

Cotton Exports from Brazil, 1758-1815 dataset

There is a reasonable amount of studies that attempted to reconstruct the export series from Maranhão and the northeast. However, all the literature has shied away from putting the numbers in a comparative perspective and, just as important, has failed to make available wide-ranging time series. The dataset we put together, drawing on figures taken from published and unpublished sources, overcomes these flaws as it covers exports from both regions from the early years to the beginning of the 1810s, in addition to providing series of cotton prices from 1780 to 1807. This documentation file explaining the background to the dataset has a dual purpose: to make it clear where we extract our data from and to comment on the literature that attempted to assemble cotton export series.

For Maranhão, we rely on primary and secondary sources to compose the export time series. For the years 1758 and 1759, we use the numbers provided by António Carreira. Data from 1760 to 1788 were obtained from eight GCGPM (General Company of Grão-Pará and Maranhão) books that inform the quantity of items annually exported by the port of São Luís to Portugal. António Carreira and Manoel Nunes Dias had already worked with these sources. However, due to errors in tabulation or in book editions, the figures presented by both do not match for some years.¹ Thus, the numbers presented by us were corrected. From 1789 to 1797, we count on nine export lists which are on deposit at the Overseas Historical Archive (*Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino - AHU*). These papers were prepared by governors and customs officials in Maranhão with the intention of informing the Secretary of the Navy and Overseas in Lisbon about the captaincy's commercial situation.² For the period from 1798 to 1807 we made use of the trade balance records (*balanças de comércio*), thoroughly worked by José Arruda.³ The trade balance records go beyond the year 1807, but from 1808 onwards the data are incomplete. Therefore, we count on the numbers provided by Raymundo Gayoso for 1808 and Henry Koster for the period from 1809 to 1815.⁴ It is worth mentioning that Jerônimo de Viveiros and Dauril Alden also attempted to elaborate extensive time series regarding the export of cotton from Maranhão. Viveiros benefit from a source whose origin we were unable to trace, which covers the period from 1760

¹ António Carreira, *A Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão. (O comércio monopolista. Portugal-África-Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII)*, vol. 2 (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1988), 225–26; Manuel Nunes Dias, *A Companhia Geral do Grão Pará e Maranhão* (São Paulo: Usp, 1971), 353.

² See online database, spreadsheet A.

³ José Jobson de Andrade Arruda, *O Brasil no comércio colonial* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1980), 368–69.

⁴ Raimundo Jose de Sousa Gayoso, *Compendio historico-politico dos principios da lavoura do Maranhão: suas produçoens, e progressos, que tem tido até ao presente, entraves que a vão deteriorando; e meios que tem lembrado para desvanecer-los, em augmento da mesma lavoura, e sem prejuizo do real patrimonio...* (Paris: P.N. Rougeron, Impressor, 1818), 220; Henry Koster, *Travels in Brazil* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), 250, <http://archive.org/details/travelsinbraziloinkost>.

to 1800 (with a gap between 1772 and 1775).⁵ Alden drew export data from a variety of sources and bibliographies. His series is more comprehensive, going from 1760 to 1807 (with a gap in 1772).⁶ Taking the only period that allows comparisons between our data with those of Viveiros and Alden, between 1776 and 1800, we have approximately similar results. Alden arrives at the lowest values: 1,859,792 cotton arrobas. Viveiros reaches the highest values: 2,071,549. Our data yield a figure halfway between the two: 1,942,381 arrobas.

Exports from northeastern Brazil are, by far, a less explored topic when compared to Maranhão. If Maranhão has the benefit of gathering several export data in a few dozen books and lists that were handled by other historians, the northeast demanded that we collect export data by hand using 1,246 cargo lists of vessels that sailed from Pernambuco and Paraíba to Portugal between 1761 to 1807. These cargo lists, the so-called *mapas de carga*, are also held in the AHU. As in the case of Maranhão, these records had the purpose of notifying the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon of the economic condition of the respective captaincies. These lists also served as a form of inspection: when the vessels arrived in Lisbon or Porto, these papers could be used to check if any form of contraband had been carried out.⁷ For the period from 1808 to 1813 we used the figures provided by Koster.⁸ Even though the literature sought to elaborate export series of cotton from the northeast, all the studies ended up providing data that were sadly incomplete. Aside from trade balance records (which cover the years 1796 to 1807), once again Dauril Alden endeavored a more complete series, but even so with many gaps and evident inaccuracies (for example, from 1792 to 1797 cotton exports repeat the exact same numbers).⁹ Guillermo Palacios provided two series that, although with more credible figures, are still incomplete: one for the period from 1792 to 1798 and another for 1801 to 1809.¹⁰ In short, if historiography had information to know the size of Maranhão's exports in the long run, it still lacked solid data for Pernambuco. One of the contributions of this dataset is to fill that gap.

Apart from these studies focused on Brazilian regions, there is also the series of studies on English imports of Brazilian cotton carried out by several authors.¹¹ However, these

⁵ Jerônimo De Viveiros, *História do Comércio do Maranhão 1612-1895*, vol. 1 (São Luís: Associação Comercial do Maranhão, 1954), 75, <http://archive.org/details/histcomvol1mar>.

⁶ Dauril Alden, 'Late Colonial Brazil, 1750-1808', in *The Cambridge History of Latin America. Volume 2: Colonial Latin America.*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 636.

⁷ See online database, spreadsheets C and D.

⁸ Koster, *Travels in Brazil*, 450, 466.

⁹ Alden, 'Late Colonial Brazil, 1750-1808', 636.

¹⁰ Guillermo Palacios, 'Peasantry and Slavery in Brazil: A Contribution to the History of the Free Poor Planters from the General Captaincy of Pernambuco, 1700-1817. Volume II.' (Ph.D., New Jersey, Princeton University, 1993), 179, 195.

¹¹ Just to name a few, see Michael M. Edwards, *The Growth of the British Cotton Trade, 1780-1815* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 84; Barbara Gaye Jaquay, 'The Caribbean Cotton Production: An Historical Geography of the Region's Mystery Crop' (Ph.D., United States -- Texas, Texas A&M University, 1997), 84, 85, 88, <http://search.proquest.com/pqdtthss/docview/304402958/abstract/FF63D1C503764CB6PQ/1>;

Thales Augusto Zamberlan Pereira, 'The Rise of the Brazilian Cotton Trade in Britain during the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 50, no. 4 (November 2018): 919-49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X18000329>.

series do not identify the ports of origin of the cotton and could lead to underestimation, as not all Brazilian cotton went to England. France was also an important buyer of cotton from South America. Therefore, the export series that we provide here are the most complete. Through them, we can now measure with greater precision how much each region in fact exported.

The cotton price series for Maranhão and Pernambuco are the second statistical contribution of this dataset. In this regard, historiography did not pay much attention. The aforementioned studies of Carreira, Arruda, and Palacios provide some price data for both captaincies, but all have several gaps which make unfeasible long-term comparisons. This dataset, instead, provides original price series that cover long periods of time. For Maranhão we utilized the prices gathered by Carreira from 1770 to 1788. However, his research did not provide price data for the year 1785. For that year and for the period from 1789 to 1807, we put together the price data that are reported in 248 cargo lists of the AHU.¹² We also draw on 883 cargo lists of Pernambuco to collect the captaincy cotton price series for the period from 1780 to 1807.¹³ Furthermore, we utilized time series of sugar exports and their prices in Pernambuco and also the series of rice exports from Maranhão. All of this data was obtained from the documents we describe so far, mainly through the AHU cargo lists.¹⁴

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¹² See online database, spreadsheet B.

¹³ See online database, spreadsheet E.

¹⁴ The sugar export series was used in a recently published article, see Angelo Alves Carrara et al., 'The Brazilian Economy During the Old Regime Crisis (c. 1750-1807)', *Revista de Historia Economica - Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History*, 28 January 2022, 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0212610921000185> However, the sugar price series and the rice export series are unpublished data.

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