

Metamorphoses of colonization: the Tocantins River and the expansion to the West in maps and reports (18th century)

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Abstract

To understand the colonization of the interior of Brazil, this article analyzes two manuscript reports and a map of the Tocantins river that unveil the progressive domain Luso-Brazilian colonizers achieved over the area. The aim of this paper is to analyze the transitional and permanent forms of colonization that were established along this river route, such as farms, urban centers, strongholds for protection against attack by the *Gentiles*, and the imaginary construction that the settlers were composing of Brazil and its spaces in the interior, especially those which had mineral wealth.

Keywords: Tocantins, mining, colonization, D'Anville

Metamorfoses da colonização: o rio Tocantins e a expansão para o oeste em mapas e relatos (século XVIII)

Resumo

Para compreender o movimento de abertura do interior do Brasil, este artigo analisa dois relatos manuscritos e um mapa do rio Tocantins que desnudam o progressivo domínio que os luso-brasileiros alcançavam sobre a natureza local, permitindo efetivar a colonização desse espaço e objetiva-se analisar a atuação dos colonos nesse espaço. Busca-se apreender as formas transitórias e permanentes de colonização que iam se estabelecendo ao longo dessa rota fluvial, como fazendas, núcleos urbanos, casas fortes, para proteção contra o ataque de gentios; bem como a construção imaginária que os colonizadores iam compondo do Brasil e dos seus espaços do interior, especialmente os que apresentavam riquezas minerais.

Palavras-Chave: Tocantins, mineração, descobertos, D'Anville.

Las metamorfosis de la colonización: el río Tocantins y la expansión hacia el oeste en los mapas e informes (siglo XVIII)

Resumen

Para entender el movimiento de colonización del interior de Brasil, este artículo analiza dos informes manuscritos y un mapa del río Tocantins que revelan el dominio progresivo que el colonizador luso-brasileño alcanzó de la naturaleza local, lo que permitió llevar a cabo la colonización de ese espacio. El objetivo es aprovechar las formas de transición y permanentes de la colonización que se asentaron a lo largo de esta ruta río, como granjas, centros urbanos, bóvedas para la protección contra el ataque de los gentiles; y la construcción imaginaria que los colonos componían de Brasil y sus espacios del interior, especialmente aquellos con riqueza mineral.

Palabras clave: Tocantins, minería, colonización, D'Anville

Métamorphoses de la colonisation: la rivière Tocantins et l'expansion vers l'ouest, sur les cartes et rapports (XVIII e siècle)

Résumé

Pour comprendre le mouvement d'ouverture de l'intérieur du Brésil, cet article examine deux rapports manuscrits et une carte de la rivière Tocantins que mette à nu le domaine progressive que le luso-brésilienne atteint sur le caractère local, ce qui permet effectuer la colonisation de cet espace et analyse la performance de les colons dans cet espace. Le but est de saisir les formes transitoires et permanents de la colonisation qui ont été réglés le long de cette voie fluviale, comme les fermes, les centres urbains, des voûtes, pour se protéger contre l'attaque des Indiens; et la construction imaginaire qui les colons ont été compose du Brésil et de ses espaces de l'intérieur, en particulier ceux qui ont des richesses minérales.

Mot-clé: Tocantins, exploitation minière, colonisation, D'Anville

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Introduction

The history of the territorial occupation and the exploration of the territory of Portuguese America was interwoven with the need to discover and delimit its space, as expressed in various documents of a cartographic nature which describe and represent the geography of the interior, unveiled to these travelers little by little. These include maps, sketches, plans, drafts, drawings, but also itineraries, *derrotas*,² and travel reports, since cartographic representations can be produced and circulated in other supports than graphic planispheres, such as travel literature (Dym, 2007, pp. 81-109). In the case of the movement opening the interior of Brazil, in addition to maps themselves, produced and circulated among the pioneers were oral or written reports, which formed travel itineraries, real mental maps, which allowed successive generations of *sertanistas*³ to find their path into the interior (Paiva, 2013).

This article studies “a long manuscript map of the course of the Tocantins River, whose riches in gold mines in this country resulted in the discovery of its upper part” (Anville, 1750, p.659). This map, found in Belém by Charles Marie de La Condamine (Safier, 2008), was brought to Paris, where it served the cartographer Jean Baptiste Bourguignon D’Anville (Furtado, 2012 and Furtado, 2013a) so that he could portray the Tocantins river in his map *Amérique méridionale*, from 1748.⁴ Entitled *Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins* (c. 1735-1742),⁵ it covers practically the entire course of the river and its tributaries, from Meia Ponte village⁶ in Goiás, and very close to the river’s source, to Vila de Cameté, in the mouth of the Amazon River. This long map, which measures 3 meters 33 cm long by 65 cm wide, will be analyzed in light of the manuscript *Roteiro da derrota do rio Tocantins até Belém do Pará*,⁷ which describes an expedition that descended the Tocantins, from its source until Cameté,⁸ resulting in an arduous journey of almost three months, between 2 November 1734 and 23 January the following year, when they reached Belém do Pará. It is also intended to collate the Tocantins map with the *Roteiro de viagem de José da Costa Diogo e João (sic) Barbosa, sobre a derrota do rio São Francisco pelo rio Urucuya até as Minas de Goyases em*

² *Derrota*: the path followed by a vessel on its voyage along a river or at sea.

³ *Sertanistas*: People who explored the interior of Brazil, mostly frequent natives from São Paulo captaincy.

⁴ Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Département des Cartes et Plans (DCP), “Amérique méridionale”, GE C 6149, d’Anville. (This is the 1748 printed version, on three pages, 125 X 87 cm).

⁵ BNF, DCP, “Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins,” GE DD 2.987 (9.554), Manuscript in ink and watercolor, colored, between 1735 and 1742, 65 X 333 cm.

⁶ Meia Ponte village is now Pirinópolis.

⁷ Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), Manuscritos Avulsos de Goiás (MAG), “Roteiro da derrota do rio Tocantins até Belém do Pará”, Caixa 1, doc.12, fl.11.

⁸ In two previous papers I have partially focused on this document and map (Furtado, 2012, pp. 428-434 and Furtado, 2013a, pp. 222-229), but from a different perspective from this article. I would like to thank CNPq, FAPEMIG, and FAPERJ for the financial support granted to the research project “Dos Emboabas Ilustrados à República de Mazombos: identidade e alteridade na América portuguesa (1700-1822),” which gave rise to this article.

1734.⁹ The latter manuscript allows José da Costa Diogo to be identified as the leader of the two expeditions.

With the mutual comparisons of the map and the two reports, it is intended to unveil the progressive dominion which Luso-Brazilians achieved over the local landscape, using it to effectively colonize this space, but which sometimes was revealed as an impediment to this colonization. For example, rivers were penetration routes, but their rapids were constant dangers, while mineral wealth was configured as an economic support for this colonization, but at the same time awoke the greed of foreign nations, threatening Portuguese dominion over the interior of its American possessions. It is also sought to understand the transitory and permanent forms of colonization which were being established along the fluvial route, such as plantations, urban settlements, and strongholds for protection against the attack of the 'gentiles' as the Indians were commonly referred to. These graphic signs do not represent only an exact - mirrored - image, of the New World but, to the contrary, impress on it new meanings, since they are reflections of what has been experienced - some of them concrete and others somewhat dreamed. Furthermore, the map and the report of the *derrota* highlight the imaginary construction which the colonizers were composing of Brazil and its interior spaces, especially those with mineral wealth, as was the case of the Tocantins mines, which reveals how men symbolically reconstructed and reinterpreted the space which surrounded them. Finally, it is intended to analyze the metamorphoses through which these agents passed, dedicating themselves to mercantile activities, to mining, and to chronicling journeys, in order to make colonization effective.

The exploration of the Tocantins River

The discovery of the Tocantins River and its penetration started at the beginning of the sixteenth century and intensified in the following one, both from its mouth and the source. The French, based in Maranhão, were the first to find the mouth, close to the Amazon River, where, under the command of Charles Des Vaux, they set up a trading post and baptized the Tocantins, naming it after a neighboring tribe. Between 1594 and 1615, they carried out various expeditions upstream to explore it, founding the *vila* of Cameté and in 1613 reaching the mouth of the Araguaia. (Flores, 2009, p.45).

The Luso-Brazilians moved in both this and the inverse direction. From Maranhão, the first to penetrate its channel was Friar Cristóvão de Lisboa, in 1625, being followed by other Jesuits, who established some missions (Rodrigues, 1978, pp. 62-63; Flores, 2009, pp. 46-47). Around 1590 the source of the river was discovered during the Domingos Grou expedition in the central plateau in the Center-West of Brazil. After this consecutive expeditions of *sertanistas* from São Paulo, São Vicente, and the São Francisco River, explored

⁹ AHU, MAG, "Roteiro de viagem de José da Costa Diogo e João (sic) Barbosa, sobre a derrota do rio São Francisco pelo rio Uruçuyá até as Minas de Goyases em 1734". Caixa 1, doc.8, fl-4.

the Tocantins downriver and by 1670 had reached the mouth of the Araguaia. The *bandeirantes* from São Paulo soon began to enslave Indians from tribes located along its banks, despite the opposition of missionaries. In 1671, in the wake of the Sebastião Paes de Barros expedition, houses were being built “in the headlands of the Tocantins,” where minerals were found and “roads to the *vila* of São Paulo” opened for the transport of the indigenous peoples. (Silva, 1996/1997, pp.28-31; Flores, 2009, p.35, 42-44)

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, livestock rearing reached the Upper Tocantins via the São Francisco River. “When, in 1722, Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva Filho, known as Anhanguera, discover of Goiano gold, on entering the region found signs of cattle” (Silva, 1996/1997, p.35). In 1730, *desbravadores* (explorers) coming from the southern captaincies built a fortified village, called Palma, to fight against the Acroá-Açú Indians, whom they intended to reduce to slavery, staying there for two years. From this location, from the base in Salgado, they descended the Tocantins and, from 1734 onwards, cattle ranches were established in the area after the bar of the Paraná river. This movement intensified from 1735 onwards, when explorers found a mining region, which they baptized São Félix, and after the Tocantins bar, they descended the Amazon River, reaching Belém do Pará (Silva, 1996/1997, p.35). This advance along the river and its banks, and the human remains they left were registered in the *Roteiro* and *Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins*.

Between 2 November 1734 and 23 January the following year the *derrota* of the Tocantins River, the subject of this article, was accomplished (Flores, 2009, p.50). This was part of the movement of gold mining exploration of the river, which intensified at this time. When the explorers reached Belém, they reported the route they had followed and asked permission from the governor to “to return to the discoveries” of gold which they had made. This was refused because they did not have a royal license to “send a troop up the Tocantins River” and they were detained in the city until the arrival of the following fleet. When this arrived there were no orders for new expeditions, the leader of the expedition, José da Costa Diogo, decided to go back to the kingdom on the “first ship which left that state,” to “give testimony about the discovery.”¹⁰

From Lisbon, the news that in the “state of Maranhão two mines had been discovered nearby” spread to other European courts, but the little that was known was vague and confused. Marco Antônio de Azevedo Coutinho, then serving as a diplomat in England, was the first to hear of this adventure in London. He wrote to Lisbon asking for more information, since he feared that “through this door” Minas Gerais could be threatened by foreign invasions. The Secretary of State, Antônio Guedes Pereira, responded on 22 February 1738, that “the report that Your Excellency reported you heard in that Court,” as it had reached him, was “entirely false.” This negation was exaggerated because he then clarified that the report was about already known “mines that had been rediscovered in Tocantins and Goiasés.” The letter also advised Azevedo Coutinho that he had

¹⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f10v-11.

nothing to be afraid of, since these new finds “are far from that state” of Minas Gerais and “involved three men who went into that *sertão* and using some parts of the rivers which abound there reached Grão-Pará.” These travelers “encountered so many embarrassments that the same experience disabused them that it would not be possible to facilitate an entrance into the said city from the mines in question.”¹¹ The words of Secretary clearly contrast with the *Roteiro da derrota do rio Tocantins até Belém do Pará*, which José da Costa Diogo wrote and presented to the king, where he sought to demonstrate not only the feasibility of the journey, but that new gold deposits could be found almost along the entire length of the river bed, as well as of its tributaries, which reveals that the colonizers constructed a mythical vision of the Tocantins as a river abounding in wealth waiting to be revealed and for this reason had left “for the desired discovery of the populous gold mines.”¹²

To the contrary of the negatives which Lisbon sought to disseminate, the Tocantins mines began to gain a reputation and between 1732 and 1749 at least 15 points of exploration were in activity (Palacins, 1979, pp. 25-27; Flores, 2009, p.51). José da Costa Diogo and his companions encountered old *catas* (i.e., excavations made to prospect for gold), ranches, and settlements along the river and nearby, whose population was attracting by mining and cattle raising. However, what is of interest here is less the economic viability of these activity,¹³ but rather the human marks, not always permanent, which colonizing effort had imprinted on the landscape.

The *Derrota* from the São Francisco River to the headwaters of the Tocantins

The expedition departed for the source of the Tocantins River on 2 November 1734, command by José da Costa Diogo.¹⁴ Almost nothing is known about him, only that since June he had been on route to the diamond mines of Serro do Frio, coming from Salvador along the Bahia Road,¹⁵ together with Joaquim Barbosa, three slaves of theirs, and more than 10 horses carrying merchandise.¹⁶

¹¹ Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Ministério dos Negócios Exteriores (MNE), Livro 16, f.23v-24, 22 de fevereiro 1738.

¹² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.3.

¹³ The Tocantins mines witnessed their *boom* between 1736 and 1751 declining afterwards. “At this moment, the production of gold reached 3,125 kg, the double of previous years which possibly attracted an enormous number of people,” which appears to have fallen quickly with the decline of the mineral beds (Flores, 2009, p.52). A fruit of this process was the creation of the captaincy of Goiás, separated from that of Grão-Pará in 1744 (Palacins, 1979, p.41; SILVA, 1996/1997, pp. 41-44). Between 1726 and 1736 the production of gold per slave was estimated at almost 400 grams, falling to a little under 300 gr. between 1736 and 1751, to around 200 gr. between 1751 and 1778 and, finally, to a little more than 100 gr. between 1778 and 1828. (Palacins, 1979, p.71)

¹⁴ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.1-4.

¹⁵ This was a common route, as can be seen in the case of the Nunes brothers who followed it various times and also produced itineraries of their journeys (Furtado, 2013a, pp. 168-209 and Furtado, 2013b, pp. 189-238).

¹⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.2, 3.

Like many other traders, the two intended to benefit from the lucrative market established in the mining area, especially the diamond one. (Furtado, 1999).¹⁷

On 20 June, when they were on the banks of the São Francisco river, on the bar of the Urucuia River, they were surprised with the news of the closing of the diamond region. It was demarcated that year, with the Diamond District being established, while entrance came to be prohibited, controlled by the Intendancy of Diamonds (Furtado, 2007b, v.1, pp. 303-320). For this reason, the two *viandantes* (Furtado, 1999, pp. 260-268), as those who carried goods along the roads were called, did not know what to do. On the bar of the Velhas River, they met some men who had returned from Goiás, who told them “that after their departure, the Decree of His Majesty had been published which authorized a free road” and so they decided to go to the mines “of Goiases, where they could do better business.”¹⁸ On 24 June they began the long journey to the *arraial* or village of Meia Ponte, located near the headwaters of the Tocantins River.

This trip was made by land, with the river network serving more as a geographical reference and as a supply of water for the travelers (Furtado, 2014, pp. 42-43). They took the road following the Rio das Velhas which began in the city of São Paulo. Its initial part, passing through Mogi Guaçu, can be visualized in *Mapa dos caminhos a partir de São Paulo para Minas Gerais e Goiás*¹⁹ (Costa (org.), Furtado, Renger, Santos, 2004, p.68, 185).²⁰ This map illustrates how, in the march to the West, towards Minas Gerais and Goiás, explorers preferred to open land routes rather than using rivers, which meant that the rivers perpendicular to the routes leading inland had to be crossed (Holanda, 1990, p.21).

Along this route were many ranches which José da Costa Diogo and Joaquim Barbosa crossed, some of which were used to rest in, since it was usual to make daily journeys of three to four leagues, the distance which goods could be transported in a day’s march ‘à paulista.’ In other words, they woke early and marched till around “midday, or at most until one or two in the afternoon, so that they would have time to rest and to do some hunting or fishing” (Antonil, 1982, p.182). They left from the Acary ranch, located on the bar of the Urucuia River, passing by the *sítios* (a small agricultural establishment) of Frechas, Campo Grande, Estiva, Capão, Santiago, Cana Brava and Serra Acima ranch. These were an average distance of around four leagues from each other, which demanded a day’s travel, with the exception of the Santiago-Cana Brava leg, which was 12 leagues, and required double the time.²¹

¹⁷ As was common, part of the merchandise belonged to them and another part was carried for third parties upon payment of a commission. The part which reached Goiás intact was assessed at 750 *oitavas* (eights) of gold, of which 600 referred to their own merchandise – around 86% of the total. AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.2v.

¹⁸ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.1, 2, 3.

¹⁹ IEB, Coleção J. F. Almeida Prado (CJFAP), código 23, f.14.

²⁰ The initial part of the second can be observed in the letter entitled *Demarcação do Termo da Villa do Paracatu do Príncipe*, which passed through São Romão and the *vila* of Paracatu. AHU, Cartografia do Brasil, n. 267/1177.33 (Costa (org.), Furtado, Renger, Santos, 2004, p.221).

²¹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.3-3v. Pages 3 and 4 contain a list of the locations encountered on the trail with the respective distances between them. The calculations were based on this.

On 4 July, after having travelled 45 leagues, they reached the Faz Tudo ranch, “the last ranch in the old settlements,” from where there left two trails: one to the Paraná River and the other to the mines of Goiás.²² The latter, opened a short while before, traversed some ranches, which the two travelers called the ‘new settlements,’ in contrast with the ‘old settlements’ which they had previously encountered. After marching five leagues, they crossed the São João stream²³ and on 8 July, they reached Santa Rosa, where they rested to recover from this part of the journey. There they met “some passengers coming from Goiasés,” who told them “that there was license for everything to enter for a period of six months,” counting from the St. John’s Day, i.e., 24 June, which made them accelerate their departure.²⁴

The map and the report of the derrota show the imaginary construction which the colonizers were composing of Brazil and its interior spaces

On the following day, 9 July, after travelling five leagues, they reached Bezerros ranch. Here various trails converged: the one they had been following since the bar of Velhas River; another which also began at the São Francisco River, but which passed through São Romão, following the Paracatu River; and a final one which left from the center of Minas Gerais, running alongside the Abaeté River. In Bezerros, all these trails came together to form the so-called *Estrada Real dos Goiasés* (the Goiás Royal Road). A day later, at four leagues distance, they reached Lagoa Feia (Ugly lagoon), “very big and morose,” whose waters flowed towards the São Paulo road. According to the two travelers, a little later “were the principal headwaters of the Tocantins River, called Maranhão there,”²⁵ which can be seen in the *Carte manuscrite* ...

After passing through Bandeirinha, the ranch of João da Costa, Monteiro, Sobradinho, and Três Barras, on 17 July they reached Macacos ranch, which was only three days from the village of Meia Ponte. There they met a troop coming from Goiás who gave them very inauspicious news. According to its members, the road had only been opened for ten days, at the command of the regent, Antônio de Souza Bastos.²⁶ After 24 June, it had been closed again, under the risk of new confiscations of goods. In 1732, the 4th Count of Sarzedas, Antônio Luís de Távora, recently appointed governor of São Paulo, insisted “on the need to control the opening of forbidden roads” to the region of Goiás, while the 1733

²² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.1.

²³ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.3v.

²⁴ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.1v.

²⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.1v.

²⁶ Member of the *bandeira* of Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva. Later, due to disagreements, he left them near to Meia Ponte village and in 1735 was one of the founders of the *arraial* of São José do Tocantins, now Niquelândia.

Law, which prohibited the opening of new roads to mines, was applied in this region during the same year. After this, all roads or *picadas* (trails) opened to Goiás were forbidden, with the exception of the one from São Paulo, which was controlled and submitted to various restrictions (Palacins, 1979, p.35).

Having lost ten horses and part of their goods on the journey and “being so near the said mines (...) and being unable to continue the *derrota* elsewhere” the two had no option but to “continue onwards, to await the fortune” which awaited them.²⁷ After advancing five leagues, they rested by Areia stream, passed by Corumbá, unpopulated at the time, and reached the *arraial* of Meia Ponte, alongside Almas River, which flowed into the Tocantins, where they stayed overnight.²⁸ Corumbá²⁹ and Meia Ponte were witnesses of the distinct rhythms which the mineral cycle imposed. The former had been abandoned because the Tocantins gold rush had attracted the population of the region, who had deserted *en masse* non-producing areas; Meia Ponte had been recently founded when “Manuel Rodrigues Tomás discovered rich mineral beds in the foothills of Serra dos Pirineus” (Palacins, 1979, p.25) and at this time its population was growing.³⁰

On 24 July, after travelling for 31 days since the bar of the Velhas River, a total of 92 leagues, with the purpose of resting themselves and their horses, they stopped at the farm of Miguel Ribeiro. In the middle of August, after ten days’ travel, they reached the village of Maranhão, where they left their goods in the houses of two local merchants. They sought out the regent Antônio de Souza Bastos, also one of the founders of this village, to present themselves and to seek his protection against the royal orders, but the latter was “out discovering” and “everything was in order.” When Bastos returned, to the contrary of what they expected, he obeyed the royal orders and began to confiscate the property of the traders who had recently reached the village.

The confiscations affected other travelers and this loss left the “men defeated” and “each one sought to look after their own lives.”³¹ It was then that José da Costa Diogo and someone else who had experience on mining, whose name is not known, decided “to discover some gold.” The two future miners gathered together “seven comrades and four slaves,” three of them belonging to Costa Diogo, and “in two canoes, [with] tools and supplies,” all paid for at his own expense, departed “to travel down the Tocantins River.” They left somewhat fearful but hopeful. Fearful because a *bandeira* which had left in 1732, with “50 people among whites and blacks, in search of gold,” had not been heard from since they left, “so they were deemed lost or defeated by the gentiles.”³²

²⁷ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.1v-2.

²⁸ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.3v.

²⁹ This is not Vila de Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Albuquerque, now Corumbá, founded in 1778, in Mato Grosso.

³⁰ According to Palacins, this had occurred in 1731, but according to Galvão Júnior, around 1729 (Palacins, 1979, p.25; Galvão Júnior, 2007, pp.90-95).

³¹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.2, 3v.

³² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.4.

Hopeful because they expected to become rich since their “destiny was not to reach Pará, but to search for gold.”³³

So began the rapid transformation of these traders into miners. Sérgio Buarque de Holanda estimated that in the region of the mines, one third of the population was involved in mining, one third in business, and one third in agriculture (Holanda, 1985, p.289). In fact, “commercial activity was mixed with mining, the production of agricultural foodstuffs, and livestock” (Furtado, 1999, p.222), and the example of this consubstantiation were the trader-miners José da Costa Diogo and his companions, now metamorphosed into explorers of the Tocantins Channel.

The *Derrota* of the Tocantins River to Belém do Pará

On 2 November 1734,³⁴ José da Costa Diogo and his three slaves left the village of “Santo Antônio do Campo, called there Maranhão.” For two leagues they carried the canoe in which they would travel until they reached the Maranhão stream, which was born “near Lagoa Feia” and, after this, they began to travel by water. Half a league downstream, they reached the meeting with the Almas River, which was born close to Meia Ponte,³⁵ eight days’ travel downriver.³⁶ The junction of the two formed the Tocantins. At the end of the day they were travelling through its waters without having faced any serious difficulties, just a few small waterfalls, rapids, or *itaipavas*.³⁷ They stopped at a place called Cocais, six leagues distant from where they had started, where they met their seven companions and the other slaves who had made the journey on foot, carrying the other canoe.³⁸

Until the ninth day, going downstream, they were passing through the so-called *Campanha dos Tocantins*, which were the lands that had been settled longest and were linked to the captaincy of São Paulo. During this stretch they did not sight a single living soul, colonist or native, since there were no permanent settlements on the river banks.³⁹ Nor did the *Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins* present any trace of occupation along that part of the river. Nevertheless, somewhat distantly, on the right hand side, above the four tributaries between them and the Preto River, there appeared the settlements of São José das Toreyras and Bagagem and uphill from this, Santa Rita and Santa Tereza. On the left, are the mines of Amaro Leite and a ranch called Coriola and, more to the West, Vila Boa de Goiás. (Figure 1). All these places emerged from the mining impulse, apart from Coriola ranch which was

³³ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.3v.

³⁴ The report lists, in sequential order, the days travelled, excluding from this county the intervals of time the explorers spent on land resting, though the number of these was not clearly specified. For this reason, we have numbered the days of travel in the same manner.

³⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.1.

³⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.3v.

³⁷ *Itaipava*: slabs of stone which cut the rivers, hindering navigation.

³⁸ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.1.

³⁹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.2.

a result of the expansion of livestock rearing to the center-west. While the former were located in the Tocantins Basin, under the jurisdiction of Meia Ponte, Vila Boa de Goiás (the future capital of the *comarca/county*), which grew out of the *arraial* of Sant'Anna, was close to the headwaters of the Vermelho River, one of the tributaries of the Araguaia. At the basin of this river, "along the banks of the rivers and streams with their gold silt, there [also] rapidly multiplied centers of gold prospection: Barra, Ferreiro, Anta, Ouro Fino, Santa Rita," but these were not visited by the explorers (Palacins, 1979, p.25). According to the 4th Count of Sarzedas, in 1732, "in most of that country [Goiás] golden deposits were founded which were of good promise, especially in the Pilões River [a tributary of the Araguaia] and Meia Ponte, where until the present most of those residents have gone" (cf. Palacins, 1979, p.26).

Only after 16 days' travel, when they traveled for three leagues along the left bank due to rapids, did they see the first sign of human presence, which at first surprised them. This was "an unfinished *sobrado* – a two stores type house – and a *roçado* (a clearing made for agricultural purposes) made a short while before, in which there was the beginnings of a corral beside the house." The residents, some blacks and three whites, responded to their shouts and were admiring of the presence of the explorers. The latter decided to disembark at the "house wharf" to find out more "what people lived there," while the locals in turn were also anxious for news. The ranch was called São José and it was run by Manoel Velho do Carmo. They stayed in the principal house, sick and broken from the journey, feeding on chickens bought in from the Old Settlements, distant from there, which reveals that they were not raised around there. The residents told them that the region was called "*Terras Novas* (New Lands), obeyed Grão-Pará, and were governed by Captain Manoel da Costa Madureira. Very recently settled, the *Campanha dos Tocantins*, with its old settlements and under the jurisdiction of São Paulo, ended there. Nearby were the Natividade Mines, discovered in 1734. The residents also informed them that a little downriver, "was the bar of the Pernatinga River and, seven leagues above it," was the bar of the Palma River, "in the fork of the two rivers, they had their church called São Félix" of Terras Novas, and "that the *sertão*" had many ranches, located on "riverbanks and also in the middle of rivers." In Terras Novas and its environs there were "close to 200 peopled ranches and those in search of gold,"⁴⁰ revealing the mix of the mining and livestock impulses driving the settlement of the region, activities which were consubstantiated in the same people and who were the economic sustenance of colonization. Forming a network of ranches was essential to provide food for the residents, since the urban settlements, to the contrary of Minas Gerais, were scarce and very distant from each other. For example, the *bandeira* of Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva which explored the region between 1722 and 1725, suffered from food shortages and saw many of its members die. One of those who survived reported that, "each day, three

⁴⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.2v-3v.

or four died of hunger, after having eaten all the dogs and some horses” (cf. Palacins, 1979, p.24, note 22).

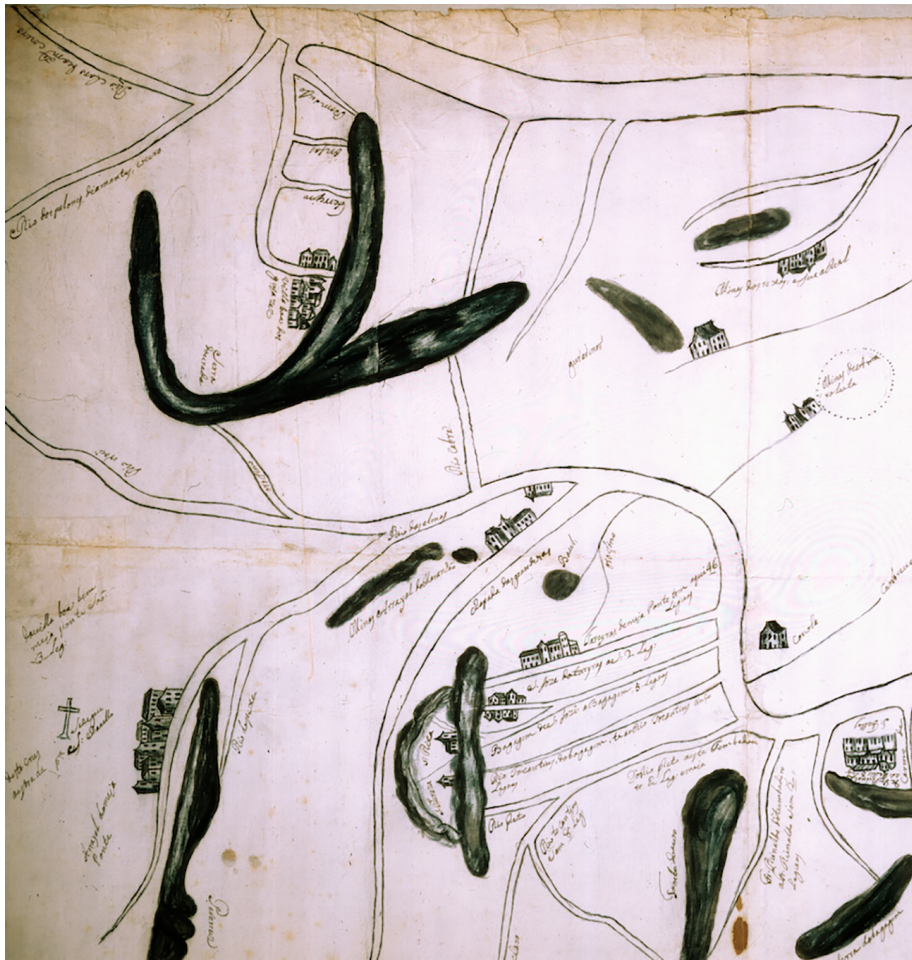


Figure 1: Section between Meia Ponte, with its cross, and São Félix, where the river bends in *Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins*. At the top, the Araguaia basin, where Vila Boa can be seen.

The *Carte manuscrite* ...presents exactly this conformation and calls the Upper Pernatinga the Paraná River, as informed by the people on the ranch, who had done a ten day *derrota* to the settlement of the same name, located near the headwaters of the river, on the other side of the Paraná mountain range. These mountains prevented contact between the residents on either side. Also revealed in the map was that the land through which the explorers had already passed had a reasonable human presence, albeit in a discontinuous manner and practically absent from the river banks. (Figure 2) This resulted from the various expeditions which had gone through the upper part of the river and its tributaries, such as the Peixe, Cabra, Preto, Bagagem, Tombador, Cuyté, Custódio, Ponte, and Palma, amongst others. In this part of the map, Santa Teresa, Santa Rita, Carmo and Frei Reinaldo can be seen, which made up the Campanha dos Tocantins; and São Félix das Terras Novas and Paraná,

which configured the Terras Novas (Newfound land). Between them were 77 leagues of unpopulated river, which the travelers conquered in 16 days by river. Around this area, explorers and missionaries were leaving their marks on the landscape, mineral beds were discovered and explored, small settlements were created, missions for the catechism of settled Indians, ranches, and corrals all built. Small houses, crosses, churches, ranch houses, fences, and heads of cattle represented the material marks which symbolized and demarcated the presence of the Luso-Brazilian colonizer around the Tocantins.

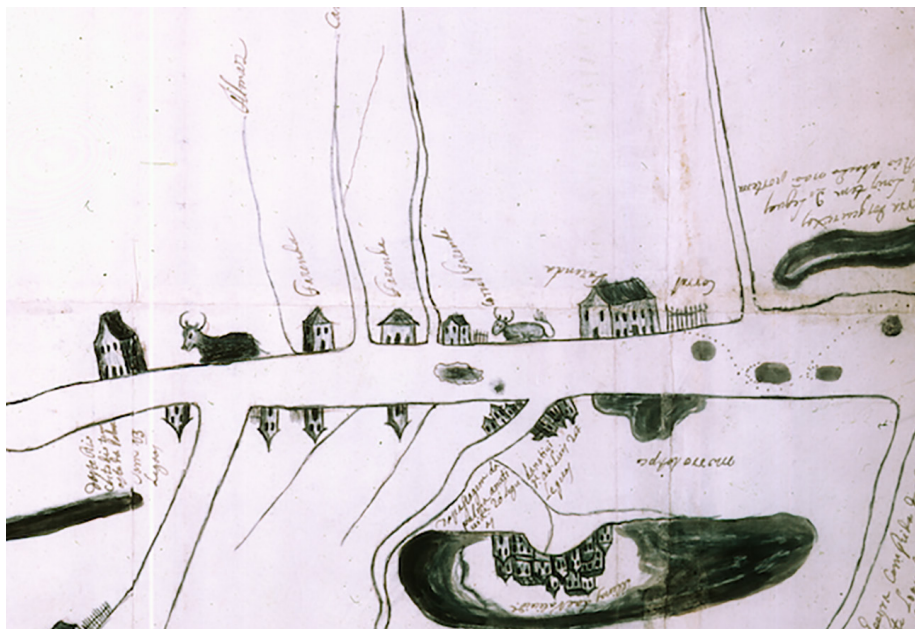


Figure 2: The *Terras Novas* and the Natividade Mines, in *Carte manuscrite...*

Provisional forms of colonization

When they restarted their journey, they continued downriver, running into rapids, waterfalls, and *lajeados* (creeks over rocky river beds), to name the most important geographic obstacles, stopping here or there to mine places which seemed promising, and encountering some indigenous peoples or seeing their canoes on the river banks.⁴¹ On the 38th day, half an hour after sunrise, and after passing an island, they saw the mouth of “an very large river, which they called the Araguaia River” and, after crossing islands and *itaipavas* (small rapids), saw on the left bank “an *arraial* of houses in the scrub, some well-built.” Although the explorers did not record its name, the *Carte manuscrite...* calls it the Purate and the bordering river as Tacazes, (Figure 3). Since they did not see anyone and because they were afraid of the gentiles, they decided to rest on the nearest island, where they saw signs that someone had been “looking for turtles” to hunt, which seemed to them to be the work of ‘white people.’ This is the only

⁴¹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12., f6v-8.

comment about the rich local fauna, which they certainly saw along the way. An explanation for this absence is that it was not the aim of the journey.



Figure 3: The mouth of the Araguaia and the *arraial* of Purate, in *Carte manuscrite...*

After the bar of the Araguaia the signs of colonization began to be repeated, even though they only saw abandoned buildings, revealing the provisory nature of these settlements against the force of nature and attacks of Indians. This was what happened on the 40th day of their journey, when they found a trail parallel to the river, which they followed for six leagues, and after returning to the river, they reached another “*arraial* with houses,” which was also uninhabited. There, they found a little ground flour of which they took some. On the 42th, they went past large rapids, which “here is called Itaboca.” Nearby, in an inlet they saw “a *rancharia*⁴² settlement in the forest, and beside this a cross, and opposite on a *coroa* [a type of sand bank] another cross.”⁴³ Once again there is no reference to residents, and it seems like it was the fear that they could meet them that made them land three leagues downriver.⁴⁴ The *Carte manuscrite...* represents this part clearly: the long waterfall with a sequences of capital letters Xs, the *coroa* with dots, the nearby islands with smudges, and the settlement on the right bank with three houses and a cross. The marks made on the map makes what was actually ephemeral appear permanent to the reader and

⁴² *Rancharia*: instalations to raise cattle.

⁴³ *Coroa*: shallows consisting of sand produced by alluvium, in other words sediment deposited in the river. Commonly appeared after the ebbtide of a tributary.

⁴⁴ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12., f.9v-10.

leaves on the river banks only the abandoned traces of the civilization which the Luso-Brazilians sought to build in the heart of the Center-West. (Figure 4)

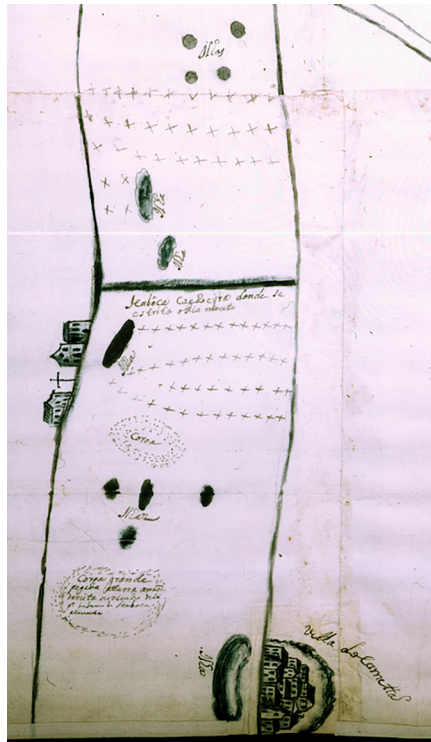


Figure 4: The Lower Tocantins until Cametá, with Itaboca Waterfall, in the *Carte manuscrite...*

On the 44th day, they passed “a large beach, on the left hand side, [which] they call here Praia Grande.” After covering 19 leagues in the next two days, when they had halted at night, they saw something which left them ‘confused:’ “at night the mouth of the river emptied a lot while around midnight it began to fill again.” They realized “that it was a tide,” which meant that they were close to the ebbtide of the Tocantins. Actually, when the sun rose, after travelling for three leagues, they saw “a house by the river” and, getting nearer, “a cross,” which they greeted “with a musket shot.” The owner, called Gregório Francisco “soon came” to receive them “with great love and charity,” letting them stay in his house, “as his possessions would permit.” The travelers told them about their journey and he agreed to bring them to the *vila* of Cametá, located 15 leagues downstream, where they went the next day. In Cametá, they spent “some days resting from the efforts of the journey,” afterwards leaving for “Belém do Gran-Pará,” where they finally arrived on 23 January 1735.

During the journey, the former traders metamorphosed into explorers had tamed the river and its surrounds. The report and the map reveal the continual discovery of the local geography. Some places already had their own names, such as the *arraial* of São Félix das Terras Novas, with its church, administered by the chaplain José Pires; São José ranch, with its still uncompleted buildings;

Corichás mine, which they believed they have found on the 21st day of the journey. Others were baptized as they found them, a waterfall “which we called Maquinas;” “a river which we called Mangues River.” Many of these names reflect the characteristics of the places. For example, the many rapids they encountered on the sixth day of the journey were given “the name of *As Cancellas* (the Barriers) as they were many;” the solitary mountain, “very steep,” was called *Pico* (peak); a very large river was baptized Rio Grande (Great River) and the Serra Vermelha (Red Mountains) were named after their color. Other were references to the hardships or bounties encountered along the way, such as the “very large rapids, with many islands,” through which it took a while to find a canal, which they named *Tropeço* (obstacle); the river, near which they saw natives for the first time, they called *Canabrava*; and the ravine which protected them was called *Boa Vista* (Beautiful View), because from on top of it they were able to see all around without difficulties. More rarely the names had a religious character, as was the case of the river they Santa Luzia, which was in “sight of a large and long mountain range, stretching towards the Tocantins,” or the longed for mines they sought so much, which were called Santa Ana mines, where they raised a cross, giving thanks to good providence. Also rather infrequent were place names with an indigenous origin, because the explorers did not have much contact with local tribes, as was the case of the Corichás waterfall, which already had this name when they reached it. Giving names to geographic features was a symbolic act of gaining possession, continually embarked on by those who considered themselves the discoverers of these new worlds.

Boat travel

The *derrota* of the Tocantins took them in total 83 days of travel, of which 46 were spent on the boat from the *arraial* of Maranhão, near the source of the river, to the *vila* of Cametá, near the mouth of the Amazon River, and 38 on land, to rest or looking for minerals, and on the boat trip from Cametá to Belém. During this period, they covered 267 leagues. While the journey along the banks of the São Francisco River and from there to the headwaters of the Tocantins had been by land, from near to Meia Ponte until Belém rivers were used, in this case the Tocantins and the Amazon. In few regions did rivers become the principal mechanism of penetration, a movement which was called *Monções* (Monsoons), the great exceptions being the Amazonian Basin and the Pantanal region of Cuiabá (Holanda, 2014, pp. 47-72). Rivers such as the Tocantins were thereby transformed into “roads which moved” (Flores, 2009), opening the vast *sertões* of the interior of Brazil to colonizers. When they decided to carry out the *derrota* in Goiás, the travelers, aware of the local landscape, covered with forests and practically impenetrable to man, decided that, like those who had preceded them, to use the Tocantins River, travelling in canoes, “due to the greater convenience to carry supplies and more precise equipment.”⁴⁵ The fact

⁴⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.4.

that they were upstream also favored the journey, since they were able to use the current in their favor. The average speed was almost six leagues per day, much faster than the average of four leagues they spent on foot between the São Francisco River and Goiás, revealing the advantages of travelling by river over travelling by land.

Only after 16 days' travel, when they traveled for three leagues along the left bank due to rapids, did they see the first sign of human presence, which surprised them

In relation to the means of transport used - the two canoes - the *Relato...* does not provide many details about this information, but during the journey references are made to various Indian and white vessels which provide some clues. The narrator makes reference to and uses in a distinct form the terms canoe and *jangada*. Canoes were vessels which “the gentiles of the Americas use for war, and which the inhabitants use for service, due to the little water they demand.” They were made from a single trunk, with the inside part being dug out, with the biggest ones having have up to 30 rowers (Bluteau, 1712, v.1, p.106). Two vessels like these, with their oars,⁴⁶ were used. However, neither would have been very big, since together they transported thirteen passengers, six or seven in each one. The seven travelling companions plus the slave, eight in total, had to carry one of the canoes in the first part of the journey, since it could not carry everyone. The canoe, as it was resistant and shallow, cut from a “entire trunk, hollowed out by fire, axe, or adz,” was “especially indicated for rivers with rapids,” as it could be carried, “be towed,” i.e., pulled by a rope, or “be easily pulled over” rapids (Holanda, 2014, pp. 47-48). Navigating the Tocantins imposed a series of difficulties. There were sections of “good river,” when the distance covered could be greater, but often travelers were faced with *itaipavas* or *coroas*, which greatly hindered navigation. In these parts, the average speed fell significantly, generally to three leagues per day. To cross “many of the rapids and *itaipavas*” “direction and experience” was needed, which did not seem lacking among the explorers.

Jangadas were “floating logs tied to each other” (Bluteau, 1713, v.2, p.12). The narrator frequently used this word to refer to the vessels of the natives. When it is mentioned that they were seen, some observations are let slip about these artifacts, which tells us a little about the material culture of the Indians. In one, “seven *jangadas* [were] made from *buritis*,” i.e., palm trunks tied to each other. Some were “new, others old” and one “old, but very well drafted and appearing like something of a white,”⁴⁷ which revealed that they considered natives’ tech-

⁴⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.10.

⁴⁷ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.6, 6v, 7.

niques inferior to those of the whites. Once the names are shuffled and canoe is used to refer to indigenous vessels. This was on the 40th day, when they saw “a long canoe with just its stern out.” In its description it can be seen that it is a *jangada*, since it was “tied with vines, some new, some old.” On a trail, “three musket shots away,” they found another “two broken canoes [in other words destroyed] of the gentiles.”⁴⁸

On the second day of travel, the explorers ran into the first serious trouble. They passed “four small rapids” and when they had gone six leagues in total, they found themselves facing a greater one, which they called “the Leap.” Due to the great difficulty in crossing it, they decided to disembark and rest “on the upper part, leaving the passage for the next,” which they did taking all due care. After having passed it and having travelled only one league due to the “heavy rain” which had fallen, they decided to rest again on a “small island that caused the whirlpool of rapids.” The following days they overcame new rapids and *itaipavas* and stopped at a large *coroa* “in the middle of the river, in sight of a large hill,” and managed to travel six leagues along the river.⁴⁹ On the fifth day new difficulties! After only two leagues, in a section where they saw two hills, one on each bank, they ran into various rapids which covered almost a league on the river. The report states how they overcame this obstacle: in part, “they passed with the canoes in their hands,” but for most they found “three channels” and crossed “on the right hand side,” leaving this route recorded in the *Relato*... When the rivers were not very deep, or when it is was possible to find a shallower channel, “the *sertanista* was content to wade through many of these rivers, with water up to their chest,” thereby crossing rapids, *itaipavas*, or waterfalls carrying the canoe above them (Holanda, 2014, p.49). On this day they only managed three leagues, two of good river, and tired after the efforts made, they camped below the waterfall. On the seventh day a new waterfall, which slowed the pace, only making three leagues, since once again they were forced to carry the canoes by hand.⁵⁰ On the ninth day, they passed “some currents and waterfalls, but they found good channels,” and managed to travel nine leagues. They then reached a bend in the river where they slept in a large island covered in trees, but the following day almost cost them their lives and the enterprise itself. After travelling for about a league, in one of the curves where the river narrowed, they were surprised by a large whirlpool which threw the canoe on top of some rocks, sinking the stern and letting half the canoe get soaked with water. This forced them to land to fix the damage that had been caused to the hull. Examining from this position the section ahead of them, they realized that the river also narrowed in the following curve, so they decided to carry the canoe by land, until they had passed this obstacle. However, they alerted readers that in these two rapids “it is necessary to carry the canoes by hand.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.9v.

⁴⁹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.11v.

⁵⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.1v.

⁵¹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.2.

Until Pedro Barros' ranch, which they reached on the 16th day of travel, no river obstacles hindering travel are portrayed in the *Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins*, although these had been reported in the text. (Figure 1) One explanation for this is that the map was made in Belém, it was of interest to the governor of the captaincy of Grão-Pará to guide future expeditions only in the part of the river under his jurisdiction, which was between Cameté and Terras Novas. Leaving Pedro Barros' ranch, on the 18th day of the journey, they came upon an island (drawn on the map) and two leagues below this, after passing a small stream on the left, "the river ran over a reef of stones, but with a good channel." They passed some *itaipavas*, but two leagues later, they came upon "very large rapids, with many islands." It cost them the entire day until they found a channel which allowed them to cross. Exhausted, after "passing the most dangerous part," they landed and set up camp. Due to the difficulty they had faced, they called it *Tropeço* (obstacle).⁵² On the 21st day they saw a river on the left bank they believed to be the Corichás and on the other side, after an island, they came up a "a large chain of rocks" and after this "large rapids" which they called *Carreira Comprida* (Long Rapids), due to their length. Despite their size, they soon came upon a "channel on the left side," which allowed them pass.⁵³ The *Carte manuscrite...* represents in this section all the obstacles which hindered navigation, namely the Serra dos Corichás (with an x), the five islands, and *Carreira Comprida*. As an alert, a dotted line was drawn which showed the route the canoes should follow, exactly what José da Costa Diogo and his companions had done. (Figure 5) On the 26th day, they found a large river, "with stable water," which signified that it would be very good for navigation. Due to its slowness, they gave it the name *Sono* (Dream), but they did not dare explore it.⁵⁴



Figure 5: *Comprida* rapids and *Pico* Mountain, in the *Carte manuscrite...*

⁵² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.4v.

⁵³ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.5-5v.

⁵⁴ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.6v.

It was not just the waterfalls and rapids which created difficulties, the *coroas* had to be circumvented with care, as was discovered on the 37th day, when the river opened into “very large beaches.” It was the indication of a large river carrying voluminous sediment. This was revealed two days later when they reached the bar of the Araguaia.⁵⁵ Below this bed of the Tocantins was “covered with rocks,” but the second *itaipava* was overcome by a channel on the right, after which there were new rapids and finally an island in front of the *arraial* of Porate and further below this, “a reef took up the entire river, but there is a weak channel.”⁵⁶ They were close to the ebbtide of the river, but the difficulties did not diminish. On the 40th day, they passed “currents, *remansos*, and dangerous rapids,” but found a channel. *Remansos* were waters “from the branch of a river, which separated from the current went somewhere” (Bluteau, 1720, v.4, p.229). Shortly ahead were new rapids, this time a very large one, called Itaboca, which forced them to land and follow a trail by the river. When they returned to the river, they found a small channel, along which they carried the canoes by hands until they stopped to rest. Greater trials were waiting for them. Returning to the journey, carrying “the canoes by hand, in a small branch” of the river, but when they felt safe and returned to the water and “to put the oars in the water,” one of the canoes turned over and “everything carried in it was lost, only the people in it escaped.” As they had just supplied themselves with flour they found in an abandoned village, they decided to return there to resupply. It was the only day they did not advance a single league. The *Carte manuscrite...* contains all of this dangerous geography between the bar of the Araguaia and the *vila* of Cametá. Between *cachoeiras* and *lajeados*, its author warning the reader, writes “Itabôca, rapids where the river narrows a lot” and “a large *coroa* close to land on the right hand side.” Having overcome these two challenges, the travelers arrived at the *vila* of Cametá.

The savage gentile

Although they were not always seen, traces of Indians were everywhere. Bartolomeu Paes de Abreu stated that these “*campanhas* (champagnes or grasslands) were infested with barbarous gentiles.”⁵⁷ In 1724, the governor of São Paulo, Rodrigo César de Meneses, wrote to the king informing him that the *bandeira* of Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva and João Leite da Silva Ortiz, which he had sent “to the *sertão* of the North called Guayases,” had been missing for two years and it was feared that their “bad success was due to the many gentiles there were in those parts”⁵⁸ and who frequently resisted the penetration of the colonizers.

⁵⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.8v

⁵⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.9-9v.

⁵⁷ AESP. *DIPHSP*, v. XXIV, 2015, p.59.

⁵⁸ Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo (AESP). *Documentos interessantes para a história e costumes de São Paulo (DIPHSP)*, São Paulo, v. XX, 1896, p.133.

After eight days of travel, José da Costa Diogo saw the first sign of their presence. They passed an “old” abandoned *roça* (small plantation), “where the gentile grew food,” an indication that they practiced agriculture, even though they were considered savage and barbarous by the colonizers.⁵⁹ Although this place was abandoned, various tribes still lived near to the river, resisting colonization and attacking white settlements whenever they could. The residents of São José ranch, for example, told them that the *sertão* between Terras Novas and the settlement of Paran was infested with “many gentiles, who everyday attack one or other of the villages.” For this reason, the local inhabitants were not interested in “settling on ranches (...) due to the great risk they ran if they went around separately.”⁶⁰ Fear of the natives shaped the form the settlement was structured, with the colonists existing in mixed rural and urban settlements, as a form to protect themselves, since external help was uncertain and slow. This hindered the establishment of a continuous network of ranches along the river, necessary for the production of food capable of supporting a settlement on a more permanent basis. This precariousness resulted, for example, in the lack of chicken-rearing in the region of Terras Novas, food that was heavily consumed by the sick.

“Each day, three or four died of hunger, after having eaten all the dogs and some horses.”

The first attack of these Indians on the Paran had resulted in the death of “some people” and in the capture of “two children, male and female.” Scared, the inhabitants had asked, through the intermediation of an expedition which had left from So Jos ranch and for the first time had established contact between the two locations, that in 1735, during Easter, F. Joo Pires, chaplain of the Church of So Felix das Terras Novas, administer them the usual sacraments and bring with him as assistance some men “to drive off the many gentiles who live around these parts.”⁶¹ They reported that in the ranches around the Pernatinga, Paran, and Palma rivers, there were few inhabitants who live “separately and were prevented from being able to defend themselves,” since “the gentiles [were] in a large number.” Survival depended on the mutual assistance of the inhabitants of these settlements, even though they were spatially distant from each other. To help them in fight against the gentile, they asked the governor of Par for aid and reported that they had received news a year previously that the governor had dispatched troops from Belm, – led by Lus Prates – however, since these had not arrived, nor news of them, they believed

⁵⁹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12., f.1v.

⁶⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12., f.3.

⁶¹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12., f.3-3v.

that “they must have followed another direction or [have] turned back.”⁶² Until this point, the explorers had not even seen any Indians, but the descriptions of the residents and the fear they felt must have contaminated how the others perceived, related with, and described the natives after this.

On an island where they stopped on the 17th day of travel, a local resident, called Pedro de Barros, increased even more the fear they were feeling. He told then that when he was putting his mares into the corral, he saw on the river bank, six wild horses, which every so often reappeared “in uninhabitable parts” and, with some of his companions, he decided to hunt them. They managed to capture only one and they saw that they were the “horses of the *Paulistas*,” stragglers from some unsuccessful expedition.⁶³ They inferred that they must have belong to the *bandeira* which left in 1732,⁶⁴ and of which there had been no reports, concluding “that the “gentiles had captured and eaten the other horses.”⁶⁵ On the same island they heard reports of other recent attacks, which occurred during an expedition to the banks of the Tocantins, when the Luso-Brazilian colonizers faced with gun a large band of Indians who were chasing them. Although they were lower in number than the savages, their firepower guaranteed them an initial advantage, which disappeared “when their lead and powder ran out.” Then they had to retreat, “and the said gentiles followed them to the banks of the river, where they spent a day making terrifying shouts and roars. They managed to escape because the Indians did not have canoes and they were able to take refuge on the island where they lived. However, they feared that they would have to abandon their ranches if reinforcements did not arrive from Pará. Based on this report it can be observed that the whites attributed their superiority in relation to the indigenous peoples to two material artifacts of their culture – fire arms and canoes –, which were capable of guaranteeing their permanence in the middle of hostile tribes. This superiority could have been shared by the explorers in order to calm themselves about the uncertainty of the environment through which they were moving. The narrative also associated another characteristic as indicative of the savagery of the natives – the howls they emitted, which with their guttural sounds were distinguished from the sounds of European languages with which they were familiar.

Upon “hearing this information,” the explorers “were so intimidated,” that they thought about “not continuing the *derrota*,” which cost them a day of discussion, pondering the pros and cons. Finally, they decided to continue onwards because they believed “that there were no gentiles with canoes downriver, and when they met them they would go into the middle of the river.”⁶⁶ They were mistaken! On the second day after resuming their journey, they heard “some

⁶² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.3v.

⁶³ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12., f.4.

⁶⁴ This seems to be related to the *bandeira* of Domingos Rodrigues do Prado, who entered by the Araguaia and on returning in 1734, reported news of various mines in the region. (Palacins, 1979, p.27)

⁶⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.4v.

⁶⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.4v.

great *aprestados*⁶⁷ shouts from men and women.” Soon they saw “seven canoes full of gentiles, which were upriver,” and that “very loudly they called to those who were on land.” The latter got into their canoes and went to meet the others. Once they were all gathered together, they all began to descend the river. Even though the travelers soon lost sight of them, fear made them travel 11 leagues that day, much more than on any other, looking for a place they could take refuge in in the event of any attack and to sleep in safety.⁶⁸

Although they had not directly confronted Indians, and having sighted them straight afterwards, the perception that the Indians had canoes and that they actually did not know what awaited them further ahead changed the spirits of the group, and they discussed again whether to continue or not. Since they had come a long distance – 93 leagues in total – and had passed the Tropeço rapids, which to climb back up would require moving by land, where the Indians could “do them great harm in an ambush,” they decided to continue onwards, even though for “some it was more by force than will,” revealing the fear that the first meeting with Indians had caused them. Four leagues later, beside a tributary on the left bank, there was a new meeting with “two Tapuias” in a canoe, who they thought “were on guard.” This river was called Canabrava and they set up camp, near the ebbtide, “in front of some high barriers,” suitable for defense, since they allowed them sight any threat, even if distant. They called this place and the nearby river, Boa Vista (Good View) – the names reflecting the daily experiences on the journey.⁶⁹ Analyzing the meeting of European and indigenous culture, in the context of Iberian maritime expansion, Tzvetan Todorov spoke of the near impossibility of dialogue, or of the self-referring monologue of Europeans in relation to Native Americans. In relation to Columbus, he stated he “did not understand the Indians better now: in fact, he never left himself” (Todorov, 1983, p.39). The same occurred with the explorers. In these two encounters no dialogue was established or any attempt made to approximate both parties, the behavior of the Indians, actually aloof, was interpreted beforehand as threatening, an impression molded by the terrible stories which had been told to them in various places on their journey.

After this point, meetings with Indians became even more frequent, but both kept their distance and the fearful travelers did not make any attempt at approximation. On the 23rd day, close to Mangues River, they saw sighted “seven jangadas made from *buritis*, in which the gentiles passed from one to the other” bank. For two days they mined in some streams of this region, but in one of them, José da Costa Diogo had to leave quickly “because of the many gentiles that came towards me.” Leaving they crossed seven rapids and between them saw a village, which however was empty. Shortly afterwards, they sighted such a “quantity of *jangadas*,” on the banks that they could not “count them.” Downstream they landed on an island where they found, still fresh, “a large

⁶⁷ *Aprestado*: ready for war (Bluteau, 1712, v.1, p.452).

⁶⁸ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.4v-5.

⁶⁹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.5-5v.

number of tracks of the gentiles.” They concluded “that, at the same instant, they had left it, having slept there,” since they were still capable of hearing their shouts. On the 29th day of travel, they saw “moored, more than 400 rafts.”⁷⁰ None of these were interpreted as attempts by the Indians not to meet the whites, a contact which they certainly feared most, since they frequently ended up at a disadvantage.

The distance with the natives was only broken on the 37th day, when the travelers were already close to the mouth of the Araguaia and finally overcoming their fear took the initiative to contact them. On the left bank they saw “smoke from a fire and a canoe pushed up onto land.” Since the signs of smoke were strong and constant, they initially believed “that it was white people.” For this reason, they began to shout, but since “the smoke rose up in the air” like the signals of the Indians, they soon perceived that “it was a fierce Tapuia” and they quickly continued going down the river. A short while later, they sighted a canoe following them, “with three people in it,” however, to the contrary of the other times, they let these come close. José da Costa Diogo does not explain the reason for this change in behavior, but perhaps it was the type of smoke signals which had been interpreted by Europeans since the discoveries as a sign that the Indians were calling them to an encounter. (Furtado, 2015, pp.93-94).

Once again, the natives, perceiving that white men were involved, fled towards land. This information reveals that the Indians had understood the screams as being from one of their own, which reveals that the linguistic sounds were not so different. The explorers attracted them back, making “signals that they return, which they obeyed with much risk, showing their bows to be unarmed and with the tips of their arrows pointing downwards,” which was interpreted as a demonstration of friendship. The whites also made “the same signals with their arms” and “signals that they [the Indians] approach,” but this was not sufficient for the ‘savages’ to come nearer, and they landed on a nearby beach. Costa Diogo ordered that they also land, but cautiously he sought an area of the river further below. The *Tapuias* came in their direction, but when they saw the whites’ guns, moved away. Certain that they were in no danger, and as a sign of good will, the whites hid their guns in the canoes, after which the Indians approach showing that they also “did not want to offend.” Costa Diogo offered them “a package of beads,” in a “symbolic exchange in the form of the reciprocal swapping of gifts” (Massimi, 1997, p.44). It can be observed that not only were they prepared for this meeting, but they also knew the rites of approximation that were usually followed with the natives. The travelers interpreted that the presents “pleased them,” since they reciprocated in “thanks, [with] half a bundle of arrows.” Even though they had spent some time with the natives, the contact was restricted to these gestures and the exchange of presents, because

⁷⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.6-7.

they “did not understand any words,”⁷¹ revealing the difficulties of communication between the two cultures.

Until this point, the Indians themselves did not seem to be of great interest, except as a threat to the survival of the explorers. Lack of contact or of knowledge prevented them from providing greater information about this tribe or any of the other nearby tribes, with the natives occupying only “a peripheral role, only being integrated [as a curiosity] to the greater objective of the expedition which was constituted ‘by the [mineral] exploration project.’” (Massimi, 1997, p.44). In this section, the report gives a rare detailed description of the two Indians:

These Tapuias had labrets in the lower lip and in the upper one, and in the ears round holes in which some bits of wood were attached, which made them seem very large ears; their hair was cut from the top of the head, leaving some long hairs here and there, which were bound below the forehead. They were tall and quite burly.⁷²

Almost nothing is made known about their lives or their customs, or the tribes seen, though a little information can be found here and there. Mentioning one of the many indigenous rafts, they said that this “looked like something made by whites.”⁷³ This observation – “something made by whites” – is used twice more: when they find traps for hunting turtles and when they see strong smoke signals. In all three, it is revealed that the travelers considered the culture of the natives as inferior to their own. When they saw, or thought they saw, more elaborate objects or customs, these were always attributed to white European culture. It can be seen that the tribes of the Upper Tocantins practiced agriculture, since they stated that in this region, they saw an ‘old’ abandoned *roça*, “where the gentile raises food.”⁷⁴ Finally, even though the whites domesticated some Indians, these were capable of establishing relations of solidarity with those who remained in their culture of origin. Around the mouth of the Araguaia, the troops sent by the governor had established contact with “a village of 600 bows,” but this, “induced afterwards by the tame Tapuia who were with the troops, set fire to their village which was in the forest, and absented themselves,”⁷⁵ once more the indigenous peoples fled the advance of the whites.

⁷¹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.8v-9.

⁷² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.9.

⁷³ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.6, 6v, 7.

⁷⁴ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.1v.

⁷⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.9v.

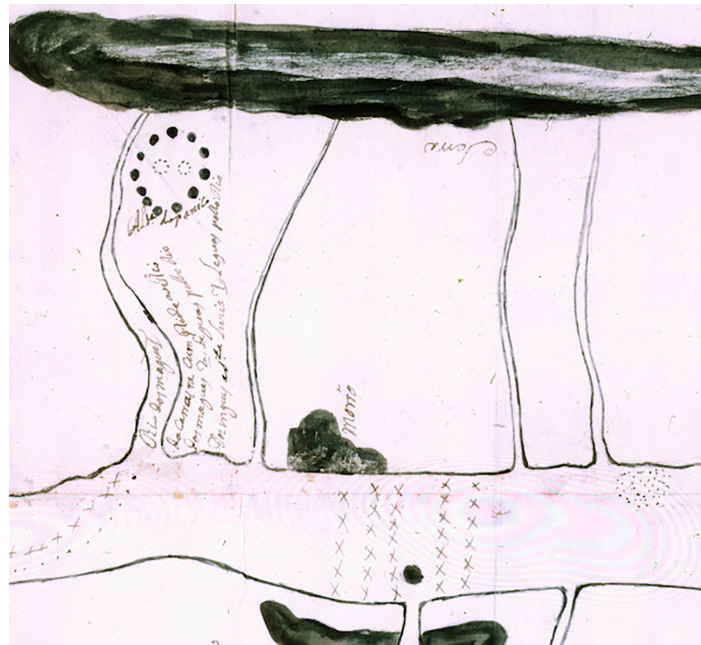


Figure 6: Pânico Village and Corixás Rapids, in *Carte manuscrite*...

The *Carte manuscrite de la navigation de la Rivière des Tocantins* portrays four indigenous tribes in the region, one in one of the tributaries on the left bank, the Mangue River, which is called Pânico Village (Figure 6); one on the left bank of the Tocantins, which is called Araguaia Village; a third on the nameless tributary on the right bank, called Curuâ ûsû or Ayaroucuâ Village; and the last one on the right bank of the Araguaia, called Sahantedecuâ Village. The name of the first is a clear reference to the situation of fear which the meeting between its inhabitants and the whites caused, while the latter refer to the local indigenous nations. These tribes were located in the remotest parts of the river, below the Corichá rapids and are represented by simple circles formed by points, without indicating any sign of material culture, unlike the locations of the colonizers. This form of representation denotes the hierarchies which the latter established in relation to the former, the Indians always being considered as savage and barbarous. It also fixes in a single point populations which most often were nomadic, revealing the difficulty of cartographic support for representing this form of life. Another difficulty resided in the linguistic diversity of the indigenous peoples, something not always possible to be learned by Europeans, as was the case of the names of these indigenous tribes. Also the few place names in local languages which were incorporated by the colonizers represented obstacles that were difficult to overcome, such as Serra dos Guirixez and the Corich[x]ás rapids, which acquiring different spellings as they migrated from oral language to textual, and from this to cartography, almost never coinciding. Finally, even though the maps sought to be instruments that gave visibility to a set of ethnographic information which European explorers gathered while taming new lands, they presented concrete limits in relation to

the trustworthiness of this information, since they were objects circumscribed to the European culture which produced them.

Approaching Eldorado...

Arriving in Belém was not the primordial objective of the journey. José da Costa Diogo and his companions, now transformed into miners, intended to ‘make some discovery of gold’ and establish themselves in some part of the river, where the findings were more promising. For this, they brought everything necessary “for the desired discovery of popular mines of gold in this river.”⁷⁶

The *Carte manuscrite...* reveals why the former traders decided to transform themselves into miners. On it there appear many areas of gold exploration already inhabited and being exploited, such as “*da Bagagem*,” “*da Chapada*,” “*dos Rexas ou Real*,” and “*das Arraias*,” near the *arraial* of São Félix das Terras Novas (Figure 1). In possession of this map, D’Anville, in referring to Tocantins, stated that “it was a country rich in gold” (Anville, 1759, p.659) and during the *derrota* the explorers made various attempts to find the metal, mostly successful. When they reached Belém, they wanted to return to the river in search of the wealth which they had only lightly touched. However, more than the mines they really found, the *Relato...* and the map reveal the imagination constructed around the river, which is revealed, for example, in the numerous place names which refer to its wealth, such as *Ouro Fino* (Fine Gold), *Tombo do Ouro* (Gold Falls), *Natividade Mines*, and *Amaro Leite Mines*. According to the travelers, its nickname was Rich River.⁷⁷ This perception had preceded its own discovery and situated it in the mythology of *Serra dos Martírios*, “which is one of these hills, which have an admirable view, and in this part by favor of God much wealth is found” (Taunay, 1981, p.208). According to this tradition, the *bandeira* of Manoel de Campos Bicudo (1673-1682), in which his young son, Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva, participated, had found in the region of Goiás, “engraved on a rock, the instruments of the Martyrdoms of Christ: crown, thorns, ladder, etc. And in this place there was gold” (Ferreira, 1960, p.22). The *sertanistas* from São Paulo shared this belief and assured themselves even before leaving that there was “in that *sertão*, not only gold, but silver.” The certainty that it would be found was such that one of them said “that either they would discover what they looked for, or die in the enterprise;”⁷⁸ the use of the word discovery shows that nature would only reveal what was known to exist. This certainty clearly appeared in the *Regimento* of Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva’s *bandeira* that went to Goiás in 1722, which stated as its purpose the discovery of “mines of gold, silver, and other forms of wealth” (Palacins, 1979, p.18).

The *Roteiro...* also allows an understanding of how travelers-miners carried out their exploration. For this, there were some prior conditions, which as will

⁷⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.3.

⁷⁷ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, fl.

⁷⁸ AESP, *DIPHSP*, v.XVIII, p.169.

be seen, they fulfilled: they had to be capable of recognizing the signs of the presence of the metal in order to locate the most promising mineral beds to be explored and after this to dominate contemporary mining techniques, how to choose the most suitable site, as well as possessing the appropriate tools for this type of mining. The first capacity was evident, for example, when they saw two *coroas* of “sand and gravel and near the second, on the left,” they found “a stream with a lot of gravel,” an indication which they quickly identified as a sign of the presence of gold and which actually, “after being dismantled, they found it had good flakes of gold,” calling it *Água Suja* (Dirty Water).⁷⁹ However, they did not spend much time there, which shows that, despite its good prospects, the discovery was not very promising and these not the dreamed of mines. This knowledge of mining techniques was possible because on the explorers, whose name is not known, already had mining experience⁸⁰ and it is very probable that among the four slaves who accompanied them, at least one had some prior knowledge, obtained either in Africa or Minas Gerais.

*Although they had not been seen, evidence of
Indians was everywhere*

During the eighteenth century, mineral exploration technology became increasingly sophisticated. Initially, however, it did not need to be very complex because the veins of gold were located in very superficial layers of earth or on riverbeds, and were easily reached by very simple techniques (Reis, 2007), as described in the *Roteiro*. Sebastião da Rocha Pita states that “at the beginning of the discovery of mines gold was obtained by digging a large square pit, more or less regular, which was called a *cata*.” After encircling the *cata*, to reduce the volume of water, the miners began to dig until “they reached some stones, like pebbles, called gravel, (...) which were settled on shale,” which was the gravel mixed with sand, where the gold was generally found. The shales “were undone with levers, like someone dismantled a wall,” and for this they used “a piece of iron with the appearance of a hoe, which they called *almocrafe*.”⁸¹ However, often before reaching the softer shale, they ran into a *socavão*, in other words a vein of stone which had to be drilled. If it was not very hard or thick it was possible to break it with a hoe, otherwise they were forced to abandon the task. Finally, to separate the gold from the shale, they used the pan, which was “a wooden winnower, between two and a half and three palms until the mouth, which from its edges narrows in a pyramidal form,” and “put it into the water,

⁷⁹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.5-5v.

⁸⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.8, f.4.

⁸¹ *Almocrafe*: a word of Spanish origin. It involves a small, long, and narrow hoe, in general with a bifurcated or pointed tip, used to remove the gravel from river beds and banks. It was a digging instrument, used to mine gold.

(...) and giving it so many twists, until the earth and the stones were got rid of, with the gold staying at the bottom.” (Rocha Pita, 1976, p.22) Based on this description, it can be observed that the instruments which the explorers had brought, “two pans, an *almocafre*, a lever, two axes, and a large knife,”⁸² were the proper tools suited to the exploration of the alluvium.

Water was an intrinsic element for mining, either because the metal was often deposited at the bottom of the river, or because this was essential to separate the heavier gold from the sediments where it was mixed (Furtado, 2014, pp. 45-47). However, when the river bed was very voluminous, as was the case of the Tocantins, this became a problem, which demanded more sophisticated engineering works to reduce or extinguish water, complex technologies which could not be used by a small group of miners in continuous movement. For this reason, at various moments the explorers in question prospected in tributaries, since their beds were shallow and less voluminous, or on sandbanks, which were formed in the Tocantins near its ebbs, and they abandoned *catas* when an excess of water made the work unfeasible. For example, the first time they carried out various “tests” in a tributary, they concluded that a “stream, on the bar, had good dispositions,” but faced two difficulties. First, they found “a *socavão*” but after this, “because a [lot] of water came downstream, the test could not be carried out.” They looked for a shallower place, which was found in a *coroa* in the middle of the Tocantins, which had the same composition as the tributary, since it was the result of the accumulation of their sediments. This was “dismounted” and “flakes of gold” were found.⁸³ After 14 days’ journey, they reached another stream, on the left where they began to prospect again. This time they were more successful and found “a lot of traces of gold.” As a result, they decided to “do something slower” and settled themselves in. However, when the day dawned, the river rose “a height of eight palms with flood waters,” which covered all their work, so they decided to leave. To mark the place and thus be able to return, they gave a “hill which was on the right hand side, and very steep,” the name of Pico (Peak).⁸⁴

The anxiety of finding gold was so strong that on the fourth day, in the “many rapids” and *itaipavas* they crossed, where the water was shallower, they carried out “some tests, finding good flakes” in some. The following day, in some large rapids when they were forced to disembark and carry the canoes by hand, they took the opportunity to pan and found “gold in some streams and *itaipavas*.”⁸⁵ On the eighth day, “beside a large mountain very close to the river,” they found a stream with a good formation of gold,” which they concluded was “the first of the *Campanha* of Tocantins,” since they knew, “that certainly in all these streams and their banks there was gold in abundance throughout the so-called *campanha*.” A league later, “another larger stream, also on the right,

⁸² AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.7v.

⁸³ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.1v-2.

⁸⁴ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.2v.

⁸⁵ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.1v.

with good signs of gold.” In the third, since the discovery was not very encouraging, they believed that this was the last river of the *Campanha*, the reduction of findings indicates the end of these famous mines.⁸⁶ This gold producing region can be visualized in the *Carte manuscrite...*, beside the large bend which the Tocantins made towards the right in the upper part of its course. The Frei Reynaldo river must be the last to which the travelers refer, with the other two being Bagagem and Preto, all flowing from the *Tombo do Ouro* (Golden) Mountains – the names identifying the wealth found or expected there. It did not take much time, because they were not new discoveries which they could claim for themselves, so they continued the *derrota* downriver. (Figure 1)

A little afterwards they reached the New Lands, where, as have been mentioned, the residents had gone “in discovery of gold” and although the chances seemed promising, they did not settle, since there were many people mining nearby.⁸⁷ They only prospected again when they reached the Corichás Rapids, outside the so-called New Lands (Figure 6).⁸⁸ After 24 days, downstream from the river they called Santa Luzia, after passing a few small hills on the left, “which accompany the river,” they found a small island and various streams which flowed down from a distant mountain range. They camped on the bar of one of them, “which came an opening in the river coming from the mountain” and spent two days prospecting. They found “various *socavões* and in all found great signs of gold.” It seemed that they had finally encountered the mines of their dreams! José da Costa Diogo decided afterwards to send “some comrades for diligence and tests in some streams which were nearby” with these tests being successful and “from which they returned satisfied.” They then decided “to delay a while,” but it was necessary to leave “due to the many gentiles” who attacked the campsite. The natives prevented them from entering their private paradise! Once again the explorers-travelers-miners set off downriver.⁸⁹

When they felt safe, on the 30th day in a river on the right hand side, they enlivened themselves to try again. They concluded that they had “a good formation of gold, but they did not make much of it.” They soon saw on the left some red mountains, which they baptized with the name of their color, from where there flowed “various streams, all with a good formation,” according to what experience had taught them. Was it the *Serra dos Martírios* which so many looked for? Landing on the bar of one of them, they made in its bed “a *socavão* in the stream in which they found gold, and more within four.” José da Costa Diogo, encouraged with its good potential, sent “four comrades and two slaves to the *campanha*” to carry out new tests. They returned after four days and stated that the discoveries had proved to be promising. They concluded that it was time to build a “stronghold in which they could shelter because they had permanent mines throughout

⁸⁶ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f1v-2.

⁸⁷ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.2v-3v.

⁸⁸ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f5-5v.

⁸⁹ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f6-7.

the *campanha*!” José da Costa Diogo’s prospecting by the bar, “also was not discontented about the tests with the *socavões*” and he agreed that they were the mines they had so anxiously searched for! In an appropriate place, where they could keep watch over the canoes, they made a “camp fire and soon in the most convenient part, they raised a cross to praise Santa Ana.” (Figure 7)

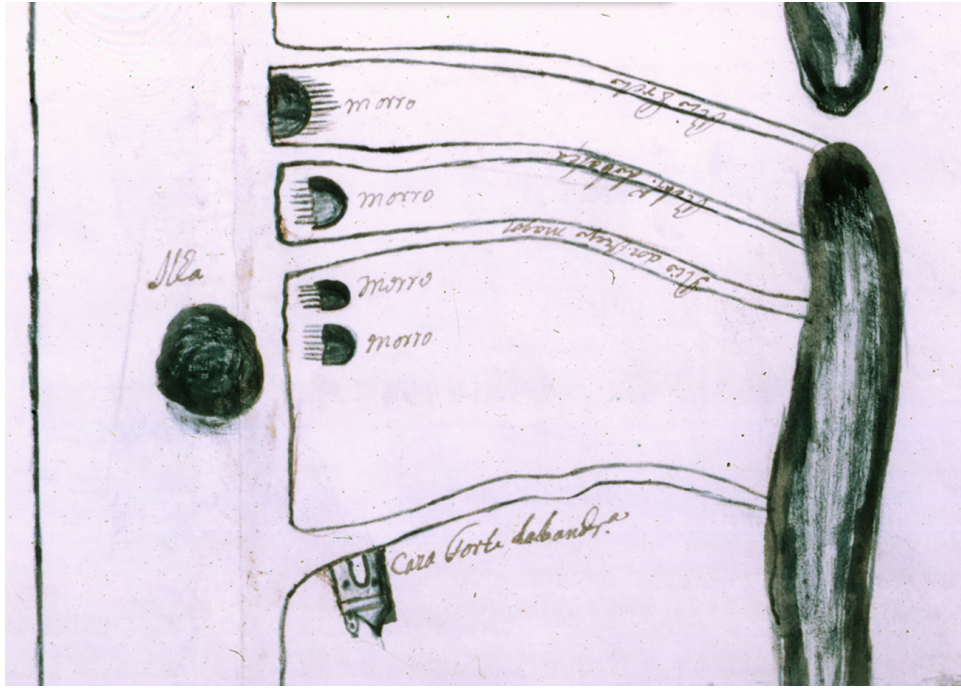


Figure 7: The stronghold of the *bandeira*, constructed in the river where the Santa Ana Mines are located, in the *Carte manuscrite*...

Some of what this reveals needs to be highlighted. The first is the use of the adjective ‘permanent’ referring to these mines, to indicate not only that their wealth was much greater than the prospecting they had done until then, such as the fact that they were what they expected to find beforehand. As they were permanent, these mines demanded the construction of a stronghold, for protection against the Indians, seen as enemies and that so much ephemerality imposed the conquest, also making permanent their form of existence in this place. Also worth highlighting is the raising of a cross and the name they chose - Santa Ana. For the Portuguese, taking possession signified, amongst other ceremonies, erecting stone markers with a carving of the royal coat of arms or raising a cross and also giving names to geographical accidents (Seed, pp. 170-171). The choice of the cross and the name of the saint revealed the religious imagination which precede and marked this conquest. The now miners credited the finding of the so-dreamed of riches to Divine Providence, impressing a religious character, with blessings and the revelation of the discovery, what would allowed them to become permanent settlers.

Their good luck did not last long. A little afterwards, they were attacked by the gentiles, alerted by the fire they had lit. Once again the explorers were frustrated and what they believed to be permanent became once again ephemeral, as if the river and the forests which surrounded them were hostile to the presence of the colonizer. They had to rapidly abandon the area leaving behind their tools and “and some small things” which they had brought. The Indians followed them “half a league to the river bank, always shouting,” but they managed to shelter on an island, leaving behind the so dreamed of “Santa Ana mines”!⁹⁰

The loss of tools ended their days as miners, although here and there as they descended the Tocantins, they saw streams with promising gravel. What they were left was to continue to Pará and to claim the discovery of their long dreamt of mines, hoping they could return to them. It is not known if they returned, but the information they collected on the journey foisted a final transformation on them. The former traders, afterwards travelers, explorers, and miners, became the craftsmen and informers of a vivid geography, often also dreamed of. The writing of the two travel reports is the material result of this transformation which, like other contemporary documents of the same nature, contributed to the opening of the interior of Brazil. In the hands of historians, the *Roteiro* like the *Carte manuscrite* became priceless sources for knowledge about this process and also for the metamorphoses which these craftsmen of colonization experienced.

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⁹⁰ AHU, MAG, Caixa 1, doc.12, f.7-7v.

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