



Science Panel for the Amazon (SPA)

Working Group IV

PEOPLES OF THE AMAZON

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PEOPLES OF THE AMAZON AND EUROPEAN COLONIZATION (16th - 18th CENTURIES)

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KEY MESSAGES

- The 16th-18th centuries forged some features of the Amazon as its name and some myths are still recurrent, built around a space of wealth (metals, medicines, materials), marginal, distant, dangerous, sometimes empty (as a result of depopulation), fascinating for knowledge circulation.
- Colonial notions such as those based on the “civilization” / “savagery” duality have strongly influenced political and social relations with the political-administrative centers of kingdoms and republics, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For example, there is a constructed opposition between activities considered as signs of “civilization,” such as extensive agriculture, in contrast to hunting, fishing, forestry or subsistence agricultural systems such as the *chakra*. These kinds of dichotomies often appear on the region’s development policies and proposals.
- The construction of “borders”, “limits” and “frontiers” has also been recurrent in the territory: between the European kingdoms and the inheriting States of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English or French colonies; between the mountains and the plain; or among Indigenous peoples. Those borders ignore past and present dynamics of intense exchange, as that performed between the Amazonian territories with the coasts and high Andes.
- The relationship between Indigenous peoples and European conquerors and colonizers was usually violent and defined by tensions in which processes of military and religious domination collided with others of resistance. The Amazonian peoples subjected to mission villages underwent processes of ethnogenesis that gave rise to new identities, containing both traditional and missionary elements.
- The introduction of technologies such as iron tools created both new relations and tensions between Indigenous peoples, and between them and the colonists.
- Several cities of today’s Amazonia were located on areas occupied by Indigenous peoples, while others were built in new places.

ABSTRACT

This chapter deals with the history of the Amazon between the 16th-18th centuries. It is organized according to various themes that have left indelible traces on the territory, in some cases, up to the present day. The name of the Amazon River and then of the whole region illustrates the influence of European myths. Several legends have been woven about the Amazon since then, including that of harboring potential inexhaustible riches or being a dangerous and empty space (largely due to the depopulation of Indigenous peoples).

"Borders" were also established in the Amazon in many ways: between Indigenous peoples, between "civilization" and "barbarism", between urban and savage, between Catholicism and paganism, between Andes and Amazonia, between Brazil, inheritor of the Crown of Portugal, and Andean-Amazonian countries of the Crown of Spain.

Key actors in European colonial expansion were military explorers, state officials, missionaries, and scientists. They built these imaginaries through narratives that included ethnographic information, location of waterways and populations, or creation of maps and dissemination of natural products or elements of natural history. They were also central to the establishment of urban centers.

Since the era of European conquest, the extraction of natural resources has been accompanied by the subjection and exploitation of the workforce and the development of multiple forms of domination and extermination, especially of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, the conquest and colonization of Amazonia implied drastic changes in the relationships within indigenous societies, between Indigenous peoples, and between these and the agents and representatives of the colonial states, varying significantly between the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. In turn, Indigenous peoples have accumulated various forms of resistance and rebellion to preserve their ways of life, territories, and autonomy. This chapter contributes to an understanding of the Amazon as the result of the accumulation of multiple and diverse long-standing determinations.

Keywords: Amazon XVI-XVIII centuries, colonial rule, cultural imposition, myths, discoveries, epidemics, resistance, ethnogenesis, extermination, urbanization, biodiversity extraction

GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT

The chapter includes references, among others, to the following historical milestones:

1494: Treaty of Tordesillas

1541-1542: Francisco de Orellana's expedition with Gaspar de Carvajal

1541: Resistance of the Quijos and other confederate Indigenous peoples on the Coca River

1560: First uprising of the Quijos

1573: Ordinances for new discoveries and pacifications

1579: Second uprising of the Quijos

1579-1599: Rise of the Chicham (Shuar)

1580-1640: Iberian Union

1595: Walter Raleigh's exploration

1616: Founding of Belém do Pará

1630: First missionary wave to the Amazon

1637-1639: Pedro de Teixeira's expedition

1661: Smallpox epidemic in Pará and Maranhão

1643, 1659, 1669: Rebellion of the Cocama great nation

1680-1681: Smallpox epidemic in Mainas

1696: Smallpox epidemic in Pará and Maranhão

1712: Uprising of the Amuesha of Eneo

1721-1723: Black Death in the Cerro de la Sal

1724: Uprising of the Ashaninka

1724: Smallpox epidemic in Maranhão and Pará

1736-1737: Flu epidemic in Cerro de la Sal

1736-1737: Uprising of the Asháninka

1742: Uprising of Juan Santos Atahualpa in the Central Jungle of Peru

1743: Journey of Charles Marie de la Condamine and Pedro Vicente Maldonado through the Amazon

1743-1749: Smallpox and measles epidemics in Pará and Maranhão

1750: Treaty of Madrid

1754-1761. Expedition of Limits to the Orinoco

1759-1767: Expulsion of the Jesuits from Portuguese, French, and Spanish dominions

1766: Uprising of the confederation of Pano peoples: Setebo, Conibo, and Shipibo

1769-1770: Isabel Godin des Odonais's crossing of the Amazon

1777: Treaty of San Ildefonso

1799-1803: Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland's expeditions into the Amazon

INTRODUCTION

As the economy of the Iberian Peninsula was sluggish, one of the most important incentives for the maritime explorations of the 15th century, especially Spanish and Portuguese, was the search for alternative routes for trading spices, located in the Far East, which had been hampered by the expansion of the Ottomans and the taking of Constantinople. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, English, French, and Dutch ships would join these explorations. In this economic context, Christopher Columbus set sail from the port of Palos and, two months later, arrived at Guanahani Island, unaware that it was another continent.

Different expeditions departed from the Caribbean islands that led to the Castilian expansion through Mesoamerica and South America, following the Atlantic coast to the Orinoco River, and the Pacific coast to the heart of the Inca empire. The civil war in which the latter was involved made it easier for Francisco Pizarro and his people to seize power and, therefore, control a good part of the territory on which said empire was organized. In the process of the fall of the Incas, conflicts among the conquerors erupted, notably the one faced by Diego de Almagro and Francisco Pizarro. At the same time, the Portuguese, more interested in preserving their enclaves on the African coast to maintain their trade with Asia, established some ports on the eastern Atlantic coast.

The first explorations of the Amazon were organized from this coastline controlled by the Portuguese, and from the Andes in the hands of Spaniards. Those on the peninsula were living a moment of transition between the Middle Ages and the modern age, in the midst of the emergence of the Renaissance. In a context of worsening conflict between Christians and Muslims, particularly in the kingdom of Castile, and the revival of the idea of the Crusades, their imagination was shaped by biblical stories, chivalric novels, and Greek mythology. With this economic, cultural and social baggage, the conquerors explored, described and named a “strange region,” inhabited by complex societies (see chapter 8), which they called the “country of the Amazons” to which they came in search of the Country of Cinnamon, El Dorado, Gran Paititi, Gran Mojo, and even Eden. They were guided by three principles: gold, personal glory, and gospel (Velásquez Arango, 2012).

This chapter shows the initial impact of these ideological, economic, social, and cultural trends, as well as others generated during the era of conquest and colonization, many of which have lasted for a long time, up to the present day. Some of those processes that took place between the 16th and 18th centuries were: expeditions that navigated the great Amazon River and its basin; ruptures and reconfigurations of the relations between the Andes and Amazonia; expeditions in search of mythical places and knowledge; demographic and cultural impact on indigenous populations; establishment of cities, settlements and institutions of colonial rule; religious missions; indigenous resistance and rebellions; and, last but not least, the delimitation of boundaries between the Brazilian Amazon and the so-called Andean-Amazonia.

The topics within each section follow a chronological order covering, when possible, the entire period of the European conquest and colonization of the Americas.

Arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors: from Gaspar de Carvajal to Cristobal de Acuña and the origin of the name of the Amazon

The Amazon owes its name to “the Amazons,” mentioned in the accounts of Gaspar de Carvajal in 1541-1542. In America, the first chronicles of conquest correspond to a narrative genre that “is part history, part fiction, and part description of geography and nature [...] In this narrative, the chronicler is a witness or participant in the events he describes” (Carrillo 1987: 27). Reading the chronicles of the 16th century requires understanding the subjectivity of the conquerors. Their narratives give an account of the interests and cultural load that they brought from the old continent: the search for the valuable spices of the Far East in the Country of Cinnamon, passing through the sieve of indigenous myths about El Dorado, El Paitite, El Enim or El Gran Mojo, including the stories that interpret what they see based on Greek mythology.

Some attempts to explore the Amazon occurred in the 1530s. One departed from the Atlantic coast, through the Maranhão, led by Aires da Cunha 1535. The other left in 1538 to the eastern foothills and reached the river Huallaga, a headwater of the Amazon. The leader, Alonso de Mercadillo, sent 25 horsemen to explore the country. After 25 days those men, led by Diogo Nunez, reached a land full of Indigenous peoples with gold ornaments.

They fought these and moved on to the territory of a prosperous, well-organized people called Machifalo or Machiparo, whose many villages lay on the upper Amazon (Hemming 1978: 184-185).

After Diego de Almagro's defeat, Francisco Pizarro appointed his brother Gonzalo as Governor of Quito. There, news was already circulating that the Country of Cinnamon or El Dorado were to the East, towards the interior of those lands. Gonzalo Pizarro decided to organize an expedition, managed to gather 220 Spaniards and 4,000 Indigenous peoples, and also summoned Francisco de Orellana, who could only reach him at the intersection of Napo and Aguarico. Having decimated his supplies, they agreed that Orellana, with 57 men, would advance in search of indigenous settlements to obtain food for the entire expedition. He was to return in 3 or 4 days after his departure. He was accompanied by the Dominican Gaspar de Carvajal, chronicler of the expedition. Either because of wanting to get ahead to claim the lands that were discovered or, as he himself pointed out in the trial that later followed in Spain, being unable to return to meet Pizarro against the current and being able to face the danger of mutiny from the people who accompanied him, Orellana decided to continue his journey downstream, along Napo, until he found a great river through which he continued to navigate for several months until its estuary in the ocean (Carvajal [1541-1542] 2007).

Gaspar de Carvajal's chronicle describes that, having been attacked by Indigenous peoples, including some warrior women, they took one prisoner, who gave them information about a large town made up exclusively of women who lived in more than 70 villages, led by one called Coroni. The religious person described them as very white and tall, with long hair, braided and tousled at the head, "very thick and they walk naked in hides covered with their shame, with their bows and arrows in their hands, waging as much war as ten Indians" (Carvajal [1541-1542] 2007: 22). In fact, fame preceded them since the departure of Pizarro, Orellana and Carvajal's expedition and along the way, named as the Amazons. At the expedition's arrival at the Atlantic Ocean, the great river was known as Marañón, later it would be the Orellana River and even later it would receive the name of Amazonas (Carvajal [1541-1542] 2007).

The “discovery” was of such importance that only two years later, Sebastiano Caboto included the Amazon River and the myth of the Amazons in the Planisphere that was published in Venice in 1544 (Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1. Detail of a World map showing the Amazons, 1544



Source: Sébastien Cabot () . In <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40593927f>
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55011003p/f2.item>¹

Almost a century later, between 1637-1639, Pedro de Teixeira departed from Pará, arrived in Quito and made the return route accompanied by the Jesuit Cristóbal de Acuña, who wrote the chronicle of a new discovery of the Amazon River. In it he ratified Carvajal’s narrative about the Amazons, thus consolidating the name of the great river (Melo-Leitão 1941:265-266)²

The chronicles of Carvajal and Acuña, gave an account of the diversity of peoples and languages, large population and the abundance in which they lived. However, between the Orellana–Carvajal and the Teixeira–de Acuña expeditions, the Omagua populations were almost extinct and more others from the estuary of the Amazon River (Melo-Leitão 1941:111).³

It is important to reflect on why this region concentrated such a large number of myths, more than others in the Americas (Pizarro 2009: 13-81). Some authors that we cite in this chapter coincide in pointing out the geographical similarity of the region with that of biblical stories, Greek writings and chivalric novels, which referred to Eden, places of great

¹ To be confirmed

² To be confirmed

³ To be confirmed

wealth and strange beings that, with the spread of the printing press, circulated in the Iberian Peninsula with a seal of veracity. However, due to its permanence in time, one aspect must be highlighted: the Amazon as a privileged expression of the notion of borders in the sense of the “unknown” and “the other,” of that which is beyond a center considered “civilized,” becomes an inexhaustible source of myths (Velásquez Arango 2012).

Millennial and more recent relations between the Andes and the Amazon

The Andes and the Amazon have been linked over time in different ways. There is increasing evidence that their supposed division, due to geographical, climatic, landscape and cultural issues, has been a myth (Pearce et al. 2020). Long before the Spanish conquest, Indigenous peoples who inhabited the so-called “piedmont” or foothills, were fundamental in this connection. They were mediators between the mountains and the jungle plain, mobilizing products such as pepper, coca, potatoes, corn. These “hinge” peoples connected knowledges, myths and products of those vast territories.

During the Inca empire, the Amazon region was known as the *Antisuyu*. Several groups were assimilated (sometimes more forcefully, sometimes more voluntarily) by the Incas before the arrival of the Spanish and in some places their influence lasted. Because of this Inca influence, and of previous relations, the Spaniards encountered many “Andean Indigenous peoples” in the foothills. However, the evidence of that expansion and its precise territorial scope, is controversial and continues to provoke debates (Moore 2016).

With the conquest and subsequent processes of depopulation and indigenous resistance, part of that connectivity was lost. Eventually, this apparent disconnection led, among other things, to build the idea that lowlands and highlands were tight compartments, clearly separated territories. An imaginary border was built between “civilization” and “savagery” or “barbarism”. For example, administrative borders of townships, provinces, etc., were established up to the so-called Eastern borders, although in practice that imaginary borders were highly permeable. During the conquest products such as coca, essential in mining operations, flowed widely from east to west.

The foothills were not a barrier -the most common imaginary-, but an elastic meeting space of material and symbolic exchanges. It was a transitional place whose meaning was complex and evolving, a place of escape or one of confinement, always a refuge (Saignes 1981; Casevitz, Saignes and Taylor 1988⁴).

Myths such as the Amazons, Paitite, Enim or El Dorado contributed to the construction of an unknown and hostile territory beyond the border, but also attractive; Paitite sparked many expeditions of Spaniards toward the Andean-Amazonian slopes.

Like their Inca predecessors, the Spanish conquerors encountered fierce resistance to their expansion in the foothills and plains. According to Saignes (1981:175), “the Spanish failure to settle in the foothills is due both to the lack of large mineral deposits and to the impossibility of exploiting the indigenous labor force.” They also found a different kind of nature, less domesticated and familiar.

An illustration of how the relations between mountains and plains were resignified appears on a map possibly drawn by the religious Hernando de la Cruz from a sketch by the Portuguese pilot Benito de Acosta, presented by Cristóbal de Acuña in 1640 (Burgos Guevara 2005) (according to the National Library of Spain, it is attributed to Martín de Saavedra and Guzmán and prepared in 1639)⁵ (Figure 9.2). In that map, one of the first of the Amazon River, the connection between the Andean glaciers and the Atlantic Ocean appears articulated by the river. The same is observed in the map of the French academic Charles Marie de la Condamine in 1743, after his scientific trip through the Amazon river with the Creole Pedro Vicente Maldonado (Figure 9.3). In both maps, the river and plains were drawn in relation to the mountains. The water determines the main routes for the initial explorations of Spanish gold-seeking soldiers, then of missionaries, and finally of adventurers in search of treasures, including minerals and useful natural products (Chapter 12).

⁴ To be confirmed

⁵ To be confirmed

Figure 9.2. Map of the Amazon, 1640



Source: Biblioteca Nacional de España ⁶

<http://catalogo.bne.es/uhtbin/cgisirsi/0/x/0/05?searchdata1=bica0000041956.7>

Figure 9.3. Map of the Amazon, 1745



Source: Charles Marie de la Condamine, 1745, Académie des Sciences⁸, scale 1:11.500.000

<https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/scanned-maps/catalog/44-9901294834802039419>

More explorations of the Amazon

The first explorations of the Amazon carried out by Europeans, most of them with the support of Indigenous peoples, had motivations that combined greed and curiosity. The first centuries of conquest and colonization witnessed raids by explorers dressed as soldiers, missionaries, scientists, or “entrepreneurial” adventurers such as the *bandeirantes*. Their motivations included the control and possession of territories, appropriation of gold, animals or plants as cinnamon, slavery, contact with local populations and establishment of

⁶ To be confirmed

⁷ To be confirmed

⁸ To be confirmed

⁹ To be confirmed

settlements. Over time, missionary and scientific motivations increased around cartography, geography, natural history and ethnography, sponsored or endorsed by commercial interests. All of those motivations remain until this day, for example in mineral and oil prospecting, bioprospecting of useful plants, or research on ecology, biology, hydrography, climate change, ethnography.

The first race for the appropriation and control of the Amazonian territory was portrayed by the kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland. In the 16th century, the Spaniards organized expeditions from Quito, the site in the Andes closest to the plain and connected with it by millennial routes that served for intensive exchanges between highlands and lowlands (Burgos Guevara 2005). The Portuguese, on the other hand, sailed “upstream,” while the English, French, and Dutch entered mostly from present-day Guianas and Suriname.

Those first travelers were fundamental in settling some myths that alluded to the dangerousness and richness of the Amazon. Some of the most famous were that of a city of gold (El Dorado), a Country of Cinnamon and a territory of warrior women they called Amazons. They also settled the idea of a city or place called Paitite, where the Inca nobility took refuge after the conquest. To this day, that place flows between the imaginary and reality (Tyuleneva 2003). Sometimes that place was confused with the myth of the fabulous empire of the Enim. Those myths were fueled by stories such as that of the Spaniard adventurer Pedro Bohórquez, who supposedly arrived in 1635 to the capital of Enim and had met his sovereign in the royal palace. In the 1680s, the missionary Manuel Biedma founded three missions that provided him with the necessary infrastructure for the exploration of upper Ucayali, where he thought that kingdom was located (Santos 1992: 138).

Since the first chronicles, the fantastic coexisted with the possible, always with the certainty that the Amazon had potential for extractive activities. The river was considered, following the indigenous territorialities, the northern limit of the island of Brazil, whose southern limit was La Plata River. It was also considered the southern limit of the island of Guyana (Ibáñez Bonillo 2015).

One expedition in search of the Country of Cinnamon was led by Gonzalo Díaz de Pineda, who left Quito in 1538. They only reached the foothills. Shortly after, the most famous Francisco de Orellana's expedition took place. Narrated by Gaspar de Carvajal, those chronicles were crucial to construct images of the inhabitants of the forests, among them the legend of the women warriors. El Dorado, on the other hand, appeared in narratives from the 1530s (Langer 1997). Its alleged existence led explorers to several places: the mountains of present-day Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, the Amazon, and to sites in Central and North America. Was it an indigenous ancestral myth or was it created to mock, confuse or get rid of their oppressors? Was it only in the imagination of Europeans, to accommodate and justify their wishes and searches? The answer perhaps lies in a hybrid of these and other possibilities. What we can be sure of is that Europeans named the place with words that represented their ambition for gold and familiar with their symbolisms. One of the best-known narratives in this regard dates back to the end of the 16th century. Walter Raleigh, who entered from present-day Guyana in 1595, wrote an account of a vast, rich, and beautiful empire, whose capital, Manoa, was El Dorado (Figure 9.4). His tale contained fantastic ingredients to stimulate England's imagination and greed, among other things, claiming that it was a continent isolated from the rest of America (Raleigh 1848).

Figure 9.4. The city of Manoa or El Dorado on the shores of Lake Parime

FIGURE TO BE FINALIZED

Source: Raleigh (1848)¹⁰.

¹⁰ To be confirmed

During the second half of the 16th century, several Spanish expeditions departed from Cusco and Asunción in search of the Kingdom of Paitite or Mojos. From Cusco they reached the region of Madre de Dios and the Beni River, and reported numerous Indigenous peoples living in the foothills, whom they generically called “chunchos”. Those that left Asunción founded places like Santa Cruz de la Sierra in 1561, and went to the land of the Mojos Indigenous peoples, in the upper and middle basin of the Mamoré River, without finding the wealth they were looking for. A well-known expedition, due to its dramatic circumstances, was that of Lope de Aguirre.

From 1640, expeditions added new meanings, including missionary purposes (Saignes 1981). Several missionaries, especially Jesuits and Franciscans, incorporated cartographic and natural history into their activities, helping to spread the idea of a wonderful world and providing instruments for its control (Chauca 2019). In 1741, the Jesuit Joseph Gumilla published the book *El Orinoco Ilustrado*, describing the preparation of the *curare* poison and giving accounts of Amazonian peoples and nature. When Charles Marie de la Condamine traveled the river with Pedro Vicente Maldonado, in 1743, he met the Swiss Joannes Magnin, a cartographer and ethnographer in charge of the missions of Mainas, who gave him copies of his maps (la Condamine [1738] 1986). The French academic also accessed at least one map by the Czech-German Samuel Fritz (Figure 9.5), who lived in the region in the late 17th and early 18th centuries (de Almeida 2003¹¹). He took those maps to Europe and used them to perfect his own cartography. Pedro Maldonado contributed to the circulation of knowledges on the Amazon through his fine map of the Real Audiencia de Quito and his presentations on the poison called *curare*, a mixture of various ingredients, before the Académie Royale des Sciences in Paris in 1747, and the Royal Society in 1748.

A singular and unusual narrative of the Amazonian journey was that of Isabel Godin des Odonais. In 1750, her husband Jean Godin des Odonais, nephew of the academic Louis Godin, arrived in Quito as part of the Geodesic Mission of which La Condamine, traveled to Cayena without her and could not, or did not want to, return to Riobamba present-day Ecuador. More than 20 years later, she departed to Cayena, crossing the Amazon, having a

¹¹ To be confirmed

dangerous and dramatic journey in which her companions died, leaving her alone. On the brink of death, she was helped by two indigenous. Seeing her alone and lost in a riverside bank, they received her in a canoe with kindness and true affection, gave her all the attentions needed, and took her to Andoas, from where she was able to continue, with new dangers but never similar to the previous ones. That adventure, recounted in the Amazon, in Cayena and in the salons of Paris by Isabel and her husband (Godin des Odonais [1773] 1827), spread around the world and contributed to building the idea of a risky territory.

A relevant expedition in the mid-18th century was to delimit the demarcation of the Treaty of Madrid. The Spanish crown sent in 1754 a commission under José de Iturriaga, with officers, doctors, cartographers, astronomers, chaplains, surgeons, soldiers and a group of naturalists led by the Swedish Pehr Löfling.

Among the more scientific explorers of the Amazon stand out the Prussian Alexander von Humboldt and the French Aimé Bonpland. For example, they confirmed the veracity of the imaginary of the “island of Brazil,” when verifying that the Casiquiare channel joins the Negro River with the Orinoco (Figure 9.6). They also made novel observations on Amazonian fauna and flora, such as electric eels, on which they made experiments (Figure 9.7) (Humboldt and Bonpland 1811-1833).

For the European since the 16th century, the Amazon represented a territory with potential countless and unknown riches. That exoticism raised all kinds of imaginaries, myths and possibilities. The first raids sought, with the force of the sword, everything from precious metals to humans that could be enslaved. They established the first narratives about a space that could be cruel, although still holding rewards. Then the missionaries became key to knowledge circulation and territorial control, being the protagonists in the opening of waterways, drawing of maps, and ethnography and natural history observations. They were followed by several naturalists through the centuries, motivated by their curiosity about natural history and geography, and their economic interests, always sponsored, directly or indirectly, by the greed for overseas territories and raw materials in Europe. These actors occasionally refuted or clarified myths, but always built new challenges for scientific curiosity, maintaining the permanent fascination for a territory rich in possibilities and risks. Among the imaginaries of non-Amazonian peoples, the ideas of a place containing

wealth, populations to be intervened, or knowledges about the material and cultural world, are still very alive.

Figure 9.5. The Amazon river, 1691



Source: Samuel Fritz, 1691. Bibliothèque nationale de France¹², département Cartes et plans, GE C-5037 (RES). In <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40595394d>¹³

Figure 9.6. The Orinoco, Atabajo, Casiquiare and Negro River, 1800

¹² To be confirmed

¹³ To be confirmed



Source: Designed by Alexander von Humboldt in Quito, 1802, finished by J.B. Poirson in Paris, 1814; Engraved by Blondeau and written by L. Aubert¹⁴. In

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8492733z>¹⁵.

Figure 9.7. A cross-section of the electric eel (lower right) and an elongated knifefish (top of the plate).

FIGURE TO BE FINALIZED

Source: Engraved by Leopold Müller, based on a drawing by Humboldt. En Humboldt y Bonpland (1811-1833). Bibliothèque nationale de France¹⁶.

<https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb30628253w>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elektrofisch.jpg>¹⁷

A scenario of conflicts between the Kingdoms of Spain and Portugal

The Lusitanian-Hispanic confrontation is almost as old as the arrival of Europeans in America. While the Inter Caetera Bull issued by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 donated the Catholic Monarchs of the American territories, in exchange for the spread of the Christian

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¹⁷ To be confirmed

faith among “their” native populations, the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494 gave the Spanish crown control over the entire continent, except for the far east which remained in Portuguese hands (Figure 9.8). A territorial agreement that in no way guaranteed dominion over most of the Amazon basin, much less its inhabitants (Herzog 2015a: 17-37), but which undoubtedly laid the foundations for what would end up being the current configuration of the region and, by extension, of all of South America.

The absolute lack of knowledge of the territories crossed by this imaginary demarcation line meant the Treaty of Tordesillas was not easy to apply. Hence, although both crowns vowed to respect this delimitation, the tools that each empire used in its penetration process and the obstacles that each one had to face, explain the differences in their expansive success. Whereas the occupation of the Amazon received broad support on the Portuguese side, the Spaniards governed as though the tropical frontier were worthless (Lucena 1991: 7). The Portuguese advancing forces included soldiers and ransoming troops, allied natives, missionaries, and private traders, while the Spanish counterpart consisted mainly of missionaries and, to a lesser extent, soldiers. Hence, the main frontier institution in Portugal was of a military nature, and the Spanish one was missionary. Moreover, the Spaniards faced the topographic barrier of the Andes, causing their incursions into the Amazon short-lived and without continuity over time, failing in consolidating a permanent presence. Simultaneously, the Lusitanians made uninterrupted advances from their coastal settlements to the west, ascending the course of the Amazon River and its tributaries beyond the line agreed upon in the treaty, strengthening their presence in the tropical plain (Zárate Botía 2001: 236-240).

The Portuguese exploited the dynastic union of the two Iberian crowns, between 1580 and 1640, to push their conquests far to the west (Hemming 1978: 229). These advances became part of a military, religious, and administrative project for the vast interior areas of the basin that laid “the foundations for the integration and effective colonization of the immense Amazonian territory” (Santos Pérez 2019: 45). This resulted in the spread of the Portuguese and Spanish languages in the territories that would be gradually occupied by agents from both kingdoms. And, with this, the imposition of European practices (cultural, commercial, legal, spiritual) that would guarantee the Iberian colonization of the region; we

will delve into that later. It is also in this context that Pedro Teixeira's expedition in 1637-1639 must be understood, traveling up the Amazon River to Quito intending to integrate the space dominated by both crowns, recognize the territory and the indigenous populations, and confronting the English, French and Dutch occupation attempts from the north (Hemming 1978: 213, 223-237). In any case, border conflicts resumed almost immediately after the separation of the so-called "Iberian Union" in the mid-17th century.

The limits between the Portuguese and Hispanic possessions were still far from being defined at the beginning of the 18th century. Border conflicts intensified among the subjects of both crowns. The dynasty that assumed the Lusitanian throne strengthened the colonization model that had been in place since the previous century to ensure a greater presence of its various colonial agents in the Amazon basin. Over the following decades, first, more fortifications were erected on the northwestern and southwestern flanks of the frontiers with the Spanish dominions; second, the explorations of religious Orders were encouraged up the Amazonian rivers until they converged in the territories that, in turn, were occupied by mission villages of their counterparts under Spanish jurisdiction; and third, the advance of the agricultural frontier was boosted, whose advancement required indigenous labor captured by ransoming troops and private individuals with (and without) a royal license (Hemming 1978: 217-282, 416-451; Purpura 2006). This expansionist policy resulted in increased *in situ* or diplomatic disputes (Herzog 2015a) between state, clergy and military agents, traders, and indigenous, both autonomous and subject to one crown or another, particularly in the areas of the Guaporé, Mamoré, Marañón, and Napo rivers (Lehm Ardaya 1992; Avellaneda 2016; Lopes de Carvalho 2011). In turn, it favored that, from the Lusitanian point of view and taking into account Teixeira's and the ransoming expeditions, the western limit with the Spanish domains was located at the mouth of the Yavarí River in the Amazon (Hemming 1978: 275; Santos 1992: 168)¹⁸.

In the mid-18th century, pressure to end long-standing disputes between the two kingdoms made the boundary demarcation between the two crowns in the Americas an urgent issue. The Treaty of Madrid of 1750 was approved after several negotiations in which each party

¹⁸ To be confirmed

provided maps, documents, and reports to support its arguments (Ferreira 2007; Martín-Merás 2007). This agreement modified the ambiguous demarcation line established three centuries earlier for another equally imprecise one as far as the Amazon was concerned: although the treaty advocated the physical limits of the great tributaries of the Amazon River, such as the Yavarí, Yurúa, Purús, Guaporé, and Madera, their hydrographic basins were practical, if not totally, unknown at that time. This forced the drawing of virtual boundaries linking these more or less known natural accidents. The treaty, however, was short-lived since it was annulled in 1761 alluding to the continuous incidents involving agents of both parties and the heavy smuggling that existed between the two territories (Lucena 1991: 11-19; Roux 2001: 515-517). The lack of a recognized delimitation favored the persistence of Portuguese advances towards the Neogranadine provinces in the north and Mojos and Chiquitos in the south, with the consequent dispatch of armed forces by the Spanish authorities. Meanwhile, the military, administrative and economic reforms undertaken by both crowns since the mid-18th century promoted the furtive migration from the domains of one to those of the other by their agents on their borders, such as missionary indigenous, enslaved or free African people, farm laborers, or deserting soldiers (Lopes de Carvalho 2011; Gomes, 2012¹⁹; Avellaneda 2016; Martínez 2020). Said scenario compelled the opening of new diplomatic negotiations between Spain and Portugal that finally gave rise to the Treaty of San Ildefonso of 1777 (Figure 9.8). This treaty reproduced the terms agreed in 1750, specifying certain legal aspects and maintaining many of its geographical uncertainties (Lucena 1991: 24-28; 1999; Souza Torres 2011²⁰; Herzog 2015a: 25-69).

The field survey of the frontier limits stipulated in both treaties was entrusted to Boundary Commissions created by each crown and composed of engineers, geographers, botanists, astronomers (Hemming 1987: 26-35). The delimitation efforts were conducted in several expeditions sent to different areas along the demarcation line, each one composed a priori equally of Spaniards and Portuguese. In most of them, however, the disparity of the Spanish expeditions compared to the Portuguese regarding personnel numbers, logistical capacity, and control of supplies and provisions would subordinate the former to the latter's

¹⁹ To be confirmed

²⁰ To be confirmed

interests. This situation eventually led to the legitimization of Portuguese dominion over many of the disputed areas (Lucena 1991; 1999; Zárte Botía 2001: 250-255). The outcomes resulting from the negotiations and delimitation work of these commissions are largely responsible for the current configuration of the Amazon by “outlining and creating an imperial frontier that did not exist until then, and by giving shape to what is known as the Andean Amazon or upper Amazon, and the Brazilian Amazon” (Zárte Botía 2012: 29).



Figure 9.8. Sources: Roux JC. 2001

Depopulation: the impact of conquest and colonization on the indigenous populations of the Amazon

As mentioned in Chapter 8, it is estimated that in the first 100 years of the conquest and colonization of the Amazon, the demographic losses of indigenous populations reached up to 95% (Koch et al 2019). The high vulnerability of these people to inter-ethnic contact, due to the rapid spread of diseases and the fall in fertility rates, occurs to the present-day (Morán 1993). In the 1950s, Ribeiro (1956) and Wagley (1951), anthropologists who were concerned with the demographics of indigenous populations in Brazil, observed that contact with non-Indigenous peoples led to demographic catastrophes, in many cases leading to extermination of many peoples. Ribeiro (1967) estimated that between 1900 and 1957, in Brazil alone, 87 ethnic groups had become extinct. At present, Indigenous peoples in initial contact or in voluntary isolation face the risk of disappearing for the same causes as in the past.

The analysis of the demographic evolution of the populations of Amazonia, especially during the 16th to 17th centuries, is based on data that were collected in response to various criteria and positions on the potential of the ecosystems and the workforce, in estimates by chroniclers and missionaries based on direct observation or by transmission from their informants. Meanwhile, by the 18th century, the recording of mission data for administrative and evangelization purposes was relatively more systematic.

According to archaeological evidence (Chapter 8), the demographic densities of indigenous populations were higher than those existing today. These findings have led to some attempts to estimate, in some way, the demographic losses caused by contact with Iberian agents during the centuries of conquest and colonization. One of the first researchers to link archaeological remains and demographic losses during the first century of contact was William Denevan (1980). According to him, until 1950, the estimates that attributed a low density of indigenous populations as a characteristic of the Amazon (Steward, 1948) were due, on one hand, to the fact that they were based on late sources from the second half of the 17th century, when the indigenous populations had already suffered the onslaught of diseases and epidemics as a result of contact; and, on the other hand, because they considered the immense extension of the Amazon. Denevan considered that in the Amazon, the demographic distribution was very uneven and that there were areas with very high densities, particularly on the banks of the great rivers (varzea), the coast at the Amazon's

estuary in the Atlantic and the low savannas. However, new archaeological discoveries indicate the existence of many other regions that must have had high densities. In all cases, it is estimated that the indigenous populations at the time of indirect contact (due to the arrival of the diseases even before the Iberians set foot in the Amazon) or direct due to their physical presence in the region, were even higher than those that exist today. These population losses implied processes of ethnic disarticulation that accentuated the vulnerability of Indigenous peoples, forcing them, in many cases, to seek refuge and even request the presence of missionaries and the establishment of reductions in their territories (Lehm, 1999²¹; 2016).

In fact, as was seen at the beginning of this chapter, the first chronicles, such as that of Gaspar de Carvajal, show numerous indigenous populations, governed by complex organizational systems, enjoying products and resources in abundance and they contrast with the chronicles of a century later, like that of Cristóbal de Acuña, which already accounted for the disappearance of once populous Indigenous peoples. Among the first groups, which are mentioned as disappeared, are those who lived at the Amazon's estuary in the Atlantic and the Omagua (Carvajal [1541-1542] 2007; (Melo-Leitão 1941:111)²².

Despite the advances in the study of the historical sources of the Amazon, there are still pending searches and more exhaustive analyses of the sources of the 16th century that allow a better understanding, precisely, of the shocking period of conquest.

For the second half of the seventeenth century there is more systematic demographic information, since it was in the interest of the missionaries and the Spanish crown to keep relatively detailed records on the demographic dynamics in the reductions. Similarly, in the case of the Pará and Maranhão regions (Brazil), there are records of epidemic outbreaks in a context of concern about the loss of indigenous and slave labor. In these sources there is a reiterative reference to demographic losses due to 1) the spread of diseases, facilitated by the concentration of indigenous populations in the reduction centers; 2) the damage caused to them by being extracted from the places where they lived, forced many times to seek

²¹ To be confirmed

²² To be confirmed

refuge from the slaver traders' expeditions of Portuguese and Spanish civilians and soldiers; 3) the raids to capture indigenous populations; 4) submission to labor regimes and life systems contrary to their own tradition.

As can be seen in Table 9.1 and Figures 1 and 2 relative to some Jesuit and Franciscan missions, the demographic rise emerging from the recruitment process of indigenous populations in the missions was followed by progressive demographic declines until the second half of the 18th century, at the end from which, they began to recover slightly and progressively, until the 19th century when the Rubber boom would lead to new declines. The indigenous populations of the Amazon would never fully recover from the impact of conquest and colonization.

Among the most affected indigenous populations are those corresponding to Indigenous peoples located in the sub-Andean region due to their proximity to the Spanish cities, from where, as colonial rule expanded, so did the diseases brought by Europeans such as smallpox, measles and influenza, against which indigenous populations lacked biological defenses. Subject to Franciscan missions, in the so-called Conversions of Huánuco in Peru, it was estimated that the population of the Panatahua and Payanzo Indigenous peoples decreased from 10,000 inhabitants in 1644 to only 300 in 1713 (Santos 1992: 184)²³. The few that remained subsumed among the Andean population disappearing as an Amazonian ethnic identity. As was noted, the disappearance of many Indigenous peoples of the eastern foothills determined fractures in the relations between the Andes and the Amazon and contributed to the idea of the "great Amazonian emptiness."

The reduced indigenous populations in the missions on the banks of the great rivers such as those of Mainas also suffered great losses and the disappearance of many indigenous nations. This is because the Iberians preferentially used the large rivers to move around, spreading the diseases where the largest number of missions were found, which coincided with the high demographic density of the indigenous populations. Between 1719 and 1767 the region would be devastated by three great epidemics that affected the Maina, Cocama, Cocamilla, Omagua, Yurimagua and Conibo peoples, concentrated in missions along rivers

²³ To be confirmed

such as the Marañón, Huallaga, Ucayali and the upper Amazon. The demographic losses were impressive: for example, it is estimated that the general smallpox epidemic that occurred between 1680 and 1681 killed around 85,000 indigenous people, of the 100,000 who were concentrated in the missions of Mainas, only 15,000 survived (Santos, 1992²⁴: 189). The regular increase of the population in the missions of Mainas (with decreases in 1727 and 1745, according to the census reports of the Jesuits) is only explained by the recruitment of indigenous populations not yet reduced. In the Mainas region, the Jesuits privileged the so-called “Correrías de Indios” (Indian raids) to the interfluvial regions, as a frequent and systematic strategy for recruiting the indigenous population for their missions (Lehm 1992).

Table 9.1. Census reports from Mainas

Year	Number of Indigenous peoples	Number of missions	Population average per mission
1719	7.966	28	284
1727	5.942	22	270
1740	11.036	32	313
1745	12.909	41	307
1760	12.229	34	359
1767	19.234	36	534

Source: Galob, 1982:²⁵193 En: Santos, 1992: 186

²⁴ To be confirmed

²⁵ To be confirmed

Both in Mainas and the Conversions of Huánuco, the children population under 5 years of age was the most affected: there were missions in which during four years no child had survived more than four years (Santos 1992: 190²⁶).

The demographic evolution of five Amuesha missions in the Franciscan conversions of Cerro de la Sal (Peru) and of the twenty-six Jesuit missions of Mojos show similar trends, as can be seen in Figures 9.7 and 9.8, the demographic growth during the first years of the establishment of the missions is mainly due to the recruitment of the free indigenous population, followed by demographic drops that reach 50% compared to the zenith, and finally a recovery process. In the case of the Cerro de la Sal Conversions, the demographic falls were mainly due to the spread of diseases and, as we will see later and Santos (1992)²⁷ shows, they were followed by uprisings: between 1710 and 1818, these missions suffered four great epidemics, between 1721-1723 an epidemic of the so-called black plague affected mainly the Asháninka population and between 1736-1737 an influenza epidemic devastated the Yánesha and Asháninka populations (Santos, 1993)²⁸.

In the case of Mojos, according to Block (1994), demographic declines were due to the impact of diseases, low fertility rates probably due to contact stress, the permanence of cultural practices such as selective infanticide to the detriment of women and twins, as well as the Lusitanian invasions. The size of the population makes it possible to highlight the importance of the Mojos Missions in relation to those of Cerro de la Sal and even with those of Mainas.

²⁶ To be confirmed

²⁷ To be confirmed

²⁸ To be confirmed

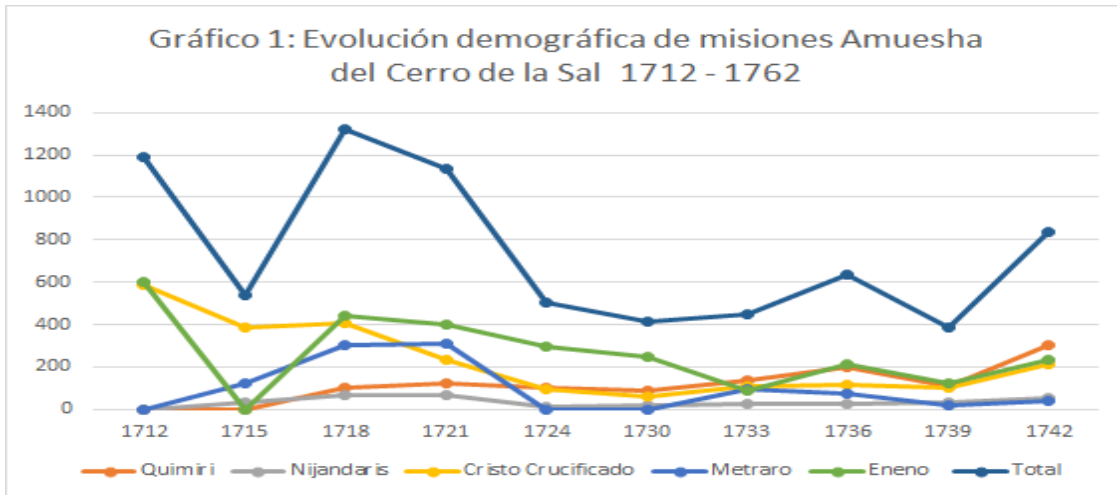


Figure 9.9 Source: Santos 1992: 194

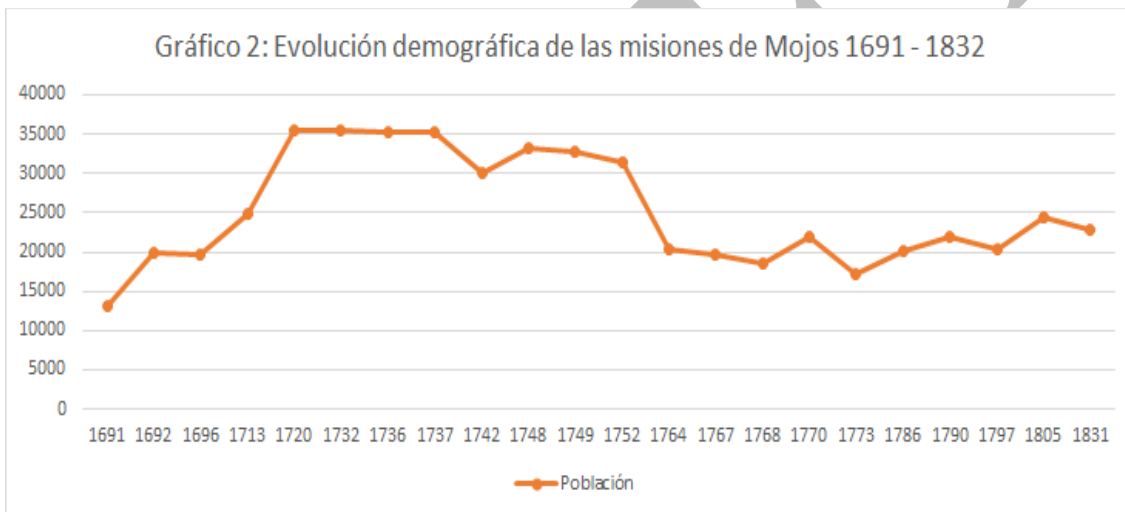


Figure 9.10 Source: Barnadas 1985:LV

The regions of Pará and Maranhão would also be the scene of epidemic outbreaks in 1661, 1695, 1724 and 1743-1749. The earliest smallpox outbreak, in 1661, occurred in Pará: it began among the Portuguese settlers, affecting them, their slaves, and the indigenous populations of the interior villages. In 1695, the epidemic outbreak, also of smallpox, in Maranhão, was known as the "great death," and the disease was spread by a slave ship. At the beginning of the epidemic, 2,000 deaths were estimated among the Portuguese, slaves, and Indigenous peoples in the region. At the end of the century, the figure rose to 5,000. Between 1724 and 1725, a new epidemic caused great deaths among the white, slave and

indigenous population. The death of more than 1,000 slaves, especially indigenous, was mentioned. The epidemic had been dispersed by the trip of the bishop of Maranhão and Pará. The first cases appeared in the canoe that was transporting them, and they left sick indigenous in the villages located along their journey, spreading the disease. Many indigenous fled to the interior seeking refuge, taking the disease with them to regions where its true impact would never be known. Between 1743 and 1749, epidemic outbreaks of smallpox and measles were registered in Pará and all its districts. In 1750, it was estimated that the deaths from this long period of epidemics reached 18,377, of which 7,600 were residents of Belem and the rest of indigenous villages subject to religious orders (Chambouleyron *et al* 2011).

All the epidemics in the Portuguese Amazon were accompanied by royal authorizations to “extract” free Indigenous people from the interior jungles with the argument of replacing the losses of labor force in the cities and productive fields of the Portuguese settlers. Likewise, the declines of the indigenous labor force due to the epidemics resulted in the intensification of the slave trade brought from Africa to Pará and Maranhão. The first slave route to this region developed between the mid-1690s and the mid-1700s, accusing the indigenous depopulation due to epidemics. Since 1690, the epidemics also generated the recruitment of soldiers especially from the interior regions of the Madera basin (Chambouleyron *et al* 2011).

The expeditions and boundary commissions between the kingdoms of Portugal and Spain would bring with them new demographic declines due to confrontations with the Indigenous peoples and the spread of diseases there they brought with them. During the first half of the century, the confrontation between the Manao Indians and the Portuguese caused the death of more than 20,000 Indigenous peoples of this nation; by the second half of the century, these people had been disarticulated. However, some survivors joined the Mura, putting up the greatest resistance to the boundary commissions (Zárate, 2014).

In summary, there were two major periods in the demographic analysis: the one that refers to the arrival of the conquerors whose references are qualitative and not very precise, and the colonial period, whose data are based mainly on the mission sources with more detailed records but circumscribed to the mission’s space, leaving aside the great universe outside

the mission areas. Other sources are the reports and requests of the Portuguese authorities based in Belem and Maranhão.

The gaps in the more exhaustive search for 16th century sources prevent a better approach to the critical moment of the transition between the pre-Columbian and colonial periods. However, indirect analyses and subsequent experiences of the contact of Indigenous peoples with agents of non-indigenous populations allow us to deduce catastrophic declines in indigenous populations, especially during the first century of conquest.

The analysis of the historical sources of the colonial period largely corroborates this demographic collapse. These sources indicate the main factors of demographic loss to be established as the diseases brought by Europeans against which the Indigenous peoples had no defenses, the demographic concentrations in mission centers as facilitators of the spread of diseases, the capture of indigenous for urban centers, in addition to being subjected to living and working conditions completely different from their way of life. In the case of the territories under the control of the Portuguese crown, the demographic losses due to the epidemics led to authorizations for the recruitment of indigenous labor in the interior regions for the colonist population at the same time that the African slave trade intensified towards Pará and Maranhão. In the 18th century, both the Portuguese and Spanish crowns intensified the recruitment of the indigenous population, especially from the Madera region, to serve as soldiers in the forts. The information from the Jesuit and Franciscan missions allows us to point out for the second half of the 18th century a slow process of recovery of the indigenous populations, without reaching, however, the levels of the pre-Columbian period.

The demographic reduction contributed to perpetuating the myth of the “great Amazonian emptiness” and the rupture between the Amazon and the Andes. At the same time, the study of demographic problems in the context of contact with non-indigenous agents is essential to draw attention to the reproduction of this dynamic throughout history up to the present, highlighting the current situation, particularly critical of Indigenous peoples in initial contact or in voluntary isolation.

Colonial control and dominance: the establishment of European populations in the Amazon

Since the 16th century, the Amazon became an open field for the different European agents who entered the region to exploit its natural, mineral, and human resources, to establish urban centers and occupy its territory, and to evangelize its inhabitants in the name of the unity of the Christian faith (García Jordán 1999). Back then, uncultivated lands were seen by Europeans as not properly occupied lands, physically abandoned, what from their logic implied that despite the native presence, those territories were empty and open to their incursion and effective occupation (Herzog 2015b). And accordingly, they understood that wherever population and economic activity they would establish meant territory was controlled and, therefore, under colonial rule.

The first entries to the area were made primarily by subjects of the Hispanic monarchy looking for mythical riches, who provided the first data on the territory and its inhabitants. The Crown delegated functions of conquest to the private initiative that the state could not carry out by itself, promising titles and grants to those who were successful. Over the following decades, numerous expeditions were organized from the Andean highlands and the Atlantic coast to enter the Amazon on behalf of the Crown. These so-called *huestes indianas* had an eminently military character and their objective was the discovery of new territories, the identification of their resources, the contact with the native population, and the establishment of urban centers (Useche 1987; Casevitz, Saignes and Taylor, 1988: 124-179, 233-293)²⁹.

The main institution introduced by the Spanish monarchy to ensure its domain was the *encomienda*. The Crown handed over an indigenous population within a specific territory to subjects who had excelled in military services of discovery and conquest. The *encomenderos* did not have rights over the land, but over the Indigenous people who were regrouped in new settlements, indoctrinated in the Christian faith, and used as labor in different economic activities as part of their transformation into vassals. Although the *encomienda* had a greater presence in coastal and highland areas, it also spread to the

²⁹ To be confirmed

Amazonian foothills, with special force in the current Ecuadorian region (Casevitz, Saignes and Taylor, 1988:233-293³⁰; Santos 1992:81-106, 157-163). The lack of its regulation led to violence and abuse by the *encomenderos*. The publication of the *Sublimis Deus* Bull stating the right of Indigenous peoples to be treated like any other vassal of the Christian princes prompted a change in Indian legislation: the prohibition of inheriting entrusted people. This institution slowly disappeared with the death of its holders, leaving the natives under the tutelage of the Crown (Peñate 1984). However, Taylor (1999: 214) points out that titles and the privileges that went with them remained recognized in Western Amazonia for many years to come. From the 17th century onwards, the military ceased to be the Spanish spearhead into the Amazon to give way to a peaceful occupation by missionaries, as we will see in the following section. However, this did not exclude the use of armed force on certain occasions (entries or raids) either to face native hostility or to ensure their evangelizing work on the immediate border with other European crowns (Herzog 2015a:109-114).

Indeed, at that time, besides the Spaniards and Portuguese, the English, French, and Dutch also settled between the estuaries of the Orinoco and the Amazon, competing with their Iberian rivals for trade and labor relations with the native inhabitants (Hemming 1978: 119-138, 198-229, 283-311; Lorimer 1989; Van Nederveen Meerkerk, 1989).

In the early 16th century, the Portuguese established small warehouses along the Atlantic coast where some people lived and occasionally traded with the natives. Soon after, the Crown sought to expand its domains, dividing the coast into hereditary captaincies whose administration was granted to private individuals who, in turn, distributed land to their men. Expeditions of armed men, usually known as *bandeiras*, were organized from these captaincies to advance from the coast towards the interior of the territory in search of gold and precious stones and the capture of indigenous populations, who were then enslaved and taken to the coastal enclaves and plantations. The northernmost captaincy lay to the east of the estuary of the Amazon. Portuguese attempted to explore the great river early on, but indigenous resistance to the advances of ransoming troops soon put an end to their efforts

³⁰ To be confirmed

in the area for the rest of the century. Slaving expeditions throughout the region of the Pará and lower Amazon would restart in the 17th century, now with the assistance of Catholic missionaries. The natives captured in wars were classified as slaves and as “free” men those who were “persuaded:” the former belonged to the traders and settlers, the latter were lodged in mission villages and were expected to work for private individuals and state officials (Hemming 1978: 7-10, 69-78, 184, 218-220, 335, 412-413; Monteiro 2019).

There were several attempts to grant freedom to the Amazon natives under Lusitan rule. None lasted. Indigenous capture and enslavement continued legally enforced well into the 18th century. The Crown did not interfere with the capture of Indian labor by ransoming troops (Hemming 1978: 311-317, 412-419; Perrone-Moisés 1992; Lopes de Carvalho 2019: 147). It even remained institutionalized during the dynastic union of the two Iberian crowns (1580-1640). This was partly because the Spaniards had promised not to change the Portuguese legal system and felt its inhabitants did not fit into the Laws of the Indies (Hemming 1978: 152). And partly due to the interest in securing the conquest and control of Maranhão and Pará, a territory organized jurisdictionally at the time as a connecting bond between the areas under the control of Spain and Portugal that corresponds approximately to the current Brazilian Amazon (Marques 2009; Santos Perez 2019).

Europeans identified agriculture with the right to land; hunting and gathering did have no place in the equation. The Spanish crown respected the native rights over the lands they cultivated, as long as they submitted to the laws of the kingdom. In the 16th century, they were issued titles based on the continued use of those lands by their ancestors. Such documents would be later invoked to prove their rights to the land since the “times of conquest” (Herzog 2013; 2015a: 124-125). Yet, this only benefited sedentary societies. The nomadism of most Amazonian peoples constrained the acknowledgment of the possession over the extensive lands they occupied (Mariluz Urquijo 1978). Agriculture and, thus, the settlement of these societies at a specific location were essential aspects of colonial society.

Urban settlement (towns, villages, forts, and missions) was part of the strategy of colonial occupation and territorial control of the European forces in the Americas (Guzmán 2017). In the Amazon, the intricate nature, the development of diseases, indigenous resistance, and the lack of mineral wealth hindered their establishment. Some current cities, such as Belém

do Pará or Santarém, remain in their original location. Many others moved, trying to find less problematic or richer places, whose resources would not easily deplete, such as Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia or Zamora and Archidona in present-day Ecuador. Others simply disappeared over time. In Spanish America, some towns founded in the late-16th and early-17th centuries became gateways from which all expeditions attempted to conquer the jungle until the late-19th century (Useche 1987; Casevitz, Saignes and Taylor, 1988: 124-179, 233-293; Musset 2011, 166). On the Lusitanian side, military and private agents progressively moved along the Amazon and the Tocantins, and their tributaries, impelled by growing demand from the extractive and slave economy. The location of savannahs on the banks of the great central rivers favored the formation of large cattle ranches and the expansion of agriculture based mainly on cocoa, but also tobacco and sugar cane. The workforce of these plantations were primarily native and African slaves, who arrived in the region in the mid-17th century. Their presence in the Amazon raised significantly the region's agricultural production for export. Slave labor was also employed in the construction of urban public works and fortifications (Hemming 1978: 343, 367-376; Chamboleyron 2014; Sommer 2019: 617-618). In the 18th century, the last colonial urbanization process took place in the Amazon, this time with a military feature: numerous fortifications were built to defend the imperial borders against rival nations (Souza Torres 2011). Likewise, the Spanish-Portuguese Boundary Commissions organized to define the border limits between the two crowns contributed to this process: small riverside villages ended up becoming cities (e.g., Barcelos, in Brazil), some places where they settled became town centers, such as San Fernando de Atabapo, in present-day Venezuela. The so-called "twin" cities also emerged on either side of the disputed border, as Tabatinga and Loreto de Ticunas, latter Leticia (Zárate Botía, 2012).

From these European enclaves, not only did the raids of the ransoming troops begin, particularly in the Portuguese domains. Exchange relations would also take place with some indigenous populations not subjected to the colonial labor system. European markets were filled with the so-called *drogas do sertão*: vanilla, wild cinnamon, sarsaparilla, nutmeg, urucú, indigo, various oils, resins, wood, cinchona bark, among others; in return, the natives obtained metal axes, knives, weapons and fishhooks (Solórzano 2017: 197). Interest in metal tools led many of them to seek contact with colonial agents and even to

appropriate the forging technology. Access to metal sources, as well, reinforced inter-ethnic conflicts and slavery relations with those groups far from this trading front. The greed for tools created trade circuits connecting the upper Amazon with the Orinoco basin, in present-day Venezuela, and the coasts of the Guianas. The exchange of slaves for tools intensified in the 17th and 18th centuries and lasted well into the 19th century (Benavides 1986, 1990; Santos 1988; Santos 1992: 5-32).

Alliances among European agents and Indigenous peoples were shifting, and functional to the interests of both. Independent Indians had their expectations of gifts, involvement in trade circuits, political preponderance (with titles recognizing their leadership), and dominion over rival groups, which in turn dictated what the European kingdoms were willing to grant them. Europeans saw strategic allies in these autonomous nations, as they could serve as auxiliaries in expeditions into the jungle, act as intermediaries and convince independent peoples to negotiate with them. Alliances allowed the expansion of colonial agents (traders, missionaries, soldiers, ranchers, miners) and extractive and agricultural industries in the Amazon (Herzog 2015a: 97-109; Roller 2019). It is worth recalling that under the European colonial logic, such alliances, rather than securing friendship with the autonomous natives, formally turned them into vassals and the lands they occupied into the property of the Crown (Herzog 2015a: 95).

Incursions into the Amazon had a strong impact on native societies, as they caused the disappearance of many groups, as well as regional and ethnic disarticulations. The most damaged in the Spanish territories were those of the foothills and high jungle, due to their proximity to the Andean urban centers; among them, those who suffered the most were the riverine groups, located on the banks of the great rivers, as opposed to the lesser impact experienced by the interfluvial ethnic groups (Santos 1992). In the Portuguese lands, the societies that inhabited the banks of the Amazon River and, especially in the vicinity of its estuary, were the ones that suffered the worst fate, imprisoned by the slave-owning agents of Belém do Pará; those who avoided most of the European contact lived in the *sertão*, in the inland forests, along the less traveled rivers, or on the waterfalls of its tributaries (Hemming 1990: 213-218; Sommer 2019: 614). In short, the peoples who most suffered

from the European presence were those that inhabited the main access routes to the Amazon.

Jesuits, Franciscans and other orders: mission villages

The Iberian cities were established by military and civilian agents to control the territory, while the mission villages aimed to evangelize the indigenous populations and incorporate them as vassals to the rule of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns. The Ordinances for the new discoveries, conquests and pacifications of 1573 provided that imperial expansion over these populations (and the territories they occupied) would be conducted using persuasion, and appointed the mendicant Orders responsible for such action. This norm was never revoked or modified, which is why it continued to be appealed throughout the eighteenth century (Weber 2013: 144)³¹.

The first missionary wave in the Amazon only took place around 1630. Dominicans, Augustinians, Capuchins, Carmelites, Franciscans, and Jesuits advanced towards the Amazon basin either from the Andes or from the Atlantic coast; however, it was the three latter ones that had the greatest presence in the region (Sweet 1995: 9-10). The Jesuits were the main agents used by the Spanish Crown to enter the Amazonian border: in the upper Orinoco and the plains of Casanare and Meta, the Mainas area following the course of the Napo River, and the Mojos and Chiquitos regions in the headwaters of the Mamoré and Guaporé rivers (Negro and Marzal, 1999; Saito and Rosas, 2017). The intermediate areas from the Andean foothills to the Neogranadine jungles were assigned to Dominicans, Augustinians and Franciscans (Santos 1992: 125-173³²; Merino, Olga; Newson 1994; Chauca Tapia 2019). The missionary spearhead was of much less importance to the Portuguese Crown, which delegated the control of populations and territories to groups of soldiers. The south of the Amazon River was assigned to the Jesuits, who operated in the valleys of the Madeira, Tapajós, Xingú, and Trombeta rivers, while the Franciscans settled in the North Cape (current Amapá) and the Carmelites were entrusted with the evangelization on the border with Mainas and in the valleys of the Solimões and Negro

³¹ To be confirmed

³² To be confirmed

rivers (Torres-Londoño, 1999; Guzmán 2017: 62³³; Sommer 2019; Lopes de Carvalho 2019: 136-137). The search for new populations to evangelize allowed the advancement of the internal border of both empires and the recognition of the geography and hydrology of the Amazon basin, giving rise to the first cartography of these regions (Burgos Guevara 2005; Chauca Tapia 2015).

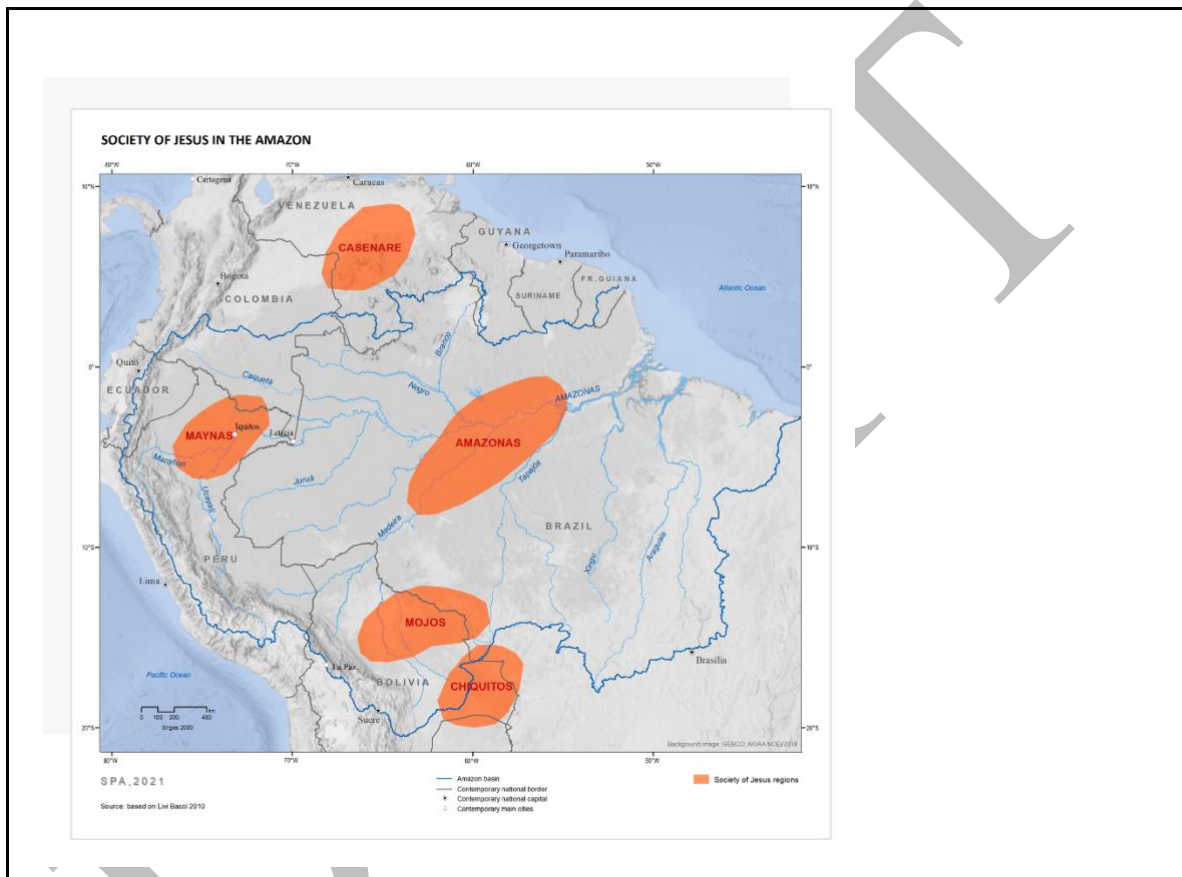


Figure 9.11 Livi Bacci M. 2010

The missionaries’ aim was the Christianization and Europeanization of the Amazonian indigenous groups, who were considered culturally and technologically inferior. The lack of a stable and permanent place of residence, the ignorance of the Christian faith, and the alleged poor discipline, order, and norms of behavior, both personal and group, were attributed to them as signs of barbarism, which justified the missionary intervention (Boccaro 2010: 106-112; Waisman 2010: 209-211). The priority of the missionaries was

³³ To be confirmed

religious conversion: the “infidels” received notions of catechesis to later receive baptism and become “neophytes,” that is, Christian people but in need of tutelage, since they still had to learn to be “vassals” of the Crown (Saito 2007: 454). A guardianship to be performed within the mission village, an urban environment and therefore “civilized” according to the Europeans, where Indigenous peoples had to abandon their attributed state of “barbarism” and embrace a culture of the Western pattern.

9.12. Peruvian indigenous with his weapons

FIGURE TO BE FINALIZED

Source: Francisco Javier Eder, 1791, *Descriptio provinciae moxitarum in regno Peruano*. Biblioteca Nacional de Francia³⁴. In:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b2300042x/f5.item>³⁵

The concentration of the indigenous populations meant the restriction of their mobility and autonomy and the introduction of Iberian cultural aspects that were alien to them. The mission villages followed the Iberian “checkerboard” urban model, in which the church, workshops, and clergy residences were built around a large central square; the parallel streets were occupied by the dwellings of the neophytes, while the indigenous *catechumens* (not yet baptized) lived on the periphery (Martins Castilho Pereira 2014). The introduction of new crops and cattle breeding caused changes in the landscape and ecology of the area (Radding 2008). The promotion of these activities, as well as the training in craft trades (blacksmithing, carpentry, spinning), sought to turn the neophytes into “productive subjects.” This involved a new concept of time, arranged according to a specific purpose and regulated by a bell; also, disciplinary aspects and a compulsive notion of work, leading to the rise of the idea of “indolence” if not producing what was expected; and last, the alteration of kinship systems and gender roles and division of labor (Sweet 1995: 14-22; Santos 1992:43-44). The wealth produced by the mission villages did not always allow them to be self-sufficient: as the Mojos case illustrates, sumptuary goods, metal utensils,

³⁴ To be confirmed

³⁵ To be confirmed

and salaries of specialized personnel were financed by the income obtained from the slave labor on the estates that the Society of Jesus owned on the current Peruvian and Ecuadorian coasts (Block 1994: 65-77).

Various ethnic groups congregated at the mission's villages. Europeans knew these peoples by the specific names of bands, tribes, and chiefdoms, usually given to them by those who did not belong to such groups. Chroniclers and clerics may assign multiple different names to the same people or apply the same name to several different groups, depending on their location or relationship at any given time. These ethnic labels served more to ascribe an identity than to describe them, whilst suggesting a false sense of ethnic purity or continuity, ignoring that people met and mingled, entered and left ethnic groups, became bilingual or polyglot (Weber 2013: 35). Indeed, as the chapter on linguistics discusses in detail, these populations spoke a great number of languages, which prevented their evangelization. The missionaries tried to impose *lingua francas* among Indigenous peoples using grammars and vocabularies. Their goal was cultural and linguistic homogenization. The result of this policy was ambiguous: even if in some provinces the Quechuaization or Guaranization was achieved, in others it was only possible to impose the use of a *lingua franca* within each mission village (Lehm Ardaya 1992: 144-145; Pinheiro Prudente 2017). Over time, these languages solidified as a specific idiomatic variant and became the identity mark of the missionary ethnic groups (Wilde 2019: 549).

The highest authority within the mission was exerted by the missionaries. The leadership of the chiefs was honored but subordinated to the supervision of the latter. A new social order was created. Native leaders held positions in the government, the church, and the militia: while the former had to ensure the community order (moral, social, productive), the latter acted as auxiliaries to the clergy in liturgical celebrations (as sacristans or musicians) and played a defensive role against the Lusitan military advances. The hierarchy of society within the mission villages gave rise to a new native bureaucracy that was distinguished by its attire (clothing and accessories), its differential access to resources and literate culture, being instructed in writing and reading, and the European arts (Saito 2007; Waisman 2010; Lopes de Carvalho 2011; 2019; Avellaneda 2016; Wilde 2019). New leaderships based on the authority and respect conferred on them by both the indigenous and the missionaries

emerged, due to the knowledge of their people and the appropriation of practices of Iberian origin (Sweet 1995: 36-39). Music, painting, and sculpture became the best vehicle for the engagement of many Indigenous peoples in this new order, especially in the Jesuit missions. Traces and aesthetics of indigenous origin were reflected in the arts although subordinated to European creative logic, and perpetuated over time, even once the missionary process was over (Waisman 2010; Diez Gálvez 2017, Monteiro 2019).

In short, the organization of mission villages in the Amazon entailed the territorial and demographic fragmentation of these ethnic groups that left their traditional lands to live under the standards of a new social, economic, labor, and political order, shaping new identities within the centers. Parallel to this clear process of deculturation, a course of ethnogenesis also took place. It was undertaken both by the missionaries, imposing institutions, knowledge, and habits, and by Indigenous peoples, adopting and appropriating them to suit their interests, and giving rise to the so-called “mission culture” or “missionary memory” (Block 1994; Wilde 2019). The missionary experience of these Indigenous peoples led the colonial agents, and later republicans, to consider them closer to “civilization” by living within the state’s political body, while those groups that remained autonomous, continued to be perceived and portrayed as hostiles, barbaric and savages.

The secularization of the missions

In the latter half of the 18th century, the Hispanic and Lusitanian monarchies implemented a reformist policy aimed at strengthening their respective states through the modernization and rationalization of the economy, society, and the administrative apparatus of both the peninsula and the Americas. The secularization of the missions pursued the integration of Indigenous peoples into a broader socioeconomic system, considering their submission to the general laws of justice and taxation, their insertion into the labor market and the regional trade and industry circuits, and their contact and mixing with the colonial society.

The expulsion of the Jesuits was part of this reformist policy. Of all the missionary Orders, they were the ones that received jurisdiction over most of the Spanish Amazon. The Jesuits exercised tight control over the neophytes they tutored, ensuring their minimal relationship with the Hispanic colonial regime, and were highly autonomous in the management and

commercialization of the supplies produced. This autonomy ended up being seen in the mid-18th century as a threat to the power of the colonial state (Mörner 1965; Merino and Newson 1994). The Jesuit presence in the Lusitan Amazon had been declining since the mid-17th century. The frequent conflicts between the missionaries and the settlers and soldiers for the control of the natives and their labor force strained the relationship of the former with the colonial administration: their services would be requested and canceled on successive occasions by the governors of Maranhão and Pará, to the point of being replaced by the Carmelites to run missions in the Solimões, Negro and Branco rivers. This animosity would join in the mid-18th century with the growing private and state interest in having direct access to resources and natives under missionary control (Hemming 1978: 316-341, 410-461; Lopes de Carvalho 2019).

In Portugal, doctrinal modernization and the defense of royal rule advocated by the Marquis de Pombal precipitated the estrangement of the Society of Jesus in 1759. In Spain, the effort to subordinate the religious orders reached its peak when Charles III expelled the Jesuits in 1767. France had already done so in 1764. At that time, the Society of Jesus served about 60,000 Indigenous peoples on the Hispanic Amazonian border in just over 70 mission villages and about 20 with around 25,000 Indigenous peoples along the lower Amazon and its tributaries in the Portuguese domains (Hemming 1990: 224; Merino and Newson 1994: 10-14).

In this context, the Spanish administration approved different provisions in each of its jurisdictions aimed at secularization, centralization, and acculturation of indigenous populations. The fate of the Jesuit missions relied on strategic importance, economic resources, proximity to markets, and temperament of Indigenous peoples. Those natives believed still in the course of conversion (neophytes) were handed over to the mendicant orders, particularly in the areas connecting the Upper Amazon and the Upper Orinoco. The ones thought to have already embraced the Catholic principles and “learned” to live as Europeans ceased to be under guardianship, as is the case of the Guapore area, recognized them as full subjects of the Crown. Their government was entrusted to civil administrators, while their spiritual affairs remained with the secular clergy (Merino and Newson 1994; Weber 2013: 162-201). In turn, the Portuguese crown enacted in 1757 the Directorate that

must be observed in the settlements of Indigenous peoples of Pará and Maranhão. It was specific legislation originally designed for the Amazon basin but soon extended to the whole Luso-American domains, and although it was devised as a temporary measure, would be in force for 40 years. The Directorate withdrew all missionary Orders from direct control of the indigenous concentrated in villages and were assigned exclusively to contacting and converting wild tribes. The mission villages acquired township status and under the rule of a civilian officer. The director was appointed to oversee the administration and “civilization” of Indigenous peoples to secure their rapid and complete integration into Portuguese society as quickly as possible, that is, to get the values and culture required to become true vassals. It also meant the legal end of indigenous slavery, although in practice it persisted for several decades (MacLachlan 1972³⁶; Hemming 1987: 11-12, 40, 58-80).

Both crowns understood the exposure to daily colonial life was the optimal path to acculturation. This was especially emphasized on the Lusitanian side whose aim was none other than the “Portuguese-ization” of the Amazon. The former mission villages lose their native names to be called after towns in the metropolis, Portugal. The entry of settlers into the old missions and their marriage to native women was encouraged to accelerate the process of cultural conversion and the adoption of Western-style domestic and economic practices. Portuguese tongue was imposed as a vehicular language among the indigenous population, considering its use as a fundamental basis of civilization (Hemming 1987: 12; Sommer 2019: 615-616, 620-621). In the Spanish domains, it was also stressed the use of the Castilian within the former missions, to the detriment of the several native languages that continued to be spoken by their inhabitants, as well as the recognition of the power and authority of the monarchy to guarantee the internalization of Western culture, and its effective domination. The natives were no longer exempt from paying taxes that life in the missions had spared them; a duty that should be paid with their labor (e.g., textiles, wild cacao), another factor that secured their conversion into faithful and industrious vassals (Ribera 1989 [1786-1794]: 207-212; Weber 2013: 164-175). Some of them resisted and even rebelled against the economic exactions. Others, on the contrary, made common cause with the new administrators, recreating new leaderships based on the inherited mission

³⁶ To be confirmed

culture without it implying the abandonment of their ethnic identity and many of their cultural traits (Block 1994).

The reformist policies sought to mobilize the native workforce and thereby rationalize and increase the region's production and assure the desired stimulation of colonial trade and industry. The cattle herd was expanded, crops (cocoa, rice, manioc, tobacco, bananas) were increased and manufactured goods were diversified. In Spanish Amazon, native production drew the attention of traders who, due to the previous Jesuit guardianship, had been prevented from contacting the natives. In some cases, civil administrators were in charge of all transactions, while in others direct trade of Indigenous peoples with outsiders was restricted to specific dates each year. Besides, the natives kept providing their services to the Crown (Block 1994: 126-141; Radding 2008: 120-138). Under the Directorate rule, the growth of agriculture and the introduction of commerce to Indigenous peoples was seen as the best means of "civilizing" Portuguese Amazonian peoples. They were ordered to work for the Crown but also the settlers and provincial officers who may employ native workforce for long periods to carry out agricultural activities on their properties, to take part in collecting expeditions in the forests, or to crew boats. The director not only decided for whom they would work, and therefore what activities they would perform, but also administered the payment they would receive. Additionally, they had to harvest the communal lands of the towns: the production was for local consumption, as well as to supply the markets of larger cities, to deliver to employees in state services, and to feed the boundary commissions expeditions. Likewise, Indigenous peoples worked in the large coffee or sugar plantations alongside African slaves who were brought to the Amazon basin by the trading company for Grão-Pará and Maranhão (Hemmig 1987: 11-17, 40-52; Melo Sampaio 2004). Furthermore, natives were inserted into smuggling networks established by merchants, clergymen, soldiers and governors in the border areas between the different crowns (Sommer 2006; Lopes de Carvalho 2011).

The new system made Indigenous peoples more vulnerable to labor demands, expropriation of their lands, abuse by those in charge of the towns, and indiscriminate exploitation of the natural resources on which their subsistence depended. In the Spanish domains the division between temporal and spiritual affairs brought tensions between the state officers and the

clergy, generating conflicts between them and the native leaders. In the Directorate villages, the fact that the director received a percentage of the production as a reward for his work encouraged them to submit Indigenous peoples under their care to physical abuse and increasing overexploitation. Hemming (1987: 57, 60) indicates that during the forty years this rule was in force, the number of Indigenous peoples administered in Pará and the Amazon fell by over a third, from thirty thousand in 1757 to nineteen thousand in 1798.

All these factors contributed to the depopulation and disintegration of towns (but not all, not even the majority), increased the possibility of disease spread, and promoted desertions (Merino and Newton 1994: 28-30). Most Indigenous peoples under the protection of mendicant Orders or whose settlement had been late returned to the forests, occasionally joining African slaves who had fled from colonial domination. This phenomenon took place particularly, but not exclusively, up north of the headwaters and middle reaches of the Amazon River. Many descendants of these populations in voluntary isolation on remote tributaries would be encountered by ethnographers and missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries, who misclassified them as “uncontacted” groups (Sommer 2019).

Indigenous resistance against conquest and colonization

From the arrival of the first conquerors until the end of the colonial period, multiple mechanisms of domination were implemented in the Amazon. Just as many forms of resistance and rebellion raised Indigenous peoples and other populations that in one way or another shared a similar situation. In a general sense, three phases can be observed in the relationship between the conquerors and Indigenous peoples of Amazonia. The first, characterized by the entries of the 16th and early 17th centuries, the second, between the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century, with the establishment of colonial towns, missions, forts and the entry of various colonial agents, mostly merchants, including slave traders, across the rivers, and the third phase, starting in the second half of the 18th century, with the most serious attempts to consolidate colonial powers in the framework of the competition between Portugal and Spain through boundary commissions and expeditions as a result of the Madrid and San Ildefonso treaties.

While some mechanisms of domination developed during the colony seem to have disappeared as institutions, others have left their manifest or indelible mark up to the present time. The numerous “conquest” expeditions that entered the Amazon in search of riches were characterized, according to the reiterative elements in chronicles of the time, by the looting of the villages in search of food for the maintenance of the expedition crew and coercion to make the indigenous populations with whom they came into contact work, first in the construction of boats, and then in forts or settlements of Europeans (Maurtua 1906; Carvajal [1541-1542] 2007). In other words, the appropriation of the livelihoods of indigenous populations was accompanied by attempts to control their workforce.

In response, in this first phase of the conquest, the most frequent expressions of the resistance of Indigenous peoples were the abandonment and burning of the villages and crops, as well as the constant harassment of the expedition members. At first, the conquerors were received with hospitality, but news of their abuses progressively spread and the initial reception in good terms became a declaration of enmity (Carvajal [1541-1542] 2007; Santos 1992)³⁷.

In many cases, the harassment of the expedition members transformed into confederate movements that involved several different Indigenous peoples. In some places, these movements managed to liberate large territories and expelled the conquerors for several decades. Among the earliest is that of the Quijos to Francisco Pizarro’s expedition that, in 1541, brought together several groups on the left bank of the Coca River in response to several of them having been subjected to torture to obtain information on the location of the Country of Cinnamon (Santos 1992)³⁸. In the same way, the expeditions of Juan Alvarez Maldonado and Gómez de Tordoya through Cusco and La Paz, respectively, and the conflicts between them, ended up inciting a confederate movement among the Araona, Toromona, Tacana and Leco in the present-day Apolobamba region in Bolivia (Ibáñez Bonillo 2011³⁹; Lehm 2016).

³⁷ To be confirmed

³⁸ To be confirmed

³⁹ To be confirmed

As a demographic colonial front was established with populations of Spanish and Portuguese, in some regions, institutions of colonial domination were established. Although it is often affirmed that *encomiendas*, distributions, and forced labor in the colonial works and mines were institutions confined to the Andes, evidence from the sub-Andean Amazon region shows that they were present in the Amazon, although with less distribution. Between 1560 and 1579, the Quijos area was the scene of two new uprisings in response to abuses by *encomenderos*. The second, led by Jumandi, managed to destroy some Spanish cities established in the region, such as Ávila, Archidona and Baeza. After the defeat of the Quijos, the Jesuits used the route to establish the missions of Mainas (Uribe Taborda et al. 2020: 58-63; Campion Canelas 2018: 121-122; Ruiz Mantilla 1992).

In some places, the usurpation of land and extraction of biodiversity and minerals was accompanied by the subjugation and exploitation of indigenous labor. Between 1579 and 1608, in a state of long-term permanent uprising, the Shuar, Achual, Huambisa peoples, among others, rose up in the face of abuses by colonial agents who had subjected them to forced labor in gold mines. Led by Quiruba or Kirub, these Indigenous peoples took the cities of Logroño de los Caballeros, Sevilla del Oro, Valladolid, Huamboya and Zamora. The Iberians fell back and a “frontier” was “established” that lasted well into the 20th century. The uprising had great influence and spread to other areas of the Amazon and the sub-Andean region (Santos 1992: 215-220⁴⁰; Campion Canelas 2018).

The establishment of religious missions implied greater impacts on indigenous populations, since it facilitated the spread of diseases. In addition, in the reductions, the missionaries put pressure on the cultural, religious and governing systems of Indigenous peoples, at the same time that promoted linguistic and cultural homogenization. These actions encountered various forms of indigenous resistance, from the progressive and massive abandonment of the missions, open attacks or the death of missionaries and soldiers, to the articulation of important movements that involved various indigenous groups, such as the great rebellion

⁴⁰ To be confirmed

of the Cocama nation between 1643 and 1669, or that of the Pano groups from Ucayali in 1766 (Santos 1992: 220-226, 227-232⁴¹).

In the Brazilian Amazon, colonial domination was characterized by the capture and enslavement of Indigenous peoples to nurture the colonies of agricultural production of sugar, cocoa and others. Towards 1720, the Portuguese incursions by the Negro River encountered resistance, led by Ajuricaba of the Manao people, who managed to unite different groups of that river, slowing the advance of the conquerors towards their middle and upper areas (Sommer, 2019).

The treaties of Madrid and San Ildefonso implied the deployment of expeditions and boundary commissions. This process, which lasted several years, had a serious impact on the indigenous societies. In some cases, some leaders and even entire Indigenous peoples had no choice but to collaborate with one side or the other, in other cases they resisted by maintaining a permanent state of war, also the missionaries played their role (Zárate, 2014). In this context, in 1755 and even in 1766, the Negro River region showed the persistence of multi-ethnic articulations, based on ancient and vast exchange networks, with complex and dynamic leadership systems, even more complex with the incursion of agents linked to the colonial world and the relationship between the internal and external policies of Indigenous peoples. In the late-18th century, colonial control of the territory did not materialize despite multiple attempts. The indigenous leadership demonstrated sophisticated political and diplomatic strategies, as well as the maintenance of a permanent state of war. This case also highlights the strategy, not always effective, of both the Spanish and Portuguese empires to incorporate Indigenous peoples into the colonial system by recognizing indigenous authorities and granting them privileges (Melo Sampaio, 2010).

Between 1770 and 1790, the Tapajós region was the scene of attacks by the dreaded Munduruku. At first, the objective of their attacks was the harvesting canoes, followed by any colonial agent, man, woman or native in league with the colonists. Violence was constant in their interactions allowing them to successfully avoid being ruled by the colonial regime (Sommer, 2019). At the end of the 18th century, peace agreements were

⁴¹ To be confirmed

forged between the Portuguese and important factions of Karajá (1775), Kayapó do Sul (1780), Mura (1784-1787), Xavante (1788), Mbayá-Guaikurú (1791) and Mundurukú (1795) (Roller 2019: 641).

Some rebellions had messianic characteristics, combining elements of indigenous mythology with the influences of Catholicism. These types of movements became more frequent in the late 18th century. The one led by Juan Santos Atahualpa stood out in the central jungle of Peru, who also linked different peoples such as the Yanésa, Asháninka and Piro, to individuals or groups from the Andes such as Juan Santos, of Cuzco origin, and to mestizo and Afro-descendant settlers (Santos 1992: 233). In that instance, after the uprising, the region was isolated from the rest of the viceroyalty until 1847, a hundred years later, when new attempts at colonization began in the republican period. Indigenous peoples regained their autonomy, their pre-conquest ways of life, but they also maintained elements brought by the Spaniards such as cattle raising, the cultivation of fruit trees of European origin, and very importantly, they kept running numerous smithies in which they themselves forged tools and iron artifacts. (Varese 1973; Zarzar 1989; Santos-Granero 1993).

In short, the different forms that colonial domination took were matched by a diversity of forms of resistance and uprising of Indigenous peoples, which changed according to the stages of conquest and colonization. In the early stages, the burning of their own villages, as well as leaving the numerous expeditions without food, were combined with actions of harassment up to open and confederate attacks. Shortly thereafter, attempts to establish a “frontier of civilization” through cities in the Amazon were resisted by attacks and destruction, in the same way as *encomiendas*, towns and mission villages. Towards the end of the period, in the second half of the 18th century, the attempts to delimit the kingdoms of Portugal and Spain, particularly in the first case, implied the most forceful effort to establish colonial rule in the Amazon and generated a great impact on the indigenous societies a disorder in their internal and external relations, and complex and fluctuating strategies between collaboration and violent conflict.

In many cases, the indigenous resistance reached confederate actions in which, overcoming inter-ethnic rivalries, several Indigenous peoples managed to unite. In this way, they

achieved military objectives, such as the destruction of cities and missions and, more importantly, contain the advances of conquest, the reestablishment of their autonomy and independence in large territories, in some cases until well into the 20th century.

CONCLUSIONS

The European conquest and colonization of the Amazon entailed intensive transformations in the territory, especially among its ancestral peoples. The presence of the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal, but also, albeit more marginally, of France, Holland, and England, was decisive in the configuration of the region in political, administrative, jurisdictional, economic, legal, linguistic, social, and cultural terms.

From the beginning, the Amazonian territory was viewed by Europeans as a space with inexhaustible riches ready to be extracted. This imagery referred to fables that circulated intensely in Europe about cities, places and objects of gold, and to myths of Greek origin, such as that of the warrior women that would end up giving the entire region its name. The colonial agents (state officials, soldiers, adventurers, clergymen, scientists) were essential emissaries of these kingdoms for the knowledge and control of the Amazonian inhabitants and their territories.

Navigable rivers, from the Andes or the Atlantic coast, were decisive channels of European advances interested in metals, the exploitation of biodiversity and capture of souls and labor, but also in reaffirming territorial rights that each crown claimed over this “new” space. All of this contributed to the settlement of Europeans across the Amazon. Formal institutions of colonial origin such as the *encomiendas* and the captaincies of the early 16th century later led to the erection of towns and cities of different types: some of civil and military origin populated by Iberian population, but also African slaves and indigenous slaves, and others of missionary origin with mainly native populations. The cities were footholds for expeditions of the basin beyond the great central river, in search of new indigenous groups, natural and mineral wealth, and territories. Rivers were the most used routes. Disputes on access to Amazonian heritage resulted in border conflicts due to imprecise, fragile and changing treaties between the crowns. Explorations, especially in the 18th century, increased the geographical knowledge of the region and improved the

cartographies, which made it possible to define more precise boundaries between the kingdoms.

The domination of the native populations was carried out with the power of the sword and firearms, of the liturgy and of agricultural tools. The main objectives were to control the indigenous population as a workforce and to ensure the productivity of the “discovered” lands. Relations between Europeans and Amazonian societies were built on the roots of the "civilization-barbarism" dichotomy, founded on the presence (or absence) of certain forms of culture, both urban and agricultural. As a result, Indigenous peoples were portrayed as being in the process of “civilization” and were gathered whenever possible in urban and mission centers where they developed activities associated with colonial interests. Autonomous people living in the middle of the forest were labeled “barbarians” or “savages.” This prejudicial classification generated a chain of “staggered disparagements” that has lasted to this day in the relations of the states with the Amazon region, and between the various agents of national societies and Indigenous peoples, and frequently also among Indigenous peoples that have been shaping social relations and public policies since the colonial period.

The *encomienda* service, the mission’s villages, or slavery forced the natives to participate in unknown logics and favored the spread of diseases, with their consequent demographic decline and extermination. The depopulation reinforced the myth of the great Amazonian emptiness justifying its occupation by Europeans. Mission organization also led to the territorial and demographic fragmentation of the groups as they left their traditional areas of influence to accept the new European social, economic, political and labor order, or migrated elsewhere. The concentration of Indigenous peoples in urban centers with relatively different cultures and their contact with Europeans, led ethnogenesis processes, with the displaying of missionary dimensions within their cultures and diverse crossbreeding. As a result, many of them are now considered “less indigenous” in an attempt to disregard their rights as such.

The reformist policies of the mid-18th century detached Indigenous peoples from missionary tutelage and incorporated them into the general colonial regime, subjecting them to the payment of taxes and the provision of labor services, both for the colonial state

and for its economic agents. Control of the native labor force mutated into practices such as “habilito” or “enganche” in extractivist processes since the 19th century, perpetuating colonial structures. Republican rulers promoted policies to open roads and waterways, establish urban centers and, most particularly, control and exploit populations and biodiversity.

The different forms of colonial domination were reciprocated with various forms of adaptation, resistance, and revolt. Natives strategies combined the search for refuge in inland regions, the harassment of the expeditions and boats of the settlers, the destruction of the colonial urban centers, and the formation of confederations among different Indigenous peoples that succeeded in carrying out unified actions, overcoming their inter-ethnic conflicts. On many occasions, they managed to maintain autonomous spaces free from colonial domination for relatively long periods, in some cases up to the first half of the 20th century.

In short, the European presence in the Amazon introduced a series of ideas and practices of a colonial nature that persist to this day. Anyway, this being true, riches were not that important as in other colonial spaces. Otherwise, it would not be understood that only until the nineteenth century the Amazon, after the break of the new states with the Iberian metropolises, was largely unknown, not controlled. After the American independence increased the processes of acquisition of knowledge, occupation, exploitation of a large part of the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Various appropriation practices of the Amazon nature and peoples have appeared since the arrival of Europeans. The transformation of those practices, at times related with layers of colonialism of long duration, could be signified and acted through the break of historical racism, deterministic ideas of “civilization” or “barbarism,” and violent and exploitative human relations of power. Policies for the present socio-ecological system require permanent critical observance to avoid the reproduction of ancient myths and stereotypes.

- Avoid the continuous building of “borders” between the policies of national States, between spaces and/or activities considered more or less “civilized” (for example between urban centers and more dispersed settlements in the forests and savannas), between agriculture and other activities carried out by Indigenous peoples and local populations, or between the Amazon and the Andes.
- Andean and Amazonian Indigenous peoples had permanently tense relations with the colonial kingdoms, trackable into various forms of resistance. Overcoming these tensions that in many cases last until the 21st century requires building respectful relations that address the needs of local populations, avoiding the imposition of agendas from external actors that could, as in the past, generate conflicts, dispossessions, losses, exterminations, and other negative consequences.
- Some contemporary actors, like previous military explorers, missionaries or scientists, continue to generate knowledges in/about the territory. It seems necessary to ensure that this information is used by and for the well-being of the Amazonian populations, not to encourage new violent or improper appropriations by internal and external actors.
- More exhaustive research is required on the colonial history of the Amazonia, especially during the 16th century.

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CORE LINGUISTIC GLOSSARY

Bandeirantes: (in Portuguese) groups of Portuguese, creole and indigenous men that sailed inland from Sao Paulo, attacking Indigenous peoples.

Curare: generic name given to a group of highly effective poisons made of plants and put in arrows

Chunchos: generic term used in colonial chronicles to refer to various Indigenous Peoples from the Eastern Andes (Saignes, 1981: 2)

Enganche: peonage for merchandise or subjection of the labor force for merchandise (Córdoba, 2012; 87)

Habilito: credit in the form of provisions on account of future rubber transfers (Córdoba, 2012; 87)

Piedmont: foothills; area at the base of a mountain or mountain range

Varzea: Amazonian seasonal floodplain forests and savannas inundated by whitewater rivers.