

New winds, distinct times of the Church: the activity of Bishop Sardinha and the Provincial Nóbrega in Brazil (XVI century)

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Abstract

During the sixteenth century, the Counter-Reformation of the Catholic Church stimulated a conservative practice at the same time that a more open and innovative one. From the campaign promoted through the expansionist project of the Iberian Crowns, there was a considerable difference between the work being developed in the continent from the one in the other territories. In this scenario, the religious orders had to adapt some procedures, and a few new groups were created. The Society of Jesus was founded in 1540 to defend the authority of the Holy See and to promote a religious campaign, which they did with the support of the Portuguese King. Outside Europe, far from the Reign and Rome, the Jesuit missions had to face problems and concerns that never could be predicted before. In the many missions around the world, we can identify those who, from the beginning, were more conservative and those who since the first steps defended an innovative approach. The Brazilian mission was a particular case dealing with the fact that the Portuguese had an administrative body in the region, developing very distinct demands. In this sense, focusing on the first provincial of Brazil Manuel da Nóbrega and the first bishop D. Fernandes Sardinha, we intended to analyse the distinct ways of action, seeing them as different times of the Church.

Keywords: Jesuits, Mission, Society of Jesus, Brazil, Manuel da Nóbrega