Brazilian Gold and the Commercial Sector in Oporto, 1710-1750

AJ.R. Russel-Wood

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The period from 1695 to 1750 eas characterized by C.R. Boxer as the "golden age" of Brazil¹. In the 1960s alluvial gold had been found in the Rio das Velhas region. The next half century witnessed multiple gold strikes in many regions, especially in Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso, and Goias; gold rushes in seriatum; measures for the administration and localization of gold production; mining encampments; chartered towns; and new captaincies to impose royal governent. Overall, gold production increased trougth thr 1750s, but already in the early 1740s in Minas Gerais trere were signs of decline. The impact on the metropolis was both positive and negative. Connections between the north of Portugal and Brazil may be expressed in two words: emigration and commerce. The gold and Oporto's commercial sector.

Oporto was the major demographic, administrative, commercial and urban centre of northern Portgal. It was an episcopal see, and counted a Relacao, fine churches, impressive public buildings, and imposing private residences. In the eighteenth century there was demographic growth. Provisional data suggest that the city's population increased from 16,086 souls in 1623 to 24,883 in 1732, and more than doubled over the next half century. In 1710 the city was divided into two *bairros*, one with four parishes and the other with three. Location on the right bank of the of the River Douro, a bar, and rock infested passage from the mouth to the port, did not stop Oporto from being an emporium with a multinational merchant community and strong maritime links to northern Europe. This period saw a shift of the British Factory. Commodities from Brazil flooded into Portugal: sugar, molasses, manioc flour, honey, fish oil, cotton, coffe, cacao, tanned hodes and skins, tobacco, construction and fine woods, resins and gums, and *drogas do sertdo*. These found a market in Oporto. Exports to Brazil included salt, olive oil, codfish, cloth, tools, ironware, manufactured goods, items of personal adornment and religious objects. One commodity associated specifically with Oporto was wine, already being exported to Brazil in the seventeenth century².

The thesis posited in this essay is that Brazilian gold made Oporto part of a network of bullion consignments which embraced Brazil, Portugal, northern Europe, and extended east to Italy. The focus is on the commercial sector in Oporto. This essay also calls attention to a source underutilized by social historians. This is the collection of *manifestos das naus* in the Casa da Moeda in Lisbon.

For the period 1710-1750, these number 756 bound volumes containing between 200,00 and 250,00 individual declations³. Consignments of gold, silver, and precious stones had to be declared

^{*} The Johns Hopkins University

C.R Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695-1750.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962.
 ² Histdfia do Porto. Direccao Luis A. de Oliveira Ramos. Porto: Porto Editora, 1995. Pag.264-66; AJ.R Russell -Wood, Um mundo em

movimento. Os Portugueses na Africa, Asia e America (1415-1808). lisboa: Difel Editora, 1998. Pag. 198-200,2056.

³ For a description of the 1386 volumes of manifestos das ruas, 23 volumes of manifestos das visitas do ouro, and 32 volumes of receita do 1 por cento de ouro, see Margarida Ortigao Ramos Paes Leme, "O Arquivo da Casa da Moeda de lisboa; Seu interesse para a historia do Brasil colonial, 1686-1822", Acervo: Revista do Arquivo Nacional, X (Rio de Janeiro, 1997): 47-56.

in manifests of vessels originating in Brazilian ports and bound for Portugal. Such declarations were made prior to departure or on board⁴. Consignments were of gold coins struck in Brazilian mints: of gold bars forged and registered in colonial foundry houses; of gold dust and nuggets; of gold jewellery and personal objects such as toothpicks and buttons; and religious objects such as crosses and medallions of Nossa Senhora da Conceicao. Trere were also silver coins, bars, and objects worked in silver, originating in Spanish America.

Manifests identify consignors and consignees. The consignors was the person who delivered the consignment on board in a Brazilian port. This person might be acting on his/her own behalf, as agent for another person in Brazil to Portugal often travelled on the same vessel as their consignments. The consignee was the person to whom final delivery was made. Consinees not resident in Lisbon named an agent to act on their behalf. References to the place of residence of a consignee or his/her agent were as general as "morador no Porto" or as specific as "Porto em lugar do ouro"⁵. Manifests also record the name of the person at whose financial risk the consignment was sentThis could be the consignor, consignee, or a third party. Often unclear is whether a consignor was acting on his behalf or on behalf of an instituion.

Delivery of consignments to mints in Lisbon or Oporto was registered by the respective officials; unrecorded is whether, once they left the mants, consignments were delivered to consignees.

Most vessels sailing to Brazil han Lisbon as their home port but, especially before 1720, there are examples of vessels whose home port was Oporto. Their destinations were most frequently Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Pernambuco⁶. Even when vessls left Oporto for Brazil, their first port of call on return was Lisbon. Captains from Oporto followed produres outlined in this example. On 24 May 1713, Manuel Saldanha Marinho, captain and master of the *Bom Jesus e S. Domingos e Nossa Senhora do Bom Sucesso*, went to the mint in Oporto and received a book for manifests from Pedro da Costa Lima, Superintendent of the Casa da Moeda and variously styled as Superintendent das fabricas dELRei da Ribeira do Ouro or Superintendente das fabricas dos galioes da Ribeira das Naus. The book had been signed and pages numbered by Desembargador Manuel da Cunha Sardinha, an officer of the royal treasury. Marinho sailed for Pernanbuco. Homeward-bound, on 12 July 1714 at 5^Q North and 42^Q202'West, he posted on the main mast an *edital* informing passengers and crew who had not yet declared consignments of gold to do so. On 14 August the captain closed the vessel's manifest and no more declarations were accepted. Officials came on bord in Lisbon.

Penalties were imposed on those found in possession of undeclared gold. Consignments were delivered to the mint. Consignments for Oporo continued on board and were delivered to the mint in Oporto for final clearance⁷.

The paradigm of consignor-consignee for consignments from Brazil to Oporto diffred significantly from the model for consignments to Lisbon. A substantial proportion, both by numbers and value, of consignments for final delivery in Lisbon were institutional. These fell into three categories: consignments for the ryoal exchequor; for institutions under the royal protection; and consignments from overseasprovinces of religious orders and the Society of Jesus to procurators in Lisbon. Rarely are any of these categories represented in consignments yo Oporto⁸. Thus, most consignors in Brazil of consignments to Oporto were individual, rather than institutioanl. They were predominantly male, reflecting emigration patterns from the north of Portugal to Brazil⁹.

Many were priests, a reflection also of the disproportionate number of young men from the north of Portugal who took their vows. Rarely were consignors identified other than by name, but

⁴For greater detail, see A J. R Russell Wood, "As frotas do ouro do Brasil, 1710-1750", *Estudos Economicos*, Xm (Sao Paulo, 1983); 701-17
⁵Arquivo da Casa da Moeda de Iisboa (hereafter ACML); vol. 1784 #476.

⁶Virgilio Noya Pinto, *O ouro brasileiro e o comercio anglo-portugues.* 2- edicao. Sao Paulo: Companhia Editorial Nacional, 1979. Pag. 133-85.

⁷ACML: vol. 1666. For other examples of Oporto based veasels travelling to Brazil in 1713 and 1714, see vols. 1665,1671,1675,1685, 1686,1692,1695, and 1702.

⁸A J. R Russell Wood, "Holy and Unholy Mances: Clerical Participation in the Flow of Bullion from Brazil to Portugal during the Reign of Dom Joao V (1706-1750)", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 80:4 (2000); 815-37.

⁹Donald Ramos, "From Minho to Minas: The Portuguese Roots of the Mineiro Family", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 73; 4 (1993): 639-62.

the context shows that often they acted on behalf of individuals in Brazil or as agents for individuals or business partnerships in Oporto. The absence of silver suggests that their commercial networks did not include trade with Spanish America.

There was also the practice of designating a person to be responsable for handing in consignments in a Brazilian port, making a declaration of their value and nature, and then himself accompanying these as a passenger on the same vessel to Lisbon and even on to Oporto. An example of bundling together a number of consignments was the case of Joseph Teixeira e Sousa, a native and resident of Oporto. Teixeira e Sousa was a passenger homeward-bound from Salvador in 1721. He made individual declarations for the following consignments of gold on vessels of the fleet on which he was travelling: 10,000 gold moedas each valued at 4\$800 reis; 11,000 moedas; a further 7650 moedas; 9843 oitavas of gold dust, divided among 58 packages (embrulhos) of different individuals; 54 packages totalling 7580 oitavas of gold dust for various peolple; a further 1299 oitavas of dust at the risk of a consortium in Vila do Conde¹⁰. Teixeira e Sousa's role was limited to delivering consignments on board, making the respective declarations, and taking delivery on arrival in Lisbon. He was not financially liable for the above consignments. Other than a consignment of 1130 moedas and 6370 *oitavas* of dust, where risk was assumed by persons in Recife and Bahia¹¹, in all other cases risk was assumed by persons in Portugal. Teixeira e Sousa had receipts for consignments and recorded each consignments in a *caderno*, but there is no indication of whether or not consignees were in the commercial sector. His only personal interest was in a consignment of 467.5 moedas which he handed in and of which he would take delivery, for which he shared the risk with the heirs of Fancisco Dias, a sometime resident of Oporto, and which other consignees in Oporto in Oporto, and further consignments of 250 moedas, of 939.5 oitavas and of 400 moedas respectively for which he personally assumed sole risk¹²

A fellow passenger was Captain Manuel do Vale de Carvalho, a resident of Oporto who handed in a consignment of 350 *moedas*, for which he had receipts for individuals in Entre Douro e Minho who assumed risk, and of which he would take delivery in Lisbon¹³. Marcal de lima Veiga, returning in 1722, handed in 2152 *moedas* of 4.800 *reis* in Rio de Janeiro, at the risk of third parties, and intended to take delivery in Lisbon in his role as "carregador" and then make final delivery in Oporto. Aware of the danger of an Atlantic crossing, he made provision that, in his absence, the consignment be delivered to Pe. Domingos Alvares da Veiga or, failing him, to the Procurador da mercancia da Cidade do Porto¹⁴. There are also examples of persons handing in consignments in Brazil and later taking final delivery in Oporto. Naval personnel were also involved in such consignments. The pilot on the *Santa Cruz*, homeard-bound from Salvador to Oporto in 1713, was responsible for consignments of gold dust, a gold bar, and coins for delivery in Oporto.

Manuel da Silva, ship's surgeon on the *Santa Cruz das Portas* from Salvador in 1715 declared consignments of gold dust and a gold bar for delivery in Oporto¹⁵.

Consignments were of gold dust, bars, and coins. Gold dust was weighed in *oitavas* (*loitava* = 72 grdos or grains) and in 1724 fluctuated between 1\$515 reis and 1\$520 reis per oitava. Bars were forged in Brazilian smelting-house from gold on which the royal fifth had been paid. Each bar was stamped with the royal seal and numbered and matching certificate issued stating its weight.

Gold coins were the most commom form of consignment. Most frequent were *moedas* of 4\$800 *reis* struck in Brazil; less frequent were *dobroes* of 24\$000 *reis* (know as *dobroes grandes*) and *dobroes* of 12\$800 *reis* or 12\$000 *reis* (know in Brazil as *meio dobroes*). This gold was tranported in containers, packages, and sewn wrappings. The 27800 *oitavas* of gold dust destined for Ventura de Azevedo in Oporto were contained in a small trunk¹⁶.

^B ACML: vol. 1784 #400.

¹⁰ ACML: vol. 1783 # 528 and #1021; vol. 1784 # 219; vol. 1785 " 136, # 264, #265.

¹¹ACML: vol. 1784 #378. ² ACML: vol. 1783 #666; vol. 1784 #379; vol. 1785 #266; vol. 1786 #114.

[#] ACML: vol. 1799 # 73, # 74, # 97.

⁵ ACML: vol. 1653; vol. 1693, fols. 14v-17v.

⁶ ACML: vol. 1679, fol.36r.

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By volume and by value, the lion's share of consignments had Lisbon as their final destination, but manifests show Oporto as the final destination for a considerable amount of bullion.

Consignments for Oporto were transshipped in Lisbon or continued on in the same vessel in which they gad crossed the Atlantic. It was not unusual for all consignments on a vessel whose home port was Oporto to be exclusively for delivery there. Much in evidence was the large number of consignments of gold dust for delivery in Oporto, especially on vessels from Pernambuco prior to 1720, but also most fleets from Rio de Janeiro and Salvador carried consignments of gold dust for Oporto. A passenger returning home from Pernambuco to Oporto in 1714 accompanied three consignments of golg dust. Likewise, Joseph Domingues Maia of Oporto, a passenger on *Nossa Senhora da Plama e S. Pedro* from Salvador to Lisbon in 1721 declared 6804.5 *oitavas* of gold dust of which he would take delivery in Lisbon and would then be delivered to various locations as pereceipts¹⁷. Domingues Maia was also accompanying four consignments tatalling 15557.5 *moedas*.

An alternative to take delivery of two of these consignments tatalling 5974.5 *moedas* was the ubiquitous Joseph Teixeira e Sousa¹⁸.

The use of ship's manifests as sources of information on commercial pratices in Oporto, and on the merchant community in particular, presents a challenge. Unless the occupation of the consignor or the consignee is explicitly stated, it is impossible to differentiate a merchant or businessman *(homem de negocio)* from a person with no commercial interests. Nor is there sufficient information to reconstruct a hierarchy of merchants, ranging from those engaging in oceanic or long-distance trade to hunble shopeepers. Some consignments involved large amounts of bullion but, even when the name of a consignee is available, this fact alone does not permit identification of such a person as a member of a mercantile elite. Oceanic commerce was the prerogative of a few merchants in each port who had sufficient capital accumulation to dominate all sectors - supply and distribution, fiance, insurance, making loans, and even naval construction - of the market and commerce, and to act as points of articulation between domestic and oceanic trade networks¹⁹. Only rarely do manifests indicate the nature of a transaction, of a commodity being bough or sold, or of a service being remunerated. Not withstanding such caveats, manifests contain information on commercial practices, merchants and trade in Oporto.

Merchants tried to maximize their trading and purchansing potencial by forming partnerships or having collaborative arrangements with Brazilians. In 1720 Joao Carneiro da Silva & Cia delivered on board in Rio de Janeiro and manifested consignments, mostly of gold bars and gold dust, for delivery to Verissimo Mendes da Fonceca in Lisbon. Risk was shared by menbers of the partnership in Brazil and by residents in Lisbon, Oporto, and Rio de Janeiro. Unstated is whether Joao Carneiro da Silva & Cia was acting merely as agent for Mendes da Fonceca. Another example concerned shared liability for a consignment in 1727 from Brazil to Portugal. Risk was assumed equally by Captain Antonio Nunes da Silva in Oporto and Manuel Barbosa of the Engenheiro da Birinoga in the parish of Ipojuca in Pernanbuco²⁰.

Another option was for a businessman resident in Oporto himself to travel to Brazil. This may have been for solely personal reasons, but he was open to accepting commissions to defray part of his costs. *Nossa Senhora do Pilar*, homeward-bound from Salvador in 1716, carried on board Antonio de Campos. He was described as an *"homen de negocio"* and *"morador do Porto"*. Campos declared consignments of *moedas* and gold dust that he was accompanying for consignees in Lisbon and Oporto. There are also examples from other sources of merchants in Portugal encouraging a son or relative to take up residence in Brazil, represent family interests, and thereby further their own careers²¹.

As for consignees, most consignmets whose final destination was not Lisbon - including those for Oporto and northern Portugal - were delivered to an agent in Lisbon. He ensured that they

¹ ACML: vol. 1692; vol. 1666; vol. 1787 # 39.

⁸ ACML: vol. 1786 # 137, #382, #383, #388.

⁹ Cited in Joao Luis Ribeiro Fragoso, Homens de grossa aventura; acumulacao e hierarquia na praca mercantil do Rio de Janeiro, 1790-1830. Rio de Janeiro; Arquivo Nacional, 1992. Pag. 253-303.

¹⁰ ACML: vol. 1754 #87; vol. 1916 #357.

¹ ACML: vol. 1714, Jinia Ferreira Furtado, Homens de negocios. A interiorização da metropole e do comercio nas Minas setentistas. São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1999. Pag. 61-62.

reached their final destination, either by transshipping them to another vessel or overland. Usually consignees are identified by name, but some preferred to use a third party. This practice seems to have been institutionalized in the creation of the post of "procurador dos homens do negocio da cidade do Porto" referred to in 1724²².

The name which appears most often among commercial consignees in Oporto is "Viuva Aylvarde & Cia" (probably a variant on the English Aylward). Rare was the fleet from Brazil between 1720 and 1729 which did not have on board two or more consignments for this commercial house in Oporto. Such consignments were invariably in gold moedas of 4\$800 rets and, for the most part, were carried on fleets from Rio de Janeiro. Consignments from Salvador can be counted on one hand, although Salvador provides the only example of a consignment of gold dust: 423.5 oitavas in 1722²³. In 1725 and again in 1727 Diogo Aylward is designated by name as the consignee, and in 1727 Margarida Aylward is named as a consignee of 150 moedas²⁴. It appears there was a change of ownership or management. After years of being designated as "Viuva Aylvarde & Cia", in 1726 and subsequently the Company is referred to as "Viuva Aylvarde e Arcediago". The latter referred to one Pedro Arcediago. In 1728,774\$400 revs from Rio de Janeiro consigned to "Aylvarde e Arcediago" were hanted to Pedro Arcediago with the agreement of Margarida Ariardo, widow of Ricardo Ariardo²⁵. For the years 1720-29 inclusive, the manifests show that the business received consignments from Rio totalling some 17879\$000 rets before the merger in 1726 and 6456\$000 rets afterwards; and from Salvador some 1200\$00 revs and 423.5 oitavas prior to 1726 and a further 256\$000 rets after the merger.

The tantalizing question, namely why consignments clearny of a business nature were made, remains largely unanswered. The manifest for a consignment of 31 moedas dispatched from Rio de Janeiro in 1722 notes that risk was assumed by a consortium refereed to as "Amigos do Norte".

This consortium dealt in flanelette and other cloths. Two consignments were sent on the fleet from Rio de Janeiro in 1722 for delivery to investors with business interests in the vessel Bom Jesus da Gaia. Each was of 387 moedas and each was on a different vessel. This was a common strategy, presunably to avoid loss should one vessel founder at sea. A consignment of 108\$800 rets from Salvador in 1740 was for delivery to Abdre Teixeira in Oporto. Teixeira assumed risk and was identified as a "boticario" who had presumably dispatched potions or pills yo a client in Bahia²⁰ Such occupational identification is rare for consignees in Oporto, despite a livery community of persons in the "mechanical trades".

Manifests for consignments of bullion from to Portugal have a strong international component. Places of residence of consignees range from London, Hamburg, nad Paris, to Barcelona and Genoa. By the eighteenth century there was a triving international merchant community in Oporto.Wholesale and retail sectors of the economy attracted not only Portuguese investment but foreign merchants: Flemish, French, and English. In the first half of the eighteenth century a vigorous exchange continued of products from northern Europe - foodstuffs, cloth and manufactured goods - for Portuguese fruits, wax, honey, vinegar, and two products especially identified with the region of the River Douro: sumac and wine. The British were prominent in the commercial life of Oporto and England was a major market for the product already known as Port Wine. Menbers of this comminity appears as consignees for bullion consignments from Brazil, their names often appearing as Portuguese adaptations. Nothing indicates what generation of expatriates they were or their length or residence in Oporto. In the decade between about 1722 and 1732, John Stevenson & Co., appears frequently as consignee for shipments of moedas of 4\$800 reis and invariably on fleets from Salvador. Only once, in 1722, was he named as consignee of 400 oitavas of gold dust. A

²²ACML:vol.1828#6.

² From Rio; ACML: vol. 1747 #42; vol. 1748 # 244, #245, #249; vol. 1756 #62; vol. 1757 #31; vol. 1792 # 15, #16; vol. 1800 #71, #111, #112, #113; vol. 1812#114;vol. 1821 #75; vol. 1849 #55; vol. 1853 #3,6; vol. 1855 #216; vol. 1871 #37; vol. 1879 fol. 109v;vol. 1885#115; vol. 1892 #13; vol. 1893 #129. From Salvador: ACML: vol. 1788 #95; vol. 1809 #70; vol. 1810 #6; vol. 1939 #7.

² AOM: VOI. 1005 #122. From Section 4. 100 #10 VOI. 1005 #100 #10 VOI. 1005 #100 WOI. 1000 WOI. 100

²⁶ ACML: vol. 1798 #69; vol. 1792 #13; vol. 1800 #109; vol. 2162 #195.

ship's manifest recorded the consignment on the *Nossa Senhora da Conceigdo*, homer ward-bound from Rio de Janeiro and which arrived in the Tagus in November 1737, or 126\$000 *reis*, "bens do defunto Joao Stevenson"²⁷. The Hopman family name - Sibrando, Reinaldo, and Arnoldo - was associated with consignments from Brazil for more than 20 years: other than a consignments from Pernambuco in 1714 of a gold bar of 119 *marcos* for Sibrando, subsequent consignments were in *moedas* from Rio de Janeiro. This pattern did not change when a Hopman entered into a partnership with Arnold Vanzeller in 1733²⁸.

Other British partnerships make fleeting appearances in manifests: Benjamin Tilden & Co., for a consignment of 1008\$000 *reis* from Rio in 1720, another consignment in coin in 1730, and another of *moedas* from Rio, this time in 1733 and partnership with Daniel Hunt and Richard Lance in Lisbon. In 1740 the partnership of Acland, Young and Palmer in Oporto received two consignments in coin from Rio de Janeiro. Francis Milner in Oporto was the consignee for three consignments of coins from Salvador and Rio de Janeiro respectively in 1721 and 1740²⁹. Other British names are scattered through the manifests as consignees: Jorge Clarque (Carlk), Timothy Harris, John Lee, Samuel Palmer, John Hitchcock, Richard Thompson, John Paige & Co, and Critovao Croft. PedroBeasley in Oporto was probably related to Guilherme Beasley, a commercial partner of Benjamin Jones in Lisbon³⁰. Despite their roles as consignees, there is not sufficient evidence from this source alone that persons of British birth or descent in Oporto intensively or consistently engaged in trade with Brazil in this period.

Manifests indicate that merchants of Oporto had relationships with their counterparts elsewhere in Europe. A consignment on the fleet from Salvador in 1721 referred to a consignment of 64 *moedas*. Risk was assumed by Joao Burmestre Qohan Burmeister) of Hamburg and delivery was to be made in Lisbon to the order of "Joao Brestins e Venduque" (Dutch van Diyk?) resident in Oporto. There are also references to risk being assumed by a merchant in Hamburg for consignments of gold dust and "moedas" from Salvador in 1724 for final delivery in Oporto. In 1721 a Raimundo Ritte (German Ritter?) and his son were residents in Oporto and receiving consignments from Brazil³¹.

The most visible evidence of a Brazilian presence in Oporto was the suoerb gilded and carved *talha* executed in the church of Sao Fancisco in the early 1750s. The years after 1731 also saw Nicolo Nasoni was at the height of his creative powers in the city. Gold is a great enabler, with the capacity to be both the instrument and the catayst for change: promotion of music and the fine arts; new architectural styles; enhanced support for social philanthropy; public health in the from of cemeteries, hospitals, and foundling wheels; distinguished private, public, and religious buildings; public services such as fountains, roads, bridges, and streets; and as the engine to drive local economies and commercial networks whose development could have positive ramifications for the *respublica*. This essay advocates that a fruitful line for enquiry is research on the impact and influence of Brazilian gold on the society, economy, and culture of the City of Oporto during the reign of Dom Joao V.

¹⁷ Historia do Porto. Direcgao Luis A de Oliveira Ramos. Porto: Porto Editora, 1995. Pag. 281-287. ACML: vol. 1786 #21; vol. 1789 # 22; vol. 1860 #156; vol. 1936 #158; vol. 2000 #151; vol. 2095 # 51.

³⁸ ACML: vol. 1686 fol: 21r; vol. 1902 #170-71; vol. 1980 #199; vol. 2012 # 241.

³⁰ ACML: vol. 1747 #30; vol. 1963 #300; vol. 2012 #287; vol. 2147 # 38; vol. 2149 # 326; vol. 1785 #46; vol. 2144 # 1074; vol. 2149 # 44.

³ ACML: vol. 1761 #21; vol. 1686; vol. 1719, fol. 50r; vol. 2180 #71; vol. 1936 #167; vol. 2000 #150; vol. 2239 #97; vol. 2000 #149; vol.2135 #115; vol. 2143 #71, #343.

³ ACML: vol. 1784 #98; vol. 1835; vol. 1836 # 125; vol. 1783 # 112.