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“L’Amérique Méridionale”: The Map That Shaped Brazil in the 18th Century. By Junia Ferreira Furtado. Translated by Sabrina Gledhill, Flora Thomson-DeVeaux, and Eoin O’Neill. Mapping the Past. Leiden: Brill, 2025. Maps. Figures. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xv, 342 pp. Cloth, \$151.00.

The Treaty of Madrid was a touchstone event in the history of cartography, as it was the first time that European empires sent boundary commissions to jointly devise and survey (753) an interimperial border in the Americas. It prescribed on-the-ground mapmaking as the panacea for centuries-long territorial disputes. *“L’Amérique Méridionale”* examines Portuguese diplomacy and the use of armchair geography in geopolitical disputes leading up to the treaty via a focus on two figures: Portuguese ambassador Luis da Cunha and French royal geographer Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d’Anville. It is grounded in the diplomatic and private writings of da Cunha, as well as d’Anville’s vast archive, which includes 211 maps and 23 geographic texts that he produced and over 10,000 documents that he possessed.

This book builds on Júnia Ferreira Furtado’s earlier writings on da Cunha and d’Anville—namely, *Oráculos da geografia iluminista: Dom Luís da Cunha e Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon d’Anville na construção da cartografia do Brasil* (2012), *O mapa que inventou o Brasil* (2013), and numerous articles and book chapters. It includes an updated bibliography on d’Anville and on Enlightenment-era cartography and is “an updated sum of all these studies” that attempts to reach an English-speaking audience (p. 9). As with these earlier works, Furtado responds to nationalist historical imaginaries in Brazil that have presented the country’s border formation as natural and linear. This work convincingly shows that eighteenth-century cartographic representations such as d’Anville’s *Amérique Méridionale* did not reflect existing

borders but instead represented Portuguese geopolitical aspirations. In this way, Furtado's work is emblematic of one of the principal contributions of the history of cartography of the past several decades: showing that maps are arguments that shape on-the ground geographies rather than transparent reflections of preexisting geographic reality.

"L'Amérique Méridionale" is divided into three sections, each with two chapters. The first section presents parallel biographies of da Cunha and d'Anville, juxtaposing the former's noble background and diplomatic networks with the latter's rise from a nonelite family via royal patronage. The author emphasizes the lasting legacies of each "oracle" into the nineteenth century, when da Cunha's idea of moving the Portuguese capital to Brazil came to fruition and d'Anville's maps were used by Napoleon for military campaigns in Egypt. The second section narrates changing geopolitical standards in the early eighteenth century that led da Cunha to hire d'Anville. Specifically, cartographic adjustments in the positioning of meridians revitalized debates about the exact location of the Tordesillas line, which had influenced Luso-Hispanic ultramarine land disputes since the fifteenth century. This phenomenon led da Cunha to first seek diplomatic resolutions, drawing on the concept of *uti possidetis* to give primacy to settlements over the Tordesillas line, and then seek to produce cartographic evidence to support Portuguese claims via his collaboration with d'Anville. The third section examines the production and content of d'Anville's three versions of *Amérique Méridionale* to show how they merged Portuguese geopolitical interests with contemporary scientific debates. Whether in extending Brazil's borders to the mouth of the Río de la Plata, the choice of Portuguese-preferred toponyms for the Amazon, or the use of a blank void in the South American interior to expand Brazilian space, d'Anville's ostensibly neutral representations of space consistently supported da Cunha's geopolitical vision.

This work will be of interest to historians of cartography, as it vividly demonstrates the inextricable nature of mapmaking and politics. In taking advantage of d’Anville’s (754) enormous archive, it is especially effective in connecting details of his maps to both broader scientific debates and da Cunha’s diplomatic strategies. Moreover, the author provides a clear articulation of changing practices and aesthetics of mapmaking in the early eighteenth century. While d’Anville followed the tradition of armchair geography, which dated back to the Renaissance, he adapted the practice to Enlightenment-era demands for direct observation via deep engagement with contemporary travelers. He also adapted his maps to naturalistic tastes, replacing rococo with empty spaces when representing areas for which information was scant. This book’s discussion of intertwined scientific and diplomatic networks across empires is likewise engaging and accessible.

Given the top-down analysis of “*L’Amérique Méridionale*,” readers may be interested in considering it alongside bottom-up approaches to histories of mapmaking and border formations, including recent monographs by Francismar Alex Lopes de Carvalho and Irina Saladin, which focus on the same borderlands addressed in this work. As Furtado shows, d’Anville relied on on-the-ground mapmakers, and his maps were read and critiqued by locals following their publication. This feedback loop, which included the geographic knowledge and political interests of Indigenous peoples, underscores both the significance and the limitations of d’Anville’s and da Cunha’s geographic and geopolitical visions, especially as the Treaty of Madrid’s subsequent boundary demarcations generated ethnic uprisings, shifting borders, and new cartographic precedents.

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