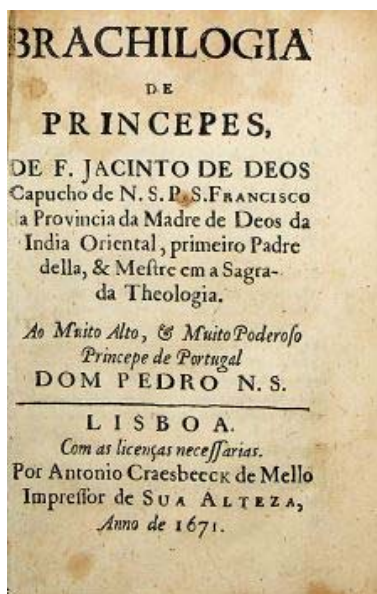


## Brachilogia de Princepes

de

Frei Jacinto de Deos

*Capucho de N. S. P. S. Francisco da Provincia da Madre de Deos da India Oriental*



---

**Author:** *Frei Jacinto de Deus (1612-1681)*

**Title:** *Brachilogia de Princepes (1671)*

**Publisher:** *Antonio Craesbeeck de Mello (Lisbon)*

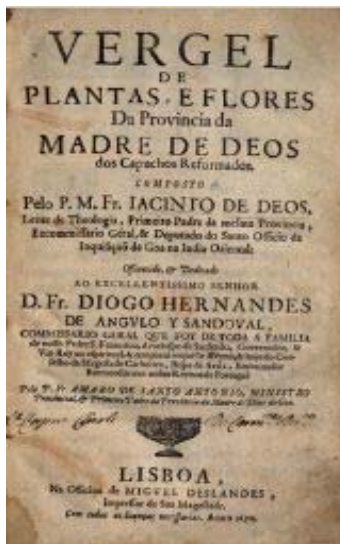
---

Father Jacinto de Deus was born in Macau in 1612 and died in Goa in 1681. Jacinto de Deus was the grandson of the Portuguese Tomás Brás da Fonseca, who held important positions in Macau, such as the Provider of the Misericórdia of Macau, and son of the Portuguese Pedro Soares Vivas and Cecília da Cunha, a native woman of China.

Jacinto de Deus received the religious habit of the Order of St. Francis in 1630 and served in Madre de Deus of Goa Province, where he was elected Custodian in 1646 and Father Provincial in 1658, and served as guardian of the Convent of Madre de Deus of Goa (1661), general-commissary of his religious order, and deputy of the Holy Office of Goa. He died at the Madre de Deus of Goa Province at the age of 69 on May 8, 1681.

Jacinto de Deus is an important author, given the limited number of works printed by the Franciscans in the East. There are two reasons that justify this affirmation. The first reason is related to the lack of financial resources due to the vow of poverty they professed; the second one is due to the fact that the memoirs of the Franciscans had only begun to be written almost one hundred years after the establishment of these friars in India, which occurred for the first time by the hand of Francisco Negrão, copies of whose work are not known to exist. The oldest account of the Franciscans presence in the East was written by Paulo da Trindade, another Macanese-Franciscan, with the work entitled *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* (Spiritual Conquest of the East), published circa 1630.

Jacinto de Deus is an author of a considerable number of texts, on a variety of different subjects, some never printed, and of which no copy exists. In addition to *Brachylogia de Princepes* (Brachylogy of Princes) published in 1671, there are other equally important works, among which *Escudo dos Cavaleiros* (Knights' Shield), published in 1670, which chronicles the history and activity of the most important military orders, such as Avis, Christ, Templars, and the lesser known; *Tribunal da Província da Madre Deus dos Capuchos da Índia Oriental* (Court of the Province of Mother of God of the East India Capuchins), published in 1670, which describes all the attributions and duties of the Franciscan friars of Strict Observance; *Caminho dos Frades Menores para a Vida Eterna* (Friars Minor's Road for Eternal Life), published in 1689, which presents a synthesis of the doctrine and rules of the Order of St. Francis; *Vergel de Plantas e Flores da Província da Madre de Deus dos Capuchos Reformados* (Orchard of Plants and Flowers of the Province of the Mother of God of the Retired Capuchins), which is one of his most important works, written in 1679 and published in Lisbon in 1690, after the author's death.



The book *Vergel de Plantas e Flores da Província da Madre de Deus dos Capuchos Reformados* (see the book image on the left) is written in careful language, with usage of expressions relating to nature, such as 'vineyard', 'seed', 'cornfield', 'woods', as a way to strengthen the missionary work of new Christian communities in adverse lands, populated by idolaters. It narrates the presence in history of the Franciscan Capuchin friars in India, since their arrival in 1500 led by brother Henrique de Coimbra, followed up by the controversies related to the creation of the Province of Madre de Deus, and the conflicts between the Franciscans of Strict Observance and the Franciscans of Regular Observance of St. Thomas, until about 1679, the year in which Jacinto de Deus completed the work (1).

There are not many written studies on Jacinto de Deus. Some authors assert that the best way to study Jacinto de Deus' thinking is to determine the type of reading to which he had access, making an inventory of the existent books in the libraries of the Franciscan convents in the Portuguese India, particularly in the library of Santo António of Taná Convent. Based on the 18<sup>th</sup> century inventory of Friar Simão de Jesus Maria, there existed in this convent about 255 volumes between books and manuscripts (a significant number for the time, especially if we take into account that many damaged works were excluded from the inventory). Among the many works of strictly ecclesiastical and philosophical nature, there were in this library works of Latin authors such as Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, Horace, Plato, and certainly the City of God of St. Augustine and the works of Thomas Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) is extremely evident in the Brachylogy of Princes, and through him, the purpose of reason in Aristotle and the thoughts of St. Augustine (354 AD-430 AD) in his work the City of God (2). In the dialectical method of Thomas Aquinas, reason and faith unite for the sake of human progress. Science, reason and faith appear

interconnected: “*There is nothing in the intellect that has not passed through the senses before.*” God has a proper knowledge of *all things* therefore He is the science of *truth*, not of any *truth*, but of that *truth* which is *the origin of all truth*, the *truth* concerning *divine things* that are presented to men by the *way of faith*. Men guided by faith, upon the free exercise of reasoning, is permitted to choose. If good choices can contribute to his progress, bad ones may lead him to destruction. However, man through sensory experience and in his contact with nature has the possibility to correct his mistakes and to improve his human condition.

This idea came from St. Augustine, according to whom the origin and truth of all things are in divine belief, although it is man’s reason the best way to seek the validity of truths, good and harmony. St. Augustine was largely influenced by Manichaeism, according to which the world was governed by the forces of good and evil (in truth, a Platonic-based conception). The truth of things lies in the divine faith, but man has the free will granted by God and can choose between good and evil. Evil does not exist in the origin of things, because there is always a divine predisposition for good; evil is the result of free deviation from good, that is, the consequence of bad choices man makes. Although St. Augustine initially believed that men could behave morally, in the end he is no longer that optimistic because he comes to conclusion that *original sin* makes human moral behavior almost impossible: except for a rare action of *Divine Grace* (3), occasional and undeserved, humans could never be moral. This combination of inner and outer experiences, between soul, body, and nature, yet guided by rigor of penance, austerity and mystical elevation (followed by the Franciscan school of the Strict Observance) is present in Jacinto de Deus and in particular in *Brachylogy of Princes*.

The *Brachylogia de Princeps* is dedicated to Prince Regent D. Pedro of Portugal (1648-1706). It consists of a treatise on the education of future princes, according to the canons of Christian thought and the image of God.

According to Plato, *brachylogy* is in opposition to *macrology* (a long and tedious speech without much substance), since it is a continuous and richly articulated discourse typical of rhetoric. In linguistics it indicates a concise, extremely synthetic and schematic way of expressing oneself. It is a rhetorical style attributed to sophists, philosophers and rhetors. It is an essential tool for a citizen to succeed in public life, such as pleading in court of law or addressing an assembly. According to the *Gorgias* dialogue, a Socratic dialogue written by Plato around 380 BC, a man needs to master his eloquence in order to ‘*persuade by speeches judges in a law court, councillors in a meeting, and assemblymen or any other political gathering that might take place.*’

*Brachylogia de Princeps* is part of the so-called literary genre *Espelho de Príncipes* (Mirrors for Princes), a literary genre with its roots in late Antiquity when the image of the ideal prince was strongly influenced by monastic background. It is in line with previous works and authors of the same literary genre, such as the *Speculum Regum* (Mirror for Kings) of Friar Álvaro Pais (1280-1350), a work dedicated to Alphonso XI of Castiglia, concerned with the notions of good and virtue, the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal, and the monarchy over other temporal constitutions.

It accompanies the transformations of the political thought of the time (the diffusion of the precepts of Catholic politics that is to say, of tacitism, and of moderate pragmatism nourished by Christian sources). Jacinto de Deus is in favour of an absolute ruler (compared to the Sun), but at the same time an open-minded ruler, accessible and willing to listen to suggestions and advice. The prince is an open self, being almost a denial of oneself, in the sense of placing himself at the service of God, sacrificing his own interests, such as it is described in the Gospel (Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23): *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* However, this denial of oneself should not be understood as a loss of oneself, but rather a re-encounter of the true Self, as further explained in the Gospels: *"For whoever would save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it."*

The role of the prince as God's representative on earth is to guide his subjects, to watch over peace and harmony, so that his kingdom may be an image of the city of God. All human conflicts result from selfish behaviour, the general inclination of mankind, and the restless desire of power after power that cease only in death. The mission of the prince is to limit this search for power and to avoid a constant war of all against all. In order to do so, he must foster unity among his subjects, founded on reciprocity and control of free will, instituting an unmistakable guiding power over human conduct.

The good prince is the one who possess good virtues, such as being kind, generous, and sufficiently wise to protect his people and his kingdom - an idea traditionally defended in Franciscan literature, which has the highest exponent in St. Francis of Assisi (1181/1182-1226), the human model that most closely approached the life of Jesus Christ. In this way, for Jacinto de Deus "O Príncipe é um espelho, em que todos olham; fonte, onde todos bebem" (4).

The Prince should be generous and must know to whom to give, what is the proper amount and the most opportune time to do so. Generosity should be adequate and equivalent to the services rendered by people, in both importance and quality, in order to generate the reciprocal love and dedication of his vassals. However, those who receive will have to observe the principle of reciprocity, that is, to be unconditionally available to the royal service, and to fight the common enemy in times of crisis.

A good ruler must be authoritarian, not overshadowed by victories, but on the contrary, to keep his feet on the ground, know how to listen and choose among the best. To act prudently, to resist self-conceit, and to accept the opinions of others if they are better than his own. In any case, to win the sympathy, affection or follow the will of others, but in whatever is more convenient or favourable to the government of his kingdom:

*"Vencer he fortuna, seguir o conselho he prudencia. Se a disposição he discreta, a desgraça a não desacredita y Para o acerto, tal vez convêm esquecerse do próprio parecer, & enamorar-se do alheo. Caminha ao seguro mais, [que] ao plausível, quem guia guiado. Cure triunfar da fama, com a escolha dos melhores conceitos; mas não se sujeite a advertencia a conceber as conveniências; & exame ao ouvir. Quanto hum Príncipe tiver de fundo, tanto terá de pessoa; sonde a maior profundez, por tomar fundo a todas as cousas; reflexão aos discursos, para perfeição das acçoens, tratar com muitos, sentir com os melhores, ouvir as opiniões, seguir a sciencia."* (5)

Notes:

- (1) Chapter IV of this book gives a description of China, and tells some stories related to the convents of St. Francis and St. Clare in Macao [Conventos de São Francisco e de Santa Clara]. This chapter would be printed by an anonymous Macanese in 1878 and published under the title of *Descrição do Império da China, precedida de algumas notícias sobre os conventos de S. Francisco e de Sta. Clara em Macau: Excerpto do vergel de plantas e flores da Província da Madre de Deus dos Capuchos Reformados...* [Description of the Empire of China, preceded by some news about the convents of St. Francis and Sta. Clara in Macao: excerpt from the orchard of plants and flowers of the Province of Mother of Madre de Deus of the retired Capuchins...] In spite of some inconsistency with regard to Chinese names, is still read by scholars of Chinese things, because it is based on studies of the Jesuit fathers of that time.
- (2) The political theology of St. Augustine is based on the distinction between two cities that share humanity together. *Two loves built two cities*, the city of God and the city of man. These *two cities* are thus not the same city: *self-love*, which leads to contempt for God, made the earthly city; *the love of God*, which goes to contempt for ourselves, erected the Heavenly City (City of God, chapter XIV). In this way, the authentic happiness of man is in the *Good*, and is the love of God, while evil consists in turning away from God and in the search for changeable goods and envy.
- (3) *Divine Grace* is the divine influence which acts upon men to inspire virtuous actions, and to regenerate, to sanctify, and to strengthen them in order to resist the temptation of evil.
- (4) *The Prince is a mirror, in which all look; the fountain, where everyone drinks.*
- (5) Brachilogia de Princepes, pp. 177-179: "*Winning is luck, to follow the advice is prudence. If a good decision is appropriated, the misfortune will not contradict it, and in order to make it right, perhaps would be better to forget your own opinion and fall in love with someone else's. Walks more safely than in doubt, the one who is advised. Cure to triumph of his fame by following the best choices; but do not commit yourself to others, whenever you decide what is the most convenient to you. The more reserved a prince, the greater his position; analyse carefully, in order to decide wisely on all things; moderation of words leads to perfection of actions, seek advice from many, assemble with the best, listen their opinions, and follow science.*"



Read the book online

<http://library.umac.mo/ebooks/b39511741.pdf>

## References:

- Aquinas, Thomas. 2019. "Contra Gentiles: book one: God." In *St. Thomas Aquinas' Works in English*. Washington, DC: Priory of the Immaculate Conception.  
<https://dhspriory.org/thomas/ContraGentiles1.htm#50> (Accessed August 2, 2019)
- Bazó Canelón, Abelardo. 2009. "Tiempo, eternidad e historia en el pensamiento de San Agustín." In *Logoi*. Ene-jun. 2009, Issue 15, p. 93-109. Caracas, Venezuela: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello Montalban. Academic Search Complete. EBSCOhost.  
<http://search.ebscohost.com.libezproxy.umac.mo/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=65999988&site=ehost-live> (Accessed August 2, 2019)
- Boxer, Charles R. 1937. "Um Macaense ilustre-Frei Jacinto de Deus (1612-1681)." In *Escavações históricas: um macaense ilustre: Frei Jacinto de Deus (1612-1681)*. Macau: Escola Tipográfica do Orfanato.
- Faria, Patrícia Souza de. 2011. "Literatura espiritual e história dos franciscanos no Oriente português: a escrita de Jacinto de Deus, um frade nascido na Cidade do Nome de Deus de Macau." *Locus: Revista de História, Juiz de Fora*. Volume 17, número 1, pp. 217-236.
- Hansen, João Adolfo. 2006. "Educando príncipes no espelho." In *Floema Especial*. Ano II, n. 2 A, p. 133-169. Itapetinga, BA: Universidade Estadual do Sudoeste da Bahia.
- Jacinto de Deus, Frei. 1671. *Brachilogia de princeps*. Lisboa: Antonio Craesbeeck de Mello, impressor de Sua Alteza.
- Lambertini, Roberto. 2011. "Mirrors for Princes." In *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*. Lagerlund H. (eds). Springer, Dordrecht.  
[https://doi-org.libezproxy.umac.mo/10.1007/978-1-4020-9729-4\\_338](https://doi-org.libezproxy.umac.mo/10.1007/978-1-4020-9729-4_338) (Accessed August 2, 2019)
- Matthews, Gareth B. 2011. "Augustine." In *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*. Lagerlund H. (eds). Springer, Dordrecht.  
[https://doi-org.libezproxy.umac.mo/10.1007/978-1-4020-9729-4\\_59](https://doi-org.libezproxy.umac.mo/10.1007/978-1-4020-9729-4_59) (Accessed August 2, 2019)
- Nina, Susana Rogeiro. 2014. "Qual a influência platónica na conceção da Cidade de Deus de Santo Agostinho?"  
<https://lisboa.academia.edu/SusanaRogeiroNina> (Accessed August 2, 2019)
- Otto, S.A. 2009. "Felix culpa: The doctrine of original sin as doctrine of hope in Aquina's Summa Contra Gentiles." In *Heythrop Journal*, v. 50, n. 5, p. 781-892. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. Academic Search Complete. EBSCOhost.  
<http://search.ebscohost.com.libezproxy.umac.mo/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=43668993&site=ehost-live> (Accessed August 2, 2019)
- Tournai, Gilberto. 2008. *Instrução dos reis e dos príncipes. Tratado sobre a paz*. Porto Alegre: Bragança Paulista.
- Van Oort, J. 2016. "Reminiscences of Manichaeism in Augustine's City of God." In *Hervormde Theologische Studies*, v. 72, n. 4, p. 1-10. Pretoria, South Africa: AOSIS. Academic Search Complete. EBSCOhost.  
<http://search.ebscohost.com.libezproxy.umac.mo/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=121811665&site=ehost-live> (Accessed August 2, 2019)