenth century onwards, this network promoted the circulation of information about the different natural potentialities of the colonies, especially those that were useful to medicine (Sanches and Abdalla, 2014: 183-187).

Angola was an important center within the Portuguese maritime complex, since its port served one of the main regions for the export of African slaves, mainly to Brazil (Alencastro, 2010: 115-144; Madeira-Santos, 2010). The ships not only transported slaves but also a series of goods. Many aspects of the connection between these two regions of the Empire (Brazil and Angola) have been extensively studied under the umbrella of Atlantic History, with emphasis being placed mainly on the slave trade and the circulation of consumer goods (Ferreira, 2012; Alencastro, 2010; Reis, Silva Jr., 2016; Richardson, Silva, 2014; Boxer, 2011). However, the transatlantic connection was not only linked to human trafficking and the trading of commercial products between the various points of the Atlantic Empire. Quite significantly, it also helped to spread diseases originating from various points in the Empire. To a certain extent, such diseases had to be recognized by physicians and required specific treatments, often involving the use of botanical components of local origin (Walker, 2009; Cook and Walker, 2013: 337-351; Abreu, 2012: 163-183).

This is the context within which this book, edited by Timothy D. Walker, together with Adelino Cardoso, António Braz de Oliveira, and Manuel Silvério Marques, is presented to us. It is definitely a fundamental tool for studying the life and work of those historical agents who produced treatises on medicine in early modern colonial Africa, including the Luso-Brazilian physician José Pinto de Azeredo (1764–1810). This book's most important contributions are related to the history of the production of medical and pharmaceutical knowledge within the Portuguese colonial spaces and the circulation of agents and knowledge between the two sides of the Atlantic Ocean, connecting Africa, Brazil, and Portugal. In addition to providing an English translation of Azeredo's treatise on medicine (1799), the book is composed of three analytical essays, each addressing different aspects of the author's work and life. With this careful and accurate translation, Walker and his collaborators have made an important contribution by bringing one of the most important medical texts of the late eighteenth century to a wider audience.

José Pinto de Azeredo was born in Brazil and studied in Europe. His academic career took him to many important educational centers, such as France, England, Scotland, and the Netherlands. In 1789, he was named Chief Physician in Angola, having moved to Luanda in 1790. Once in Africa, Azeredo worked mainly at the military hospital. Like many other scholars of the Old Regime, Azeredo wrote on a variety of different subjects and by offering his writings to important nobles, clergymen, politicians, or armchair savants, he expected to have his work recognized through a corresponding improvement in his own social position. Despite not having been recognized during his lifetime at the level of his own expectations, his writings are definitely important if we consider the late eighteenth-century intellectual panorama, which, in itself, testifies to the importance of this published translation.

The three essays that make up this book—namely “Medical inquiry in the Enlightenment-Era Portuguese Imperial World: Azeredo’s Scientific Publications in Context,” by Timothy D. Walker; “Describing and Explaining: The Systematic Horizon of the Essays by José Pinto de Azeredo,” by Adelino Cardoso; and “Shadows in the Enlightenment of Imperial Tropics: José Pinto de Azeredo’s *Enfermidades de Angola*,” by António Braz de Oliveira and Manuel Silvério Marques—provide us with a coherent analytical series of studies on Azeredo’s life and work as well as the historical contexts in which he operated in Africa, Brazil, and Europe.

In the first essay, Timothy Walker looks at the importance of the historical contexts surrounding both Azeredo and his work. According to Walker, “Azeredo’s work in Brazil and Angola is so compelling because he represents, and is a producer of, a watershed moment in Portuguese medical history” (Walker, 2016: 3). In his essay, Walker examines the most important characteristics of Azeredo’s writings by studying not only those produced in Angola but also those produced in Brazil, mainly in Rio de Janeiro. Walker establishes an interesting connection between Azeredo’s work and the political, economic, and scientific issues that dictated the Portuguese imperial strategy in that period, especially those relating to the production of scientific knowledge about the medicinal potentialities of plants from different parts of the Empire.

In the second essay, Adelino Cardoso leads the reader into a detailed analysis of Azeredo’s methods and theoretical references. In his essay, Cardoso seeks to demonstrate how close Azeredo’s work was to the ideals of the Enlightenment by offering a more rational approach to the Angolan diseases and their cures and causes, while, at the same time, searching for local knowledge and therapies based on local drugs. In his analysis,

Cardoso states that Azeredo was able to detach himself from the mystical and religious patterns that characterized medicinal practices in Angola by adopting a more scientific understanding in which "... the art in the Science of medicine calls attention to organic, psychosocial, and anthropological factors that imply a conception of medicine as natural and social Science" (Cardoso, 2016: 28).

The last essay is composed of two different but complementary parts. In the first one, by António Braz de Oliveira, the reader is given details of José Pinto de Azeredo's both personal and professional pathways. By describing the time that he spent studying at the major European centers, Oliveira seeks to demonstrate the important role that the physician played during that period, mainly by analyzing how his personal networks may have influenced his writings and medical practice. Finally, in the second part, written by Manuel Silvério Marques, there is a precise discussion about theories and theorists who may, in some way, have influenced Azeredo's scientific and political choices. Marques also presents his readers with details about some of Azeredo's choices linked to both his observation methods and his experimentation. Marques ends his essay by pointing out that Azeredo's work is definitely an important source for a better understanding of the processes of constructing medical knowledge in Angola, as well as for gaining a wider knowledge of the formation of modern medical thinking.

Therefore, *Essays on Some Maladies of Angola* is not only a compendium in which the authors report on diseases and their possible methods of cure. Most of all, Azeredo's treatise establishes a series of theses on the most common diseases in Africa: Fevers of Angola; Intermittent Fevers; Dysenteries of Angola; and Tetanus in Angola. José Pinto de Azeredo provides his readers with a historical narrative about Angolan diseases and their causes and possible treatments.

*Essays* is a complete narrative treatise, compiled by a physician who not only demonstrated the specific knowledge of his own field of work but also established a connection with the scientific thinking of his time. These are the key concepts in the analysis of Timothy D. Walker, Adelino Cardoso, António Braz de Oliveira, and Manuel Silvério Marques. According to them, Azeredo's work is a crucial historical source for sociologists, philosophers, and historians of science if their aim is to provide a better understanding of the processes involved in the construction of medical knowledge both in Angola and in the Portuguese Atlantic Empire during the eighteenth century.

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