

CARTOGRAPHY AND THE MASTERY OF EMPIRE

# THE IMPERIAL MAP

Edited by James R. Akerman

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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# THE CONFINES OF THE COLONY

BOUNDARIES, ETHNOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPES, AND  
IMPERIAL CARTOGRAPHY IN IBEROAMERICA

*Neil Safier*

It is in the immense expanse of the interior of South America (and not within a kingdom of Europe) that one cannot but vaguely trace the lines separating the different European powers.

JEAN-BAPTISTE BOURGUIGNON D'ANVILLE, *Considérations générales sur l'étude et les connoissances que demande la composition des ouvrages de Géographie* (1777)

After thirty-six days navigating a “labyrinth of rivers” and attending to the portage of his canoe through the “impenetrable forests” of South America, Alexander von Humboldt could hardly repress his elation upon arriving at the limits of the Orinoco watershed. “I may be permitted . . . to speak of the satisfaction we felt,” the Prussian explorer and mineralogist wrote excitedly, “in having reached the tributary streams of the Amazon . . . [and] thus having fulfilled the most important object of our voyage.” That goal was geographic: to cross overland from the Orinoco’s extensive network of rivers to the banks of the Rio Negro, one of the Amazon’s most sizeable tributaries, and return to the Orinoco via the famed Casiquiare canal. This interfluvial traverse, carried out in May of 1800, was to provide the annals of European science with unequivocal

proof of what had been until then—at least for Europeans—little more than a hydrographic hypothesis: that these two great river systems, Orinoco and Amazon, were connected by a seasonal channel. As he traveled between these two zones, Humboldt reflected on the peculiar place of human society amid this timeless and self-sustaining tropical tableau: “Here, in a fertile country adorned with eternal verdure, we seek in vain the traces of the power of man.” But in acknowledging the absence of human culture, Humboldt came to feel a sense of desolation and despair. To him, the abundant rivers and forests teeming with jaguars, monkeys, and mosquitoes offered clear evidence that human beings were merely transitory inhabitants in this place, passersby in a land where nonhuman denizens, large and small, possessed more permanent claims.<sup>1</sup>

These observations on the “vast solitude” of the forested landscapes of the Orinoco basin served as an ironic preamble to Humboldt’s subsequent description of the Rio Negro. As he turned to discuss the region’s territorial politics, his prose revealed nothing if not the *human* dimension of geographic disputes, replete with the strategies and deceptions of monarchs, missionaries, and informants. The transit between these two waterways represented a move from territory under Spanish dominion toward lands possessed by the Portuguese, an implicit acknowledgement of the shifting political boundaries in a zone of meandering rivers, boundless vegetation, and itinerant and occasionally hostile native populations. In this geopolitical theater at the imperial periphery, cartographic conflict between the Iberian powers took center stage. For centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies had been battling each other in “vain territorial disputes,” and these “national animosities” had resulted in what Humboldt called the “imperfection of the geographical knowledge which we have hitherto obtained respecting the tributary rivers of the Amazon.” In other words, imperial rivalries made for bad maps. But dissimulation played a role as well: “Each party has an interest in concealing what it knows with certainty; and that propensity for all that is mysterious, which is so common and so powerful among the ignorant, contributes to perpetuate the doubt.” The geographic proximity of the Iberian powers—both in Europe and in their South American colonies—eventually led to a situation of grave mistrust between two cultures that otherwise shared great affinities. “The bond that so closely connects the fine languages of Camoëns and Lope de Vega,” Humboldt lamented, “had served only to separate nations farther, who had become neighbors [in the Americas] against their will.”<sup>2</sup>

But there was a third group that had also been forced to submit to neighborly behavior against its will. For native peoples, the political rivalry between Spain and Portugal had created significant obstacles to circulating between Spanish



and Portuguese territory. According to Humboldt, these barriers to indigenous mobility bore the most direct responsibility for disrupting the production of geographic knowledge in the region. For more than three centuries, European cartographic reconnaissance had depended almost entirely on native informants. And yet, these populations were caught in a no-man's-land between competing empires, subject to increasing limitations as vassals of one or the other crown. While Humboldt recognized these Indians as "excellent geographers," he also made clear that they had been forced to circulate according to geographic principles set down in Europe, not in situ. As a result, the knowledge they provided to mapmakers at the Luso-Hispanic frontier was subject from the very beginning to constraints imposed by European politics rather than observations based exclusively on geographic experience.

Without a Portuguese passport, Humboldt famously remained on the Spanish side of this frontier during his five-year journey. Barred from entering Brazil due to the "suspicious" nature of his voyage, he consequently incorporated few maps and manuscript treatises of Portuguese provenance into his narrative. Much like the Portuguese Count Antonio de Araujo e Azevedo, who had attempted in vain to convince João VI of the importance of Humboldt's expedition, today's historians of colonial Brazil bemoan a royal decision that might have given Humboldt's observations a much wider field of inquiry.<sup>3</sup> In the spirit of the Prussian explorer, however, this chapter explores some of the materials that Humboldt himself could not examine during his voyage: the maps, narratives, and statistical documents that he would have seen had he been privy to administrative archives on the other side of an early modern geopolitical divide. For the Portuguese, Amazonia was not a "vast solitude" but rather a vibrant patchwork of peoples, places, and political interests. In order to map their dominions in South America and account for not only the region's geography but its cultural and human landscapes as well, they had to devise new forms of representation to capture an empire in movement. Imperial spaces were composed not only of mountains and rivers, of course, but also of human populations.

Humboldt's journey along the frontiers of Spanish America shows us the tension between the perceived absence of human culture in Amazonia on the one hand, and the overwhelming presence of geopolitical intervention on the other. What this chapter will reveal are those same tensions within the bureaucratic documents of the Portuguese overseas administration, whose agents used poetry, prose, and statistics to contain the indigenous presence that had been pushed—consciously or not—over the boundaries and off the map. Where did the displaced vestiges of this knowledge go? And what does its absence or displacement tell us about the underlying epistemology of maps drawn

of imperial territory? To answer these questions, we will examine three interconnected episodes in which noncartographic media captured knowledge about and observations of indigenous populations far more effectively than traditional maps. These different media, or what we might call repositories of spatial knowledge, registered interactions between agents of the Portuguese crown and Amerindians in a way that standard two-dimensional cartographic representations could not. These alternative containers of spatial data reveal the limitations, rather than the triumphs, of imperial cartography in the early modern period. They point to the important interactions and intersections between indigenous inhabitants of South America and administrative agents of the Spanish and Portuguese empires. And they showcase the important contributions native populations made to the mapping of South America in the eighteenth century, the traces of which were often suppressed from a map's final version.

Despite the plethora of studies on Portuguese cartography, the Portuguese mapping of South America and the impact of these activities on the native populations they sought to subdue remain relatively neglected areas of inquiry. This chapter breaks new ground by examining these two topics together, and by assessing Portuguese mapping practices in a variety of discursive modes and at a variety of scales. My analysis will focus on a region of the Amazon basin that sat at the intersection of Spanish and Portuguese territorial pretensions in the eighteenth century: the area surrounding the Japurá River and its tributaries. This was a region of great interest to both crowns, as is demonstrated by the annotations and markings on the small-scale map of South America produced by the Spanish military officer Francisco de Requena, and reproduced in figure 4.1. The territory surrounding the Japurá River, shown in detail in figure 4.2, was a landscape of conflicting military, political, religious, and ethnic divisions. It was also—crucially—a crossroads for commercial exchange and the transmigration of peoples and goods. To the west lay the famous Spanish missions of Maynas, gateway to the Audiencia of Quito and the Viceroyalty of Peru. To the north, the Orinoco basin and access to the Caribbean. To the south, the great Madeira River and the mines of Mato Grosso. And to the east, the Amazon basin and its Atlantic port, the colonial capital of Pará (present-day Belém). Access to the Japurá—and both Iberian monarchs knew this well—meant the possibility of communication with all of these regions, which in turn would facilitate the flow of travel and trade. The region was also home to the Mura nation, an indigenous group that became the object of one of the most ruthless extermination campaigns in the eighteenth century. And yet, it is nearly impossible to find elements of the Mura's presence on any eighteenth-century maps of the region, despite their being omnipresent in other forms of administrative



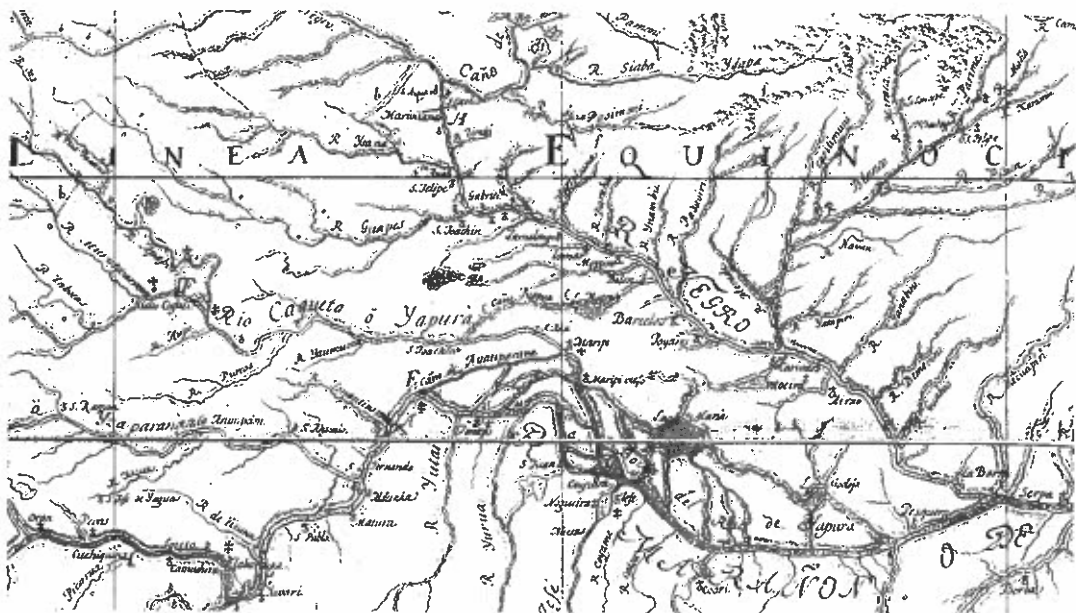


FIGURE 4.2. Detail of Francisco de Requena, "Mapa de parte de los virreynatos de Buenos Aires . . .," 1796. By permission of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

documentation. The Muras thus serve as a paradigmatic example of how poor a substrate imperial cartography was for revealing certain features of a region's cultural geography, elements that were prevalent—even ubiquitous—in other documentary forms.

But in order to understand the complex dynamics on the ground as well as the important place of imperial cartography at the Iberian courts, we must first wend our way back to the age of discovery, when the conflicts and geographic controversies expressed on paper were first hatched in diplomatic form.

### TREATIES AND TERRITORIES

More than three centuries before Humboldt's visit to the Rio Negro, in a treaty that was signed at Tordesillas (Spain) in June of 1494, Alexander VI gave his papal blessing to Spain and Portugal's earliest adventures as imperial powers. Only a year had elapsed since the initial publication of Christopher Columbus's letter proclaiming the discovery of "new kingdoms" for the Spanish king, but in its wake Pope Alexander swiftly issued a series of doctrinal edicts, or bulls, that divided the world between the Iberian monarchs. The king of Portugal, John II, and the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella signed the agreement later that year, giving each party dominion over half the terrestrial globe for

purposes of territorial colonization and propagation of the Roman Catholic religion. With its vague delineation of an imaginary line 370 leagues west of an unspecified island in the Cape Verde archipelago, and without specifying which of several European “leagues” was to be used for this measurement, Alexander VI’s papal proclamation left a wake of uncertainty as to where the demarcation actually stood, not only in the Atlantic realms but also in the Asian territory through which it passed. Within a half century of the treaty, Spain and Portugal had nevertheless extended their conquests throughout the globe and were busy taking commercial advantage of Alexander’s gift, with Spain shipping gold and silver from Mexico and Peru and Portugal transporting spices, incense, and luxurious fabrics from the Indian Ocean back to Lisbon.<sup>4</sup>

The vacuum of territorial understanding created by the Treaty of Tordesillas had obvious ramifications for early modern cartography. Because the treaty line sliced through territory that had yet to be fully reconnoitered, cartographers were given *carte blanche* to fill in the blank spaces of their maps. Peculiar monsters, Amazon warriors, and flesh-eating Amerindians were some of the figures that, according to these early representations, the curious reader would likely have encountered in the hinterland of colonial Brazil. Giacomo Gastaldi’s map of Brazil, published in Giovanni Battista Ramusio’s *Navigazioni et viaggi*, offers one such view, albeit a more bucolic image than many European geographers would portray (fig. 4.3). But Gastaldi, like many of his contemporaries, provided few geographic details as to the interior portions of the continent. What is even more surprising is that for more than 250 years *after* Tordesillas, much of Portuguese America was perceived in precisely the same way: a vast and uninhabited swath of *terra incognita* stretching from the Atlantic coast toward Spanish territory to the west. Certain eighteenth-century maps, such as Guillaume Delisle’s “Carte d’Amérique” from 1722 (fig. 4.4), persisted in showing the papal demarcation as a dividing line that passed through empty and undiscovered lands, separating “Brésil” from the “Pays des Amazones.” Other maps, such as Nicolas de Fer’s “Le Brésil” from 1719 (fig. 4.5), did away entirely with the line of demarcation and focused instead on the contrast between the “empty” Brazilian interior and the coastal captaincies, which were early land grants offered by the Portuguese monarchy to encourage settlement and stimulate economic development. Whether in manuscript or printed maps, these stark divisions between known and unknown worlds, between civilized and savage territories, persisted well into the eighteenth century.

What took place in South America between the signing of the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 and the confection of these eighteenth-century maps? Simply put, events on the ground had far outpaced their cartographic representations back in Europe. Beginning in the 1530s, exploration of the Brazilian



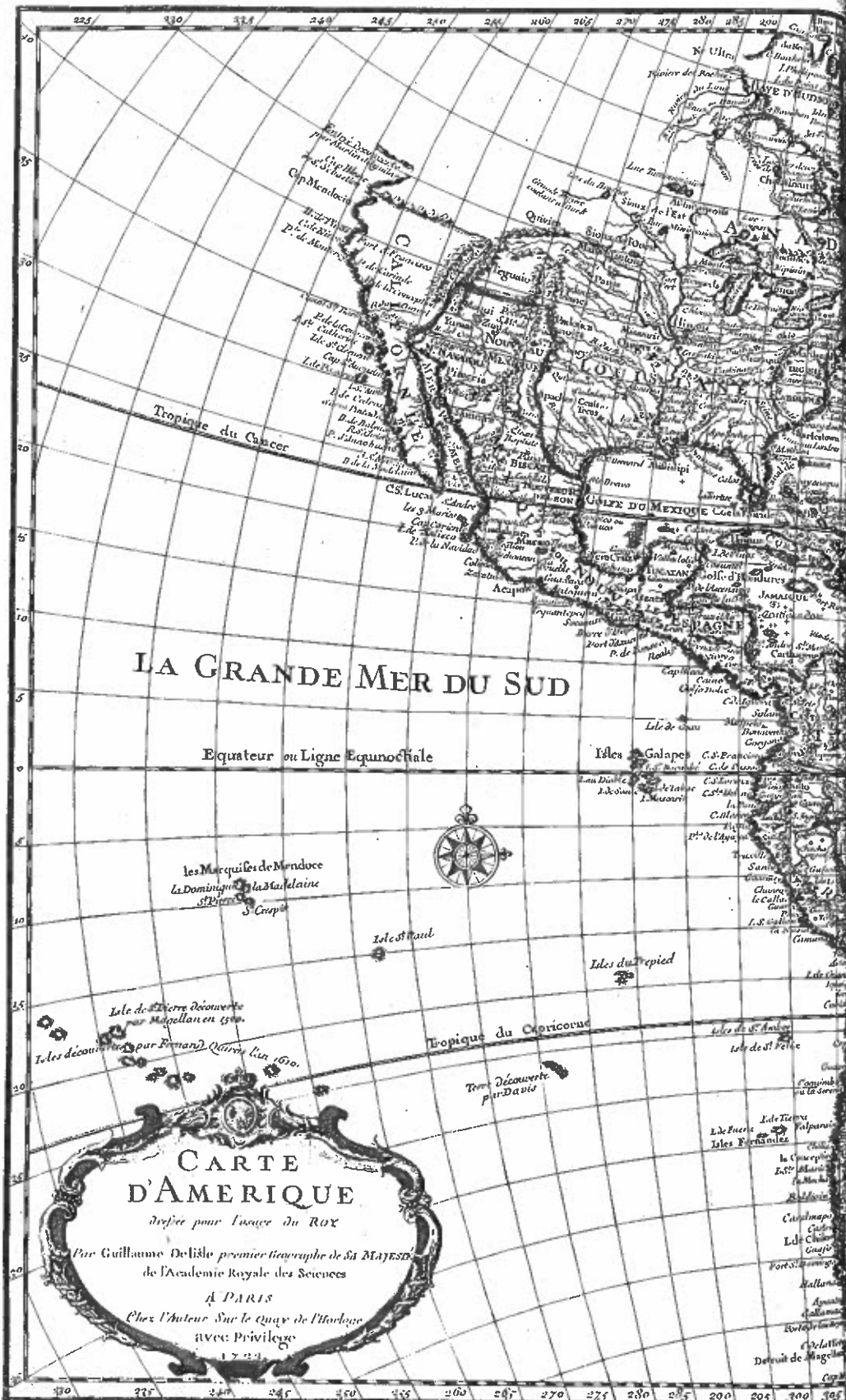
FIGURE 4.3. Giacomo Gastaldi, "Brasil," 1565. Reproduced in Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, vol. 3. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.

interior had gone forward with gusto, impelled by the search for precious metals. Legends such as El Dorado and the undying belief that gold and silver deposits must exist on the Portuguese side of the Tordesillas line (just as these mineral sources existed in Potosí on the Spanish side) provided stimulus for Lisbon's unflagging hunt for mineral treasures in Portuguese America. During the Iberian Union, a period of six decades (1580–1640) when Spain held dominion over Portugal and its imperial possessions, Madrid encouraged the search for newfound wealth in Brazil by promising elaborate titles to those who might make this coveted discovery. Spurred in part by these promises, waves of geographic explorers known as *bandeirantes*, typically of mixed indigenous and European origin, set out from the captaincy of São Vicente (near present-day São Paulo) in the seventeenth century. Named for the flag, or *bandeira*, they often carried with them, these individuals collectively extended the boundaries of Portuguese territory with their tireless entries into the Brazilian *sertão* (hinterland). All of these expeditions culminated in the dramatic and long-awaited

discovery of Brazilian gold during the last decade of the seventeenth century, in the region that would eventually become the captaincy of Minas Gerais. The unprecedented quantities of precious metals—and later diamonds—that were found there reoriented the Portuguese empire away from Asia and back toward Brazil, as the attention of the monarchy turned definitively toward exploiting its newfound wealth in the form of mineral resources.<sup>5</sup>

The European reconnaissance of northern Brazil followed a somewhat different pattern. Successive waves of fluvial exploration had already descended the Amazon River basin from the Andes near Quito since early in the sixteenth century. The most famous of these expeditions was the one led by Gonzalo Pizarro and Francisco de Orellana, who first spotted what appeared to be female warriors fighting beside their male counterparts. This encounter provided the river and the entire region with its legendary name: the Land of the Amazons. As was the case in southern Brazil, these early explorations were also stimulated by mythical and geographic speculation, including a legendary Land of Cinnamon rich in spices that was thought to be found along the Andes' eastern slopes. But unlike the southern regions of Portuguese America, little mineral wealth was found to satisfy or stimulate further exploration. In the mid-seventeenth century, a Portuguese captain named Pedro de Teixeira followed the Amazon west from the city of Pará, collaborating with the Jesuit Cristobal d'Acuña on what became the first full narrative account of the river's exploration. During this expedition, Teixeira placed a marker at the confluence of two rivers, an act that would prolong the question of who maintained dominion along the Amazon's shores. Until that point, the primary party to dominate the Upper Amazon—by and large under Spanish control—was the Society of Jesus, which had set up a series of missions in the western portion of the Amazon basin. Several decades after Teixeira, a Czech Jesuit from the Maynas district named Samuel Fritz carried out one of the most important reconnaissance missions of the seventeenth century. Starting from the Upper Amazon in 1689, he descended the river all the way down to Pará and back up the length of the river once again. Upon his return, he completed a striking map of the Amazon (fig. 4.6), a rendering laden with ethnonyms, or names of indigenous groups, and other important information regarding the river's native residents. This map became the basis for many of the expeditions that followed in the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

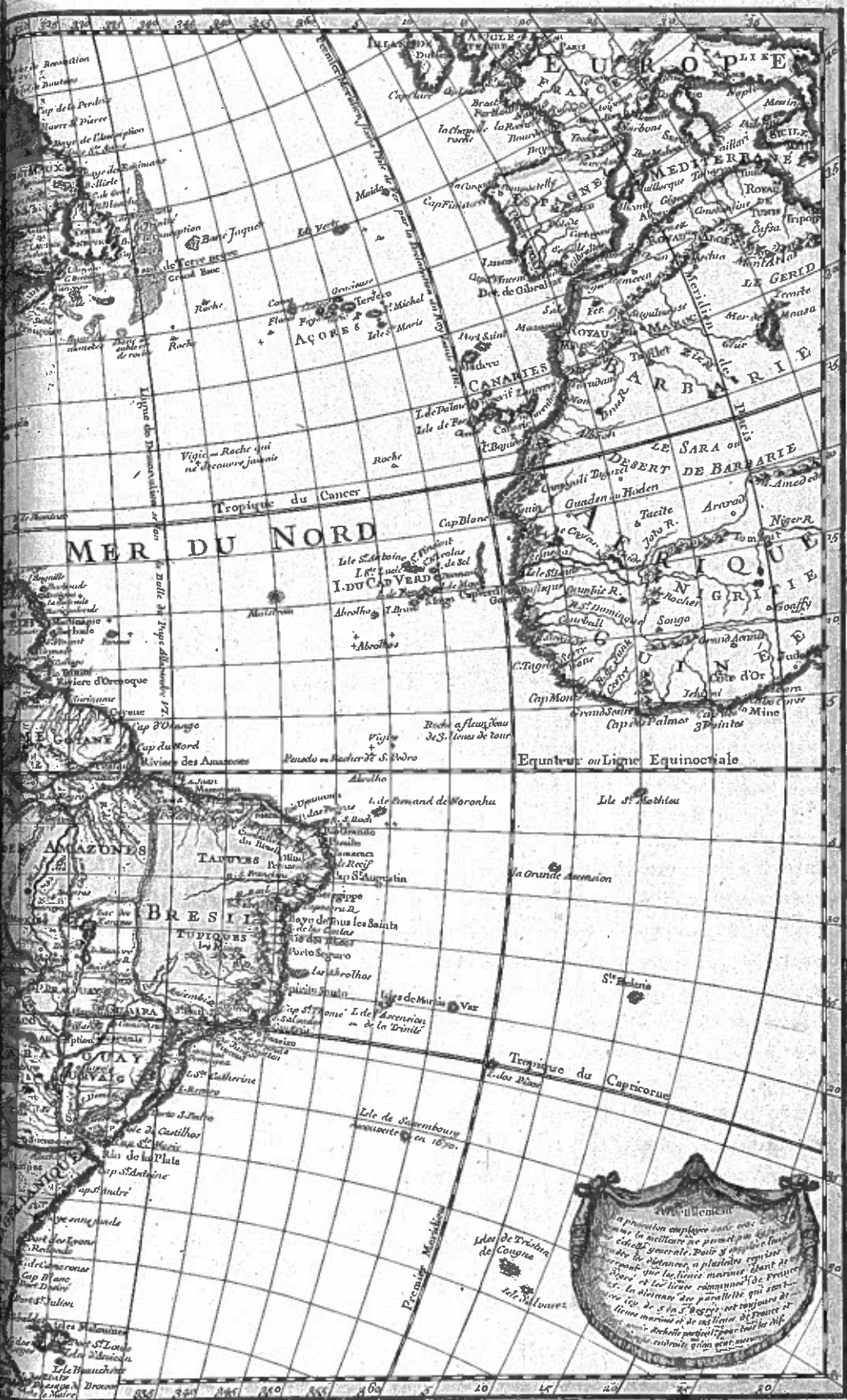
But despite increasing numbers of settlements and greater missionary activity along the key tributaries of the Amazon, the early decades of the eighteenth century still witnessed relative confusion as to the precise boundaries between Spanish and Portuguese territory. And as both crowns sought out new sources of economic wealth to offset their growing expenses back home, the natural



ARC 15.9.32

FIGURE 4.4. Guillaume Delisle, "Carte d'Amérique," 1722. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.





Avertissement  
 La présente carte est une  
 copie de la carte de France  
 dressée par le sieur de  
 La Hire, sous le règne de  
 Louis XIV. Elle est  
 corrigée et augmentée  
 de plusieurs endroits  
 qui n'étoient pas sur  
 l'ancienne. Elle est  
 imprimée chez le sieur  
 de la Motte, à Paris.



FIGURE 4.5. Nicolas de Fer, "Le Bresil," 1719. By permission of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

bounty of Amazonian territory came increasingly to be seen as a potentially lucrative resource. Cacao, cochineal, indigo, and hemp were only some of the many native and nonnative products that Portuguese mercantile agents in northern Brazil were attempting to distribute to a wider market, and which required an ever-increasing stock of forced labor to plant, cultivate, harvest, and distribute. These manpower needs of the Portuguese Atlantic system were served not only through the importation of large numbers of African slaves to the region but also through slave raids executed by Portuguese mercenaries deep into the backlands of the most important Amazonian tributaries, such as the Rio Negro and the Rio Branco, a situation that further confused the fluid borders. At the same time, in order to break the monopolistic grip the Jesuits maintained on Indian labor, Dom José I's minister plenipotentiary, the Marqués de Pombal, instituted the "Directory" in 1755. A legal document declaring how Indians were to be treated in the Portuguese states of Pará and Maranhão, the

Directory declared the Indians free and full vassals of the Portuguese crown. This act encouraged their movement within Portuguese America and effectively liberated them from the onerous yoke of Jesuit control. The goal of this strategy for the Portuguese was to possess in name and in deed as large a portion of the region as possible by granting full rights to the newest “subjects” of the crown. In this way, it was hoped, they would circumvent the political wrangling then under way in several European capitals to establish the legitimate boundaries between Spanish and Portuguese America.<sup>7</sup>

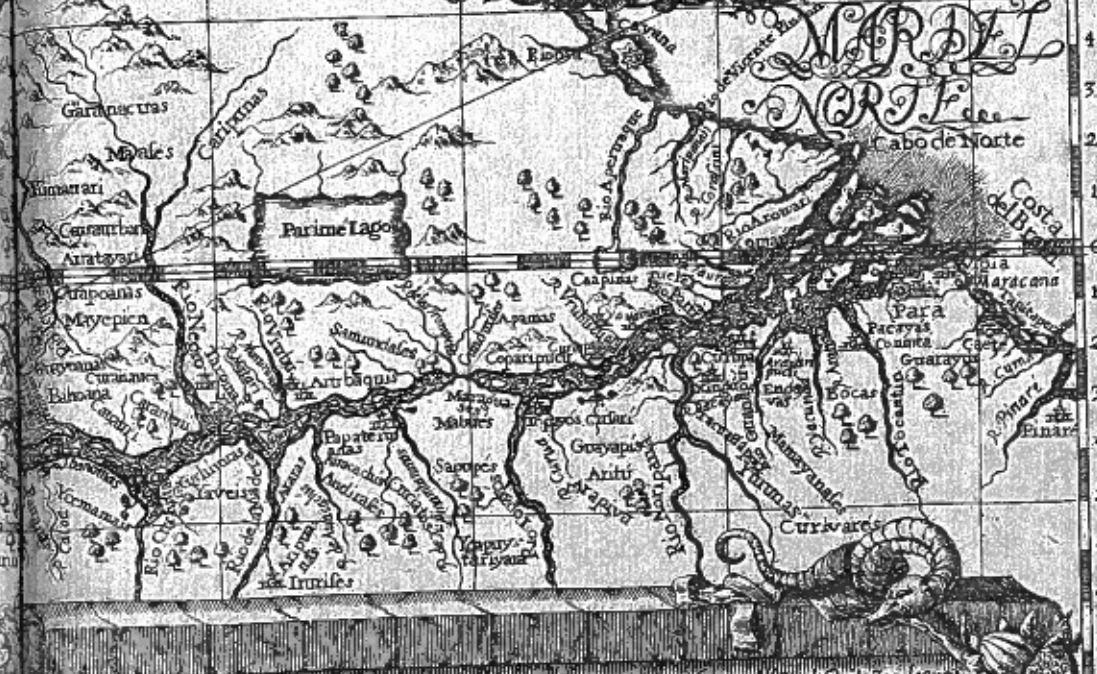
Five years prior to the establishment of the Directory, faced with diplomatic conflict, violent clashes on the ground, and unresolved tensions since the Treaty of Tordesillas, the Iberian monarchs had finally agreed to sign a treaty—the Treaty of Madrid (1750)—that would, they hoped, decide once and for all the shape of their respective empires in the Americas and elsewhere. This treaty recognized Spanish sovereignty over parts of the River Plate, the Colonia del Sacramento, and the Philippines, while Portugal gained recognition for its territorial pretensions in northern and western Brazil. But in order to visualize some of these boundaries for the purposes of negotiation prior to ratifying the treaty, the Portuguese secretary of state, Marco António de Azevedo Coutinho, ordered the confection of a special map: the “Mapa das Cortes” (Map of Two Courts; fig. 4.7), which spelled out in graphic detail how South America should look from the metropolitan perspective of Madrid and Lisbon.<sup>8</sup> The Treaty of Madrid also called for a series of royally sponsored surveys that from 1754 to 1795 traversed South America in the most important geographic flash zones. Armed with muskets as well as compasses, astrolabes, and pendulums, the members of these “boundary expeditions” set off down the contested rivers in order to depict their twists and turns in cartographic form. Their charge was, quite literally, to turn water into lines. In order to accomplish this task, they placed large stone markers at strategic locations and linked these monuments on the ground to specific measurements of longitude and latitude on paper. The systematic establishment of these borders had a dramatic impact on the shape of Portuguese and Spanish possessions in South America, an effect that can still be clearly seen in modern maps of Brazil. But the colorful lines and iconic figures of these eighteenth-century maps also helped to shape European perceptions of what was to be found within their boundaries: the human landscapes of the New World.

So how did these maps, produced largely according to instrumental processes, portray the indigenous populations of South America? While geographic knowledge about the Brazilian interior increased as a result of these expeditions, information about the region’s native peoples declined precipitously on the maps these boundary surveyors produced. This is especially surprising,





**LA ZONAS**  
 de la **Compañia de IESVS**  
 delineado  
 por el **Missionero com.**  
 Fr. **Diego de Marañon**  
 Año 1707



... cubierto que llaman ya de mazo-  
 non nombre, que le dan los mejores  
 de las provincias Superiores de la La-  
 ta. Su ancho en el Reyno del Peru corre  
 con el de Doce a ciento a la Ciudad  
 de Lingo de 25 v. de ancho y le  
 navega en un quarto de hora. Vna  
 de las riberas camoras desde donde na-  
 ce de la ultima arboleda. A lene made-  
 ra parilla, y corteza, que llaman de la  
 castañera es fresca a mas singular las  
 por la semejanza: su riberas con yerba  
 con leche a sus hijos. Es abunda  
 de los, de los de riles, y tiene algunas  
 a un hombre. En sus montañas ay  
 de las y otras muchas especies  
 en sus Vegas. Es el poblado de  
 las de mas nombre dan no fadas en  
 que le entran, algunas de los que  
 se quisiesen poseer en asia la Docta  
 de go una Fortaleza.

la Ciudad de Seran. de la zona propiamente de los Mayas el Rio de Quito por leguas  
 y se obtiene por lo dicho de la zona, su allaga, y vale hasta el fin de la zona  
 de Omaguas. Pasa a ella por tres caminos aperturados y en gran parte de a pie: por el  
 en el Rio, y Archidona: en cuyos puntos se embarcan los Misioneros en Canoes res-  
 en las y peligrosas distancias hasta sus reducciones. Han muerto en ellas muchos  
 siguientes Padres en cuyas muertes buxo sucesos prodigiosos: al P. Fr. de J. que  
 fue en la zona del Rio. Agena junto a bualaga en 1660: al P. Pedro Suarez en Arjinas  
 en 1660: al P. Agustin Hurtado en Roanaynas en 1667: al P. Alonso de Riber en 1670  
 de 1670: de 1670 hallado a repetida la noticia de que en las zonas mataron las barbas  
 de las zonas. Muraron. Los sitios de sus muertes son señalados con el P. J. de  
 ahogado por la gloria causa el P. Fr. de S. Cruz en el Rio de Bobo nazi  
 de 1660. Siene la zona: en esta Mision (amas del Curato de Boña, y de Arjinas) en 2 Part  
 de los P. de los Judados en su sudor por la mayor parte a sus expensas: en el Partido de  
 de los Xebros la Obispa de Xebros y Arjinas de Jananapur, Chayambis, Chayambis, Mi  
 nchis y Oranay. En el Partido de la Laguna, el Rio de Xebros y Chayambis, y Arjinas  
 de Chamcurus, de los y Aguanos en el Partido de Xebros y Arjinas de Xebros, y Arjinas  
 de Roanaynas, de las Arjinas, de los y Semigayres. En el Partido de Omaguas, S.  
 Joachin de Omaguas y de Arjinas de Arjinas, Omaguas y Durmagayres. En las  
 quales Partidos y Pueblos ay hasta veinte y seis Mil almas reducidas y bauti-  
 zadas por los Padres Misioneros: que al presente son diez y seis Sacentotes  
 (domos de otros dos, que asy son en la Mision de Colorados) y mas de  
 los dichos Pueblos estan amistada con varias Naciones numero de que  
 nes se opera la conversion: y grande aumento de esta Mision, la Real  
 Magnificencia y Proteccion de su Magestad.

Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.



FIGURE 4.7. "Mapa dos confins do Brazil com as terras da Coroa da Espanha na America Meridional" (Map of the Boundaries between Brazil and the Territories of the Spanish Crown in South America), 1749. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.

since the instructions the surveyors were to follow included the charge of not only providing an “exact delimitation of the . . . geography of the country” but also capturing the region’s natural historical, cultural, and ethnographic knowledge in cartographic form:

Throughout the journey [the members of the boundary expeditions] are to note the directions and distances of their route, the natural qualities of the land and its products, the inhabitants and their customs, its animals and rare plants, the rivers, lakes, islands, mountains, and other things worthy of note, placing a name that is accepted by all parties in every spot that does not have one, and in such a way as to appear clearly and distinctively on the maps.<sup>9</sup>

Their task, then, was to produce what we might call a cultural geography of Amazonian space. The leaders of these survey parties were clearly aware that indigenous populations were an important component of a full reconnaissance of the land, as well as an important political factor in the boundary demarcation process. But rather than the names of indigenous groups proliferating on the maps as these surveyors and administrators learned about the Brazilian interior in greater detail, their number instead decreased. Yet many of the manuscript maps of Jesuit missionaries, including Samuel Fritz’s “El Gran Rio Marañon, o Amazonas” from 1707 (fig. 4.6), as well as maps of European confection, such as Delisle’s “Carte de la Terre Ferme” from 1703 (fig. 4.8) based largely on information from Teixeira’s account, demonstrate that increased surveillance of a region tended to yield a greater emphasis on its human presence as well as its natural features. And the Portuguese and Spanish boundary commissioners were in constant contact with Jesuits; some had even been trained by them.<sup>10</sup> In short, following the Treaty of Madrid, the survey parties sent to reconnoiter the border regions between Spanish and Portuguese America transformed territorial knowledge and helped to provide more fixed boundary lines between the two Iberian powers. But their reconnaissance also had a significant impact on the portrayal of indigenous populations, and it is to the representational consequences of their practices that we now turn.

#### LUÍS DE ALBUQUERQUE’S NOVA CARTA: A CARTOGRAPHIC GIFT FOR A PORTUGUESE PRINCE

When we examine the maps produced and compiled by the boundary surveyors—either alongside administrative documents from the period, as we will below, or next to earlier maps of European confection—evidence of the cartographic displacement of the indigenous presence becomes clear. Compare, for



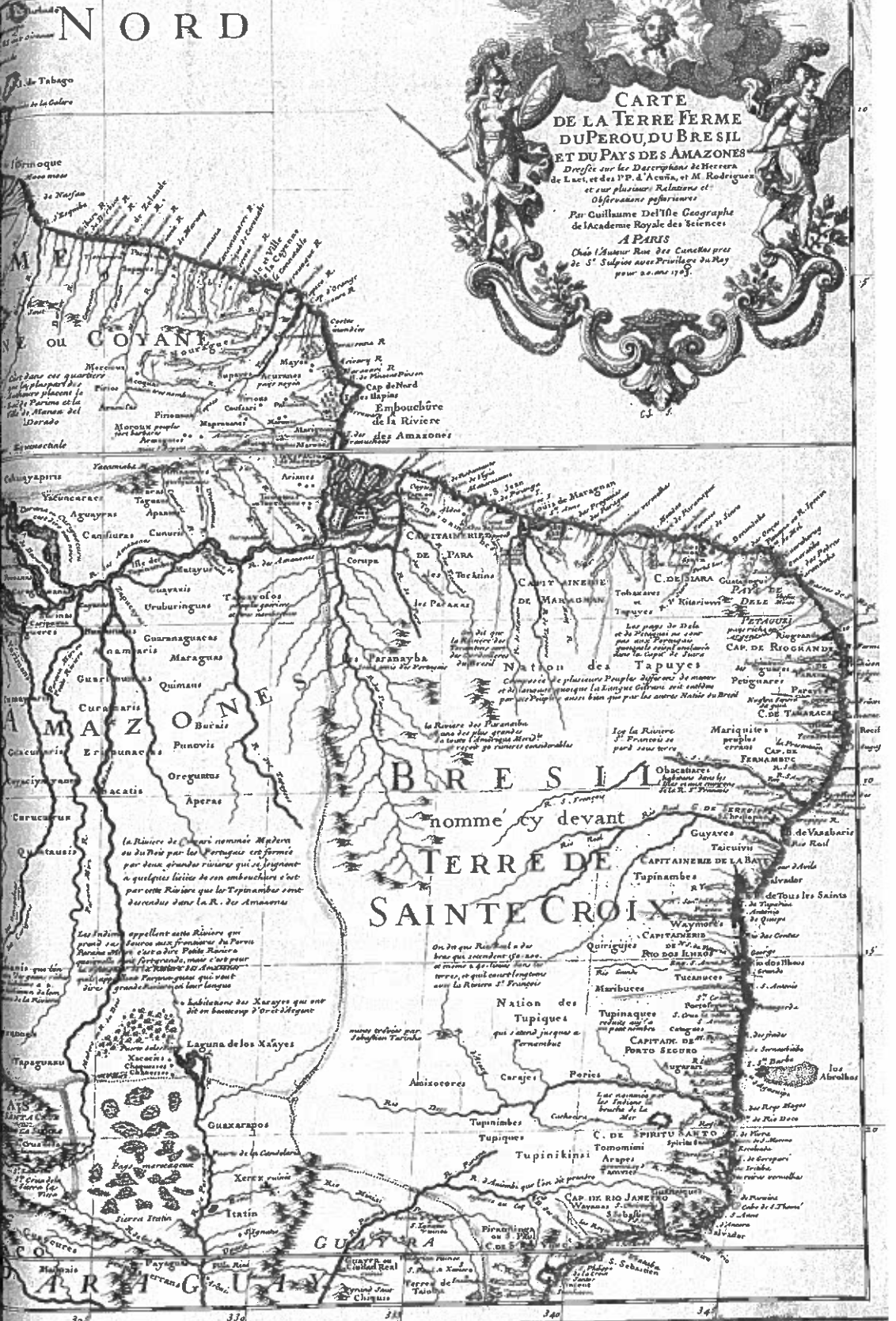
FIGURE 4.8. Guillaume Delisle, "Carte de la Terre Ferme du Perou, du Brésil, et du pays des Amazones" (Map of the Mainland of Peru, Brazil, and the Land of the Amazons), 1703. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.



# N O R D

## CARTE DE LA TERRE FERME DU PEROU, DU BRESIL ET DU PAYS DES AMAZONES

Dressée sur les Descriptions de Mercur de Laet, et des V. A. Acuña, et M. Rodriguez et sur plusieurs Relations et Observations postérieures  
 Par Guillaume De l'Isle Geographe de l'Academie Royale des Sciences  
 A PARIS  
 Chez l'Auteur Rue des Canettes pres de St Sulpice avec Privilege du Roy pour le 22. Mars 1703.



Tabago  
de la Colure

Orinoco  
de la Colure

Orinoco  
de la Colure

Orinoco  
de la Colure

Orinoco  
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Orinoco  
de la Colure

**BRESIL**  
 nommé cy devant  
**TERRE DE SAINTE CROIX**

la Riviere de Guayari nommée Moderne du du Nord par les Portugais est formée par deux grandes rivières qui se joignent à quelques lieues de son embouchure c'est par cette Rivière que le Tapinambé est descendu dans la R. de Amazons

Les Indiens appellent cette Rivière qui prend ses sources aux fontaines de Paru Paru au Sud de la P. de la R. de Amazons qu'elle se jette dans la R. de Amazons par cette Rivière que les Portugais ont nommée grande Rivière de Guayari

habitation des Xarayés qui ont été en bon accord avec les Portugais

On dit que Rio Real a des bras qui croissent icy & là, et même à 40 lieues dans les terres, et qui courent toujours vers la Rivière St François

la Rivière des Paranyba est une des plus grandes de la terre d'Amérique Meridionale et se jette par son embouchure dans la Rivière de Amazons

Les pays de Dela et de Maraganon ne sont pas sans Portugais quoiqu'ils soient éloignés de la Rivière de Amazons

Compagnie de plusieurs Peuples différents de manoir et de langage quoique la Langue Générale soit entendue par une Peuple, aussi bien que par les autres Nations du Bresil

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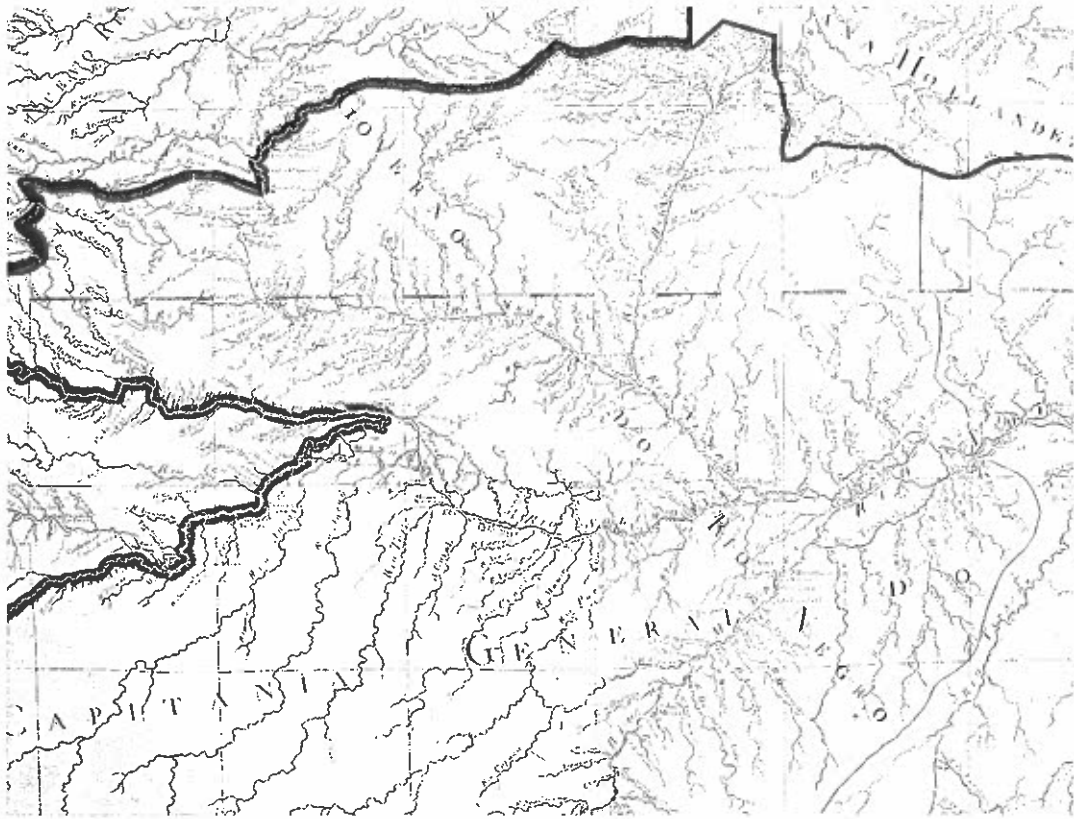


FIGURE 4.9. The captaincy of São José do Rio Negro, detail from Luís de Albuquerque de Mello Pereira e Cáceres, “Nova Carta da América Meridional” (New Map of South America), 1789. By permission of the National Archives (UK), Kew.

instance, the image from the 1703 Delisle map (fig. 4.8), produced in a European atelier, with figure 4.9, the same region taken from a small-scale map produced by a Portuguese governor in late eighteenth-century Brazil. Clearly, the 1789 map presents far greater detail and subtlety in the representation of the waterways, the boundaries between Spanish and Portuguese America (indicated by thick red and blue lines to the left-hand side of the image), and the cities and towns established along the Amazon and its tributaries. Gone in this later map are the references to a “village of gold” and its adjacent mine and river, vestiges from earlier seventeenth-century maps of the same region. Moreover, the numerous ethnonyms of the 1703 map are nowhere to be found on the 1789 rendering. While it could conceivably be argued that this absence represents the dramatic decline of indigenous populations over this period, maps hardly provide statistical evidence in such a transparent fashion, whether in the context of the disappearance of indigenous groups or in the portrayal of mountains

and rivers. The demographic collapse can be verified through a variety of *other* documentary sources, but there is nevertheless a disjuncture between the *textual* accounts of an indigenous presence and the maps produced in the context of the Portuguese and Spanish boundary expeditions. Certain categories of indigenous groups *were* included on maps, while others were silenced, moved, or entirely removed without leaving any significant graphic trace.

The “Nova Carta da América Meridional” (New Map of South America), from which figure 4.9 is taken, is a small-scale map whose purpose was to showcase the latest state of geographic knowledge about South America at the end of the eighteenth century; for the purposes of this chapter, it serves as one of the key cartographic archives that demonstrate how forms of ethnographic knowledge, primarily in the form of ethnonymic data, were displaced into other media over the course of the eighteenth century. The cartouche (fig. 4.10) boldly and clearly states that this massive visual representation in two sheets was based on “Astronomical Observations, Route-Maps, and other sundry Itinerant Computations recently and precisely executed by capable Individuals from 1772 until 1789.” Stretching from the Isthmus of Panama to the river Plate (with each sheet measuring approximately 5 feet [1.5 m] in height and 9 feet [2.75 m] in length), this map brought together the latest knowledge about Portuguese America in the context of the rest of the South American continent. Showing its imperial pretensions, the “Nova Carta” was dedicated to the Portuguese prince João (the future Dom João VI of Portugal), while the name of his mother, Queen Maria I of Portugal, was also prominently displayed on the cartouche.<sup>11</sup> The map was produced by an individual who was himself exceptionally knowledgeable about the state of South American geography: Luís de Albuquerque de Mello Pereira e Cáceres, a governor of the captaincy of Mato Grosso on Brazil’s western frontier. Luís de Albuquerque came from a family of landed nobility, his father a former high-ranking infantry colonel and his mother a descendant of a prominent family with ties to the Portuguese court. Luís himself was abruptly plucked from military service in Portugal in 1771, and within six months had made his way to Brazil, where he was to spend the next twenty years as governor of Mato Grosso and Cuiabá until being replaced by his own brother, João, in 1789. While still governor of Mato Grosso, however, Luís de Albuquerque anticipated his imminent departure by making copies of the many maps he had collected during his stay. Prior to turning over the captaincy to João, he was to compile this extraordinarily large and thorough map of the South American continent. It was likely the last map he ever produced.<sup>12</sup>

From a distance, the “Nova Carta”’s most striking feature is its colored boundary lines, which vibrantly illuminate the internal borders separating the



various Brazilian captaincies. A single dark-blue line also meanders along the Luso-Hispanic border, running the length of Brazil's western frontier from the estuary of the river Plate to the border with French Guyana. This is a map whose explicit intention was to showcase the political divisions within Brazil as well as the boundaries between Portuguese America and its neighbors. These boundary lines were generally contiguous with rivers and mountain ranges, shifting only occasionally when a particular border followed predefined longitudinal or latitudinal demarcations. Occasionally, they reiterated the conclusions of past agreements, such as a meandering red line near the southern border signaling the demarcation boundary called for by the 1750 Treaty of Madrid. Small trees, hills, plateaus (*chapadas*), and aquamarine rivers add aesthetic depth to the map, reminding us in its landscape features of some of the earliest views of the Brazilian coast produced by Luiz Teixeira Albornaz two centuries before. In the maps of Teixeira Albornaz, trees and hills were added as an artistic filler to adorn the landscape. With the "Nova Carta," however, the territory depicted with the occasional tree or hill was no longer *terra incognita*; those who surveyed these lands knew and feared what lurked in the blank spaces of the map. To address their fears, they kept the survey maps free from the constant threat posed by the region's indigenous inhabitants, removing their presence to a more appropriate repository where they could be contained, counted, and controlled. Upon closer inspection, then, the most prominent feature of the "Nova Carta" is the striking absence of the native peoples of South America.

#### CHARTING THE EMPIRE'S NEWEST VASSALS: POPULATION MAPS OF THE RIO NEGRO

The captaincy of São José do Rio Negro, created by royal decree in 1755 (fig. 4.9), was an administrative region in the heart of Amazonia that played a critical role in Portugal's attempts to resolve its midcentury economic crisis. Maps, as it turned out, were central to that effort. In 1764, the captaincy's governor, Joaquim Tinoco Valente, sent a progress report to the Portuguese secretary of overseas affairs, and he included a collection of maps in his dispatch from colony to metropole: "[With this letter]," he wrote, "I send your excellency the maps that pertain to this captaincy." He then went on to list the items, which included "the calculation of money spent in the Royal Treasury; the Map of Troops quartered in this Captaincy; the Map of Indians that have . . . descended from the Forests; the overall calculation of the Indians and their Families of this Captaincy; and, finally, the calculation and summary of the commerce [*negocios*] in which the settlements on this River [engage] as compared with the

overall commerce [of the Captaincy].”<sup>13</sup> These maps were meant to provide an accounting of various features linked to the captaincy’s geographic organization: financial, military, population, and commercial statistics that would give the overseas minister a dynamic idea of how colonization was proceeding on the ground. But their graphic form is not what one might expect from the term *map*. Instead of portraying colorful, curving lines on a canvas, these maps are a hybrid document, somewhere between a list, a map, and a chart.

The Portuguese “population map” was tailor made to provide the imperial administration with a new tool for examining the expansion of activities in the crown’s territories of South America. It was developed primarily to track statistical information on indigenous populations, its chartlike form allowing ministers and administrators to gain at a glance a sense of the progress of (and future prospects for) commercial expansion. As discussed earlier, the struggle to maintain control over the declining economies of the Portuguese American territories had led the crown to a radical experiment. Rather than relying on the mission system to regulate indigenous labor, administrative power was placed in the hands of a lay “director.” Under this system, the Indians became full vassals of the Portuguese crown with the right to circulate with relative autonomy, as long as they stayed within the borders of the colony. Most important, however, by granting full rights to the newest “subjects” of the king, Portugal could lay territorial claim to a much larger segment of the South American continent. Portuguese territory was to be conquered not merely on paper, but by incorporating actual bodies as crown subjects. What was needed was a mechanism for graphically demonstrating this population-based justification for territorial rights.

Population maps provided this information. They replaced free-floating names of tribes and indigenous groups with a graphic structure that clearly registered increases in population. Information originally contained within the borders of a geographic map was placed into an imperial medium that functioned as a more efficient tool for colonial administration. Were these ethnonymic displacements akin to J. B. Harley’s “cartographic silences” perpetrated (consciously or not) by imperial agents? It rather seems that the population map was simply a more effective repository for containing data on the indigenous presence and for communicating these statistics to a distant audience. As triangulation surveys expanded throughout South America, indigenous representation on maps tended to diminish, as we saw earlier. But the Amerindians themselves did not disappear, nor had the Portuguese forgotten that they were there. While Harley asserted that entire populations of Amerindians were eliminated with the stroke of a single pen, it is more plausible to see this cartographic evacuation as a process whereby information was ingested and

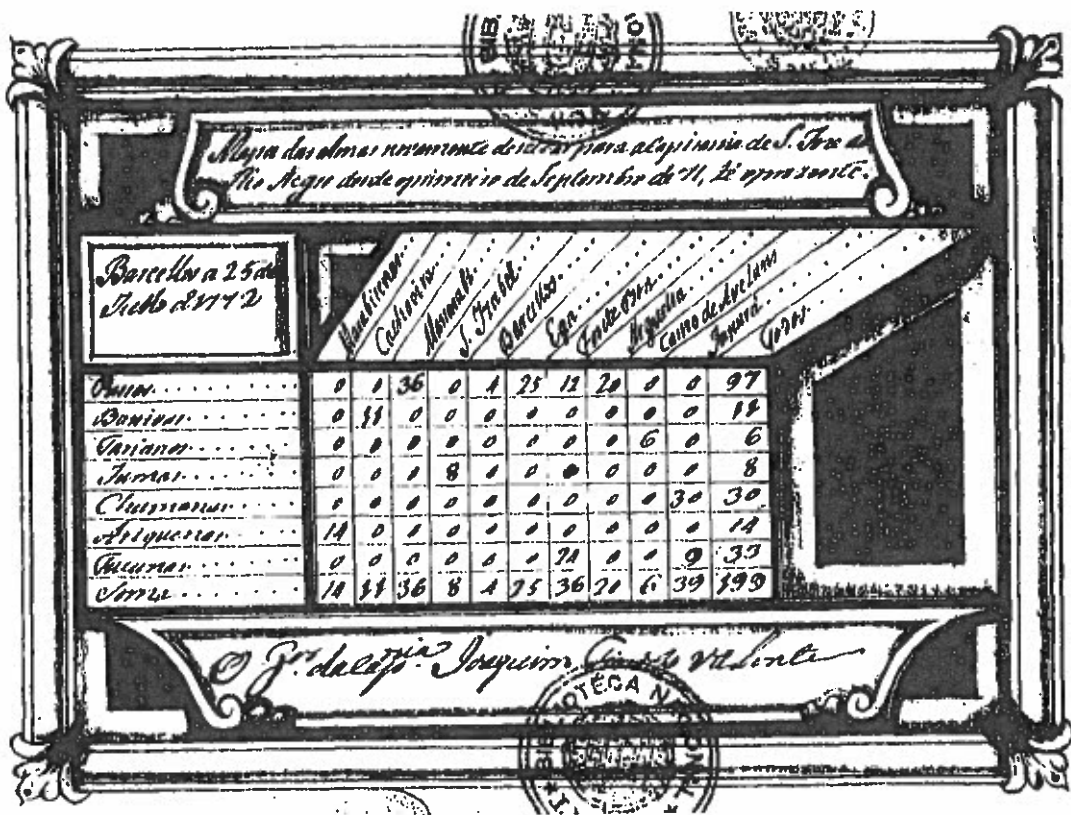


FIGURE 4.11. Joaquim Tinoco Valente, “Mapa das almas novamente descendidas para a Capitania de S. Jozé do Rio Negro” (Map of Souls Newly Descended to the Rio Negro Captaincy), 1772. Brasil—Rio Negro, Caixa 3, Doc. 176. By permission of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon.

reincorporated into other forms. Within this system of cultural recapitulation, elements were refigured and transposed into other media.

When Tinoco Valente wrote to Lisbon seven years later, he presented a population map (fig. 4.11) that showed the movement of Indians into the population centers along the Rio Negro:

The accompanying Map will make Your Excellency aware of the Souls that have descended into the Settlements of this Captaincy since the end of August, 1771 until the present . . . I am left with the sentiment that the number is far smaller than my desire seeks, or to which my efforts are applied.<sup>14</sup>

This “Map of souls newly descended . . . to the . . . Rio Negro Captaincy from the beginning of September, 1771, until the present [July 25, 1772]” tracked the “descent” of several indigenous groups into specific Portuguese settlements.



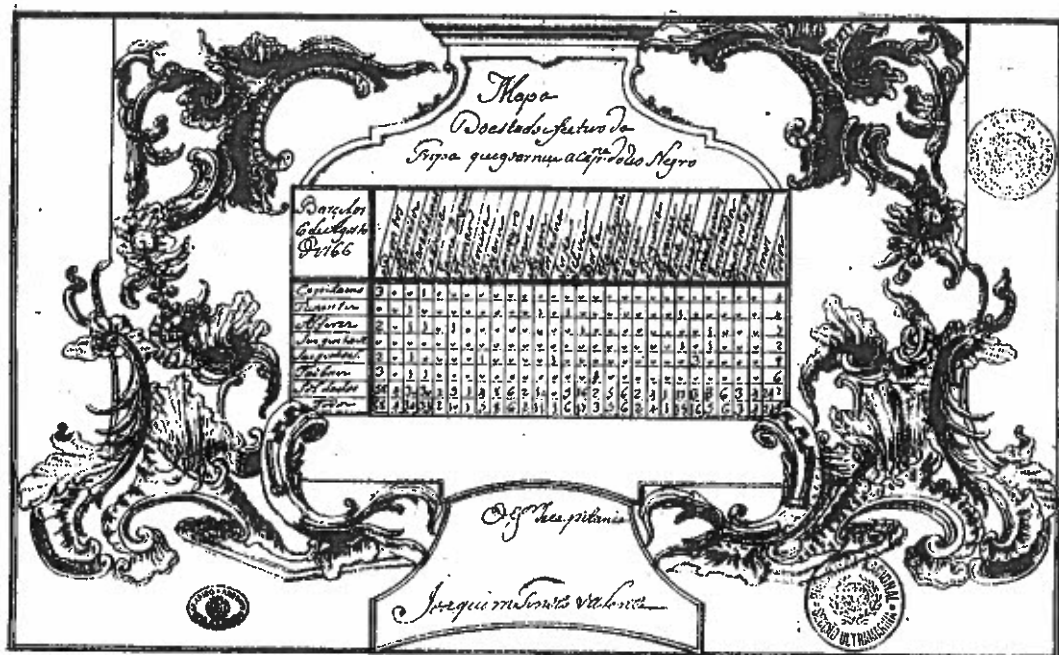


FIGURE 4.12. Joaquim Tinoco Valente, “Mapa do Estado Futuro da Tropa que Guarneça a Cap.a do Rio Negro” (Map of the Future State of the Troop That Quarters in the Rio Negro Captaincy), 1766. Brasil—Rio Negro, Caixa 2, Doc. 131. By permission of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon.

Their movement or presence in particular villages could not be measured through a static geographic map, but could be shown only numerically through statistics. This population map, then, was capable of showing the growth of the community by emphasizing a temporal component that a traditional map could not. The final column shows the total number of Amerindians in the agglomerated Rio Negro villages, a figure that could be compared from time to time with other statistical maps to determine the demographic flux in any given period.

While indigenous movements and “descents” were crucial to establishing the legitimacy of the Portuguese territorial presence, another type of population map was also central to the needs of the administrative regime: maps of troop movements. In figure 4.12, “Map of the Future State of the Troop that Quarters in the Rio Negro Captaincy,” the first column shows the rank of the individual (captain, sergeant, soldier, and so on), and the horizontal axis lists the towns and villages within the captaincy. However, rather than appearing in alphabetical order, these small population centers appear just as they would have in a fourteenth-century portolan or maritime *roteiro* (“route map”): that is, according to the order in which one would encounter them when descending or



ascending a coastal waterway. This “Mapa do Estado Futuro” lists the ascending outposts of the Rio Negro, including Airão, Moura, Carvoeiro, Poiares, and Moreira. As one moved upriver, one could measure one’s own progress—as well as the progress of the captaincy in fulfilling its duty to bring more subjects into the colonial fold. In tandem with geographic maps of the captaincy, maps of troop movements provided a more thorough and on-the-spot perspective to the distant observer.

Of course, traditional geographic maps circulated between Lisbon and South America as well, and they were often included in regular dispatches between the metropole and the colony. In one of innumerable examples, Governor Tinoco Valente sent a map—now unfortunately lost—to the naval and overseas secretary Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, explaining to his superior that the map should function as a corroborating device: “[Included with this letter is] [t]he map by Captain and Engineer Felipe Sturm (Commander of the Frontier) . . . [which] gives a small notion of the Territories and Rivers that are increasing the scope of the King’s Royal Dominion, [and which] will give your excellency a confirmation of the situation that is represented by other [documents] on this subject.”<sup>15</sup> In the parlance and practice of eighteenth-century colonial administrators, geographic maps were meant to complement and affirm rather than replace other forms of territorial reconnaissance. Maps were not examined in a vacuum, but in tandem with other tools of empire, which included population maps. Geography and ethnic management, which included organizing subjects into cultural and ethnic categories for political purposes, were interlinked and intertwined. For the efficient functioning of the empire and to ensure the colony’s continuity, both forms of mapping were necessary.

If we accept the definition of *maps* as “graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world,” as Woodward and Harley wrote in 1987, then population maps conform to this definition in a variety of respects.<sup>16</sup> They are an instance of cartography as inventory. While clearly not geographic maps in the traditional sense, they were conceived to present information in an appealing graphic format. Their form often included elaborate designs and an acute attention to graphic detail. They were spatially conceived, much like a Portuguese *roteiro*, or route map, which showed an itinerary through a particular zone or territory. Informative as well as decorative, they were designed to portray knowledge that could not be conveyed in a traditional narrative (or cartographic) format. Significantly, they were also maps of circulation, dynamic as opposed to static depictions of territory. The population maps revealed the *flow* of groups within colonial society, as Indians descended from the forest into the villages of Portuguese America.

As the years went on, the categories on which these statistical maps were based became more complex as well. Slaves were added to the lists, indicating the inexorable advance of that cruel practice into the Amazonian hinterland. The population mapmakers also included categories that, at a glance, informed the observer whether the populations had increased or decreased, and included the reason for such an advance or decline in the colonial mission. In the end, even the dreaded Muras managed to appear as a statistic on the map. But the story of how they ended up moving from the shadows of the forest to a population map remains to be told: not through the graphic image of a map, but rather in poetic verse. Their tale could not be encapsulated within a population chart, but required instead the creative talents and linguistic skills of a Portuguese military officer with epic ambitions.

### MAPPING THE MURAS: THE SPATIAL POETICS OF AN AMAZONIAN FRONTIER

It was not only the Indians who were on the move. At eight o'clock on the morning of February 23, 1781, a Portuguese military officer set off to explore the Japurá River. At the head of a contingent of five covered canoes and two supply boats, Henrique João Wilckens and his superior officer led a coterie of engineers, a pair each of mathematicians, chaplains, and surgeons, a secretary, fifty soldiers, and at least 230 Indians—to recount only the primary elements of his entire contingent—on an expedition to reconnoiter a contested and watery no-man's-land at the center of a continent. Against the backdrop of the dense rainforest canopy and among the twisting channels of the surrounding rivers, Wilckens and his fellow commissioner Teodósio Constantino Chermont set off from the town of Ega to survey and demarcate a region that for three decades had stood precariously on the boundary line between Spanish and Portuguese America. For most of those thirty years, Wilckens had accompanied the reconnaissance missions in a subordinate position. But now he was leading the way into the lair of the dreaded Mura Indians, and he was to emerge four years later with the document for which he would be most prominently recalled and regaled. It was not a map or a narrative account, but rather an epic poem in six cantos with Amazonia and its indigenous inhabitants at center stage. In the summer of 1785, he had witnessed an extraordinary moment that not even the most optimistic imperial mastermind could have conjured: a stunningly choreographed event in which the insurgent peoples that he and the other Portuguese colonists had been battling for nearly fifty years suddenly and without prompting decided to incorporate themselves within the colonial superstructure. The Muras—a reputedly bellicose nation of Amerindians

inhabiting the heart of the Amazon basin—had now given up their threatening ways. Wilckens's literary account of the Portuguese colonists' successful struggle to overcome the "barbarous" Muras became yet another repository of spatially conceived imperial knowledge, one that expressed the full range of tools employed by colonial authorities to dominate and mold a territory in their own image.<sup>17</sup>

Already some forty years earlier, a Portuguese sergeant had issued an alert about a terrifying new threat that had emerged like a cancer in the heart of the forest:

The entire region from the Aripuanã to the Giparanã Rivers is infected by a nation of Barbarous Indians called Múras. . . . [These Indians] are so insolent that in recent years . . . they shot and killed [with arrows] many [individuals] without greater cause than their own fierceness and maliciousness [*braveza e malignidade*].<sup>18</sup>

Casting this group as a disease that plagued the colony and choked efforts to tame the backlands, Joseph de Sousa went on to suggest that the crown provide "prompt remedy" for such a pernicious threat. The report in turn served as the basis for a *devassa*, or judicial process, against the Muras. This litigation was undertaken by Ouvidor Salvador de Souza Rebelo, and it derived from the "fear and consternation" put into the Portuguese population by the Mura menace. The importance of Sousa's letter lay in its early characterization of the Muras as a coherent and discrete "nation" and its assessment of the imminent threat posed by the "insolence" and "fierceness" of the group.

The words of this foundational text carved out a spatial range in which the Muras were thought to be present, stretching from one key tributary of the Madeira River to another. While there were no maps included with Sousa's account, his description served as the textual germ for a spatial understanding of the Mura presence.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the 1730s, there had been a series of inquests into the behavior of the Mura tribe and a forceful attempt to determine the veracity of this perceived threat. In the end, the Portuguese king Dom João V himself seems to have been persuaded by contrary opinions, and he objected to the just war advocated by Sousa, the captaincy's governor Castelobranco, and their allies. Instead, he advised the residents of the Madeira and Tocantins rivers to take care not to "advance settlements" in those areas where they knew the Muras were moving forward—still at that time loosely defined—and to avoid any activities that would threaten the safety of their communities and, especially, commerce in those regions.<sup>20</sup>

For colonial authorities, the Muras lived in the interstices of the forest,

lurking in those places that imperial interests found difficult to locate or define. Characterizing them as a people “without a base, without persistence, always running here and there,” the Jesuit João Daniel, author of the *Tesouro Descoberto no Rio Amazonas* (published between 1741 and 1757), suggested that a large group of Muras had been tricked into servitude by a slave trader posing as a missionary. Because of this collective memory, Daniel went on to say, those Muras that remained led a “continuous and declared war against missionaries, whites, and villagers.” Even as he justified the Muras’ ire against the European invaders, Daniel emphasized the surreptitious ways that they were able to threaten the lives and livelihood of the colony: they lived “secure in their land, in the darkness of the shadows, and in the safety of the trees . . . [and] they release[d] their volley of arrows upon the poor rowers and occasionally the white chiefs as well.” For this reason, they posed a direct and unmitigated challenge to the commercial and spiritual work that slave traders and missionaries alike were attempting to carry out on behalf of the crown.<sup>21</sup>

Wilckens drew upon these writings and his own observations as he mapped the Muras in poetic verse. In a gesture toward the dramatic, he called this interstitial space of encounter described by Daniel a “theater in the forest.” And he chose the extraordinary circumstances of the Muras’ descent and pacification as a subject to be represented in poetic form. Wilckens’s reference to a sylvan theater emphasizes the direct linkage between geography and drama. Like the Portuguese epic *The Lusíads*, Wilckens’s text elegizes empire in a geographic mode. Camões’s epic text from the sixteenth century follows Portuguese power down the African coast and across the Indian Ocean. Wilckens’s Amazonian poetry carries Portugal’s imperial (and proselytic) aspirations across the Atlantic and into the heart of South America.<sup>22</sup>

In the poem, called the “Muhuraida, or Triumph of the Faith,” Wilckens describes the Muras as a “ferocious, indomitable, and formidable people.” Their persistent attacks also made them a “cruel and irreconcilable Enemy of the Portuguese.” Wilckens depicts the Muras not in static terms, but rather in constant motion, filling with “terror, fear, [and] death” those who traveled along the fluvial pathways they inhabited. This in turn sent a death knell toward all spheres of colonial policy: “Navigation, Commerce, Circulation, and Population of said Rivers.” The itinerant nature of the Mura nation appeared as the gravest threat to the Portuguese colonists, and Wilckens characterizes them as a peripatetic human plague:

People on the run, without a lasting presence, divided into small bands which the inhabitants of Pará call Mallocas / Occupying an immense extension of terrain, to which must be added . . . the uncertain place of their existence.<sup>23</sup>

This lack of a fixed abode constituted for Wilckens the most pervasive danger to the region, and he contrasts the Muras' movement with the stable, urban settlements of the Portuguese colonists and indigenous converts. This was a period that saw the rapid development of a modest urban culture in Amazonia, where new settlements were literally transforming the forest landscape. Thus the Muras represented a threat to this still precarious sense of permanent presence for the colony.<sup>24</sup>

Invoking metaphors of lightness and darkness, Wilckens allies the geographic itinerancy of the Muras with barbarity, depicting them as traveling pillagers who would stop at nothing to destroy Portuguese civilization along the Amazon:

Absorbed by the dense darkness of adversity,  
By terror, apprehension, and uncertainty,  
The people who lived in the City,  
The Towns and the Hinterland, [places] in which the fierceness  
of the barbarous Muhuras, without piety,  
Increasing danger, leaving defenseless  
Both the Vigilant and the Careless . . .  
Their fate, their destiny one and the same.<sup>25</sup>

Wilckens insists on the contrast between the light of civilization ("following the road of the Village while there's still light" [p. 121]) and the savage darkness. This language underscores the poem's tension between European space—bearing Christianity and the "Light of Reason" (p. 119)—and indigenous space, what Wilckens calls an "Empire of Darkness," signaled by an absence of spirituality where Satan and his minions reigned supreme.

In the poem, Wilckens also invokes the image of the *roteiro*, or route map, a maritime navigational aid that made frequent appearances in Portuguese literature throughout the Renaissance and early modern periods.<sup>26</sup> Between these Amazonian worlds of civility and barbarity, one had to traverse what Wilckens calls the "ocean of darkness where the miserable mortal lives enslaved to Guilt and Ignorance, navigating without a voice, certain that he will overturn his vessel." The circulation of human cargo along the Japurá River becomes an extended metaphor for the voyage between heaven and hell, a Stygian image grafted onto the Amazonian landscape, which was transformed by pestilence and horrendous odors into a world of shadow, fire, and despair:

From the Empire of Darkness [the Prince or Satan] emerges,  
From each Torrent his Cohort is surrounded by flames;

The Air, covered in a dense smoke,  
Releases an intense and pestilent vapor.<sup>27</sup>

From within this empire of darkness, the Muras nevertheless made their hopeful way through the acrid haze of desolation toward the light of civilization. Leaving their old homes behind, they discovered Portuguese villages shining like beacons, illuminated islands within a prose cartography:

Thus leaving behind their old refuge  
The Muras of the *Malloca*, different [than the others],  
Navigating bravely for the second time,  
Come with gifts to see our People;  
First to Ega, then to Alvaraes  
Without fear, without regret, they make their contented way.<sup>28</sup>

Wilckens describes the descent of the Muras from their “beloved Nest” and “*Malloca*” (structures within which Amerindian families lived) down the “sober Japurá” to the “Crystalline” waters of the “Famous Amaná” lake. Claiming the right to speak about the events of the Muras’ descent just as an explorer might claim the right to describe a geographic space according to the autoptic, or firsthand eyewitness, principle, Wilckens invokes the privileged window of observation to bolster the authority of his poetic verse: “I was an eyewitness [*ocular testemunha*] of the horrific disaster and murder that the Muhuras carried out in the year 55 of this century, in the missions of the Indian inhabitants of the Abacachi mission of the Jesuits along the Madeira River.”<sup>29</sup> The poem, then, is infused with references to the geographic realities of the Japurá and its tributaries. Wilckens transforms the geography of the river into a narrative route map through which the reader can experience a spiritual journey from barbarity to salvation, from ignorance to enlightenment, and from condemnation to redemption. The reader can follow the “happy Muhura” in his peaceful descent as he “navigates the Rivers . . . without worry, and without deviation.”<sup>30</sup>

In these examples drawn from Wilckens’s *Muhuraida*, spatial metaphors emerge clearly as central features of the text. Wilckens emphasizes the “uncertain place of [the Muras’] existence,” which in turn fosters an image of a mythical, boundless territory that they inhabited. The poetic genre reveals the fluidity and circulation of actors upon an imperial stage. That is, the poem shows the directional *flow* of empire within a particular place and a highly particularized dramatic setting. The textual representation of movement within the poem forges a tightly woven alliance between geography and spirituality. There are,

of course, certain similarities between the map and the poem—such as the manner by which the cartographer and the poet both lay claims to authoritative experiences that license their particular vision. But the supple, dynamic, and morally charged nature of the language used by Wilckens reveals what Gaston Bachelard has called “a poetics of space,” a calling into being through poetic verse of lived geographic experience.<sup>31</sup> The *Muhuraida* is not merely an epic poem; it is also the story of an exodus, the “voluntary descent” (in the terminology used by the Portuguese) of a significant portion of the Muras to the Portuguese village of Santo Antonio de Maripi. Like the population map, the poem reveals a sense of movement that is all but absent in a cartographic document representing the static location of roads and channels.

In the end, the poem provided a narrative passage through space that complemented, rather than replaced, geographic maps. It efficiently portrayed communication, circulation, and transmigration in a different register. And the figurative language used by the poet communicated the spatial elements of the Japurá and its tributaries in a more dynamic and spiritually charged manner than lines of latitude and longitude on a cartographic image could ever accomplish on their own.

However revealing the *Muhuraida* may be for its spatial metaphors and dynamic vision of an imperial territory in political and ethnic flux, there is no unequivocal evidence linking the poem to a particular decision or policy carried out by the Portuguese overseas administration. As one scholar has explained, the *Muhuraida* “never transcended its immediate political context.”<sup>32</sup> There is no smoking gun that could point to the poem’s impact on any individual audience or readership. But despite the lack of absolute proof, we can infer from the *Muhuraida*’s dedicatory remarks that the person for whom it was intended, João Pereira Caldas, captain-general of the Rio Negro captaincy, would have seen and read Wilckens’s account. Caldas was a key architect of the northern boundary expeditions and was also broadly responsible for managing the relations between the Muras and the Portuguese colonial administration in the years following the *Muhuraida*’s appearance. Indeed, in 1785, the very year Wilckens composed the *Muhuraida*, Caldas wrote to the Portuguese secretary of overseas affairs, Martinho de Melo e Castro, regarding the pacification of the Mura nation. And over the course of the next several years, Caldas continued to inform Melo e Castro of their settlements in the Rio Branco region. This direct link between the dedicatee and one of the senior officials of Portuguese overseas policy leaves little doubt that the text had at least some repercussion within the empire’s administrative hierarchy.<sup>33</sup>

The Portuguese epic tradition to which the *Muhuraida* belonged, whose characteristics included the “adulation of imperial government officials, emulation

of laudatory European models and heroes, and the celebration of events and people of doubtful heroism,” saw itself as a conduit to encourage imperial policy by praising the actions of its architects and administrators, if only for encomiastic purposes.<sup>34</sup> Eventually, some forty years later, the *Muhuraida* was even edited and published by a chaplain in Evora, Father Cipriano Pereira Alho. Cipriano had been a parish priest on the Rio Negro, and whatever may have influenced him to offer a copy of this poem to his superior, that Pereira Alho traversed the Atlantic and republished the *Muhuraida* proves that the spatial discourses undergirding the text were capable of crossing the Atlantic as well. While it may be impossible to determine who may have breathed meaning into the *Muhuraida* or found inspiration within the text, the poem itself may have facilitated the formation of its own discursive community, one that included at the very least a Portuguese military officer, a high-ranking captain, and the chaplain of one of the most important bishoprics in the Portuguese metropole, not to mention anyone else with whom these officials chose to share a poetic relic from their extended stays in Amazonia.<sup>35</sup>

By the time the Portuguese lieutenant colonel João Baptista Mardel drew the map shown in figure 4.13, the Muras had already completed their “voluntary descent” to Santo Antonio de Maripi. Mardel’s map shows the situation of the Muras following their “reduction”: that is, after they had become a piece to be moved like a pawn in an imperial game of chess. Reduced to statistics on a population map (see fig. 4.11), they were reduced on this map as well. Mardel refers to the “location of the new settlement of the Muras in the Mamiá Lake,” implying that they had recently taken up residence in this place; their new location is indicated by a series of four small rectangles painted red. It is also interesting to note the distance between this new settlement and the town of Ega, the administrative center of the region downstream along the Amazon River (here called the Solimões). Another map by Mardel, produced slightly earlier and shown in figure 4.14, provides an indication of how the Muras may have come to settle in this new location. This second map, titled “Study Ordered by João Pereira Caldas, General Commissioner of the Boundary Expedition,” shows a portion of the Japurá River and refers explicitly to a “spot where we can move the Muras from [Lake] Amaná,” rhetorically positioning them as a semipermanent group that could nonetheless be shuttled from one location to the next. In this case, Caldas appears to have commissioned a map that would enable him to move groups and peoples with ease. Included on his map is an area listed as a “site that was chosen for the settlement,” and another that indicates a space at the strategic location of an island’s tip for farming and the raising of cattle (“Ponta de Ilha que se pode Roçar”). The location allocated for the Muras in this map is not identical to that indicated in figure 4.13, but



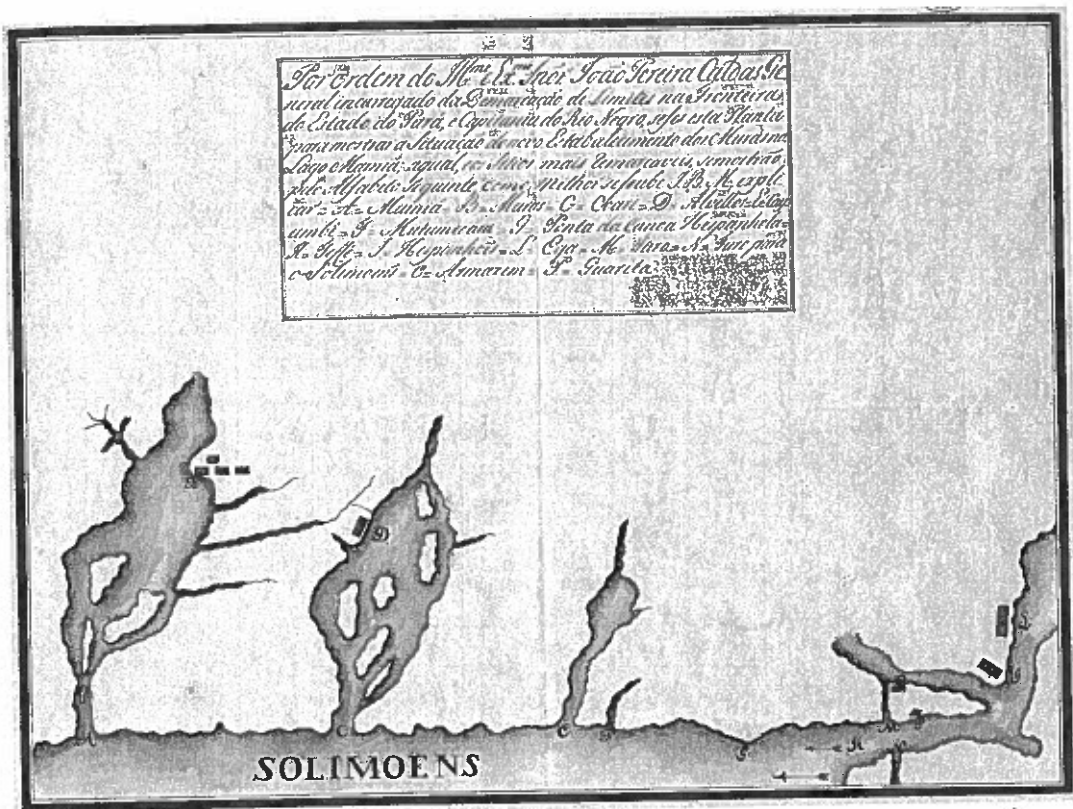


FIGURE 4.13. João Baptista Mardel, “Planta para mostrar a Situação do novo Estabelecimento [sic] dos Muras no Lago Mamiá” (Location of the New Settlement of the Muras in the Mamiá Lake), ca. 1786. By permission of the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon.

the geographic context is, broadly speaking, the same. From nomadic warriors to pieces on a figurative chessboard, the Muras’ long transmigration from the forest to the village would end with their becoming inhabitants of a riverside landing chosen not by them but by the exigencies of Portuguese settlement and development along the Japurá and Solimões rivers.

In a letter describing their voluntary reduction, Mardel discussed the great advantages that the Muras, once domesticated, would bring to the imperial project in Amazonia. Following the Muras’ forced resettlement, the Portuguese would

be able to navigate securely along these rivers; nor does it seem any less beneficial to me that we would have many more bows, which can provide significant defense of the State against both internal and external enemies; that [the Muras] will be great traveling salesmen due to the experience they have

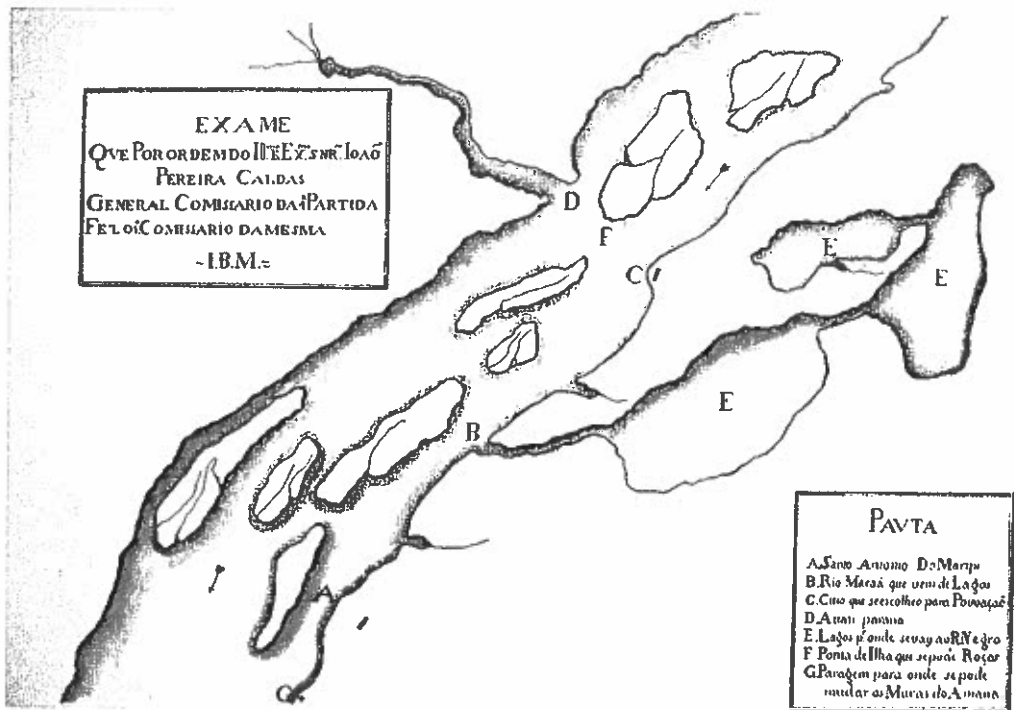


FIGURE 4.14. João Baptista Mardel, “Exame que por ordem do Ilmo. e Exmo. sur. Ioao Pereira Caldas” (Study Ordered by João Pereira Caldas, General Commissioner of the Boundary Expedition). By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.

of chopping down wood and transporting it easily from one place to another, even by sea, which they navigate with breathtaking [*indizível*] speed . . . they will be useful in discovering the treasures that their ferocious nature hid from us, and that make up the primary branches of this State’s commerce.<sup>36</sup>

In Mardel’s eyes, the Muras would provide the Portuguese state with a series of benefits: more secure navigation, protection against enemies of their colonial projects, more efficient shipbuilding, and increased commerce. The elements that had most challenged the Portuguese in their attempts to pacify the Muras had become the colonists’ most coveted spoils. The Muras’ itinerant nature, so denigrated by Wilckens in the *Muhuraida*, now became one of their most appreciated characteristics. The routes they traveled with “breathtaking speed” would, the Portuguese hoped, transform these “ferocious” people into an engine of commerce and civilization. And the Muras would become in the process a potent symbol in both image and verse: reduced to a few rectangular settlements in cartographic form and, later, enlarged to epic proportions in order to

showcase their participation in the project that proclaimed Amazonia—and its inhabitants—an arm of the Portuguese empire evermore.

### ETHNOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPES

When the Luso-Brazilian naturalist Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira traveled to the region that surrounded the Japurá River, he, too, encountered the Mura nation. Ferreira and his companions spent nearly a decade carrying out a “philosophical voyage” in Amazonia, a ten-year journey from 1783 to 1792 meant to create an inventory of the peoples, places, and natural objects encountered within the domain of the Portuguese, later recorded in a set of documents that came to be known collectively as the *Viagem Filosófica*. Rather than creating geographic maps showing the Muras’ location in the forests, however, Ferreira dispatched material objects to Lisbon that would provide a tangible sense of Amerindian culture, along with a brief treatise he composed on the Muras’ customs and rites. He also included several drawings of the Muras, such as figure 4.15, which represented in visual form some of the creators of the objects accompanying his textual descriptions. This depiction of the Muras transformed ethnography into a graphic register, and it formed part of an extensive collection of visual and material objects by which the Rio Negro captaincy came to be understood in several registers at once, horizontally as well as vertically.<sup>37</sup>

While many maps and city views were produced over the course of his expedition, Ferreira’s charge was not explicitly cartographic in nature. But his mandate nonetheless required him to question natives, missionaries, and other groups about the resources of the region. Having been influenced by other explorers and chroniclers before him, and quite possibly by Wilckens’s *Muhuraida* (Ferreira writes only of the “other Representations” he has seen), Ferreira was especially interested in the Muras’ movements, their notions of space and property, and their overall relationship to the territory they had been fighting so vehemently to protect. Both Ferreira and Wilckens were regularly present in the regional capital of the Rio Negro captaincy between 1785 and 1788, and Ferreira began “On the Mura Peoples,” an ethnographic memoir contained within the *Viagem Filosófica*, with the same historic event that served as the subject for Wilckens’s *Muhuraida*: the descent, in 1786, of various groups of Muras to the Portuguese villages and towns along the Negro and Japurá rivers.

Following a description of the Muras’ ferocious behavior that he had read elsewhere, Ferreira turns to a discussion of the Muras’ bellicose ways in an attempt to analyze in a more profound fashion their infamous thirst for war. Ferreira asserts that to understand the rationale behind their behavior, it is essential

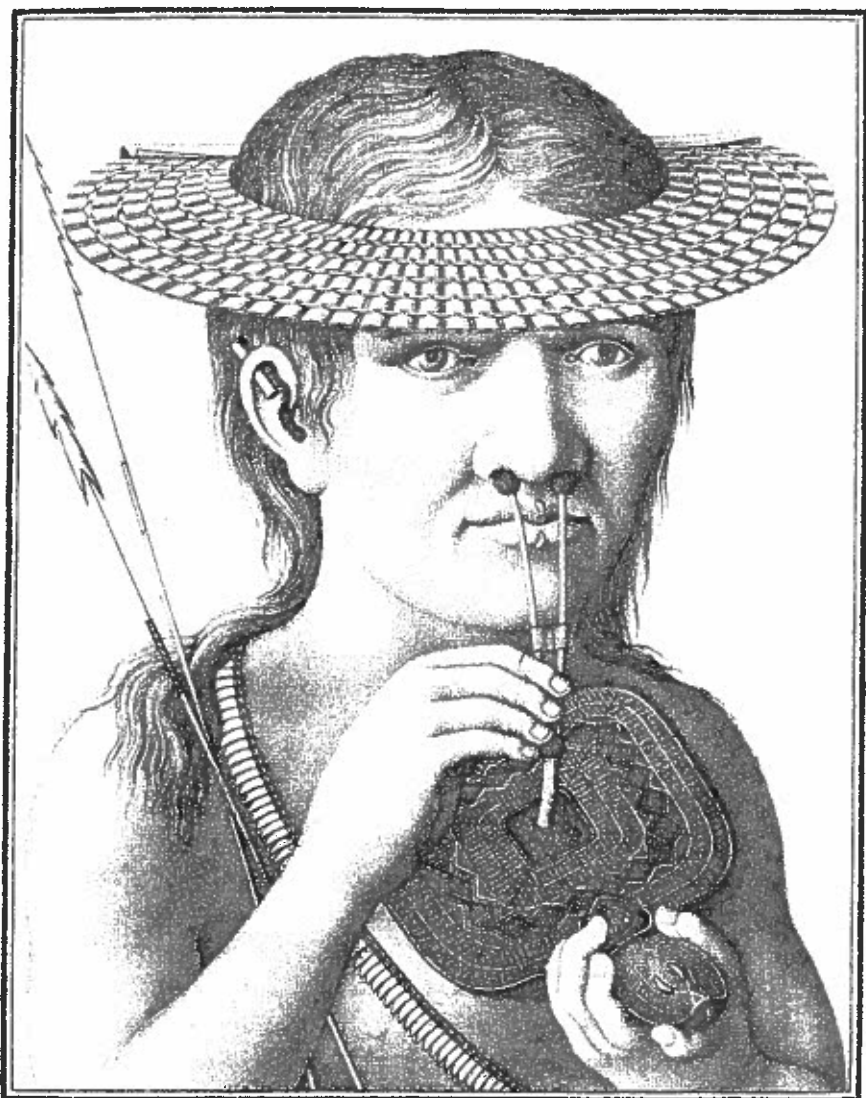


FIGURE 4.15. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, *Indio Mura*. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.

to recognize their indignation at the “usurpation of the fruits of their hunting and fishing of the land and rivers by others.” The Mura notion of boundary and territory differed considerably from the imperial logic of the Portuguese, whereby distant territories were managed by proxy and their sentries had sworn allegiance to a powerful central sovereign. In the territorial conception of the Muras, Ferreira notes, “each village judges itself to be independent of the one that borders it, and attributes to itself the absolute and exclusive right

to the lands that surround it." He continues, "This right, which gives them the quality of possessor, authorizes the villages to repel with violent force the attempts at usurpation made by any other village."<sup>38</sup> In order to resolve territorial disputes, then, the Muras engaged in what can be seen as an indigenous analog to the boundary expeditions of the Spanish and Portuguese: intrepid, if occasionally violent, forays through enemy territory to sate the "spirit of vengeance" that Ferreira notes was one of their primary traits of character.

The juxtaposition between territory that was claimed by a central power through political fiat, in the imperial case, and the exclusive right to profit from territory whose boundaries were established through rules of usufruct, in the Muras' case, pointed to inherently conflicting conceptions of spatial occupation and ownership. According to the Treaty of Madrid's diplomatic rhetoric, empires were supposed to resolve their conflicts using maps and instruments, resorting to the use of arms only when their interests were fundamentally threatened; for the Muras, however, unrestrained violence seems to have been a more consistent ideology, owing most likely to a fundamentally different understanding of property rights and individual or group territorial demarcation. All the same, the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies did sign a Treaty of Defensive Alliance to ensure that their right to subdue any potential aggressor with violent means was maintained: "As refers to the interior of South America, this obligation will be indefinite; in case of invasion or revolt, each of the Crowns will supply aid and support to the other, until things are returned to a peaceful state."<sup>39</sup> For imperial agents and their superiors, violent resistance ultimately remained the prerogative of the monarchical state.

While the territorial understanding of the Muras fascinated Ferreira, his interest in the spatial practices of Amerindians extended well beyond this single group. He was also intrigued by the rationalization of intimate space, exemplified by several drawings he and his sketch artists produced of Indian domestic scenes. Moreover, he was a keen observer of the cartographic aptitudes of Amerindians he met along the Negro, Amazon, and Madeira rivers. In one of the many ethnographic essays he composed, he puts to his readers a rhetorical question about how an Indian might respond if "he were asked questions about a river, its direction, its tributaries, or the number of villages on it." Rather than answering these questions himself, however, Ferreira describes in minute ethnographic detail how one Amerindian had sought fit to respond:

[The Indian] took a cord and laid it out along the ground in such a way as to represent the curves of the principal river. To the left and the right of this cord . . . he attached many other cordons that represented the various tributaries, adjusting them according to the distances that, in his mind, lay between

them, and in such a way as to give form to their twists and turns. Finally, he added knots to each of these lateral cords that more or less approximated the number of Indian villages and the distances from one to the next. In this way, the problem that had been proposed to him was resolved without resorting to the construction of a map.<sup>40</sup>

Ferreira's description of this indigenous map is certainly interesting as an anecdote about the geographic insights and spatial understanding of Amazonian natives. But it is also fascinating as a window onto the circulation of indigenous cultures and technologies prior to and during the colonial period. One eighteenth-century Portuguese explorer observed that the Warekena peoples of the Upper Amazon were "famous for using cords for writing in the manner of the *kipus* of the ancient Peruvians, with which they transmit their thoughts to distant people who understand and know how to decipher those knots and strings."<sup>41</sup> Is it possible that this Indian had learned a pre-Columbian technique from the Andes for storing information by stringing rope together with knots, the artifact known as the Incan *kipu*?<sup>42</sup>

If this rope-map is indeed a relative, however distant, of the *kipu*, it would have important implications for the study of how routes of migration, trade, and technology transfer functioned in a broader Amazonian context.<sup>43</sup> Its existence would also corroborate the argument I have developed throughout this chapter with regard to the alternative pathways of spatial knowledge in eighteenth-century Amazonia. The technology that would have produced such a map would have traveled over the Andes and into the Amazon River basin, possibly over the course of centuries, possibly during no more than a few weeks. What is more, such a *kipu*-map as described by Ferreira would have functioned as a superior version of the population map, since the shape of the river in graphic form was combined with information regarding the quantity of people living along it. While Europeans such as Ferreira would have been eminently *un*-qualified to interpret the layers of information contained within such a cartographic *kipu*, it is nevertheless quite possible—and intriguing—that *kipu* technology was able to bring together morphological and numerical data in a way that European graphic forms had kept separate and distinct. Even today, scholars are only beginning to get a sense of the kinds of data these *kipus* may have contained, and how prevalent they may have been in non-Andean cultures as well.<sup>44</sup>

In another document from the *Viagem Filosófica*, Ferreira describes a second map composed by a Macushi Indian, whom he had met "randomly" in the settlement of Carmo on the Rio Branco. This time, however, the ethnographic situation was reversed for Ferreira, and rather than taking notes on the customs

and rites of the Amerindians, it was the Macushi who observed Ferreira as he constructed a population map of the region. Paying close attention to what Ferreira had been working on in his thatched hut, the Indian decided to reproduce in the sand the graphic representation made by his European counterpart:

Without a single word, [the Macushi] snatched the stick that I keep in the corner of my tent and with the point began sketching on the sandy floor a linked series of large and small rivers. At the Arauru falls . . . , which is for us the Tacutu, he sketched in the Fortress of S. Joaquim and a number of squares that represented the tents which had been annexed as part of the fort. Taking advantage of the moment, I offered him paper and invited him to create with pen and ink what up till then he had made with a stick alone. Without hesitation, he began sketching a map where the mountain ranges were marked by a successive series of more or less sharp angles, and the Indians' villages ["malocas"] by large and small circles. Adding nothing other than the names he had told to me, I showed the map to his Excellency Sr. João Pereira Caldas, Governor of the Captaincy [of Rio Negro], to the Astronomer José Simoens de Carvalho, and many others.<sup>45</sup>

If Ferreira showed the pen-and-ink map to Caldas and Simões de Carvalho, did the information provided by the Macushi make its way onto a subsequent map? Examining the multiple versions of Simões de Carvalho's own map of the region, including the "Carta do Rio Branco e suas confluentes" that he compiled around the time of this exchange in 1787 (fig. 4.16), there appears to be no explicit indication of an intervention based on indigenous sources. Yet we do find some names—they may be ethnonyms—placed precisely within the portion of the map to which the Macushi had contributed in Ferreira's account. Following one of the rivers that descended into the Rio Branco, the Rio Parimé, we find three textual referents that are not explicitly attached to any particular geographic features. They are not marked with the terms *Rio* or *Serra* or *Monte*; instead, in their free-floating appearance, the words *Tauiana*, *Cauapuxi*, and *Tebay* bear a striking resemblance to the kind of ethnonym we saw represented in the Delisle and Fritz maps earlier (fig. 4.4 and 4.6, respectively).

Whether or not the presence of these terms should be seen as an attempt to locate indigenous populations graphically within the map, as Ferreira's description implies that it might be, the possibility that the "Carta do Rio Branco" was influenced by the scene described above is sufficient to dismiss any clear distinction between European and indigenous knowledge inscribed into cartographic representations such as these. This *caveat lector* is also suggested by an element in one of Simões de Carvalho's other maps of this region, the "Plano Geographico

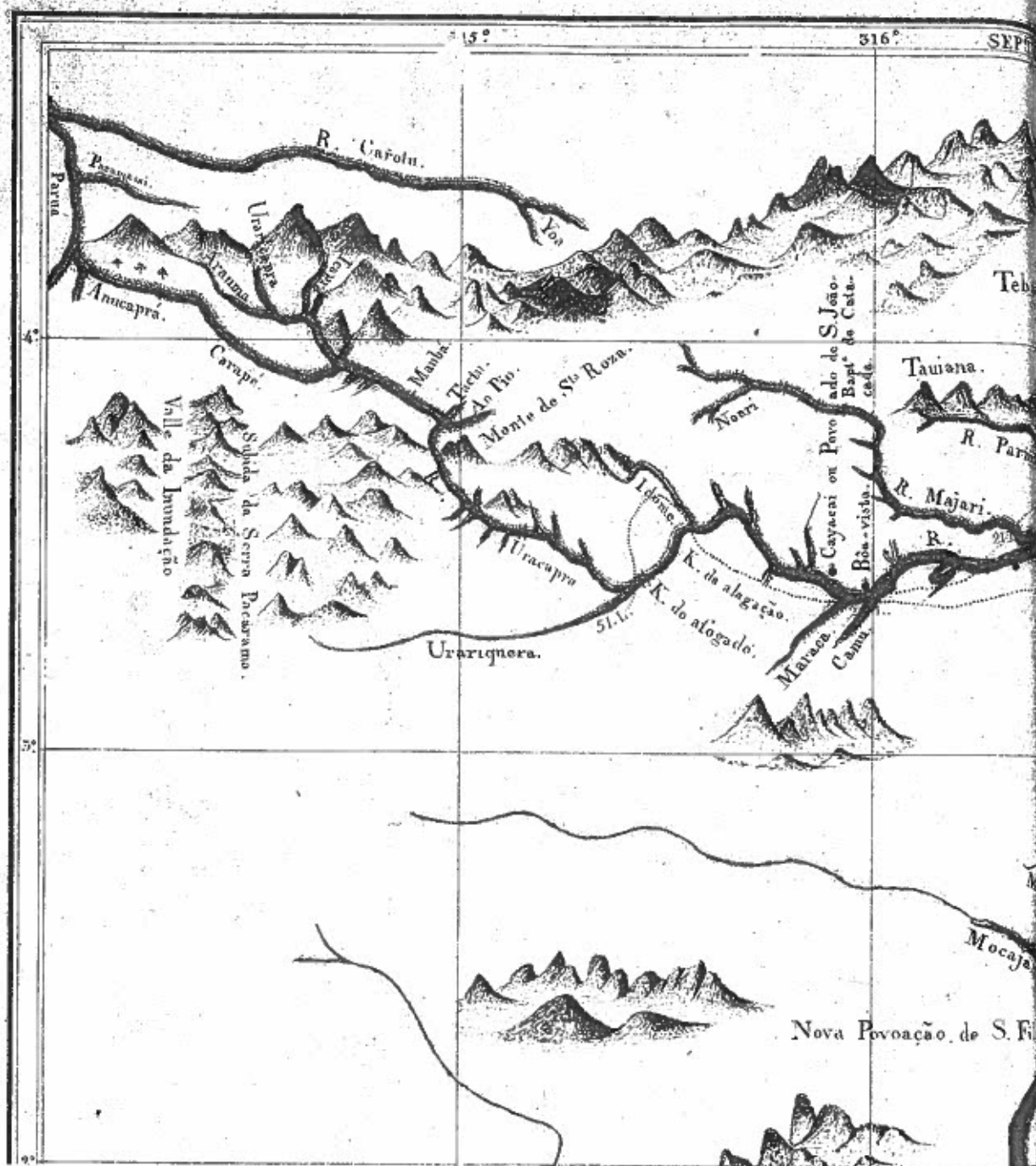


FIGURE 4.16. Detail from José Simões de Carvalho, "Carta do Rio Branco e suas confluentes" (Map of the Rio Branco and Its Tributaries), 1787. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.





Serra dos Cristaes.

Canauru.

R. Surupiti

Coatim.

M. An.

S. Virgilia.

12. L.

A.

Pirova.

Tanoricuru.

11. P.

R. Tacutu.

M. An.

Serra Xanida.

(A) Caminho feito no Exame. de 1781.

(B) Idem no de 1787.

S. An. deserto.

S. Filipe deserto.

F. de S. Joaquim.

Serra Xipiri.

Trajecto de 2 horas.

Tucuna  
S. Bar.  
Cedone.  
Mar.  
Serra Caraima.

Tacutu.

B.

conceição.

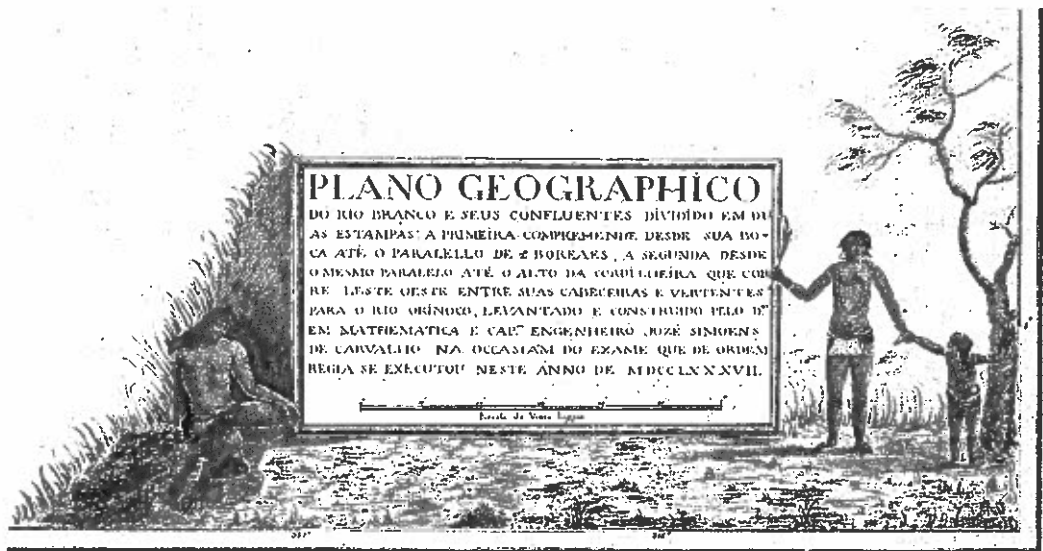


FIGURE 4.17. Detail from José Simões de Carvalho, “Plano Geographico do Rio Branco e seus confluente,” 1787. By permission of the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro.

do Rio Branco e seus confluente,” composed that same year (fig. 4.17). The “Plano Geographico,” which covers some of the same territory as the “Carta do Rio Branco,” is a denuded version of the “Carta,” and yet it curiously contains something that the “Carta” does not: a large and ornate cartouche flanked by an attractive portrait of three seminaked Amerindians. The barren nature of the “Plano Geographico” stands in contrast to the finished quality of the cartouche, making it appear as if the map were begun and then abandoned. Yet the partial nudity of the natives on either side of the cartouche speaks to a direct and unmediated knowledge of this territory that *is* raw and unfinished, an engagement with the land and its peoples that Simões de Carvalho may have been intent on conveying in both this image and the “Carta do Rio Branco.”

Even if we cannot follow a well-marked path between knowledge gleaned from indigenous informants and its incorporation into imperial networks, the example of the Macushi sand-map has much to tell us. Its transformation from a written population map describing peoples and places into an ephemeral representation composed with a stick, and from that sand-map back into a European medium of ink on paper constructed by an Amerindian, reaffirms the slippery quality of material representations. The example also underlines the importance of considering noncartographic sources—in this case, ethnographic description—in understanding the pathways of circulating spatial knowledge at the far-flung boundaries of the imperial domain. Ferreira’s description of

this event serves no inherent *cartographic* purpose (that is, it would be impossible for anyone to create a map based exclusively on the narrative description that Ferreira provides). But it places the Macushi's cartographic activities and Amerindian spatial understanding more generally within a broader ethnographic project, an interpretive gesture that Simões de Carvalho's maps do not, and in some respects cannot, provide.

The parallel here between the Macushi map and the Chinese map of Sakhalin Island described by Jean-François de Galoup, Comte de La Pérouse and analyzed by Bruno Latour is striking.<sup>46</sup> In defining knowledge between "centres of calculation" and the outposts of empire (or, more specifically, spaces that explorers pass through), Latour distinguished between the "local" Chinese informant and the "moving" European geographer. But he stopped short of setting up a mutually exclusive dialectic between the two: "we do not have to oppose . . . local knowledge . . . to the universal knowledge of the European, but only two local knowledges, one of them having the shape of a network transporting back and forth immutable mobiles [a Latourian shorthand for combinable, information-laden documents used to construct scientific knowledge] to act at a distance."<sup>47</sup> The geographic maps we typically associate with the mapping of imperial spaces were not the only objects or systems that revealed the spatial realities of a colonial territory, as these many examples drawn from Portuguese America have illustrated. In fact, other forms of description and representation allowed for a more expansive portrayal of the region's indigenous inhabitants and their practices. However, the spontaneous Macushi map and the opaque *khipu*-map resisted representation through a conventional spatial mode. These examples may be as close as we get to answering the paradox of why the Muras and other autochthonous groups from the Amazon River basin dropped off the imperial map without leaving so much as an ethnonymic trace: why for all the sophisticated methods of geographic reconnaissance and ethnographic registration, eighteenth-century maps ended up as rather poor repositories for the human geographies and ethnographic landscapes of the territories otherwise so carefully delineated by European cartographic means.

## CONCLUSION

No one would dispute that maps were important tools for constructing early modern empires: that monarchs and their ministers employed visual representations of far-flung lands in order to subjugate, control, and master distant territories and their native inhabitants. But we have observed throughout this chapter that there was an important cross-fertilization between a mapping impulse and other emerging disciplines in the eighteenth century, a melding of

discourses and practices that coincided with increasing attempts at imperial self-definition in an age of political and economic crisis.<sup>48</sup> Imperial cartography was unquestionably exclusionary, as we have seen, but the Portuguese sought to incorporate indigenous populations into their colonial system in other ways and for other purposes. The Amerindians may have been displaced cartographically, but they were reabsorbed in other media that better served the administrative, aesthetic, and ethnographic purposes of the empire. In this sense, noncartographic media compensated for the exclusionary ideology expressed through cartography, folding Amerindians into alternative representational forms just as their own knowledge was incorporated, sometimes unwittingly, into cartographic representations of imperial space.

We have traversed eighteenth-century Amazonia from the Japurá to the Rio Branco, and from the Solimões to the Rio Negro. We have seen intrepid Europeans with compasses and quills, and we have followed Amerindian pilgrims as they traded savagery for civilization across an imperial frontier. Let us now return to the cartographic archive where we began, and see what may have been lurking all along between the borders and borderlands of the “Nova Carta da América Meridional.” If we take the “Nova Carta” and examine the region that Simões de Carvalho presented in his maps (fig. 4.18; compare fig. 4.16 and 4.17), for instance, we find little evidence of the kind of ethnonymic or cultural data that the “Carta do Rio Branco”—or the Macushi sand-map—attempted to provide. Instead, what we see most clearly are the exuberantly colored borders between competing territorial empires: Spain (the Kingdom of New Granada), France (French Guyana), and Portugal (the General Captaincy of Grão-Pará). We see fortresses and urban settlements and snaking rivers painted in a pellucid aquamarine, accompanied by a smattering of place-names and river names of Portuguese and indigenous provenance. Luís de Albuquerque presented his colossal “Nova Carta” as a paradigm of imperial cartography: expansive, obsequious, and astronomically astute, composed of “the most recent and precise computations” that were carried out by “capable persons” during nearly two decades of terrestrial reconnaissance *in situ*. But mapping an empire was a process that took place in multiple registers at once, particularly when that empire was attempting to bring into its fold thousands of indigenous inhabitants migrating betwixt and between the borderlands of an inchoate colony. Since many forms of media were used to take stock of European territories overseas, scholars interested in the spatial practices associated with imperial “mastery” need to be especially attentive to the varied practices by which these statistical and geographic portraits of the empire emerged.

But scholars should also be alert for the presence of atavistic remnants of earlier mapping techniques, strange vestiges of peoples and places that belie

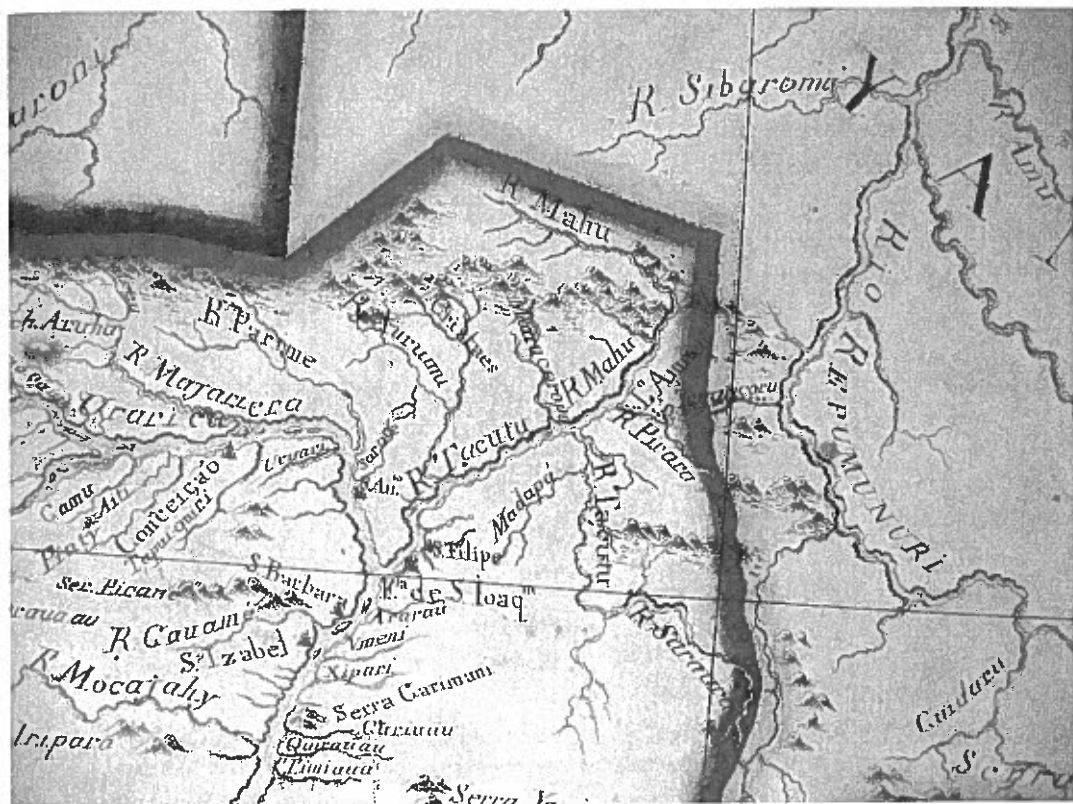


FIGURE 4.18. Detail from Luís de Albuquerque de Mello Pereira e Cáceres, “Nova Carta da América Meridional” (New Map of South America), 1789. By permission of the National Archives (UK), Kew.

eighteenth-century mapmakers’ orotund claims in the name of aptitude and precision. Hiding among the islets and tributaries of the Rio Madeira in the “Nova Carta” is just such a feature. Here, we find the only remains of the Muras that are visible on this map. North of the Giparaná River and south of the Aripuaná, in precisely the area evoked by Joseph de Sousa in his diatribe against the Muras cited earlier, lies the “Island of the Muras” (Ilha dos Muras; fig. 4.19). This toponym may have signaled an actual reported presence of the Muras. But it was just as likely an echo—a warning, even—of a time when Amazonian toponyms were derived from the names of interethnic encounters and not named for cities in Portugal; when islands in the middle of Amazonian rivers, such as Nicolas Sanson’s mythic Island of Tupinambas (fig. 4.20), were maintained as historical repositories for earlier conflicts between Europeans and indigenous tribes. Despite its debt to the most recent demarcation maps and its overall absence of ethnographic data, the “Nova Carta” was not immune to reproducing descriptive text that bore signs of European prejudice.<sup>49</sup> In an entirely unrelated

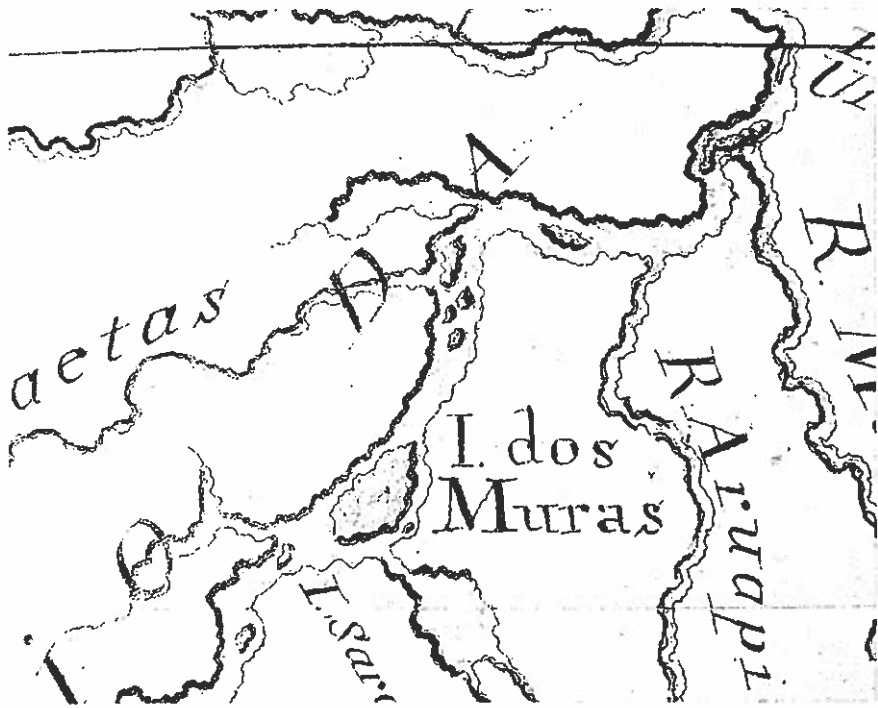


FIGURE 4.19. Detail from Luís de Albuquerque de Mello Pereira e Cáceres, “Nova Carta da América Meridional” (New Map of South America), 1789. By permission of the National Archives (UK), Kew.

region, a segment of the border between Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais was described as a “backland [*certão*] occupied by fierce [*bravos*] Indians,” an oblique reference to the violent conflicts that took place between Portuguese settlers and the Botocudo Indians in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>50</sup> These examples may be scattered and rare on a map that was primarily concerned with the political borders between Spanish and Portuguese America, but they speak to the history of hostility and armed clashes that ensued following the arrival of Europeans in a land that was already occupied. Despite political treaties that sought to focus Spanish and Portuguese attention on the borders between their two imperial spaces, these two powers could not avoid contending with a third party in the negotiations, a group that asserted itself time and again in the peripheral vision of imperial eyes.

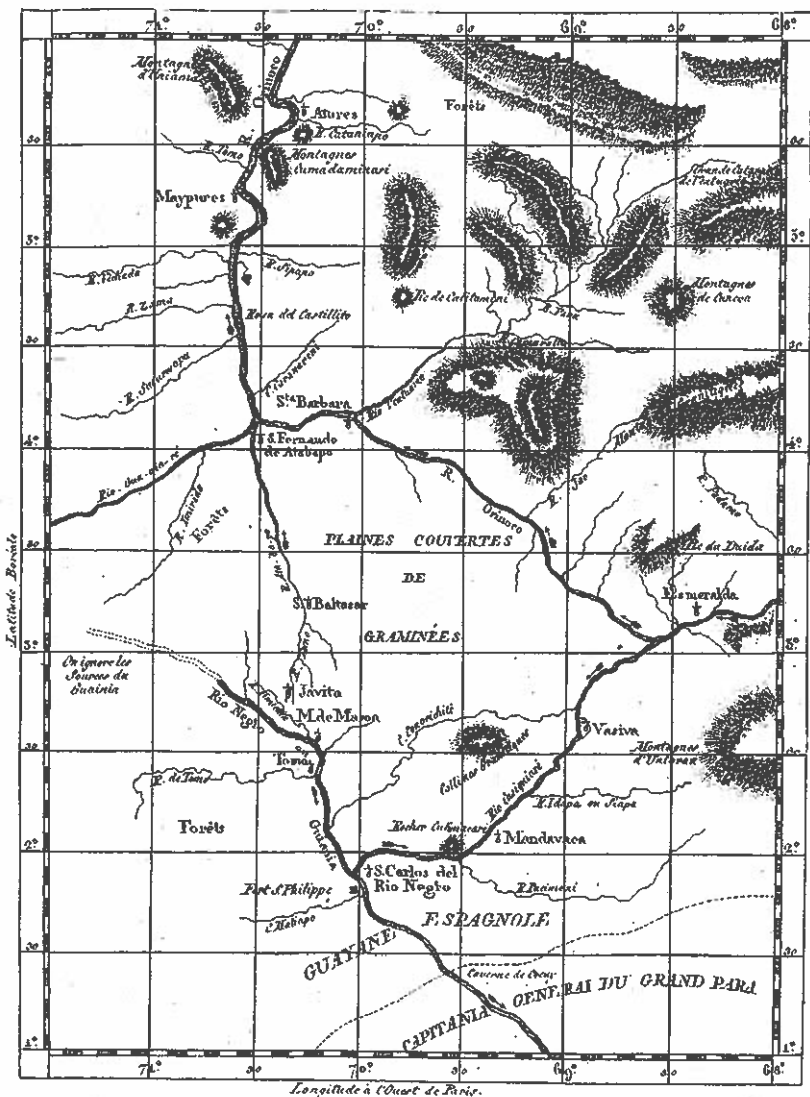
The relationship between Europeans and Amerindians in the colonization of the Americas was not exclusively antagonistic, however. While the systematic exploitation of indigenous resources by the Spanish and Portuguese did frequently pit native peoples against the colonizing Europeans, many individual natives chose—if under some degree of coercion—to participate actively in the construction of the system that was ultimately used against them. Alexander



FIGURE 4.20. Detail from Nicolas Sanson, "Le Brésil," 1656. By permission of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

von Humboldt claimed that native peoples left but few traces in the annals of colonial history. These "vanquished nations," he acknowledged, "[had] become gradually extinct, and [had left] no other signs of their existence than a few words of their language."<sup>51</sup> But they did provide knowledge that influenced European spatial understanding in a region that had once been the natives' exclusive domain. Without acknowledging these alternative forms of knowledge, we will never understand the indigenous role in inscribing cultural and geographic features onto maps and charts of European provenance.

Upon his return from South America, Humboldt presented a map of the region he had traversed near the border between Spanish and Portuguese America (fig. 4.21). More than anything else, his map is hydrographic: small arrows along the key tributaries of the Orinoco and Rio Negro show the directional flow of the most important channels between the Orinoco and Amazon basins, including the Casiquiare canal itself. But the very idea of an expedition to reconnoiter the connection between the Orinoco and Amazon basins had its roots in the testimony of an Indian woman of the Cauriacani nation, from the Spanish mission of Santa Maria de Bararuma. This woman had offered crucial testimony regarding the connection between the two river systems prior to the descent of a European, Father Roman, from the Orinoco Missions to the Rio Negro. Charles-Marie de La Condamine, a French astronomer and explorer who descended the Amazon River in 1743, made brief reference to this Indian woman, but quickly went on to say that the proofs she had offered "were rendered useless" by the European testimony that had been publicized shortly thereafter.



**CARTE**

**De l'interieur de la Guayane Espagnole dressée sur les lieux  
d'après des observations astronomiques  
par A. de Humboldt.**

*mep.sds.*

FIGURE 4.21. Alexander von Humboldt, "Carte de l'interieur de la Guayane Espagnole dressée sur les lieux d'après des observations astronomiques" (Map of the Hinterland of Spanish Guiana, Composed on the Spot According to Astronomical Observations), reproduced in *Monatliche Correspondenz zur Beforderung der Erd- und Himmels-Kunde* 26 (1812): 300. By permission of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.



In Humboldt's account, it was the Jesuit Father Roman's "memorable expedition" from the Orinoco to the Rio Negro that was highlighted, followed by the Spanish boundary expedition commanded by Iturriaga and Solano, who "made known the real state of things."<sup>52</sup> Gone from the record was this woman from Bararuma, her testimony effaced and her explorations forgotten. Neither were any traces of her journey present on his map.<sup>53</sup>

It was not uncommon for Humboldt to overlook indigenous testimonies when his own geographic conclusions were at stake, despite frequent references to Amerindian knowledge and geographic prowess. "Notwithstanding the perfect accordance which prevailed in the testimony of the natives," he wrote, "I believe that the sources [of the Rio Negro] are still more to the west." Trust in native knowledge only went so far. If Humboldt was intent on describing the solitude of the forests at the boundary zone between two empires, as we saw at the outset of this chapter, his frequent references to native testimony seemed nonetheless to reinforce the human presence at this very spot. The paradox between human absence and human presence in Humboldt's account also exemplifies the imperial map: a rhetorical space that was capable of withholding knowledge at one moment and supplying it abundantly in the next. Maps produced by early modern empires were as much a product of the dissimulation of their sources as they were a mechanism for displacing the cultural (as opposed to physical) features of colonial geographies. In the eighteenth century, a stark divide began to appear that separated the observation of native customs and beliefs—what would later come to be called ethnography—from graphic representations of colonial territory. Between description and inclusion on the one hand, and dissimulation and displacement on the other, there emerged a multifaceted discursive space within which Europeans represented native peoples and native peoples began to represent themselves—as well as Europeans—with recourse to an array of statistics, narratives, and graphic forms. The traces of a human presence often eluded the frontier spaces of the imperial map. But the intersection of politics and place nevertheless came to define the confines of the colony, both ideologically and physically—especially for those native peoples who were fortunate enough to survive within them.

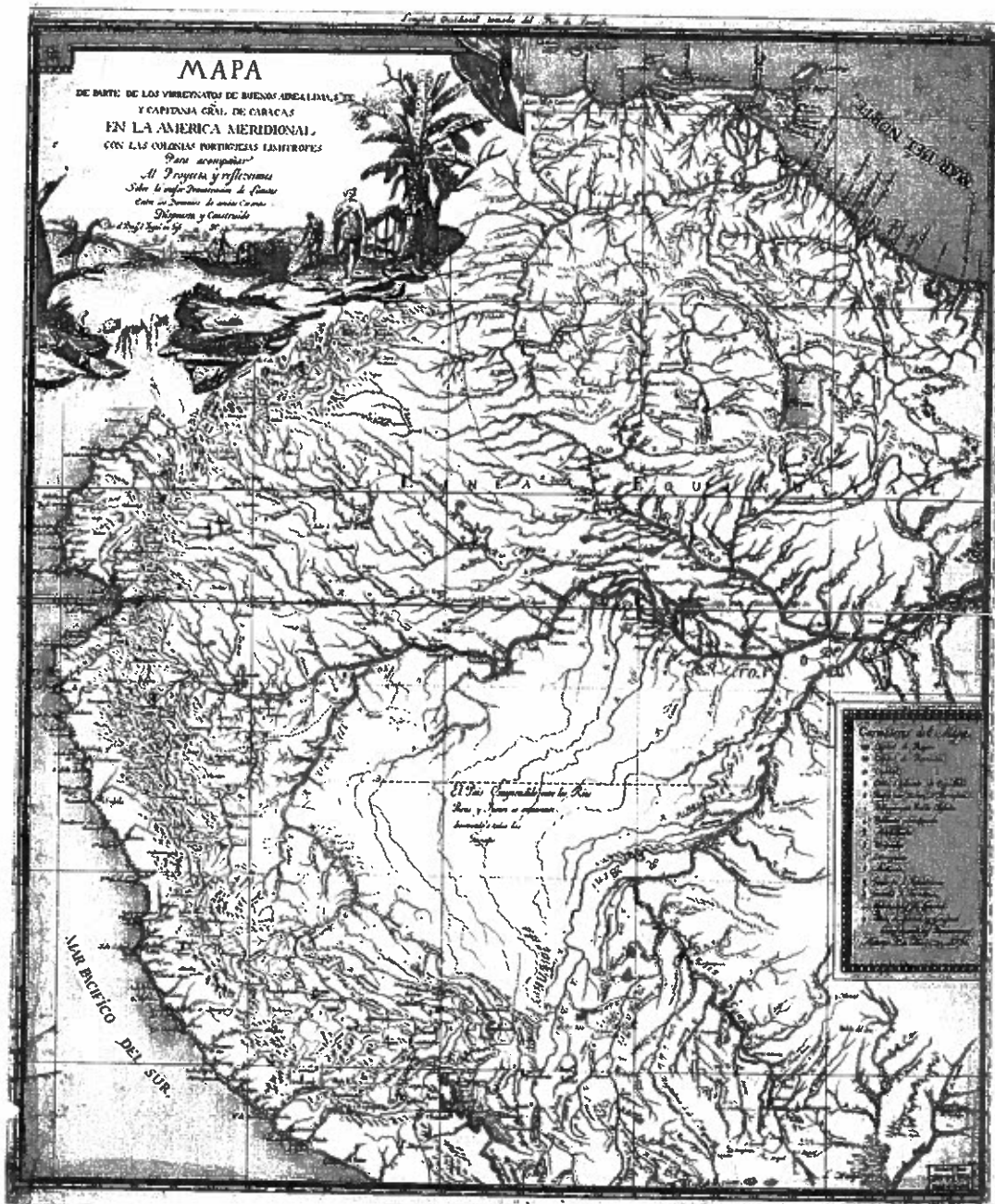


PLATE 9 (FIGURE 4.1). Francisco de Requena, "Mapa de parte de los virreynatos de Buenos Aires, Lima, Sta. Fe y capitania gral. de Caracas en la America meridional" (Map of a Portion of the Viceroyalties of Buenos Aires, Lima, Santa Fe, and the General Captainty of Caracas in South America), 1796. By permission of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

that matter. Indeed, doing so may obscure other important qualities, such as a shared early modernity. (For a possible alternative to the categorization of “Chinese” and “Western” maps, see the introduction to Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*, esp. 21–25.) Drawing such parallels between the cultural products of different traditions could be taken too far, as Clunas is well aware. I, too, wish to exercise caution in my portrayal of similarities and differences in mapping practices in China and Europe. After all, different scholarly traditions and technological practices *do* contribute to different ways of understanding and representing the world. However, my aim is to demonstrate that too much focus on differences between “Chinese” and “Western” or “traditional” and “scientific” can obscure other important qualities of mapping—specifically imperial mapping—that deserve our attention.

65. Smith, *Chinese Maps*, 42.
66. Teng, *Taiwan’s Imagined Geographies*. For a study of similar processes of self-definition in Tokugawa Japan, see Marcia Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan: Space, Place, and Culture in the Tokugawa Period (1603–1868)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).
67. Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*.
68. “Dian yi tu shuo,” Fu-ssu Nien Library, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica. Although the specific examples I discuss here date from the eighteenth century, ethnographic depictions were also made significantly earlier. See Clunas, *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*, 35.
69. The maps are found in the *zhi fang dian* section.
70. *Qin ding Da Qing hui dian*, 494 vols. (Beijing: Hui dian guan, 1899).
71. From 1704, by order of the Kangxi emperor, the measure of one Chinese *li* was altered so that 200 *li* would be equal to one degree of latitude, or 100 km (62 miles), thus bringing the system of measurement used in China into conformity with an international standard.
72. On the Qianlong emperor, see Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in the Transformations of Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999). On palace architecture and gardens, see Philippe Forêt, *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000); and Young-Tsu Wong, *Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).
73. The Chinese title of the work, *Huangyu quanlan tu*, does not mention Tibet specifically.
74. Translation from R. K. Douglas, MS copy in the British Library, stored with the *Qing Qianlong neifu yu tu*.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

1. Alexander von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent, during the years 1799–1804* (London: Longman, Hurst et al., 1821; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1966), 290 (bk. 8, chap. 22).
2. *Ibid.*, 306 (bk. 8, chap. 23).
3. “Humboldt and Brazil,” *Science* 22, no. 150 (August 1893): 91.
4. On the history of the Treaty of Tordesillas and its important role for subsequent treatises, including the Treaty of Madrid (1750), see *El Tratado de Tordesillas y su época* ([Valladolid, Spain]: Junta de Castilla y León, 1995).
5. For a concise history of these early expeditions culminating in the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais, see Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), preface.

6. For the early history of the Amazon's exploration and the myths associated with it, see Jean-Pierre Sanchez, *Mythes et légendes de la conquête de l'Amérique* (Rennes, France: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1996). Samuel Fritz's journal has been translated and reproduced in George Edmunson, ed., *Journal of the Travels and Labours of Father Samuel Fritz in the River of the Amazons between 1686 and 1723* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1922). On Samuel Fritz's Amazonian maps in particular, see André Ferrand de Almeida, "Samuel Fritz Revisited: The Maps of the Amazon and Their Circulation in Europe," in *La Cartografia Europea tra primo Rinascimento e fine dell'Illuminismo*, ed. Diogo Ramada Curto, André Ferrand de Almeida, and Angelo Cattaneo (Florence: Olschki, 2003).
7. For the full text of the "Directory," see Carlos de Araújo Moreira Neto, "Directorio que se deve observar nas Povoações dos Indios do Pará, e Maranhão, em quanto Sua Magestade não mandar o contrario" in *Indios da Amazônia, de maioria à minoria (1750–1850)* (Petrópolis, Brazil: Vozes, 1988), 165–206; and Angela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda metade do século XVIII* (Lisbon: CNCDP, 2000). On debates over the Directory within the context of eighteenth-century Brazilian academic culture, see Iris Kantor, "Indianismo e indigenismo na Academia Brasileira dos Renascidos, Salvador/Bahia 1759," *Anais de história de Além-Mar* 6 (2005): 327–37.
8. On the confection of the "Mapa das Cortes" in the context of the negotiations of the Treaty of Madrid, see Mário Clemente Ferreira, *O Tratado de Madrid e o Brasil Meridional* (Lisbon: CNCDP, 2001); Mário Clemente Ferreira, "A Demarcação do Território Brasileiro: O Tratado de Madrid e o Mapa das Cortes," in *Cartografia da Conquista do Território das Minas*, ed. Antônio Gilberto Costa (Lisbon: Kapa Editorial, 2004); Mário Clemente Ferreira, "Cartografia e Diplomacia: o Mapa das Cortes e o Tratado de Madrid," *Vária Historia* 23, no. 37: 51–69; and Guillermo Kratz, *El tratado hispano-portugués de límites de 1750 y sus consecuencias* (Rome: IHSI, 1954). On the issue of boundaries in colonial Brazil more broadly, see the special issue of the journal *Oceanos* entitled "A formação territorial do Brasil," no. 40 (October–December 1999).
9. Document no. 81, "Plano de instrução para os Comissários da parte do Norte," as transcribed in Jaime Cortesão, *Alexandre de Gusmão e o Tratado de Madrid*, vol. 4, pt. 2, p. 228 (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 1950–60).
10. Henrique João Wilckens, who appears later in the text, was trained by the Czech Jesuit mathematician Inácio Szentmartonyi (Sanmartoni), and came to be acknowledged by King D. José I as a competent engineer. He was subsequently rewarded with increasingly important commissions, including being named second in command of the 1781 Japurá expedition.
11. MR 1/649, National Archives, London. I would like publicly to acknowledge the J. B. Harley Fellowship in the History of Cartography, which supported my research in London in the summer of 2002 that led to my discovering this map at the National Archives at Kew. I chose to use this map for several reasons. First, there was an abundance of large-scale (i.e., high-resolution) regional maps made by the Portuguese during the eighteenth century, and the "Nova Carta" shows clearly that there were also many efforts to provide the crown with information about the whole of the continent (including such maps as the "Mapa das Cortes" [fig. 4.7] and the "Mapa de todo o vasto continente do Brasil," Casa da Ínsua, Penalva de Castelo, Portugal). Second, while the "Nova Carta" is derived from other cartographic sources, it makes few explicit references to other maps. As such, it exemplifies the way in which the translation of knowledge from one map to another functioned to perpetuate certain kinds of information as well as silences within cartographic documents. Third, and finally, the cartouche presents the map as providing the most detailed information available about the routes and boundaries within South America. The silences in this map thus show how the accrual of information during

- the eighteenth century did not necessarily lead to an increase in knowledge represented cartographically.
12. For a biography of Luís de Albuquerque de Mello Pereira e Cáceres, see J. C. Freitas Barros, *Um Português no Brasil* (Lisbon: Papelaria Fernandes, 1948); and Gilberto Freyre, *Contribuição para uma sociologia da biografia: O exemplo de Luiz de Albuquerque, governador de Mato Grosso no fim do século XVIII* (Brasília: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 1968). On Luís de Albuquerque's collection of maps at the Casa da Ínsua, see João Carlos Garcia, ed., *A Mais Dilatada Vista do Mundo: Inventário da Coleção Cartográfica da Casa da Ínsua* (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 2002). On the urbanization of Mato Grosso in the eighteenth century and Luís de Albuquerque's role, see Renata Malcher Araújo, "Urbanização do Mato Grosso no século XVIII: Discurso e Método" (Ph.D. diss., Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2000).
  13. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon (hereafter "AHU"), *Rio Negro*, "Ofício do [governador do Rio Negro, coronel] Joaquim Tinoco Valente ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado a enviar os mapas dos gastos da Fazenda Real; da tropa da capitania; dos índios aldeados e do comércio das povoações," Barcelos, July 26, 1764, Cx. 2, Doc. 120.
  14. AHU, *Rio Negro*, "Ofício do [governador do Rio Negro, coronel] Joaquim Tinoco Valente ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], Martinho de Melo e Castro a remeter o mapa das deslocções dos índios para as povoações do Rio Negro," Barcelos, July 25, 1772, Cx. 3, Doc. 176.
  15. AHU, *Rio Negro*, "Ofício do [governador do Rio Negro, coronel] Joaquim Tinoco Valente ao [secretário de estado da Marinha e Ultramar], Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado a enviar o mapa dos territórios e rios da região," Barcelos, August 6, 1769, Cx. 2, Doc. 160.
  16. J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1:xvi.
  17. Of uncertain origins, a young Wilckens arrived in Belém do Pará at the mouth of the Amazon River sometime between 1751 and 1753, at the same time that Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado was named governor of the province that was newly vested with a central role in the political economy of the Portuguese overseas empire: Grão-Pará e Maranhão. In 1755, he was invited by then-governor Mendonça Furtado to participate as part of the demarcation team in the Mato Grosso region, accompanying the Jesuit mathematician and astronomer Inácio Szentmartonyi, with whom Wilckens had developed a close relation. This expedition ended with the expulsion of Szentmartonyi and the rest of the Jesuits from Grão-Pará in 1759. Wilckens participated in several of the boundary expeditions, and he returned from the voyage to the Japurá River with a journal entitled *Diário da viagem ao Rio Japurá*; it is reproduced in Marta Amoroso and Nácia Farage, eds., *Relatos da Fronteira Amazônica no Século XVIII: Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira e Henrique João Wilckens* (São Paulo: NHII/USP, 1994). The most complete study of Wilckens, including a brief biography and an account of his activities in the Portuguese overseas territories, is to be found in the Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro's republication of his *Muhuraida, ou o Triunfo da Fé*, in *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* 109 (1989): 67–275. With reference to postcolonial epics and, most specifically, Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, Irene Martyniuk recently explained that it should come as no surprise that "postcolonial writers, given the opportunity to create literary works during decolonization, should turn to the epic, a political genre." The motivations for colonial writers such as Wilckens were not radically different, even if the context may have been. Irene Martyniuk, "Playing with Europe: Derek Walcott's Retelling of Homer's *Odyssey*," *Callaloo* 28, no. 1 (2005): 190.
  18. Joseph de Sousa, "Certidão denunciando os índios Mura por hostilidades praticadas contra

- os portugueses e solicitando as punições cabébeis,” in *Autos da devassa contra os índios Mura do Rio Madeira e Nações do Rio Tocantins (1738–1739)* (Manaus, Brazil: Universidade do Amazonas, 1986), 9.
19. Later accounts corroborated Sousa’s. One testimony by a Portuguese resident reported on the deaths of three blacks by the “same Mura nation” and included the opinion that these Indians had “no cause whatsoever” to engage in behavior that interrupted the “collection [of] the fruits that this River provides” (“Inquérito das 33 testemunhas juradas,” *Autos da devassa*, 21). The opinion was not universally shared, however, as to the culpability of the Muras vis-à-vis their presumably innocent victims. The missionary Frei Braz de Santo Antonio, for instance, explained in one letter that the Muras were only reacting to the frequent enslavement of their community by these cacao cultivation expeditions; he rose to their defense in saying that the Muras “as Lord of their Own lands have the just position to defend the fruits and routes [passajes] of the said lands without our taking offense” (“Parecer do Frei Brás de Santo Antônio,” *Autos da devassa*, 135).
  20. “Decisão de Dom João V . . . sobre a devassa,” *ibid.*, 165.
  21. João Daniel, “Tesouro Descoberto no Rio Amazonas,” *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 1976), vol. 95, tome 1, 264–65.
  22. Wilckens, “Muhuraida, ou o Triunfo da Fé.” Wilckens’s *Muhuraida*, or *Triumph of the Faith* recounts in six cantos the pacification of the Mura tribe at the hands of the Portuguese. The poem was produced during his time spent in Ega, the riverside village from which the Portuguese and Spanish boundary commissions departed to explore the Japurá River in 1781. For a literary analysis of the *Muhuraida*, see José Arthur Bogaça, “O Mura e a Musa,” in *Anais do Seminário “Landi e o século XVIII em Amazônia,”* Federal University of Pará (Brazil), Museu Parence Emílio Goeldi, and the University of Amazônia, <http://www.landinf.br/anais/> (accessed September 25, 2006).
  23. Wilckens, *Muhuraida*, 87 (prologue). All translations of the *Muhuraida* are my own, while all page references are from the 1989 *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* edition, including canto numbers in parentheses.
  24. On the urbanization of the Amazon River basin, see Renata Malcher Araújo, *As cidades da Amazônia no século XVIII: Belém, Macapá e Mazagão* (Porto, Portugal: Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto, 1998); and Roberta Marx Delson, *New Towns for Colonial Brazil: Spatial and Social Planning of the Eighteenth Century* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1979).
  25. Wilckens, *Muhuraida*, 107 (canto 2).
  26. On the literary representation of the route map, see Neil Safier and Ilda dos Santos, “Mapping Maritime Triumph and the Enchantment of Empire: Portuguese Literature of the Renaissance,” in *The History of Cartography*, vol. 3, *Cartography in the European Renaissance*, ed. David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
  27. Wilckens, *Muhuraida*, 159 (canto 6).
  28. *Ibid.*, 151 (canto 5).
  29. *Ibid.*, 95 (canto 1, footnote a).
  30. *Ibid.*, 161 (canto 6).
  31. Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l’espace* (Paris: PUF, 1958).
  32. David H. Treece, “Introdução crítica à *Muhuraida*,” *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional* 109 (1989): 211–12.
  33. For correspondence between Caldas and Melo e Castro regarding the Muras, see AHU, *Rio Negro*, Cx. 9, D. 380, “Ofício do João Pereira Caldas, ao Martinho de Melo e Castro,” June 21, 1785; Cx. 10, D. 385, August 19, 1785; Cx. 11, D. 435, August 17, 1786; Cx. 12, D. 451, November 4, 1786; Cx. 12, D. 468, December 31, 1786; Cx. 13, D. 480, May 2, 1787; Cx. 14, D. 540, October 8, 1788; etc.

34. Leopoldo M. Bernucci, "That Gentle Epic: Writing and Elegy in the Heroic Poetry of Cecília Meireles," *MLN* 112 (1997): 206.
35. On the notion of the discursive community and its relationship to cartographic literacy, see Matthew Edney's contribution to this volume.
36. João Batista Mardel, letter to João Pereira Caldas, Nogueira, June 1, 1785; reproduced in Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, "Notícias da voluntária redução de paz e amizade da feroz nação do Gentio Mura nos anos de 1784, 85 e 86," in *Viagem Filosófica pelas Capitanias do Grão-Pará, Rio Negro, Mato Grosso e Cuiabá: Memórias; Antropologia* (Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Federal de Cultura, 1974), 121.
37. On the ethnographic collections from Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira's *Viagem Filosófica* in the context of imperial administration in the Portuguese world, see Ronald Ramoinelli, *Viagens Ultramarinas: Monarcas, vassallos e governo a distância* (Rio de Janeiro: Alameda Editorial, 2008). See also the series of documents recently published as *Viagem ao Brasil de Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira: A Expedição filosófica pelas Capitanias do Pará, Rio Negro, Mato Grosso e Cuyabá* (São Paulo: Kapa Editorial, 2002–6); and Tekla Hartmann et al., *Memória da Amazônia: Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira e a "Viagem Filosófica pelas Capitanias do Grão-Pará, Rio Negro, Mato Grosso e Cuyabá," 1783–1792* (Coimbra, Portugal: Museu e Laboratório Antropológico, 1991).
38. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, "Memória do Gentio Mura," in *Viagem Filosófica* (1974 ed.), 61. All translations are my own.
39. *Tratado de aliança defensiva entre os muito altos, e poderosos senhores Dona Maria Rainha de Portugal e Dom Carlos III Rei de Hespanha, assinado em Madrid . . . em onze de Março de MDC-CLXXVIII* (Lisbon: Regia Officina Typografica, 1778).
40. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, *Viagem Filosófica pelas Capitanias do Grão-Pará, Rio Negro, Mato Grosso e Cuiabá. Memórias: Zoologia, Botânica* (Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Federal de Cultura, 1972), 93.
41. Francisco Xavier Ribeiro de Sampaio, *Diário da viagem que em visita, e correição das povoações da capitania de S. Jose do rio Negro fez o ouvidor, e intendente geral da mesma Francisco Xavier Ribeiro de Sampaio* (Lisbon: Academia Real das Sciencias, 1825), 114. Reference derived from Vidal, "Kuwé Duwákalmi."
42. I would like to thank Frank Salomon and other members of the University of Wisconsin Institute for the Humanities for suggesting this possibility to me. For more on the Incan *quipu*, see Salomon, "Los quipus y libros de la Tupicocha de hoy," in *Arqueología, antropología e historia en los Andes: Homenaje a Maria Rostworowski*, ed. Rafael Varón Gabi and Javier Flores Espinoza (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1997); Salomon, *The Cord Keepers: Khipus and Cultural Life in a Peruvian Village* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Gary Urton, *Signs of the Inka Khipu: Binary Coding in the Andean Knotted-string Records* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); and William Burns Glynn, *Decodificación de quipus* (Lima: Banco Central de Reserva del Perú: Universidad Alas Peruanas, 2002).
43. As Silvia Vidal has shown, the impact of Spanish and Portuguese exploration in the northwest region of Amazonia in the eighteenth century signified "the compulsory displacement and substitution of [indigenous] spatio-geographical and geopolitical knowledge of their own interconnections by European spatial distributions and hierarchies of power." See Vidal, "Kuwé Duwákalmi: The Arawak Sacred Routes of Migration, Trade, and Resistance," *Ethnohistory* 47, nos. 3–4 (2000): 635–67. She shows convincingly that the Warekena of the upper Rio Negro had familiarity with a *khipu*-like writing system, and she even asked members of the Warekena tribe about this technology: "They informed me that their forebears used to have a system of cords and knots to send messages from one place to another; some Warekena still remember part of this system" (p. 659, footnote 14).

44. Urton, *Signs of the Inka Khipu*, 2003.
45. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, *Viagem Filosófica* (1972 ed.), 93–94.
46. This *locus classicus* of the history of science is found in chapter 6 of Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).
47. *Ibid.*, 229.
48. The classic account of the crisis of the Portuguese colonial system is Fernando Novais, *Portugal e Brasil no Crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1979). See also Maria Odila de Leite da Silva Dias, *A interiorização do metrôpole e outros estudos* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2005). For more recent approaches to questions regarding the relationship between colony and metropole in the Luso-Brazilian context, see Júnia Ferreira Furtado, ed., *Diálogos Oceânicos: Minas Gerais e as novas abordagens para uma história do Império ultramarino português* (Belo Horizonte, Brazil: Editora UFMG, 2001); João Fragoso, Maria Fernanda Bicalho, and Maria de Fátima Gouvêa, eds., *Antigo Regime nos trópicos: A dinâmica imperial portuguesa (séculos XVI–XVIII)* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001); and Maria Fernanda Bicalho and Vera Ferlini, eds., *Modos de governar: Idéias e práticas políticas no império português* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2005).
49. The “Ilha dos Muros” was also present on at least one other map that Luís de Albuquerque had in his possession, the “Plano Geographico do Rio Madeira” (1781); reproduced in Garcia, *A Mais Dilatada Vista do Mundo*, map no. 175.
50. On the Botocudo War and crown Indian policy in late eighteenth-century Minas Gerais, see Hal Langfur, “Uncertain Refuge: Frontier Formation and the Origins of the Botocudo War in Late Colonial Brazil,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 2 (2002): 215–56.
51. Humboldt, *Personal Narrative*, 306 (bk. 8, chap. 23).
52. *Ibid.*, 203 (bk. 8, chap. 22).
53. Charles-Marie de La Condamine, *Relation abrégée d’un voyage fait dans l’intérieur de l’Amérique méridionale* (Paris: Veuve Pissot, 1745), 119–20.

## CHAPTER FIVE

My sincere thanks to Christina D. Burnett, Michael S. Mahoney, Roy MacLeod, Angela Creager, Linda Colley, Michael Gordin, Alistair Sponsel, Joe Nardello, David Livingstone, Richard Smith, William Davis, Damon Salesa, Richard Pizer, Jane Walsh, Daniel Fenimore, Nathaniel Philbrick, Michael Dyer, Stuart Frank, Ronald Grim, Edward Towle, Molly Bloom, Ed Dahl, Robert Richards, Domingo Monet, the indispensable staff of Firestone Library’s Interlibrary Services and Article Express, and the participants in the Fifteenth Kenneth Nebenzahl, Jr., Lectures at the Newberry Library, particularly Jim Akerman. Two anonymous readers provided helpful suggestions on several points.

A note on conventions in this chapter: original spelling has been retained in primary source citations, but where necessary for clarity punctuation has been adjusted to conform to current usage.

1. From the *New York Herald*, August 10, 1842.
2. Nathaniel Philbrick, *Sea of Glory* (New York: Viking, 2003), 309. This recent narrative treatment of the U.S. Ex. Ex. supplements David B. Tyler, *The Wilkes Expedition* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968), and a variety of other older sources, cited below.
3. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, Record Group 123 M-273 rec. # 826, Court-Martial of Robert F. Pinkney, manuscript records.
4. *New York Herald*, August 9, 1842.
5. Greg Denning, *Islands and Beaches* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1980), 269.