



**Seraphic pedagogy and the Franciscan iconography of instruction: novices formation structure and the Order's medieval doctors' representations in the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province convents (Bahia and Pernambuco - 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>1</sup>**

A pedagogia seráfica e a iconografia franciscana da instrução: estrutura da formação dos noviços e representações dos doutores medievais da Ordem nos conventos da Província de Santo Antônio do Brasil (Bahia e Pernambuco – séculos XVII e XVIII)

Pedagogía seráfica e iconografía franciscana de la instrucción: estructura de la formación de novicios y representaciones de doctores medievales de la Orden en los conventos de la Provincia de San Antonio de Brasil (Bahía y Pernambuco – siglos XVII y XVIII)

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**Abstract**

This paper intends to analyse the successive layers of meanings and the importance attributed to images by the seraphics, and the extent to which such representations are ingrained in the reinforcement of their practices of instructional and spiritual formation developed in the intramural space throughout the colonial period, especially at the height of their performance, that is, from the 1600s to the 1700s. The research developed so far has already shown the existence of a visual discourse made specifically for the faithful, and another, more intellectualized and personalized, but aimed at exalting the Order intellectuals and medieval theologians in convent spaces restricted to novices in formation and professed religious. The text discusses the permanence of pre-Tridentine structures and norms in Seraphic Pedagogy crystallized in the Provincial and *General Statutes*, comparing these documents with the collection of the libraries of the convents that received the novices, also analysing some images and representations of the medieval Franciscan theologians in the reading and teaching spaces frequented by the religious in formation. This paper discusses the relationship between such images – especially those of Scotus and Ockham – and the instructional norms in the *Statutes* of the Saint Anthony of Brazil Custody/ Province and in higher legislation, such as the 1622 *Barcelona Statutes* and the 1501, 1598 and 1651 versions of the *Statuta Generalia*, as well as the scope of the permanence of scholastic precepts, even after the Tridentine prescriptions for changes in the educational formation of the Roman Catholic religious orders.

**Keywords:** Convent Literacy; Seraphic Pedagogy; Portuguese America.

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<sup>1</sup> English version by the author herself.

## Resumen

Este artículo se propone analizar las sucesivas capas de significados y la importancia atribuida a las imágenes por los seráficos, y en qué medida estas representaciones se arraigaron en el reforzamiento de sus prácticas de formación instruccional y espiritual desarrolladas en el espacio intramuros durante la época colonial, especialmente entre los siglos XVII y XVIII. Las investigaciones realizadas hasta el momento ya han puesto de manifiesto que es posible identificar la existencia de un discurso visual realizado específicamente para los fieles, y otro, más intelectualizado y personalizado, destinado a exaltar a los intelectuales y teólogos medievales de la orden en espacios conventuales restringidos a novicios en formación y religiosos profesos. Se pretende discutir la permanencia de estructuras y normas pretridentinas en la Pedagogía Seráfica cristalizadas en los *Estatutos Generales y Provinciales*, comparándolos con el acervo de las librerías de los conventos que acogían a los novicios, analizando también algunas representaciones de los teólogos medievales de la Orden presentes en los espacios de lectura y enseñanza frecuentados por franciscanos en formación. También se discute la relación entre tales imágenes – especialmente las de Escoto y Ockham – y las normas instructivas presentes en los *Estatutos* de la Custodia/ Provincia de San Antonio de Brasil y en legislaciones superiores, como los *Estatutos de Barcelona*, de 1622, y los *Statuta Generalia* de 1501, 1598 y 1651, además de la permanencia de los preceptos escolásticos, incluso después de las determinaciones tridentinas de cambios en el proceso educativo de las órdenes religiosas católicas romanas.

**Palabras Clave:** Instrucción Conventual; Pedagogía Seráfica; América portuguesa.

## Resumo

Este artigo pretende analisar as sucessivas camadas de significados e a importância atribuída às imagens pelos seráficos, e o tanto que tais representações se entranharam no reforço de suas práticas de formação instrucional e espiritual desenvolvidas no espaço intramuros ao longo do período colonial, especialmente no entre o seiscentos e o setecentos. As pesquisas desenvolvidas até o momento já demonstraram ser possível identificar a existência de um discurso visual feito especificamente para os fiéis, e outro, mais intelectualizado e personalizado, voltado a exaltar os intelectuais e teólogos medievais da ordem em espaços conventuais de circulação restrita apenas a noviços em formação e religiosos professores. Se pretende discutir a permanência de estruturas e normatizações pré-tridentinas na Pedagogia Seráfica cristalizada nos *Estatutos Gerais* e da Província, cotejando-os com o acervo das livrarias dos conventos que recebiam os noviços, analisando também algumas representações dos teólogos medievais da Ordem presentes nos espaços de leitura e ensino frequentados pelos franciscanos em formação. Se discute a relação existente entre tais imagens – especialmente as de Scotus e Ockham – e as normas instrucionais presentes nos *Estatutos* da Custódia/ Província de Santo Antônio do Brasil e em legislações superiores, como os *Estatutos de Barcelona*, de 1622, e os *Statuta Generalia* de 1501, 1598 e 1651, além da permanência dos preceitos escolásticos, mesmo depois das determinações tridentinas para que se operassem mudanças no processo instrucional formativo das ordens religiosas católicas romanas.

**Palavras Chave:** Instrução Intramuros; Pedagogia Seráfica; América Portuguesa.

## As an introit

Delving into the realm of Franciscan iconography in Portuguese America reveals a fascinating journey through successive layers of meanings and the significance attributed to images by the seraphics<sup>2</sup>. It becomes evident how these representations were deeply rooted in reinforcing their practices of instructional and spiritual formation within the confines of the colonial period, particularly during its peak in the seventeenth century.

It is noteworthy that a specific visual discourse tailored for the faithful emerges, highly catechetical and allegorical. This discourse adhered to Tridentine decrees, employing images of saints and blessed as models of conduct and intermediaries between the earthly realm and the sacred sphere. This discourse found prominence in the most public areas of the convents, including the entrance, chapels, convent church, and cloister. Simultaneously, a more intellectualized and personalized discourse existed, also emphasizing models of conduct but aimed at glorifying intellectuals and theologians of the order. This discourse was confined to convent spaces with restricted access, reserved for novices in formation and professed religious.

It is essential to note, before a deeper analysis of the relationship between religious instruction and iconography in the Franciscan convents of the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province, that the Order of Friars Minor, in theory at least, was expected to implement a minor reform in the operational structure of its intramural classes. This reform was to align with the directives set forth by the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

Up until the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the instructional framework within the Franciscan Order in Europe remained largely unchanged from its origins in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It had evolved alongside the Order's expansion, marked by the founding of numerous convents, establishment of provinces and custodies, and its significant presence in some of the leading medieval European universities, particularly in Paris and Oxford<sup>3</sup>.

In the context of the custodians and provinces established in the New World, Asia, and Africa, there was a clear adherence to the established model. However, my primary focus in this analysis is the persistent presence of pre-Tridentine structures and regulations within what is referred to as Seraphic Pedagogy, as outlined in the *Saint Anthony of Brazil Province Statutes*. This document, published in two versions in Lisbon in 1683 and 1709, delves into the training and formation of novices across several chapters<sup>4</sup>, along with provisions present in the

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<sup>2</sup> The term “seraphic” serves as a synonym for “Franciscan”, referencing the vision Francesco de Assisi had about two years before his death. In this vision, he saw Christ crucified with seraphim wings emerging from the wounds caused by the nails of the cross and the spear of the Roman soldier in his side. These wounds emitted five red rays, leading to the stigmatization of the founder of the Order of Friars Minor. This profound episode took place during a retreat held by the Italian friar on Monte Alverne (Della Verna), north of Arezzo, central Italy, in mid-September 1224. This event has been widely depicted in religious iconography representing Francesco's life and is featured in the works of renowned artists spanning from the pre-Renaissance to the Baroque periods, including Cenni di Petro [Giovanni] Cimabué (c.1240-1302), Giotto di Bondone (c. 1267-1337), Fra [Giovanni da Fiesole] Angelico (1395-1455), Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494), [Michelangelo Merisi da] Caravaggio (1571-1610), Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652), and Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664).

<sup>3</sup> To delve into the formation of the educational structure of the Franciscans during the Middle Ages, refer to the works of Roest (2000, 2015a) and Şenocak (2012a).

<sup>4</sup> Both versions encompass directives concerning intramural instruction in the Province's convents. Preceding these, there were custodial *Statutes* and notes or orders specific to Brazil, with handwritten copies preserved in the National Archives of Torre do Tombo, Lisbon. These documents were noted in the minutes of chapters conducted by the Saint Anthony of Lisbon Province in various Portuguese convents from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The 1683 *Statutes* lack details about the selection of grammar masters and lectures and are more

Province's Chapter Acts concerning instructional matters<sup>5</sup>. I intend to compare these documents with the Order's 1651 *Statuta Generalia*<sup>6</sup> and some earlier versions. Simultaneously, I will explore the contents of the conventual libraries within the establishments that hosted novices for training. Additionally, I plan to analyze specific significant images and representations of medieval doctors and theologians of the Order found in the reading and instructional spaces frequented by Franciscans in training.

### **The Franciscans and Education: The Studies and Formation of Friars from the Middle Ages to Modernity**

Contrary to common belief, not just in Brazil but globally, the friars of Assisi have always had a significant presence in the field of education. Despite the founder's early intentions associating dedication to studies and erudition with a threat to the simplicity he had idealized as a pillar of his rule<sup>7</sup> – grounded in detachment from worldly possessions and complete surrender to poverty as prerequisites for their evangelizing mission – the Franciscans embraced education as a means to equip their friars for their religious duties by the first decades of their institutionalization in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The connection between the seraphic brothers and erudition was not initially Francesco's intention. Despite his literacy and love for poetry and music, he lacked extensive knowledge in Theology. Francesco only acknowledged the need for his first *compagni* to be more educated in Theology when he found Brother Antônio, a Lisbon native supposedly from a privileged background in Coimbra, where he had previously been an Augustinian and was renowned for his mastery of doctrine. Antônio took charge of theological studies under Francesco's guidance. In the realm of sacred literature, Francesco's expertise extended only to texts commonly known by those from his social stratum: the Gospels, select books from the Old Testament, prayers, chronicles, saints' lives, a range of literature circulated in handwritten copies, books of hours, illuminated psalters, and a few rudimentary woodcuts.

During that era, literacy was prevalent among the feudal nobility and the emerging merchant bourgeoisie, both of which the Bernardone family was part of, primarily through religious texts. Francesco himself attended a school<sup>8</sup> near the Church of San Giorgio, close to

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concise in sections related to novice training. Consequently, in discussions and examples focusing on Portuguese America within this paper, the emphasis primarily falls on the 1709 version, which is readily accessible online and can be downloaded from the Portugal National Digital Library collection (ESTATUTOS, 1709, p. 31-39).

<sup>5</sup> ATAS, 1970, p. 92-222.

<sup>6</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 61-74.

<sup>7</sup> This recurring theme is found in several biographies written during the first century after Francesco's death and canonization, which occurred in the third decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Fr. Tommaso da Celano penned the *Vita Prima* (1228/1229), the *Vita Secunda* (1246/1247), and the *Trattato dei Miracoli* (1247/1257). Fr. Bonaventura da Bagnoregio, the General Minister of the order, commissioned the *Leggenda Maggiore*, approved at the General Chapter of Pisa in 1263. The same initial stance of Francesco, his aversion to erudition and in-depth studies, is evident in significant anonymous texts of Franciscan hagiography, such as the *Leggenda Perugina* (c. 1311), the *Leggenda dei Tre Compagni*, written under the commission of the General Chapter of Genoa in 1244, and the *Fioretti di San Francesco* (14<sup>th</sup> century). For a comprehensive biography of Francesco, grounded in extensive research into these sources, where this choice by the founder to reject intellectual erudition clearly emerges as a personal pursuit of a simple life, closer to the precepts of the Gospel and constituting a central issue in the order's internal disputes during the process of defining its *Regula Bullata*, approved by Pope Honorius III in 1223, refer to: FRUGONI, 2011, p. 102-125.

<sup>8</sup> FRUGONI, 2011, p. 18.

his family home<sup>9</sup>. Although he held theologians in high regard, Francesco believed his *compagni* did not necessarily need to be intellectuals but rather a “brotherhood of joyful minstrels of apostolic life”<sup>10</sup>.

When did the shift occur in the Franciscan mission? If the founder of the order envisioned his brotherhood not as future theologians, but as passionate and joyful advocates of the simplest teachings of Christ, ones that could be imparted through examples, actions, and daily practices, when did it become imperative for the followers of Assisi to invest in intellectual training and even erudition for their religious pursuits?

It is a historical fact that within a mere 80 years after the formation of the initial group of brothers near the ruins of the little church of San Damiano in Assisi, members of the Franciscan order were already associated with some of Europe’s most prominent university centres, including Paris, Oxford, Cologne, Padua, and Salamanca. Remarkably, figures like John Duns Scotus<sup>11</sup> and William of Ockham<sup>12</sup>, not only became esteemed doctors of Theology within the order but also elevated the reputation of Franciscan *Studia Generalia* in Paris, Cologne (Scotus), and Oxford (Ockham).

The necessity for appointing a *Magister Grammaticæ*<sup>13</sup> in the larger Franciscan convents began to arise in the Provincial Statutes during the late Middle Ages. This need stemmed from the increasing difficulty in finding novices proficient in Latin, a fundamental prerequisite for initiating studies in the novitiate<sup>14</sup>. In the year 1500, during the General Chapter of Terni, presided over by Fr. Egidio Delfini – the recently elected Minister General renowned for his reformist fervour and curbing separatist tendencies within the Observants<sup>15</sup> – this requirement was officially incorporated into the new *General Statutes*, famously known as the *Statuta Alexandrina*. These statutes received papal ratification from Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) on March 13, 1501. The specific clause from these *General Statutes* reads as follows:

It is mandated that masters of [Latin] Grammar be appointed in the principal convents to instruct the young residents. Additionally, a master of singing should be appointed. Furthermore, every Guardian, under the penalty of losing his office, must ensure the presence of

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<sup>9</sup> The Church of San Giorgio stood approximately 200 meters from the Bernardone family home and served as Francesco’s initial resting place before his remains were transferred to the future Franciscan Basilica. It was in this church that his body was found to be intact a few months before his canonization, which occurred less than two years after his death on July 6, 1228. In the subsequent decades, the original structure of San Giorgio underwent significant expansion, transforming into a chapel of the Basilica of Santa Clara. This expansion, completed in 1265, aimed to house the relics of the first Franciscan sister, who was also interred in the old church on August 12, 1253.

<sup>10</sup> ŠENOCAK, 2012 a, p. 02.

<sup>11</sup> It is believed he was born during the winter of 1265-1266, between late December 1265 and mid-March 1266. He hailed from a prominent family in the Duns Castle region, Berwickshire, Scotland, and was earmarked early on for religious studies, which he pursued at the Franciscan *Studium Generale* of St. Ebbe’s Church in Oxford. He took his vows at St. Andrew in Northampton, England, on March 17, 1291, and passed away in Cologne in 1308 (MINGES, 1909; WILLIAMS, 2013, p. 18-19).

<sup>12</sup> Born in Ockham, Surrey, England, in 1287, he received his education at the Franciscan convent in London. He is believed to have briefly attended the *Studium Generale* in Oxford between 1309 and 1321 as an observer, although he never completed the exams to work as a lecturer. He passed away in Munich in 1347 (TURNER, 1912; COURTENAY, 2006, p. 17-30).

<sup>13</sup> In general terms, a master, selected from the most experienced and suitable friars, responsible for leading a Latin Grammar class and guiding the moral formation of the novices.

<sup>14</sup> ROEST, 2015 a, p. 135.

<sup>15</sup> WALSH, 1988, s./p.

young novices in his Convent if the Minister or Custodian requests it. These novices should be instructed in grammar, and when appropriate, sent beyond the convent walls to propagate the faith and bring honour to the Order.<sup>16</sup>

It is fascinating to observe that despite the ongoing disputes and debates within the Franciscan community, particularly involving the Observants' restrictions on intellectual pursuits for friars, especially those engaged in teaching at the *Studia Generalia* and European universities, a dilemma that had persisted since the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and lasted even after the internal schism of 1517<sup>17</sup>, the practice of creating the role of *Magister Grammaticæ* within convents continued to be an integral part of provincial and seraphic custodial regulations throughout the Modern Age. This tradition extended to the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province, as outlined in their Statutes and further clarified in their second printed version of 1709:

To ensure that students embarking on Philosophy studies are proficient grammarians, we decree the establishment of a Grammar study at the Convent of our Father Saint Francis in the City of Paraíba. Grammar serves as the foundation for most sciences. The Brother Minister, during his visits, will select ten or twelve Religious who display talent and aptitude for advanced studies. The chosen friar will serve as the Master of the Grammar study, exempted from all Choir duties and convent obligations, and will provide explanations to the disciples.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1683 version, there was only one chapter detailing provisions for the “Scholastic Order”<sup>19</sup>. It outlined study and prayer hours, “days of soeto”<sup>20</sup>, in a somewhat simplified version compared to the 1709 rendition. It also defined the conditions under which novices could leave the convents, always accompanied by experienced and suitable friars, and described how the conclusions of their studies should be conducted. These conclusions involved public debates and could occur monthly<sup>21</sup>. If the 1683 Statutes were silent on instructional matters, the friars were instructed to refer to the Order’s General Statutes, formulated and established in Latin during the general chapters. In the initial years of the Custody’s formation, the reformed *Statuta Generalia* published in 1598<sup>22</sup>, established in the 1593 General Chapter in Valladolid under the coordination of General Minister Fr. Boaventura Calategerona. Despite subsequent changes and

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<sup>16</sup> INCIPIUNT, 1650, p. 151. Free translation, conducted by me. Original text in Latin: “[...] Ordinatur insuper, ut omnes Conventus principales grammaticæ Magistrum, pro iuvenum instructione, teneant; similiter, & magister cantus, & quilibet Gardianus, sub poena privationis officii sui, de facto debeat in suo Conventu aliquos iuenculos retinere, si a Ministro, aut a Custode fuerit requisitus, & in studio grammaticæ enutrire, etiam extra Conventum transmittendo cum Religionis honore quoties oportuerit”.

<sup>17</sup> For a deeper understanding of the Franciscan Observance movement in Portugal, particularly its origins in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and consolidation in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, refer to: TEIXEIRA, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> ESTATUTOS, 1709, p. 31. Free translation, completed by me, from the original 18th-century Portuguese text.

<sup>19</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1683, p. 30-35.

<sup>20</sup> In the language commonly used in Portugal and its colonies until the 1800s, synonymous with days off.

<sup>21</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1683, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> STATVTA, 1598, *passim*.

additions<sup>23</sup>, including those in the 1651 *Statuta*, any issues omitted in the 1683 and 1709 *Statutes* of the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province had to align with these regulations.

In the realm of defining masters of Latin Grammar, masters of novices<sup>24</sup> and lecturers of Theology and Philosophy, the regulations outlined in the Order *General Statutes* remained in force until 1709, at which point these rules were incorporated in a more explicit and comprehensive manner into the provincial *Statutes*. This implies that throughout the Custody years, particularly after its transformation into a Province in 1657, the friars in Portuguese America adhered to elevated standards when selecting individuals to teach both within and outside the convent walls. This practice persisted at least until the publication of the 1709 document, considering that the 1683 *Statutes* merely briefly mentioned the method of selecting novice masters<sup>25</sup>.

Interestingly, the roles of masters, especially in the early days of the Custody in 1584, were not even mentioned in the *General Statutes* established for the Reform of the Observants during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Order General Chapter held in Valladolid at the Saint Francis Convent on June 5, 1593<sup>26</sup>. These *General Statutes*, published exactly two years later in Rome with the explicit approval of the Order's General Minister, Fr. Boaventura Catalagerona, primarily focused on the internal disputes between Observants and Conventuals. They extensively detailed aspects of monastic life, daily functions, hierarchical structures within religious houses, as well as the process of admission to the Order and novitiate. However, scholastic life, the selection of masters and lecturers, were not even mentioned. The only reference to a friar's role as a master was concerning a novice's future after making perpetual vows: "[...] destined to be a Master, approved in religion, wise, and advanced in age: to teach through words and examples, Christian doctrine, the Rule's precepts, the Religion's ceremonies, moral integrity, and spiritual purity"<sup>27</sup>.

It was not until the Intermediate General Congregation of Cismontane<sup>28</sup>, convened after the 66<sup>th</sup> General Chapter at the Convent of Saint Francis of Segovia, Spain, during the feast of Pentecost in 1621<sup>29</sup>, that the new *Barcelona Regular Observance General Statutes*<sup>30</sup> began to explicitly address questions related to novice masters and lecturers in Theology and Arts:

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<sup>23</sup> The Franciscan tradition, as per their *General Statutes*, involved making alterations or deletions to the main text only when deemed necessary, during the general chapters. Therefore, if no changes or new decisions were made on a specific topic, the last approved rule remained valid, even if it was found in previous *General Statutes*.

<sup>24</sup> In this instance, the 1683 *Statutes* contain Chapter III, titled "On the houses in which there must be novices, & on their Masters", with concise instructions regarding the selection of these individuals for the novice role. In case of doubts or omissions, the rules continued to refer to higher *Statutes* (ESTATVTOS, 1683, p. 11-12).

<sup>25</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1683, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> INCIPIUNT, 1650, p. 361.

<sup>27</sup> INCIPIUNT, 1650, p. 504. Original text in Latin: "[...] Magister destinetur, approbatus in Religione, prudens, discretus, & ætate prouectus: qui eos doceat verbo, & exemplo, christianam doctrinam, Regulæ præcepta, ceremonias Religionis, morum candorem, & Animi puritatem".

<sup>28</sup> The Cismontane Family encompassed the Observants of Italy, the Iberian Peninsula (including territories under the jurisdiction of their Crowns, particularly in Portuguese America and the Indies of New Spain, spanning from Peru to Mexico), and the Adriatic region. In contrast, the Ultramontane Family referred to the Observants from "beyond the Alps", comprising friars from the rest of Europe, the Holy Land, and Argentina (ESTATVTOS, 1622, p. 89-92).

<sup>29</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1622, "Prologo", s./p.

<sup>30</sup> Named after the inaugural specific statute of the Cismontane Observants, established during the 1451 General Chapter convened at the Saint Mary of Jesus Convent in Barcelona, this term denotes their distinctive identity within the Franciscan order (ESTATVTOS, 1622, "Prologo", s./p.).

## Regarding Novice Masters.

1 We hereby decree that in each Novices' Convent, a designated Master shall be appointed, whose responsibility is to instruct them in discretion, piety, and serve as a confessor to secular individuals, or at the very least, to the friars within the order.

2 The Master shall administer confessions for all Novices and demonstrate diligence in participating with them in all communal religious activities. He should not leave the premises except for pressing matters, and the Prelate shall not assign him duties that hinder his assistance to the Novices. On the contrary, the Prelates should facilitate his tasks essential to his ministry.

3 Any friar refusing the position of Novice Master shall be barred from legitimate duties for a year. Conversely, those who hold the role of Novice Masters, with the approval of their fellow friars, may be promoted to higher positions by the Prelates.<sup>31</sup>

Regarding Theology and Arts lecturers, the *Barcelona Statutes* did not dedicate a specific section to them. However, these roles were addressed within the broader context of education in the "On Study" section, consisting of nineteen articles. This section not only outlined the norms and curriculum for the instruction and religious formation of novices in observant Franciscan convents but also delved into the guidelines for the performance and selection of Theology and Arts lecturers in religious houses. Given their significance, it seems pertinent to include a portion of these regulations here. This inclusion provides valuable insights into the meticulous considerations of the Cismontane seraphics concerning the education of their members and, more importantly, the careful selection of individuals entrusted with this responsibility:

## On Study.

1 It is mandated to encourage those inclined towards the noble pursuit of knowledge. In each Province and Custody, there must be designated study centres in Convents, as determined by the Provincial Chapter. These centres are essential for instructing Friars in foundational sciences and sacred Theology. Provincial Ministers are tasked with vigilantly ensuring that Guardians and other leaders adhere to this directive.

2 Hence, any Province lacking a minimum of three Convents dedicated to the study of Grammar, Arts, and Theology shall forfeit its provincial status, reverting to a Custody. Such a demoted entity should seek assistance from another Province capable of providing it with Confessors, Priests, and erudite Preachers.

3 In accordance with the decrees of the sacred Council of Trent, which dictate the inclusion of a lesson in sacred Scripture within Religious Convents (where feasible), we stipulate that in all Convents of our sacred Order (where scholastic Theology cannot be accommodated), lessons in Moral Theology should be conducted. These lessons will cover intricate matters of conscience and must be attended by all the Priests of the Convent at times specified by the Guardian, no less than three times each week. Ministers are entrusted with the responsibility

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<sup>31</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1622, p. 6. Free translation, completed by me, from the original 17th-century Spanish text.



of penalizing neglectful members during their visits. Guardians found in breach of this statute will face suspension from their duties for a duration of four months for the first offense, escalating to permanent removal for subsequent violations.

4 We earnestly beseech all the esteemed Prelates of our Order that those aspiring to academic pursuits must, above all else, exhibit devoutness, moral integrity, and aptitude, with a preference for younger candidates. It is incumbent upon our Order to support these dedicated scholars wholeheartedly. This support includes providing them with essential materials such as books and other resources, ensuring they have the means to pursue knowledge comfortably. This endeavour is not only in service to God but also in defence of the Catholic Faith, the honour of our Order, and illumination for the people. Therefore, it is our solemn duty to assist those engaged in the pursuit of knowledge.

[...]

7 No one shall be admitted to the study of Arts without undergoing a prior examination in the Latin language and demonstrating sufficient proficiency. Likewise, admission to Theology necessitates passing an examination in Philosophy. Those found lacking in skills must be barred from further study and may not be readmitted. Provincials failing to implement this rule will be suspended from their duties for a period of four months.

8 Concerning Lecturers, we decree, in accordance with the Tridentine Council, that the most deserving individuals be appointed during the General or Provincial Chapter. No one shall assume the role of Lecturer without undergoing examination in both knowledge and character by the Provincial and Definitors, and their appointment must be confirmed by their votes and consent.

9 No study of Theology shall have more than two Lecturers and one Master of students, unless the Minister or General Commissioner deems otherwise for justifiable reasons.

10 Recognizing the value of scholastic conferences, particularly between Doctor Subtil and others, which have consistently proven beneficial for the Church and Religion, fostering intellectual growth and preserving truth, we instruct all Theology Lecturers to diligently teach and defend Scotus' doctrines. They must explain his opinions with utmost care and precision.

11 If a lesson from the Seraphic Doctor Saint Bonaventure is incorporated into the studies of sacred Theology, it shall be regarded as highly appropriate and beneficial.

12 Lecturers are encouraged to conduct thorough and extended courses. By dedicating ample time to their studies, students can acquire a comprehensive understanding of scholastic doctrine. This method, historically followed by many successful scholars, should be maintained.

13 The Theology Lecturers are expected to complete their course within three years, delivering lessons for seven consecutive months. One session should be held in the morning and another in the afternoon. All other literary exercises shall adhere to the customs of the respective Provinces.

14 To ensure the selection of the most deserving Arts Lecturers without personal biases, it is determined that after their selection in the Chapter or congregation by the definitory, those deemed most suitable in both scholarship and virtue shall undergo opposition. This involves defending the material given to them in front of the Provincial Minister, at least two Definitors, and an equal number of retired or current Theology Lecturers. After the arguments, those judged most suitable by the majority of the aforementioned Fathers shall be duly appointed as Arts Lecturers.

15 The appointed Lecturers shall teach the essentials required for entry into Theology for a period of three years. They must select the most suitable authors, aligning with Scotus' doctrines, which we consider highly beneficial and necessary. Compliance with this directive is mandatory. [...] <sup>32</sup>

The influence of the medieval scholastic method on the formation of novices and the selection of Lecturers is unmistakably evident in the *Barcelona Statutes*, despite their references to Tridentine determinations. This influence is particularly notable in the structuring of classes for novices, outlined both in terms of their daily schedules, following the methods of Duns Scotus and Bonaventure, and the content of their teachings. Additionally, the method of selecting Lecturers, involving public arguments akin to *disputatio* or *opositiones*, is deeply rooted in medieval scholastic traditions.

In contrast, the 1651 *Statuta Generalia* provides a more detailed account of these aspects in its section dedicated to the Cismontane Family. Chapter I, titled “De Studiis Scholasticis”, delves into this topic across four paragraphs: § I, “De modo quo erigenda sunt Studia Scholastica”; § II, “De modo instituendi Lectores Artium”; § III, “De Lectoribus Sacrae Theologiae”; and § IV, “De disciplina observanda in Collegiis Studentium”. While the essence present in the *Barcelona Statutes* is maintained, there is a noticeable increase in attention to the definition of the lecturers' selection process and the guidelines for their teaching methods:

## CHAPTER I On Scholastic Studies

### §. I.

#### Establishment of Scholastic Studies.

1 In these times, the ancient practice of sending Lecturers and young Students to different Studies outside their Provinces has led to numerous inconveniences, contrary to the purity of our Rule and to the detriment of literature and our Profession. Therefore, the General Chapter decrees that students should not be instructed according to this practice. Lecturers should not leave their own Provinces to teach unless compelled by urgent need.

2 Each Province has the authority to appoint Lecturers in both Arts and Sacred Theology within their respective Provinces, based on the merit of the candidates' knowledge and character. These appointments can be made in the Chapter or Provincial Congregation.

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<sup>32</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1622, p. 30-32. Free translation completed by me from the original 17th-century Spanish text.

3 However, if Lecturers of exceptional behavior and knowledge emerge, either in the Roman Curia or elsewhere, who can significantly benefit the common interest, the General Superiors have the authority to appoint them where they are most needed.

4 Each Province must establish two Seminaries or Colleges for the Liberal Arts Course and at least two for the Sacred Theology Course in suitable locations where Students and Lecturers can engage in intellectual discourse.

5 For Provinces lacking teachers and for Students residing among non-Christians, the General Superiors are responsible for providing suitable solutions.

## §. II.

### Selection of Arts Lecturers.

1 The institution of Arts Lecturers, vital for the development of scholastic studies, demands careful consideration and oversight.

2 Arts Lecturers must be chosen through a vote by the Definitory after a prior public discussion by the Fathers, ensuring the Lecturers' suitability.

3 Knowledgeable and morally upright teachers will conduct the arguments, which will be appointed by the Definitory of the Province during the Chapter or Provincial Congregation.

4 Any student who has completed studies in Logic, Physics, and Theology may participate in the argument, unless found to be grossly incompetent or morally corrupt.

5 Judges, including the Provincial Minister, the entire Definitory, and two experienced Retired Lecturers, will oversee the selection of Arts Lecturers. The argument will be held in a designated convent, chosen for its convenience.

6 The topics for the argument will be based on predetermined points selected from the books of Porphyry's Predications, Aristotle's Metaphysics, and Physics. Candidates will choose a topic and argue their points within twenty-four hours.

[...]

## §. III.

### On Sacred Theology Lecturers.

1 Sacred Theology Lecturers will be appointed in the Chapter or Provincial Congregation, following the Council of Trent's guidelines. No one may be appointed without demonstrating proficiency in Arts Lectureship.

2 Theology Lecturers must teach continuously, hold daily Conferences, conduct Public Conclusions monthly, and publish writings annually.

[...]

## §. IV.

## Discipline in Student Colleges.

[...]

If Seminaries or Colleges are situated in regions where regular alms are insufficient to support the Students, Provincial Ministers should arrange for Lecturers from other Convents. Fostering excellent Studies reflects the greatest glory of their Province.

[...]

4 Teaching solely from the text, according to Scotus, is the most effective discipline, as it avoids recent disputes in the schools. Besides, it is unsuitable for instructing young minds, a task best handled by experienced teachers.

5 Henceforth, Arts Lecturers will teach through dictation or provide printed books from approved Doctors, in alignment with Scotus's approach.

[...]<sup>33</sup>


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<sup>33</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 72-73. Free translation, conducted by me. Original text in Latin: "CAPUT I// De Studiis Scholasticis// §. I// De modo quo erigenda sunt Studia Scholastica// 1 Quoniaun ex vetusta consuetudine transmittendi Lectores, & Studentes juvenes ad diversa Studia extra Provincias proprias, plura experiuntur incommoda his temporibus contra puritatem nostræ Regulæ in perniciem litterarum, & Professionis nostræ, ideo Capitulum Generale mandat, ne post hac studentes gratia discendi: neque Lectores causa docendi exeant à Provincia propria ad demorandum in aliena, nisi ex urgente necessitate. // 2 Omnes Provinciæ habent facultatem instituendi pro suis Provinciis respectivè Lectores Artium, necnon Sacræ Theologiæ in Capitulo, aut Congregatione Provinciali juxta meritum doctrinæ, & morum Fratrum instituendorum. // 3 Attamen si aliqui apparent Lectores, ita insignes moribus, & eruditione, quod in Curia Romana, vel alibi possint prosicere utilitati communi, Superiores Generales poterunt assignare illos, ubi meliùs noverint prosecturos. // 4 Singulæ Provinciæ assignabunt duo Seminaria, seu Collegia pro Lectura Artium Liberalium, & alia duo, ad minus, pro Lectura Sacræ Theologiæ, in locis idoneis, ubi Studentes, & Lectores possint conferentiis extraneorum exerceri. // 5 Pro Provinciæ quæ Magistris egent, & pro Studentibus Provinciarum, quæ degunt inter Infideles, Superiores Generales provideant. // §. II. // De modo instituendi Lectores Artium. // 1 Quia incrementa studiorum in re scholastica præcipue proveniunt ex optima instructione juventutis in Artibus Liberalibus, idè institutio Lectorum Artium debet sieri summa cura, & providentia. // 2 Qua propter Lectores Artium instituuntur deinceps per suffragia Diffinitorum, & Patrum prævia oppositione publica, per quam certò constet de idoneitate Lectorum. // 3 Hæc oppositio debet sieri à peritioribus, & probatioribus scholasticis, doctrina, & moribus; hos autem Oppositores nominabit Diffinitorium Prvinciæ in Capitulo, seu Congregatione Provinciali. // 4 Nullus Scholasticus, qui iam perfecit Studia Logica, Physica, & Theologica excludendus est ab oppositione, nisi notoriè constet esse inhabilem, aut imperitia, aut morum pravitate. // 5 Judices ad eligendum Lectores Artium assignantur: Minister Provincialis cum integro Diffinitorio omnes Patres qui fuerint Provinciales, & duo Lectores Jubilati antiquiores in Jubilatione. Oppositio celebranda est in Conventu assignando à Ministro Provinciali, ubi commodiùs possint Judices convenire. // 6 Oppositoribus assignanda sunt puncta coram Judicibus super quæ instituenda est electio oppositionis. Puncta verò assignantur aperiendo primò librum Prædicabilium Porphyrii, secundò aperiendo librum metaphysicæ Aristotelis, & tertio aperiendo librum physicorum ejusdem, & notatis punctis, quæ sorte contigerunt, Oppositor eliget unum extribus, quod sibi magis placuerit ad explicandum; & legendum intra spatium temporis viginti quatuor horarum. // [...] // §. III. // De Lectoribus Sacræ Theologiæ. // 1 Lectores Sacræ Theologiæ instituendi sunt in Capitulo, vel in Congregatione Provinciali juxta ordinationem Concilii Tridentini. Attamen nullus institui possit quin primò in Lectoratu Artium exhibuerit specimen suæ idoneitatis. // 2 Lectores Theologiæ debent legere continuò indefessa manu, habere singulis diebus Conferentias, & singulis Mensibus Conclusiones publicas, & singulis Annis Impressas. // [...] // §. IV. // De disciplina observanda in Collegiis Studentium. // 2 Si Seminaria, seu Collegia sita sint in terris, ubi elemosynæ ordinariæ non sufficiant ad sustentandum multitudinem Studentium, & Lectorum Ministri Provinciales ex aliis Conventibus provideant, quia præcipuus splendor sui Provincialatus erit, optima Studia enutrisse. // [...] // 4 Docere discipulos per nudum textum Scoti, confusissima est norma disciplinæ, tum quia ibidem quædam desiderantur, quæ recenter in scholis controvertuntur; tum quia ad instruendam juventutem

It is fascinating to observe that the internal educational structure outlined in the 1651 *Statuta Generalia* was faithfully implemented in the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province. Specifically, as detailed in Article 4 of § I, four dedicated spaces were established within the conventual houses spanning from Paraíba to Recôncavo. Among these, two were allocated for Liberal Arts, comprising the foundational curriculum for novices during their initial three years. These years focused on essential subjects vital for the friars' basic formation in their religious life. Additionally, two spaces were designated for an in-depth study of Sacred Theology over the subsequent three years.

This intramural instructional model persisted in Portuguese America, replicating the same framework rooted in the Franciscan order from the Middle Ages and refined in the 1622 and 1651 Statutes. However, it is worth noting that this implementation appeared in a somewhat incomplete form, as evident in the earlier transcripts. Noteworthy is the emphasis placed on Duns Scotus' texts and the specific teaching methodologies adopted by the lecturers. At the core of this structure were the Latin Grammar classes, universally established across all convents. These classes played a pivotal role in imparting Latin literacy to novices and, in some cases, catered to the local community surrounding the Franciscan residence. Notably, they served as a preparatory course for postulants.

During colonial Brazil, in addition to postulants, these grammar master friars also extended their services to the children of settlers. This outreach was essential due to the precariousness of educational conditions prevalent even in major urban centres. This additional function is clearly highlighted in a document sent by the Franciscan Provincial, Fr. Domingos da Purificação (? -1790), to D. Maria I (1734-1816) in November 1779. In this document, he reproduces the text of a representation sent to the Portuguese Crown forty years earlier by the Provincial of that time, Fr. Manoel da Ressurreição (c.1682-1750), emphasizing the necessity for each convent to have a Guardian, President, Doorman, Sacristan, Pantryman, Commissioner of Tertiaries Brothers, and a Master responsible for teaching grammar to the children of the residents<sup>34</sup>.

In the traditional Franciscan formation model established during the Middle Ages, novices underwent initial training in Latin Grammar. Following this phase, they were sent to custodial or provincial schools, typically located in the largest convents. These institutions were dedicated to the novices' basic training, which could extend from three to five years. This training period was divided between minor and major studies, encompassing courses in Theology (*Studia Theologiæ*), Philosophy (*Studia Philosophiæ*), and Logic (*Studia Artium*). After three years of minor studies, novices took their vows. Those deemed capable continued to major studies, deepening their knowledge in various areas, including Rhetoric, Greek, Hebrew (all mandatory in minor studies), Philosophy, Ecclesiastical History, Dogmatic Theology, Moral Theology, and Exegetical Theology<sup>35</sup>. Novices who did not exhibit a particular inclination for scholarly pursuits undertook other roles in conventual life, working as priests, confessors, doormen, pantrymen, choristers, sacristans, cooks, and more<sup>36</sup>.

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non est idoneus Textus, quem versatissimi Magistri vix potuerunt penetrare. // 5 Quapropter Lectores Artium docebunt deinceps vel per scripturam dictandam, & scribendam à Discipulis, vel per librum impressum assumendum ex probatoribus Doctoribus, quoad mentem Scoti scripserunt Cursum moderniore<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> AHU\_ACL\_CU\_015, Cx. 135, D. 10107. Attachment 5.

<sup>35</sup> AMORIM, 1999, p. 375.

<sup>36</sup> ROEST, 2015 a, p. 133-138.

In Portuguese America, these educational spaces, namely Latin Grammar classes or schools and custodial/provincial schools, were established exclusively within Franciscan houses. The pinnacle of the friars' theological training occurred in their roles as teachers, qualifying them as lecturers, this advanced stage of education, known as *Studia Generalia*, involved both the practice of teaching and a deepening of theological and philosophical studies. However, reaching this level was contingent upon spending several years teaching in the novitiate and serving as mentors to younger friars in convents. *Studia Generalia* were institutions prevalent in Europe, often associated with traditional universities that had a strong Franciscan presence, such as Paris, Padova, Pisa, Salamanca, Coimbra, Oxford, and Cambridge<sup>37</sup>.

Interestingly, in the 1730s, Fr. Apolinário da Conceição (1692-1755), a lay brother born in Lisbon and a chronicler of Franciscan life in eighteenth-century Brazil, highlighted that the establishment of schools connected to convents, and sometimes even standalone churches, was a widespread practice among the friars throughout America, under both Iberian crowns. This practice was rooted in the multifaceted roles of the Franciscan friars, which notably included the provision of instruction:

The Religious established these Seminaries and Schools adjacent to the Convents. In places where such institutions were absent, they erected them near the Churches they built. In these educational centres, boys were instructed not only in reading, writing, and the intricacies of the Faith, but also in Grammar. Furthermore, they were guided in the sacred practices of vocal and mental prayer, and were taught to sing the Divine praises. Various hymns were sung to God and Our Lady, enhancing their spiritual education.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Franciscan Instruction transposed to Portuguese America: from Custody dependent on Portugal to the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province**

Despite the absence of *Studia Generalia* in the Custody and later in the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province, much of the medieval Franciscan approach to the initial formation of religious individuals was introduced to the newly established convents along the Brazilian Northeast coast in 1585. Initially, as a Custody, it maintained ties with the homonymous Saint Anthony of Portugal Province, adhering to its *Statutes* for specifics not covered in the *Regula* or the *General Statutes* of the order. Upon gaining independence in 1657, discussions in provincial Chapters commenced to formulate their own *Statutes*. In the interim, they followed the directives of the Franciscan *General Statutes* republished in 1651<sup>39</sup> and, in cases not addressed, the 1622 *Barcelona Statutes*, specific to the Observants.

While still a Custody, the 1607 Provincial Chapter in Lisbon decided to establish an Arts and Theology Course at the Convent of Our Lady of the Snows in Olinda, as it was more convenient and ensured novices' edification without distractions<sup>40</sup>. In 1645, another provincial Chapter at the Saint Anthony Convent in Lisbon recommended that only advanced postulants, noted for their virtue, religiosity, and proficiency in Latin, be accepted in Custody convents<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> ROEST, 2000, p. 11-42; 2015 a, p. 135-136. ŞENOCAK, 2012 a, p. 218-237.

<sup>38</sup> CONCEIÇÃO, 1733, p. 79. Free translation completed by me from the original 18th-century Portuguese text.

<sup>39</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 61-74.

<sup>40</sup> ANTT, OFM, Província de Santo Antônio, Província, maço 18, doc. 29, f. 1r.

<sup>41</sup> AMORIM, 1999, p. 370.

These requirements, alongside purity of blood, were strongly emphasized in the initial version of the *Statutes* of the independent Province, published in 1683. It specified that aspiring postulants for study acceptance should be worthy, capable of preaching, and possess age, virtue, pure lineage, and adequate Latin proficiency<sup>42</sup>.

In a significant development, the Chapter held at the Saint Francis Convent in Salvador, Bahia, in August 1657, immediately after Pope Alexander VII's bull granting autonomy to the Province, established Philosophy and Theology classes in its principal convents:

10. A continuous study of Philosophy and Theology was mandated, ensuring that as one Philosophy course concluded, another commenced. The location for these courses varied based on prevailing conditions and successes, but they consistently took place in one of the three designated Convents: Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and Villa of Pernambuco [Olinda].<sup>43</sup>

When redefined and published for the second time in 1709, the new *Provincial Statutes* explicitly emphasized the significance of the medieval foundation in novice instruction. This persistence can be observed in teaching methodologies and methods of assessing knowledge mastery, aligning with the characteristic practices of medieval scholasticism. This enduring approach, despite the Tridentine recommendations for updating instructional methods across Catholic orders and congregations since the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Council on June 17, 1546, showcased a remarkable continuity<sup>44</sup>.

The enduring instructional culture originating from the Middle Ages is apparent in specific chapters addressing novice and friar education, titled "XIII. Of the house in which there must be Study of Grammar, & of the Master, & Students of that Study", "XIV. Of the houses in which there must be studies of Philosophy, & Theology", "XV. About the Philosophy Lecturers," "XVI. About the Theology Lecturers", "XVI. About the Students", "XVIII. About the scholastic order", and "XIX. About the Conventuals, who will go to Morality"<sup>45</sup>.

For instance, Chapter XVIII, titled "About the scholastic order"<sup>46</sup>, meticulously outlined the hours allocated for canonical prayers and study, even commencing at dawn. It also detailed the expectations of obedience to which novices and young friars were bound, the infractions and deviations they could be reprimanded for, and the severe punishments they might face, showing an unwavering commitment to discipline. The educational process involved extensive reading, rigorous public arguments called *Conclusions*, and strict control over students' time, whether they were novices or already professed friars.

Considering the framework proposed by scholars like Ginzburg and Castelnovo<sup>47</sup>, which emphasizes the relationship between the core and the periphery, this internal standardization within the seraphic order took shape. While some sections in the provincial regulations seemed to merely translate the Latin text into Portuguese, other areas demonstrated a nuanced adaptation, reflecting a keen awareness of the need to supervise the daily lives of friars and novices in response to the particular challenges posed by customs in Portuguese America:

<sup>42</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1683, p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> ATAS, 1970, p. 100.

<sup>44</sup> O'MALLEY, 2013, p. 106.

<sup>45</sup> ESTATUTOS, 1709, p. 31-39.

<sup>46</sup> This chapter also appears in the 1683 *Statutes*, where it is divided into eighteen articles, mirroring its length in the 1709 version. Moreover, it contains comparable directives, albeit in a more concise format.

<sup>47</sup> While not extensively delving into the subject, Carlo Ginzburg and Enrico Castelnovo present intriguing insights regarding the relationship between center and periphery in their text discussing the history of Italian art in *A Micro-História e outros ensaios* (1991, p. 5-117).

7. Philosophy students are strictly prohibited from leaving their residences under any circumstances. The Brother Guardian is not authorized to send them on any errands, as outlined in the General Statute. Any violation of this rule will result in the removal from their position, as determined by their Master, Guardian, or a Definer of exemplary conduct. The Brother Guardian must ensure a fair rotation for participation in the Conclusions so that it is not always the same individuals going, while others never get the opportunity.

[...]

9 During external Conclusions, no more than four students are allowed to attend, and all of them must always accompany their Master. They must remain within the Master's sight at all times and are not permitted to enter any other buildings.<sup>48</sup>

Even prior to these directives, the Franciscan establishments spanning from Recôncavo to Paraíba, all founded between the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-1600s, adhered to regulations stemming from chapters and assemblies held in the Kingdom of Portugal. This practice was particularly prevalent before the Custody's separation from its original Portuguese Province. In Portuguese America, there were no custodial or provincial schools housing the *Studia Generalia*. Consequently, the norm was for the most proficient friars, upon completing their major studies and successfully defending their public conclusions, to engage in a teaching role, a period that could extend from one to several years. During this time, these capable friars assisted lecturers in Theology or Philosophy classes as *passantes*<sup>49</sup>. Subsequently, they were dispatched to the College of Saint Anthony of Quarry (Colégio de Santo Antônio da Pedreira) in Coimbra. Here, they completed their training by participating in the Arts and Theology Courses<sup>50</sup>.

Only after devoting a minimum of three additional years to studying the doctrines of John Duns Scotus could a friar embark on the diverse stages of his career as a lecturer. Initially, he would teach classes in a convent within his original province. In this role, he held direct responsibility for developing the curriculum and guiding the training of young friars in Theology and Canon Law, all while fulfilling the routine religious duties of convent life<sup>51</sup>.

### **The Convents in Pernambuco and Bahia and the Novice Formation**

In the early days of the Saint Anthony of Brazil Custody, the convents of Olinda and Salvador emerged as prominent centres for training Franciscan novices. It is crucial to recall that this seraphic establishment in the territories under the Portuguese Crown in America stemmed from the branch of the "Strict Observance" in Portugal<sup>52</sup>, also known as Recoletos, which differed significantly regarding the management of daily convent life. Moreover, it imposed substantial restrictions on the academic sphere and its inherent privileges associated with teaching careers.

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<sup>48</sup> ESTATUTOS, 1709, p. 36.

<sup>49</sup> Designation given, in Franciscan convents, to the auxiliary masters of the lecturers during the colonial period, for "passing" the content points to the novices in preparation for public arguments.

<sup>50</sup> AMORIM, 1999, p. 369.

<sup>51</sup> ROEST, 2015 a, p. 134-135.

<sup>52</sup> TERENO, PEREIRA & TERENO, 2010, p. 562.



Additionally, as noted by Vítor Gomes Teixeira, since the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, “the Observance became a significant cultural agent and participant, intervening in the country’s fate, with counsellors and confessors at the royal court, standing beside kings”<sup>53</sup>.

According to Bert Roest, the Observants believed that instructing friars from their initial years of novitiate should be driven by a motivation much closer to their pastoral activities amidst worldly life than to philosophical and theological debates held not only in university settings but also in the *Studia Generalia*<sup>54</sup>. Hence, around 1500, most of the Observants’ literary output did not encompass sophisticated scholastic themes. Instead, it included numerous sermons, treatises on Moral Theology, summaries of *Casus Conscientiae*, catechisms, hagiographical works, and ancient inquisitorial manuals<sup>55</sup>. This trend persisted among the friars in the Franciscan Saint Anthony of Brazil Custody/Province throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and began to wane in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The volumes that graced the shelves of conventual libraries and the works penned by religious figures such as Fr. Apolinário da Conceição emphasized these characteristics<sup>56</sup>. His chronicles, including *Primazia Serafica na Regiam da America* from 1733<sup>57</sup>, *Claustro Franciscano* from 1740<sup>58</sup>, and *Ecco sonoro da clamorosa voz* from 1748<sup>59</sup>, in addition to *Orbe Serafico Novo Brasilico* by Fr. Antônio Maria de Santa Maria Jaboatão (1695-1779), published in 1761<sup>60</sup>, the most comprehensive chronicle about the Custody/Province, played a significant role in constructing a Franciscan historical culture regarding their importance and destiny for mission work in Brazilian lands. This historical culture fostered a unique form of erudition, emphasizing the catechetical mission. The Observants regarded the practices of conventual Franciscans (often referred to as non-observants) in Europe, especially their involvement in the *Studia Generalia* alongside prominent universities, as deeply problematic.

Thus, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the intramural instruction of the Observants remained deeply rooted in the medieval mold, aiming “to maintain faithful [ties] to established authorities, i.e., the Franciscan *doctores ecclesiae*”<sup>61</sup>. This scenario mirrored the seraphic instructional structure in Portuguese America until the late 1700s. This system underwent minimal changes, and all houses between Bahia’s Recôncavo and Paraíba accepted novices for Latin Grammar classes, a prerequisite for entering minor studies. These studies occurred in the Saint Anthony convents in Vila of Igarassu, Pernambuco, and the Vila of São Francisco de Paraguaçu, near Cachoeira, Bahia. Major studies, undertaken after provisional vows were taken, were conducted in the convents of Our Lady of the Snows in Olinda and Saint Francis in Salvador. A novice who completed minor studies in Bahia was expected to pursue further education in Pernambuco after professing vows, and vice versa<sup>62</sup>. This practice aimed to instil detachment in young friars, immersing them in a life marked by frequent relocations, aligning with the determinations of their superiors and avoiding potential privileges for outstanding

<sup>53</sup> TEIXEIRA, 2010, p. 237.

<sup>54</sup> For a comprehensive exploration of the Franciscan instructional structure in the Modern Age, including detailed insights into the curricula and course content taught at *Studia Generalia*, consult: ROEST, 2000 and 2015a; ŞENOCAK, 2012b.

<sup>55</sup> ROEST, 2015 a, p. 144.

<sup>56</sup> About this, consult: OLIVEIRA, 2016/2017, 2017 and 2020.

<sup>57</sup> CONCEIÇÃO, 1733.

<sup>58</sup> CONCEIÇÃO, 1740.

<sup>59</sup> CONCEIÇÃO, 1748.

<sup>60</sup> JABOATAM, 1761.

<sup>61</sup> ROEST, 2015 b, p. 9.

<sup>62</sup> AHU\_ACL\_CU\_015, Box 135, D. 10107, f. 1-1v.

students. Furthermore, it aimed to sever ties with their place of origin and the temptations of secular life, thereby preparing them for their missionary endeavours within the Order. Adherence to the directive in the 1651 *Statuta Generalia* was observed, ensuring novices were not sent for studies outside their province of origin before taking perpetual vows<sup>63</sup>.

### Scholarly Paradigms in Portuguese America: John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham

While it is impossible to reconstruct the entire bibliographic collections of conventual libraries in the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province, some insights can be gleaned from traces recorded in guardian books that have endured the test of time, specifically those from the Ipojuca, Paraíba, and Salvador houses. The *Livro dos Inventarios dos Conventos do Norte*<sup>64</sup>, a manuscript prepared in July 1852 by Fr. Antônio da Rainha dos Anjos Machado, OFM, provides further clues. From this historical documentation, it appears that if works by prominent medieval Franciscan theologians circulated in the convents, they were likely in small formats, belonging to the personal collections of friars who served as lecturers and masters. Surviving records reveal only three volumes written by Scotus – two of his *Questiones Subtilissimæ* and one of his *Theologia* – all housed in the Convent of Olinda library, one of the two locations where higher studies of the novitiate occurred.

Fr. Machado's 1852 inventory also lists theological works by Jesuit authors contemporary to the Province, Franciscans spanning the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and medieval classics like Saint Augustine. Additionally, there are texts mentioned by theme, covering Theology, Emblematics, Marian devotion, biblical studies, and Franciscan history. This method, while informative, does not offer a definitive view of the influence of medieval Franciscan scholars on the Province's staff formation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Another approach to gauge the presence of key medieval Franciscan thinkers in the education of the Province's members is through the decorative iconography found in their conventual houses. Predominantly executed during the 1700s, the paintings on ceilings and medallions in study rooms, libraries, chapels, churches, and entrances provide valuable material for such reflection. Crucially, these representations were intended for the internal audience of professed and novice religious, constituting a visual discourse within their historical and educational culture.

In the Franciscan coastal houses between the Paraíba River mouth and Bahia's Recôncavo, idealized depictions of scholars like John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Pierre Auriol, Álvaro Pelagio, Gerardus Odonis, and Ramon Llull can be found. While no definitive engravings have been identified as models for these paintings, they are predominantly situated as details on chapel, prayer room, bookstore, and study room ceilings, and sometimes even in more public spaces like beneath the choir of the convent church.

To delve deeper into the significance of this formative discourse, I will specifically analyze the representations of John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. These figures, apart from their prominence in Franciscan Theology, are the most frequently depicted characters in these convents in Portuguese America, indicating their central role in the Province's educational and spiritual narrative.

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<sup>63</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 72.

<sup>64</sup> LIVRO dos Inventarios dos Conventos do Norte, 1852, APFR.

## The Doctor Subtilis<sup>65</sup> in Pernambuco and Bahia

At least seven captivating images depicting John Duns Scotus have endured through time within Franciscan convents in Pernambuco and Bahia. Among these, three convents played a crucial role in shaping the formation of novices within the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province: Our Lady of the Snows in Olinda, Saint Anthony in Igarassu, and Saint Francis in Salvador. The fourth convent showcasing an image of Scotus is the Saint Anthony Convent in Cairu, Bahia. Additionally, there's a representation of Scotus in the Saint Anthony Convent in Recife.

Given the explicit mandate in the 1651 *Statuta Generalia* for the Cismontane to incorporate Scotus' work – the sole author specifically cited as obligatory in the Theology curriculum – and his significance as a stronghold in the theoretical training for novices<sup>66</sup>, it is unsurprising that the medieval Franciscan theologian was so prominently represented in the convents of the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province. Scotus' doctrines became foundational in Franciscan education from the Middle Ages onward. In institutions like Oxford and Paris, the Scottish friar laid the groundwork for crucial doctrines, notably the Immaculate Conception of Mary – eventually established as a Catholic dogma in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His contributions also encompassed concepts such as Individuation, the idea of Universals, discussions on Aristotle's works, including *Metaphysics*, and, as part of his training similar to any candidate for the Theology chair – whose preliminary course lasted six years – he prepared lessons on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard<sup>67</sup>.

Before delving into the analysis of these images, two essential points require consideration. First, both the 1622 *Barcelona Statutes*<sup>68</sup> and the 1651 *Statuta Generalia*<sup>69</sup> prescribed the use of Scotus' works by Theology lecturers in their classes, defining the course duration in months and emphasizing the necessity of both morning and afternoon classes. Second, these representations were likely crafted in Portuguese American convents in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, during the final stages of their decoration, often on the ceilings.

In Pernambuco, three publicly accessible representations of Duns Scotus exist: a medallion in the ceiling painting of the lower choir of the Church of the Convent of Saint Anthony in Igarassu, depicting him teaching from a pulpit; a medallion in the ceiling of the lower choir of the Church of the Convent of Saint Anthony in Recife, where he is portrayed sitting on the floor, writing with a quill in a book resting on his knees; and another in the ceiling of the Saint Roch Chapel in the Our Lady of the Snows Convent in Olinda, where he appears as a blessed figure, standing in a contemplative state, holding a book and a writing quill. In all these representations, his primary qualities as a Theology professor and a Franciscan intellectual are accentuated.

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<sup>65</sup> Duns Scotus earned the title Doctor Subtilis – or Subtle Doctor – because the language of his arguments was intricate and nuanced, often characterized by labyrinthine and complex constructions, making it challenging to comprehend.

<sup>66</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 73.

<sup>67</sup> WILLIAMS, 2013, p. 20-24.

<sup>68</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1622, p. 31.

<sup>69</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 73.

**Image 1** - Anonymous, *Ante Rvet Mvndvs Qvam Svrgat Scotvs Secvndvs* (“Faced with the ruin of the World, let us begin according to Scotus”), 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, coffered medallion in the lower choir, detail, Church of the Saint Anthony Convent, Igarassu, Pernambuco.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Oct. 2011.

**Image 2** - Anonymous, *B. João Escoto D. Subtil*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, ceiling of the St. Roch Chapel, Our Lady of the Snows Convent, Olinda, Pernambuco.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jan. 2023.

The other two images from Pernambuco are also located within the Olinda convent but are situated in spaces restricted to religious visitors. One of them adorns a side detail of the Sant’Ana Chapel’s ceiling, while the other occupies a niche in the ceiling of the room that served as the novices’ study, located on the ground floor adjacent to the cloister. In the chapel’s ceiling image, Scotus is portrayed within a small medallion, depicted from the waist up, holding a quill in his right hand in front of a bookshelf. In the study room, he is depicted in full stature, kneeling before a table, an open book in his hands, and a shelf brimming with treatises in the background.

His gaze is directed upward, seemingly contemplating the Immaculate Conception. Scotus, known for staunchly defending Mary’s purity concerning Original Sin, is depicted in both images as the quintessential intellectual Franciscan. Surrounded by books, fundamental instruments for novices’ education, these representations underscore his scholarly character and reflect the profound influence of his work on the formation of young friars, mirroring the essential role books played in the life of this medieval theologian.

**Image 3** – Anonymous, *B. João Duns Escoto Dr. Sutil mariano*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, detail of the low choir ceiling, Church of the Saint Anthony Convent, Recife, Pernambuco.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jan. 2023.

**Image 4** – Anonymous, *Escoto Doc Svtil*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, ceiling of the Sant'Anna Chapel (detail), ground floor, Our Lady of the Snows Convent, Olinda, Pernambuco.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jan. 2023.

**Image 5** – Anonymous, *Svtilis Ven. Ioan Dvns Scot.*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, ceiling of the former Novices' Study Room next to the cloister, ground floor, Our Lady of the Snows Convent, Olinda, Pernambuco.

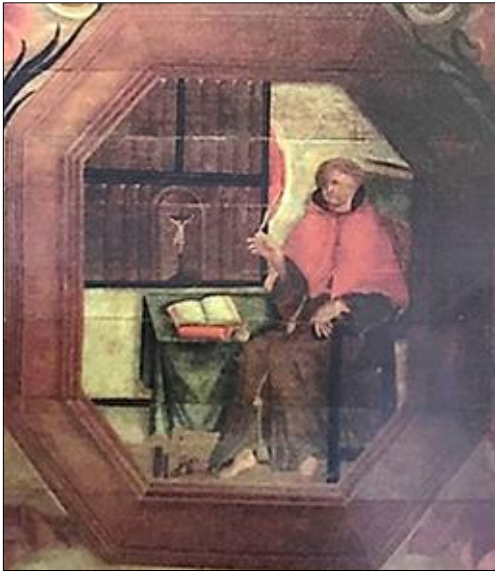


**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jan. 2023.

In Bahia, two significant representations of Duns Scotus have been preserved in Franciscan establishments. One is found in the Saint Anthony Convent in Cairu, painted on the ceiling of the lower choir of the convent church<sup>70</sup>. Here, Scotus<sup>71</sup> is depicted alongside a medallion featuring the Immaculate Conception, emphasizing his intellectual prowess and the pivotal role of books, the vessels of knowledge that disseminated his ideas to the friars and novices frequenting those spaces.

In Salvador, the representation of Scotus is located in the library of the Saint Francis Convent. In this portrayal, he is seen studying near a window, once again surrounded by books, highlighting his scholarly pursuits and his influence in the theological establishment of the Marian dogma within the Catholic Church. This theme held particular significance for the Franciscans, as the Virgin's patronage was deeply cherished within the Order. This reverence traced back to a significant moment in the congregation's history – a blessing explicitly granted to Anthony of Lisbon during one of his early apparitions.

**Image 6** – Anonymous, [John Duns Scotus?], c. 1761. Polychrome wood, detail of the low choir ceiling, Church of the Saint Anthony Convent, Cairu, Bahia.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, personal collection.

**Image 7** – Anonymous, *Joannes Duns Scotus Doctor Subtilis*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, ceiling of the Conventual Library, Saint Francis Convent, Salvador, Bahia.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jun. 2007.

<sup>70</sup> It is important to note that this artwork depicts two friars who, in my view, were erroneously identified as Saint Anthony by José Dirson Argolo (ARGOLO, 2009, p. 156). I believe these figures represent John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham, given their specific characteristics. They follow the same iconographic pattern found in paintings from Olinda and Salvador. Particularly, the central medallion scene features Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, a concept ardently supported by Scotus in his classes at the University of Paris and further developed by Ockham, who followed Scotus's ideas and elaborated on them in various aspects. The overall painting appears somewhat rudimentary, suggesting it might have been executed by a local craftsman or even a fellow friar without specific artistic training.

<sup>71</sup> I identify this representation as Scotus on the ceiling because he is depicted wearing a crimson murre on his shoulders, a garment typically worn by clerics holding prominent positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Scotus, indeed, was a lecturer in Paris and Cologne and was esteemed as a distinguished theologian by his peers. His untimely death at the age of 42 cut short what promised to be a brilliant career. In contrast, Ockham never attained the same position since he did not complete the necessary exams. He only served as a “passante”, an assistant to the lecturers and masters.

## William of Ockham, a disciple of Scotus

William of Ockham, often regarded as a follower of Scotus, was long thought to have been a student in one of Scotus' classes at Oxford. This belief stemmed from Ockham's extensive writings where he delved into theological concepts rooted in the ideas of the Scottish friar. However, recent biographers, upon scrutinizing previously unknown documents and establishing a more accurate chronology of Ockham's life, have dismissed this possibility<sup>72</sup>. Ockham's connection to Scotus primarily lies in his adoption of Scotus' conceptions and principles concerning the divine acceptance of grace in the Theory of Justification, as well as his interpretation of Transubstantiation<sup>73</sup>. Consequently, it would not be surprising to find representations of them alongside the Immaculate Conception, as I speculate to be the case in the ceiling of the lower choir of the Saint Anthony Convent church in Cairu, Bahia.

**Image 8** – Anonymous, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception flanked by William of Ockham [?] and John Duns Scotus [?], c. 1761. Polychrome wood, detail of the low choir ceiling, Church of the Saint Anthony Convent, Cairu, Bahia.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, personal collection.

In both representations of Ockham found in Bahia, specifically the one from Cairu which I believe depicts him, and the other within the library of the Salvador convent, we see the English theologian seated at a table surrounded by a plethora of books, holding a writing quill in his hands. These images highlight intellect and the pursuit of knowledge, qualities crucial for both novices and friars. Notably, in the case of the Salvador representation, it is situated on the ceiling of the library, a space exclusively dedicated to studies within a religious institution focused on the advanced theological education of novices after they have taken their initial vows.

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<sup>72</sup> Traditionally, Ockham has been claimed to be a student of Merton College, although there is no contemporary evidence supporting this assertion. Additionally, as a Franciscan, he would have been ineligible for scholarships at the institution (MARTIN & HIGHFIELD, 1997, p. 53). The assertion that Ockham studied in one of Duns Scotus's classes at Oxford has also been contested for some time (HUGHES, 1979, p. 119, note 2). In fact, the only possible interaction between them could have happened during Scotus' exile, when he fled Paris for England between June 1303 and April 1304. During this period, Ockham would have been around sixteen years old and in the initial stages of his religious training among the Franciscans in London (COURTENAY, 2006, p. 19).

<sup>73</sup> COURTENAY, 2006, p. 24.

**Image 9** – Anonymous, [John Duns Scotus?], c. 1761. Polychrome wood, detail of the low choir ceiling, Church of the Saint Anthony Convent, Cairu, Bahia.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira personal collection.

**Image 10** – Anonymous, *Guilhelmus Okamus Venerabilis Nominalium Princeps*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, ceiling of the Conventual Library, Saint Francis Convent, Salvador, Bahia.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jun. 2007.

The same iconographic motif repeats in the depiction on the ceiling of the former novices' study room at the Our Lady of the Snows Convent in Olinda. Here, William of Ockham appears in a similar posture, writing at a table, with a bookshelf laden with books in the background. The notable distinction lies in the serene ambiance created by an open window revealing a lush forest of conifers outside the building, and a cat leisurely resting atop the bookshelf. Despite these minor differences, the consistent presence of these elements across the three representations illustrates the well-established discursive construction and idealization of Ockham's image, at least within the convents of the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province. It appears that the essence of Ockham as a thinker, particularly his theological and philosophical contributions to the Order, was intended to be highlighted in these depictions within the conventual spaces.

**Image 11** – Anonymous, *Schola Nominalis Ochami*, 18<sup>th</sup> century. Polychrome wood, ceiling of the former Novices' Study Room next to the cloister, ground floor, Our Lady of the Snows Convent, Olinda, Pernambuco.



**Photo:** Carla Mary S. Oliveira, Jan. 2023.



## As a conclusion

In essence, it can be affirmed that the internal education system within the Saint Anthony of Brazil Custody/Province, as revealed through the examination of both the *Provincial Statutes* and the *General Statutes*, remained closely aligned with the superior directives derived from a formative discourse deeply rooted in the writings and philosophical-theological framework of medieval Franciscan scholars. This becomes especially apparent in the explicit endorsement of John Duns Scotus' works for the curriculum of Theology classes, as stated in the 1622 *Barcelona Statutes*<sup>74</sup> and the 1651 *Statuta Generalia*<sup>75</sup>, as previously emphasized. In this regard, I concur with Bert Roest's perspective, who asserts,

What also should be questioned in this regard is: if indeed the scholastic education provided in Franciscan school networks in the seventeenth century and even after was increasingly out of tune with the innovations that were happening 'outside', to what extent could this scholastic education remain a valid preparation for generations of Franciscan religious educators? After all, they were very much active in the outside world once they finished their schooling. Looking at the careers and the cultural production of these religious educators, it would seem that their educational trajectory within the Early Modern Franciscan school system was in any case not an impediment for the production of apparently adequate forms of biblical scholarship that was reasonably in tune with the transformation of biblical studies during this time period, or for the production of acclaimed and popular model sermon collections and a wide range other works of religious instruction.<sup>76</sup>

What is particularly intriguing is that this medieval scholastic model, as evidenced by the images outlined here, persisted well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, enduring until the completion of the decorative schemes in the specified convent spaces within the Saint Anthony of Brazil Province. This underscores the endurance of a formative discourse that extended beyond mere books, treatises, classes, or the regulations outlined in the *General* or *Provincial Statutes*. It permeated the visual representations that would captivate the gaze and thoughts of novices, friars, and, in certain instances, even the faithful who frequented these convents.

In the Baroque period, where images carry a discourse and immanent force that cannot be ignored, it becomes crucial to contemplate the weight of reinforcing the ideas of Duns Scotus and Ockham among novices in training and friars through these visual depictions. Hence, understanding this intricate relationship between imagery and discourse is paramount when dissecting the internal instructional processes of the Franciscans.

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<sup>74</sup> ESTATVTOS, 1622, p. 32.

<sup>75</sup> STATUTA, 1718, p. 73.

<sup>76</sup> ROEST, 2015 b, p. 10.

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