



LUSITANIAN GEOPOLITICS IN THE AMAPÁ AMAZON: CARTOGRAPHY, CATECHESIS, AND POMBALINE POLICIES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF BORDER DOMINATION (17TH–18TH CENTURIES)

GEOPOLÍTICA LUSA NA AMAZÔNIA AMAPAENSE: CARTOGRAFIA, CATEQUESE E POLÍTICAS POMBALINAS NA CONSTRUÇÃO DO DOMÍNIO FRONTEIRIÇO (SÉCULOS XVII-XVIII)

GEOPOLÍTICA LUSA EN LA AMAZONÍA AMAPAENSE: CARTOGRAFÍA, CATEQUESIS Y POLÍTICAS POMBALINAS EN LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DEL DOMINIO FRONTERIZO (SIGLOS XVII-XVIII)



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ABSTRACT

With the advancement of European colonization, particularly from the seventeenth century onward, the insular and continental portions of the lower Amazon began to play a strategic role in the Portuguese Crown's efforts to claim, defend, and dominate the northern region of Brazil. The construction of military garrisons and the establishment of settlements bearing names inspired by Portuguese localities—part of the Pombaline reforms—were tactically incorporated into nautical charts, highlighting the use of cartography and toponymy as instruments for legitimizing territorial power. In light of this context, the present study aimed to analyze the multifaceted tactics of defense and domination employed, focusing on the instrumentalization of Jesuit catechesis, Pombaline centralization policies, spatial and toponymic reconfiguration, and the crucial role of cartography as a tool of power and territorial legitimization. To this end, a historical-geographical approach was adopted, methodologically grounded in bibliographic review and the analysis of historical and cartographic documents. The research revealed that the consolidation of Portuguese control over the mouth of the Amazon—particularly in the territory now known as Amapá—during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a complex process, driven by religious missions and state centralization policies. This included defensive actions materialized through the construction of fortifications and the spatial and toponymic reconfiguration of the region. In this context, cartography emerged as a fundamental geopolitical instrument, not only for delineating boundaries but also for legitimizing claims and influencing territorial disputes, thereby securing sovereignty and demonstrating how territory is a construct imbued with power relations.

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Keywords: Mouth of the Amazon River. Territorial Disputes. Historical Cartography. Amapá. Brazil.

RESUMO

Com o avanço da colonização europeia, especialmente a partir do século XVII, as porções insulares e continentais do baixo Amazonas passaram a desempenhar função estratégica nas ações de posse, defesa e domínio do território pela Coroa Portuguesa sobre a região setentrional do Brasil. A construção de guarnições militares e a fundação de vilas com nomes inspirados em localidades portuguesas, como parte das reformas pombalinas, foram taticamente inseridas em cartas náuticas, evidenciando o uso da cartografia e da toponímia como instrumentos de legitimação do poder territorial. Diante desse cenário, o presente trabalho objetivou analisar as multifacetadas táticas de defesa e dominação empregadas, com foco na instrumentalização da catequese jesuíta, nas políticas de centralização pombalina, na reconfiguração espacial e toponímica, bem como no papel crucial da cartografia como instrumento de poder e legitimação territorial. Para tanto, adotou-se uma abordagem histórica-geográfica, metodologicamente fundamentada em revisão bibliográfica e na análise de documentos históricos e cartográficos. Como resultado, a pesquisa revelou que a consolidação do domínio português na foz do Amazonas, em especial na porção territorial amapaense, entre os séculos XVII e XVIII, foi um processo complexo, instrumentalizado pelas missões religiosas e as políticas de centralização estatal, abrangendo ações defensivas materializadas na edificação de fortificações e reconfiguração espacial e toponímica do território. Nesse contexto, a cartografia emergiu como um instrumento geopolítico fundamental, não apenas para demarcar limites, mas para legitimar reivindicações e atuar nas disputas territoriais, assegurando a soberania territorial e demonstrando como o território é uma construção imbuída de relações de poder..

Palavras-chave: Foz do Rio Amazonas. Disputas Territoriais. Cartografia Histórica. Amapá. Brasil.

RESUMEN

Con el avance de la colonización europea, a partir del siglo XVII, las porciones insulares y continentales del bajo Amazonas pasaron a desempeñar una función estratégica en las acciones de posesión, defensa y dominio por parte de la Corona Portuguesa sobre el septentrional de Brasil. La construcción de guarniciones militares y la fundación de villas con nombres inspirados en localidades portuguesas, como parte de las reformas pombalinas, fueron tácticamente insertadas en cartas náuticas, evidenciando el uso de la cartografía y la toponimia como instrumentos de legitimación del poder. Ante este escenario, este trabajo tuvo como objetivo analizar las tácticas de defensa y dominación empleadas, con foco en la instrumentalización de la catequesis jesuita, políticas de centralización pombalina, en la reconfiguración espacial y toponímica, y el papel crucial de la cartografía como instrumento de poder y legitimación. Para ello, se adoptó un enfoque histórico-geográfico, basado en la revisión bibliográfica y el análisis de documentos históricos y cartográficos. Como resultado, la investigación reveló que la consolidación del dominio portugués en la desembocadura del Amazonas, especialmente en Amapá, siglos XVII y XVIII, fue un proceso complejo, instrumentalizado por las misiones religiosas y las políticas de centralización estatal, abarcando acciones defensivas con la edificación de fortificaciones y la reconfiguración espacial y toponímica. En este contexto, la cartografía emergió como un instrumento geopolítico fundamental, para demarcar límites y legitimar reivindicaciones y actuar en las disputas territoriales, asegurando la soberanía y demostrando que el territorio es una construcción imbuída de relaciones de poder.

Palabras clave: Desembocadura del río Amazonas. Disputas Territoriales. Cartografía Histórica. Amapá. Brasil.

1 INTRODUCTION

The territorial portions of the south and southeast of the State of Amapá have historically emerged as fundamental and multifaceted loci in the production and use of the territory at the mouth of the Amazon River. Its geo-temporal layers date back to periods prior to the arrival of European colonizers, when indigenous peoples such as the Tucujus, Nheengaybos and Aruans inhabited the region, establishing symbiotic relationships with natural resources and shaping a geography of their own.

With the advance of European colonization, especially from the seventeenth century onwards, the insular and continental portions of the lower Amazon began to play a strategic role in the actions of possession, defense and domination of the Portuguese Crown over the northern region of Brazil. The construction of military garrisons and the foundation of villages with names inspired by Portuguese localities, as part of the Pombaline reforms, were tactically inserted in nautical charts, evidencing the use of cartography and toponymy as instruments of legitimation of territorial power. Maps, in this context, were essential tools for identifying, recognizing and claiming ownership of the territory (Lima; Chaves, 2022). Thus, the imposition of a new territorial order, both material and symbolic, was marked by the replacement of original toponyms and the intensive exploitation of nature for the construction of war squares, such as the fort of São José, in Macapá. This model of domination extended beyond the physical occupation of the territory, reaching the subjectivity of the indigenous peoples.

Faced with this intricate scenario, this article reflects on the strategic approach of the Kingdom of Portugal in establishing and consolidating its territorial dominion in the Amapá Amazon between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a region marked by a strong indigenous presence and the greed of other European powers. The objective is, therefore, to analyze the multifaceted tactics of defense and domination employed, focusing on the instrumentalization of Jesuit catechesis, the policies of Pombaline centralization, the spatial and toponymic reconfiguration, as well as the crucial role of cartography as an instrument of power and territorial legitimation.

To achieve this objective, a historical-geographical approach was adopted, methodologically based on a significant bibliographic review, as a theoretical-critical framework, in addition to analysis of historical documents and old maps, related to the Portuguese period of occupation of the Lower Amazon region. As a result, the research revealed that the consolidation of Portuguese domination at the mouth of the Amazon, especially in the territorial portion of Amapá, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was a complex process, which articulated the instrumentalization of Jesuit



catechesis for the submission and identity erasure of the native peoples, and the policies of Pombaline centralization, which included a robust military defense materialized in the construction of fortifications and a spatial and toponymic reconfiguration of the territory.

This work is divided into two main sections. The first addresses the strategies of affirmation and consolidation of the Lusitanian domination in the Amazon estuary, while the second is dedicated to cartography as an instrument of power in territorial disputes in Amapá. Thus, by critically revisiting the processes of occupation and territorial contestation in the Amapá Amazon, we seek to understand the complex fabric of this spatial cut.

2 THE STRATEGIES FOR THE AFFIRMATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE LUSITANIAN DOMINATION IN THE AMAPÁ AMAZON

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Portuguese Crown implemented shrewd strategies to assert and consolidate its dominion in the Amapá Amazon. These initiatives went through the initial phases of the occupation, marked by the intense indigenous presence and the instrumentalization of Jesuit catechesis, and advanced to the political reorientation of the Pombaline period, characterized by state centralization, robust territorial defense, and the spatial and toponymic reconfiguration of the region in the face of border disputes.

2.1 VULNERABILITY AND OCCUPATION OF THE AMAZON VALLEY: THE INDIGENOUS PRESENCE AND THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF JESUIT CATECHESIS (SEVENTEENTH CENTURY - MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

In the mid-seventeenth century, the initial phase of Portuguese colonization in northern Brazil was marked by the perception of territorial vulnerability of the Amazon valley, added to the growing threat of incursions by other European nations that also coveted the 'new' continent. This scenario impelled the Portuguese to implement geopolitical measures aimed at consolidating control over the vast Brazilian Amazon region. Such actions included the construction of military garrisons, the formation of nuclei of possession and the creation of strategic settlements, such as "São Luís do Maranhão (1615), Belém do Pará (1616), Macapá (1636) and Manaus (1665)" (Tavares, 2007, p. 2, emphasis added).

In 1636, the occupation of Macapá, located at latitude zero and close to the North Bar of the Amazon River, was only a point of tactical interest or an incipient attempt to assert Portuguese domination in the lands of Amapá. At that time, this equinoctial region lacked a consolidated administrative structure, being predominantly inhabited by native populations and devoid of effective instruments of territorial control (Santos, 2001).



Only in 1758, after more than a century, the then village, located in one of the strongholds of the Tucujus indigenous people, achieved the status of Village. This promotion was made official by Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, brother of the Marquis of Pombal and governor of Grão-Pará, who named it Vila de São José de Macapá, a name that precedes the current city of Macapá, capital of the State of Amapá.

The elevation to the category of Village represented a crucial institutional milestone in the Lusitanian occupation of the Amapá Amazon. With this new status, Macapá was formally integrated into the Portuguese colonial structure, having a local government with its own administrative apparatus, and transcending its previous role of mere strategic occupation aimed at military surveillance in a predominantly Tucuju territory.

In the context of administrative and strategic redefinition, the indigenous presence, especially that of the Tucuju, played a central role in the territorial conformation of the region. According to Santos (2001), the Tucuju were original peoples who inhabited the strip of land between "the Jari River and the left bank of the Amazon River, that is, from the Paru [River] to the mouth" (p. 16). According to this author (*ibid.*), the remarkable presence of this indigenous group led to the area, initially identified by the Portuguese as Tucuju territory, later being named Tucujulândia, evidencing the importance of this ethnic group in the human and geographical landscape before and during the colonial system. The Portuguese perception of the population density and organization of these peoples made the control and integration of the Tucuju an indispensable vector for the effective consolidation of Lusitanian domination in the region.

In this scenario, the Tucuju were distributed along the alluvial plain, occupying insular and continental territorial portions, especially in the Amapá lands bathed by the northern channel of the Amazon River. Although they prevailed in the south and southeast of Amapá, other indigenous communities also cohabited in this region, such as the Nheengaybos and the Aruans (Santos, 2001).

Faced with the vast and complex indigenous presence and the ineffectiveness of the first attempts to enslave them, the Portuguese Crown, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reoriented its strategy, sending religious missions for the evangelization of the original peoples. The missionary activity of the Jesuits, in particular, sought to promote an apparently peaceful coexistence between colonizers and indigenous peoples, mediated by a catechetical process of an educational and doctrinal nature. However, despite his discourse of religious and cultural integration, the underlying objective was the submission of the newly converted to the colonial project.

In this way, the catechization of native peoples was not limited to the religious sphere,



but proved to be a crucial instrument to enable the strategic purpose of internalizing colonial domination. According to Tavares (2007), this practice favored the expansion of Lusitanian territorial control, allowing the reach of forest areas progressively further away from the banks of the large rivers.

Therefore, although catechization was presented as a missionary initiative of an altruistic and humanitarian nature, aiming at approximation, pacification and spiritual salvation, it is imperative to recognize that this practice, in its essence, constituted a colonial ecclesiastical method. Structured through pedagogical activities and approach strategies, catechesis was deeply articulated with an intrinsic project of sociocultural domination.

Religious education consolidated a sophisticated form of social control, often disguised under the pretexts of civilization and faith. The effectiveness of this strategy is widely debated in the literature. Ribeiro (1995), for example, describes catechesis as a mechanism of cultural reprogramming, molding the indigenous people to become useful subjects for the colonial project. Corroborating this perspective, Oliveira (2006) argues that evangelization operated as a technology of power, responsible for the erasure of original identities and the naturalization of subordination to Lusitanian domination. This instrumentalization of religion in Latin American colonization is also denounced by Galeano (2014). From a broader theoretical perspective, Foucault (1987) offers a valuable lens when discussing how educational practices can function as disciplinary devices, aimed at the docilization of bodies and the production of submissive subjectivities. Finally, Cunha (2009) warns about the effects of acculturation promoted by civilizing projects, which often ignore or erase the complexity of indigenous cultures.

It is evident, therefore, that the Luso-Iberian colonial project, by making use of doctrinal education and the identity modeling imposed by the Jesuits, transcended the mere physical occupation of the territory. It was thus consolidated as a profound intervention in the subjectivity of native peoples, who were culturally reprogrammed to think, act and even feel according to the prevailing colonial Christian values. This process often culminated in the erasure of indigenous ancestral identities and the internalization of the logic of domination of hegemonic agents, establishing a system of power that operated not only on bodies but, crucially, on consciousnesses.

2.2 POMBALINE CENTRALIZATION, DEFENSE AND TERRITORIAL REORGANIZATION (MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

The strategy of acculturation of the native inhabitants, centered on evangelization and catechesis as instruments of control and social domination, configured the first phase of



Amazonian colonization. However, in the mid-eighteenth century, the Portuguese State orchestrated a significant geostrategic inflection, by implementing profound reforms in the administrative and political system of the colony. These transformations, led by Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, the Marquis of Pombal, inaugurated a new stage of the colonial project, characterized by the gradual replacement of the influence of religious missions by policies of state centralization and socio-territorial reorganization.

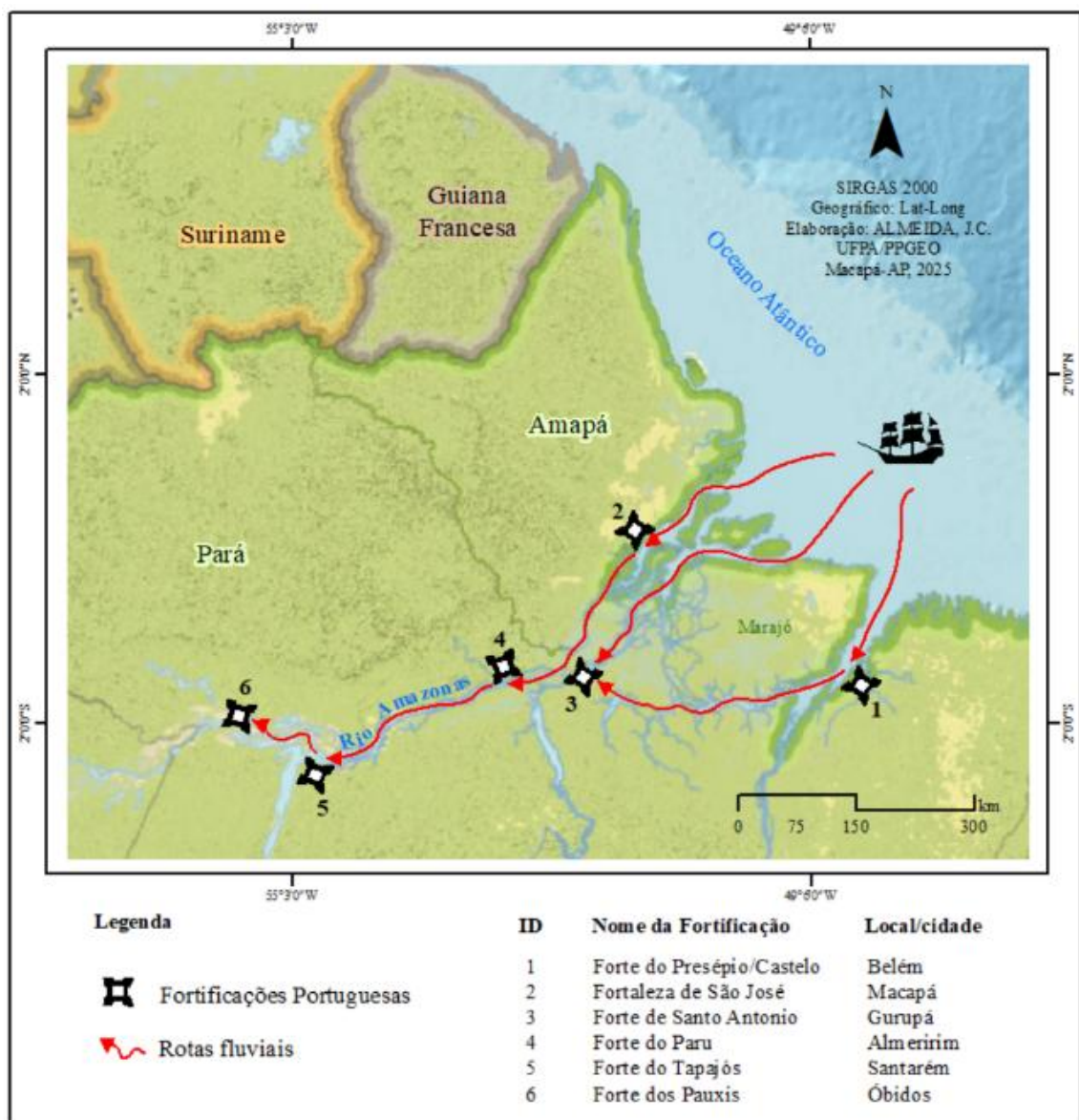
In this context, the Pombaline reforms, as analyzed by Tavares (2007), substantially redefined the meaning and content of the territories traditionally occupied by the Amazonian indigenous nations. This occurred, above all, through the institution of towns and cities with Portuguese toponymy. Such urban centers not only imprinted new morphologies on the organization of space, but also acted as effective instruments of internal control and as tangible expressions of a new colonial materiality, manifested in forts, ports, churches, squares, quartermaster's headquarters, and other strategic urban facilities.

This policy of spatial and cultural redefinition was also supported by specific legal instruments of the Portuguese Crown. An emblematic example was the Royal Charter of April 4, 1755, issued by D. José I. This document demonstrates that part of the Pombaline reforms aimed at the integration and assimilation of indigenous peoples to the Lusitanian colonial system, especially by encouraging mixed marriage between Portuguese and indigenous peoples, granting them the same rights and equating their descendants with Europeans (Varnhagen, 1857), in an attempt to abolish distinctions and condemn discriminatory practices.

In addition to this geostrategic and urbanistic redefinition, in the Pombaline period in the Amazon, which took place between 1750 and 1777, the Portuguese Crown implemented a robust policy of territorial protection, which was fundamental to safeguard its geopolitical interests in the region. As noted by Almeida (2020), the defensive strategy was based on the "constant, ostensive and marked military presence of the Lusitanian state" (p. 79), materialized in several fortifications strategically arranged along the waterway axes at the mouth of the Amazon River. The central purpose of this presence was to curb or intimidate potential attacks by foreign nations on the lands of Grão-Pará, especially in the area that today corresponds to the Eastern Northern Amazon (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Portuguese fortifications in the lower Amazon (Eastern Northern Amazon)



Source: Adapted from Almeida (2020).

The lowered hydrographic and geomorphological configuration of the estuary and the Amazon delta played a decisive role in the occupation and protection plans implemented by the Portuguese Crown in the eighteenth century. The fluvial landscape of the mouth of the Amazon, characterized by an intricate system of canals, islands and tides, directly conditioned the location of the military fortifications, since the rivers constituted the main ones — and, often, the only ones — routes of penetration and access to the interior of the 'new' continent (Almeida, 2020).

The exploitation of natural resources by European colonizers in the valley of the Pedreira River, according to historical records, had a geostrategic purpose. This activity was intrinsically linked to the extraction of rocks from the channel of the Pedreira River and from

other sites for the construction of the fort located in Macapá, listed as a Brazilian cultural heritage in 1950 by the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN), with the official name of Fortaleza de São José de Macapá (FSJM) (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Overview of the FSJM (A) and views of the Amazon River from the top of its walls (B)



Source: (A) available at: <<https://br.pinterest.com>>; (B) Almeida (2020, p. 80).

The FSJM was built on an elevated and strategically selected site, located on the left bank of the North Canal of the Amazon River (A). According to Almeida (2020), from the top of its imposing walls — with heights ranging from 8.30 m to 9.30 m — it was possible to see, with the naked eye and even under the moonlight, large ships, caravels, sailboats, and ships (B/a) that navigated the vast stretch of river. The current width of this segment reaches approximately 12 kilometers in relation to the opposite margin (B/b). This remarkable surveillance capability is evidence of the military acumen of the engineers responsible for its construction, as they meticulously positioned the fortification to ensure a panoramic and unobstructed view of this crucial estuarine segment.

Built between 1764 and 1782, with the use of indigenous and African enslaved labor, the FSJM is recognized as the largest Lusitanian fortified complex in Latin America. Although its construction remains incomplete and there are no historical records of direct combat in its vicinity, its mere grandeur, by itself, was enough to intimidate the enemy presence, attesting that the fort fulfilled its primary function in the territorial defense of the Portuguese Crown. In this regard, Camilo (2003, p. 109) observes that:

In Brazil, the war squares did not have an exclusively defensive and garrisoning character of the border. They positioned themselves as instruments for the realization of sovereignty and domination of the territory by the Portuguese crown, expressing the colonizing concreteness, especially after the Restoration and throughout the eighteenth century, and having a political and practical character, urbanizing in its essence and purpose. This statement can be supported when we compare the



architectural models of Brazilian fortifications with those of Europe, especially with regard to the geometry of the walls.

In fact, several settlements in the Amazon arose or expanded around fortifications. Macapá, in this context, constitutes one of these urban centers whose organization and development were catalyzed by the geopolitical influence inaugurated with the construction of the FSJM.

The relevance of FSJM also covers the understanding of the processes of exploitation of natural resources and, in particular, minerals. In this context, Norat and Costa (2019) carried out the physicochemical characterization of the rock materials used in their construction, confirming their historical places of origin. The research showed that most of the walls are composed of blocks of ferruginous sandstone (FSS) and ferroaluminous lateritic crusts (FLC), coming from the channel of the Pedreira River and other extraction points.

The data obtained in the field and in the fortress, together with historical information, the transport of raw material by the rivers (Pedreira and Amazonas) and the geological connections, allow the conclusion that the main source of raw material for the FSS used in most of the FSJM came from the quarry found on the banks of the Pedreira River, while the FLC were extracted from the site of the fortress and from points on Santana Island, which were also mapped in the research (NORAT; COSTA, 2019, p. 227).

Considering the deep familiarity of the native peoples with the territory and its natural riches, added to the context of educational assimilation promoted by the Jesuits, it is reasonable to infer that the first information on the location of mineral resources, especially the rocky materials of the Pedreira river channel, was transmitted by the Tucuju natives to the Portuguese.

Some river valleys in Amapá, such as those of the Matapi, Curiaú, Pedreira, and Macacoari rivers, became central spaces for the emergence of new socio-territorialities, driven both by the formation of quilombos — initially composed of runaway enslaved Africans who worked on the construction of the FSJM and ports — and by the arrival of families of Portuguese immigrants and their descendants and slaves. This process resulted in the expulsion and cultural erasure of native peoples, gradually changing the demographic and cultural configuration of the south and southeast of Amapá.

For Almeida (2020), the region of the Pedreira River valley represents a multifaceted stage, where marks of convergence of different cultures and the clash between colonial domination, the incessant search for freedom and belonging weave a singular and diversified socioterritoriality, revealing the contradictions derived from the structural permanences of



colonialism.

The gradual process of colonization of the Amazon (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) characterized the transition of territorial control by the systematic replacement of toponyms. Names of rivers, villages, towns and strategic places, previously loaded with indigenous meanings, were re-signified by Portuguese denominations. This tactic of spatial production, by reconfiguring the cultural geography of invaded peoples and territories, aimed to impose 'territorial marks' crucial to the affirmation and consolidation of the borders of colonial domination (Almeida, 2020).

However, the tactic of spatial production described, although already employed in previous centuries, reached a new level of formalization and intensity during the Pombaline period, with the implementation of policies in the Amazon between 1750 and 1777. In this context, toponymic changes became even more common. The reforms were marked by the systematic conversion of indigenous villages into villages, especially those that housed religious missions. To emphasize the presence and dominance of the Lusitanians, the newly established villages were named after typically Portuguese cities or localities, which reinforced the imposition of a new cultural and administrative identity on the spaces of Grão-Pará and Maranhão, where the traditions and forms of organization of the original peoples had previously prevailed.

In addition to these guidelines and illustrating their practical application, it is observed that, on June 7, 1775, the then governor of Grão-Pará, Captain-General Mendonça Furtado — one of the main Portuguese colonial administrators in the region — ordered the elevation of several villages to the category of village, formalizing the replacement of their indigenous denominations by nomenclatures of Lusitanian origin (Tavares, 2007). Among the villages established in this period, whose names refer to places in Portugal, some are listed below (Table 1).

Table 1

Towns created with nomenclatures inspired by localities or cities located in Portugal

Year of Creation	Villages	Toponymic reference to Portugal
1750	Abaetetuba	(—)
1751	Aveiros	It refers to Aveiro, a coastal city known as the "Portuguese Venice"
1752	Macapá	(—)
	Ourém	Historic city of Portugal, notable for its medieval castle.
1757	Necklaces	Village in the Sintra region of Portugal, known for its wines and landscapes.
	Maracanã	(—)
	Muaná	(—)



	Salvaterra	It refers to Salvaterra de Magos, a Portuguese village, in the district of Santarém
	Soure	Portuguese village, also seat of the Municipality of Soure, in the district of Coimbra.
	Souzel	Toponym variant of Sousel, village located in the district of Portalegre, Portugal.
1758	Acará	(—)
	Alenquer	Historic village, belonging to the District of Lisbon.
	Almerim	Variant nomenclature of Almeirim, a Portuguese city in the Ribatejo region
	Braces	Historic city in the north of Portugal
	Curuçá	(—)
	Flair	City in the Algarve region, in the south of Portugal.
	Melgaço	Village in the north of Portugal, on the border with Spain, known for Alvarinho wine.
	Monte Alegre	Although there is no official source that directly confirms the tribute to a specific Portuguese city, the name "Monte Alegre" is common in Portugal. There is, for example, a parish called Monte Alegre in the municipality of Valpaços, in the north of this country.
	Óbidos	Medieval fortified village, quite famous in Portugal.
	Oeiras	Municipality of Greater Lisbon, in Portugal, an important business hub.
	Portel	A village in Portugal, in the Alentejo, where there is an imposing castle.
	Port of Moz	It alludes to the Portuguese village of Porto de Mós, belonging to the district of Leiria, in the province of Extremadura.
1770	Santarém	an important city in the center of Portugal (district capital)
	Mazagão	Although the ancient Portuguese city of Mazagan is now known as El Jadida in Morocco, its name still remains strongly linked to Lusitanian colonial history.
(—) Names of indigenous origin or without allusion to Portugal.		

Source: Authors, based on Tavares (2007).

In addition to the villages mentioned in the table above, Tavares (2007) also states that, during the Pombaline phase, the policy of territorial reconfiguration was not restricted to the larger villages. Villages with smaller population contingents were also formally established as settlements, receiving names of Portuguese origin, such as "Benfica, Monforte, Monsarás and Vila do Conde (1757); and Arrayolos, Alter do Chão, Boim, Esposende, Fragoso, Pinhel, Pombal, Veyros and Vila Franca (1758)" (p. 5).

The breadth of this policy of toponymic reconfiguration gains even more complex contours in the context of Amapá, reflecting a history of occupation and territorial disputes that transcends the merely Lusitanian influence. In this state, the coexistence of denominations of indigenous and European origins is notorious, with rivers that have more than one name, due to the influence of the French, English, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese. For example, some drainages located between the Araguari and Oiapoque rivers stand out, where there are watercourses that maintain their original indigenous nomenclatures, such as the Amapari, Tapiti and Caciporé rivers, as well as tributaries with French designations, such as the *Carnot* and *Macary rivers* (present-day Macarri).



The presence of French toponyms is directly attributed to the centuries-old territorial conflict known as the Franco-Lusitanian Contest, a border dispute that took place in the North and Northeast of Amapá, fought initially between Portugal and France (1713-1822) and, later, between Brazil and France (1822-1900). The history of the French claim in the region is long, dating back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, with attempts to occupy the Northern Cape, the foundation of colonies and forts such as the Orange and Araguari, and the claim of areas that extended from the Oiapoque to the island of Maranhão (Lima; Chaves, 2022). This territorial clash will be addressed in the next session, which highlights cartography as a crucial instrument of power in the demarcation of spatial limits and border disputes in the Amapá Amazon.

3 CARTOGRAPHY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER: ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT OF TERRITORIAL DISPUTES IN AMAPÁ

Border conflicts, cartographic inaccuracies and treaties that tried to define limits characterize this period, which culminated in the resolution of the Question of the Franco-Brazilian Contestado and in the evidence of the role of maps as expressions of knowledge during the consolidation of territorial conformation.

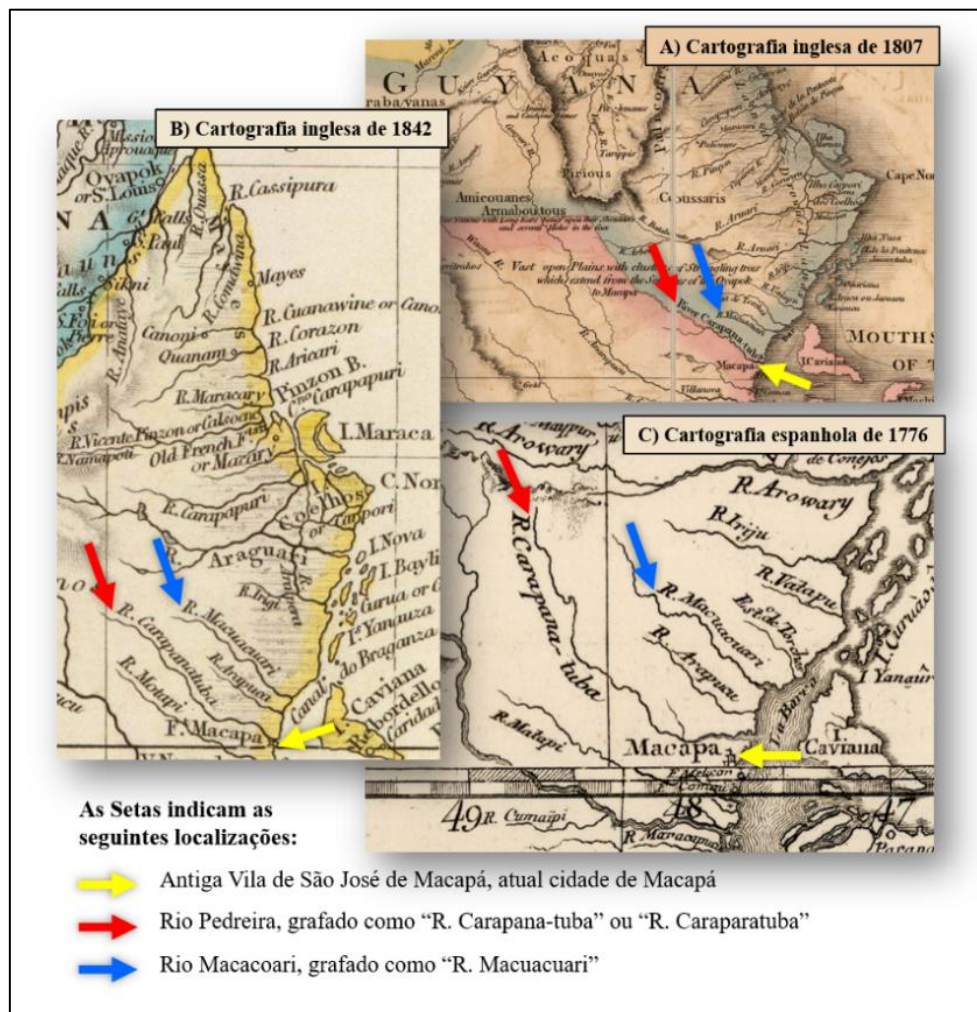
3.1 TERRITORIAL DISPUTES AND THE TREATY OF MADRID OF 1801: CARTOGRAPHY IN THE DEFINITION OF BOUNDARIES (EIGHTEENTH-NINETEENTH CENTURIES)

In the context of the practices of changing toponyms, the Pedreira River, before the European presence, had a name of indigenous origin. Its current nomenclature, 'Pedreira', resulted from a long and intense process of exploration of the quarries distributed along its banks, from which, as mentioned, rock blocks were extracted for the construction of the FSJM.

Cartographic documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reveal that the Pedreira River was formerly called Carapanatuba, as illustrated below (Figure 3). Currently, this toponym designates the district seat of Carapanatuba, a traditional riverside community located near the mouth of the Pedreira River. It is likely that this community inherited the original indigenous name of the river.

Figure 3

Clippings of English and Spanish historical maps



Source: Prepared with historical maps acquired from the David Rumsey website (RUMSEY, 2019).

The cartographic productions of the past continue to intrigue geographers, cartographers and other specialists in the field, especially for the remarkable quality, technical rigor and artistic expressiveness they display. This recognition is significant because, until the end of the nineteenth century, there were no modern geotechnological resources — such as computers, printers, geographic information systems (GIS), airborne sensors, orbital imaging and the indispensable global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) — capable of guaranteeing the precision that is currently achieved in the collection and organization of spatial data.

Although made manually with India ink and on very reduced cartographic scales, and produced in an incipient technological conjuncture, devoid of resources such as the orthogonal interpretation of the landscape (aerial view), the historical maps (A), (B) and (C), despite everything, reveal a significant professional effort and a high technical and artistic dexterity employed in their elaboration. This detail shows a singular richness in the construction of geographical knowledge of the past, marked by numerous toponymic records

and a remarkable density of spatial information. In addition, some ancient cartographic documents denote an impressive ability to identify and spatialize the natural and artificial elements that make up the territory.

It is noted that the Spanish cartography of 1776 (C) still represented the geographical features in a monochromatic and two-dimensional way, without expressing any topographic roughness of the surface. On the other hand, the English cartographies of 1807 (A) and 1842 (B) showed a greater concern with territorial delimitation, using contrasting colors to highlight border limits and using high-relief symbolologies to represent mountainous slopes.

In the cartography of 1807 (A), the English identified the area of the contested Franco-Lusitanian as a vast territory belonging to French Guiana. This territorial strip significantly exceeded the right bank of the Araguari River, which at the time was pointed out — or confused by the French — as the Oiapoque River.

[...] for Brazil, its historical, geographical, political and legal border with its French neighbors should flow through the Oiapoque or Vicente Pinson rivers, which flows into the Atlantic Ocean. France, on the other hand, defended the same limit, but considered that the Oiapoque or Vicente Pinson River was the Araguari River, located south of the Northern Cape (Furtado, 2022, p. 81).

At the same time, while the French mapped the Oiapoque River as the Araguari River, some maps of the time indicated the Carapanatuba River, now the Pedreira River, as the boundary between the Portuguese and French colonies. This imbroglio evidenced not only the imprecision of the toponymic information, but above all the argumentative fragility of the French, who inconsistently varied the geographical position of the supposed border limits they claimed. However, the English cartography of 1842 (B) showed the border line between Brazil and France on the Oiapoque River.

The 1807 English map (A), which depicts the border limits of French Guiana on the Carapanatuba River, was possibly drawn up observing the 1801 Treaty of Madrid. This document consisted of a peace agreement compulsorily established by the Napoleonic French Republic to the Kingdom of Portugal, as a result of the War of the Oranges — an Iberian conflict, which took place in the same year, triggered by Spain against the Lusitanians, under French influence. It is worth remembering that, in this context, the Spanish Monarchy was an ally of France, while Portugal maintained historical ties of friendship and a traditional commercial partnership with England.

The Treaty of Madrid of 1801 was, in fact, an offshoot of the Treaty of Badajoz (1801), which imposed harsh demands on Portugal, such as the closure of ports to British ships, the cession of the city of Olivenza to Spain, and the redefinition of the border between Portuguese



America (Brazil) and French Guiana (Castro, 1857). Such measures generated economic and territorial impacts for the Lusitanian state at local, regional and overseas levels. Thus, the new border limit between the Portuguese colony and French territory was established along the Carapanatuba River, according to Article Four of the Treaty of Madrid of 1801, which established:

ART. IV. The boundaries between the two Guyanas Portugueza and Franceza will be determined in the future by the Carapanatuba River, which flows into the Amazon at a third of a degree more or less from the Equator, at a northern latitude, above Fort Macapá (Castro, 1857, p. 147, emphasis added).

The underlined excerpt from the aforementioned document shows the imprecision of the coordinates, resulting from the use of rudimentary instruments such as the astrolabe and the magnetic compass, widely used in navigation by astronomical guidance. The document also points out that the redefinition of the border between the Portuguese and French colonies in South America would be determined at a future time, without specifying, however, when this change in boundaries would come into effect.

Under the short term of the Treaty of Madrid of 1801, some English maps already indicated that the new border over the Carapanatuba River was recognized or observed among the British, even in a context of intense rivalries between France and England. This treaty could have resulted in the definitive transfer of an extensive area of Amapá territory to the French. However, with the Napoleonic invasion of Portugal in 1807 and the consequent flight of the royal family to Brazil, the terms of this document lost their validity, reigniting territorial disputes that, after Brazil's independence in 1822, became known as the Question of the Franco-Brazilian Contest.

3.2 THE RESOLUTION OF THE FRANCO-BRAZILIAN DISPUTE AND THE GEOPOLITICAL ROLE OF CARTOGRAPHY

This border dispute was resolved in 1900, thanks to the remarkable argumentative skill and meticulous preparation of José Maria da Silva Paranhos Júnior, the Baron of Rio Branco. During the international arbitration process conducted by Switzerland, this diplomat — who had been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary on a Special Mission to the Swiss government — based the defense of the Brazilian border on his own vast and original documentary and cartographic research, which integrated and expanded the important geographical studies and mappings of Joaquim Caetano da Silva, demonstrating with precision and coherence the historical limits of the north of the country (Furtado, 2022).

The outcome favorable to Brazil was formalized in the Berne Report of 1900, which

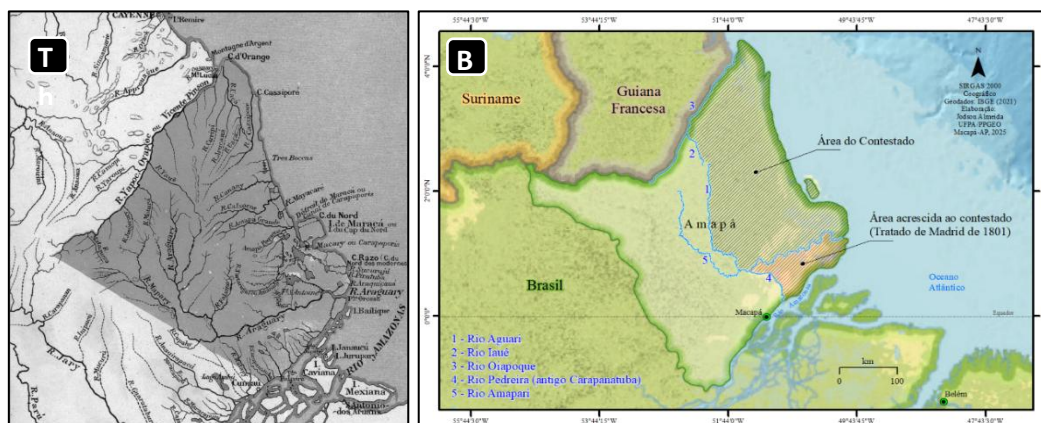
ratified the old Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 and definitively recognized the Oiapoque River as a natural border between the French and Portuguese colonies. Thus, Brazilian sovereignty over the contested region of Amapá was consolidated, ending decades of territorial disputes and disputes with France. However, at the local level, some conflicts between Brazilians and French persisted and intensified for some time, driven mainly by the discovery of gold in the region of Calçoene (Northeast of Amapá).

If Brazil had not been favored by the geopolitical circumstances caused by Napoleon Bonaparte's expansionist threat in Europe — which culminated in the transfer of the Portuguese royal family to Rio de Janeiro in 1808 — and had not been successful in the Swiss Arbitral Award of 1900, which guaranteed the country definitive possession of the contested region (then the Northern North Coast of Pará), The Franco-Brazilian conflict could have lasted longer.

Given these conjectures, it is plausible to consider that the state of Amapá would not present today the territorial dimension of 142,253.880 km² (IBGE, 2024) and, in this hypothetical scenario, probably part of the Pedreira River basin would belong to the territory of French Guiana (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Contestado Region - from the historical (A) and current (B) physiographic perspective



Source: Map (A) of Brazil (2008, p. 364) and map (B), generated by the authors.

In the figure above, the area claimed by the French, shown in the eighteenth-century cartography (A), divided the territory of Amapá by a straight line (dry limit), ignoring the natural physiography. The crosshatched polygons on map (B), in turn, were delineated to simulate the extent of the contested region. In this model, the territorial base of the state of Amapá was segmented by the Pedreira, Araguari, Iauê and Oiapoque rivers, according to the current physiographic understanding.

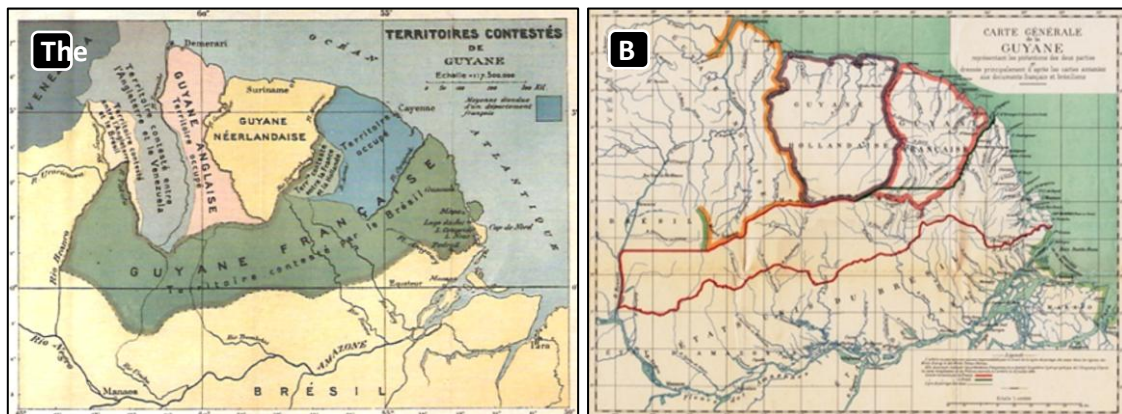
The spatial cutouts hatched on map (B) indicate that the initial litigation zone covered

about 55,425.48 km², while the portion incorporated by the Treaty of Madrid of 1801 comprised approximately 8,935.55 km². Together, these two areas would correspond today to about 45.24% of the territorial surface of the state of Amapá. Currently, they would fully encompass the municipalities of Amapá, Calçoene, Cutias, Itaubal, Pracuúba and Tartarugalzinho, in addition to covering parts of the territories of Ferreira Gomes, Macapá, Porto Grande and Oiapoque.

It should be noted, however, that the French – whether by mistake or intentionality – significantly exceeded the limits of the claimed area. This attitude demonstrated spatial confusion as to the location and size of its borders, especially in relation to the geographical position of the Oiapoque River, whose sources were also frequently confused with the headwaters of the Amapari River. This imprecision is clearly exemplified in the historical maps below (Figure 5), which notably oversize the territorial extension of French Guiana.

Figure 5

Territories claimed by France in South America



Source: map (A) Granger (2011, p.161) and map (B) Available at: <https://historiaeseconversasdiplomaticas.blogspot.com/2018/06/a-questao-do-amapa-conhecendo-historia.html>.

In addition to the contested region of Amapá, other border areas in the north of Brazil were recurrently mapped by different nations throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In general, the cartographic documents produced by European countries such as Portugal, Spain, France, England, Belgium, and the Netherlands — especially during the period of the great navigations — were prepared according to geopolitical interests and played a crucial role in the disputes between colonial empires, being especially used to (re)affirm borders or legitimize territories. It is remarkable how these maps, drawn and illustrated with figures of appreciable artistic value, revealed ideologies and policies for the control of the Territory, expressing the level of intervention and often including symbols such



as "coats of arms, signs, flags, weapons, warships, fortifications" (Lima; Chaves, 2022, p. 204).

In other conflicting contexts, it is observed that cartography and some geographical theories, such as that of living space (*Lebensraum*) by Friedrich Ratzel (1897), which postulated the need for a state to expand its territory to ensure its survival and power — have historically been distorted and used as ideological instruments to justify imperialist domination or expansion.

During World War II (1939–1945), the Nazi expansionist campaign of the Third *Reich*, driven on the basis of the theory of *Lebensraum*, constitutes a classic example of how scientific thought can be intentionally misrepresented. It is not by chance that the French geographer Yves Lacoste (1976) disseminated, in the epistemological field, the provocative idea that geography would serve, above all, to make war. Critically deconstructing the paradigm of the supposed impartial geographic science.

According to Lima and Chaves (2022), cartography has taken on such a central role in territorial disputes that, even before the 'discovery' of Brazil, the ancient Land of Vera Cruz was already conceived as an imaginary territory, demarcated and mapped according to Iberian pretensions. In this way, the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) constituted a fundamental instrument of territorial claim from its beginnings.

Therefore, maps are not mere objective and neutral representations of reality, but expressions of knowledge and power. Through them, geographical knowledge not only redesigns space, but also shapes it according to different geopolitical interests. The controversial representations of the region of the contested Franco-Brazilian show the historical role of cartography not only as a resource of symbolic dispute, but above all as a tool of territorial domination.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Lusitanian occupation of the Amazon region involved a sophisticated articulation between the instrumentalization of Jesuit catechesis and the policies of Pombaline centralization. In this intricate scenario, cartography played a central role, acting as a decisive geopolitical tool in the delimitation and contestation of boundaries. Maps were, and continue to be, active documents in border disputes, translating claims to sovereignty and legitimizing strategies of territorial domination.

The understanding of historical dynamics offers valuable lenses for the analysis of processes of territorial reconfiguration and contemporary geopolitical disputes, reinforcing the premise that space, manifested as territory, is a construction imbued with power relations.



The study of the Amapá Amazon in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveals that the conformation of the Brazilian territory is a palimpsest of interests and strategies, where each map, each name and each fortification tell the story of an incessant struggle for sovereignty and control, configuring a geopolitical legacy that echoes to the present day.

To unveil the multiple layers of domination and resistance that shape the region, an interdisciplinary and critical approach, which articulates history, geography, sociology and cultural studies, becomes imperative. Through this integrated perspective, it will be possible to contribute to the formulation of fairer public policies, value local identities and knowledge and, thus, overcome colonial permanences in the construction of a socio-territoriality that respects the diversity and autonomy of Amazonian peoples.

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