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Frontiers Beyond Abolition: Fugitive Slave Communities and Resistance in Maranhão and Pará,  
Brazil, 1860-1950

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of  
Philosophy

in

History

by

Johnathan Abreu

Committee in Charge:

Professor Christine Hunefeldt, Chair  
Professor Gary Fields  
Professor Jessica Graham  
Professor Sara Johnson  
Professor Rachel Sarah O'Toole  
Professor Eric Van Young

2018

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2018

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It seems a foolhardy task to express my gratitude when the present work is, in many ways, unfinished. Nonetheless, the fact that I have even advanced to the point where I can write these words is due to the support of dozens of individuals inside and outside of the academy. This project was six years in the making, even during the nascent period of my graduate studies when I hadn't yet conceived of a topic and was absorbing historiographical and theoretical influences at the University of California San Diego (UCSD). It would be impossible and unthinkable to continue without pausing to recognize and acknowledge my wife and partner in all things, Catherine Duarte, who furnished me with every conceivable type of support. She was always there for me, even during the long research trips, lonely days of writing, and precarious work schedules that are par for the course in most Ph.D. programs. I dedicate this work to her because she was the one who made it possible in so many ways.

The course I took to get to this point was far from certain. I spent many years outside of academia and was not sure if I could meet the steep demands of professional scholarship when I was accepted to the Ph.D. program in Latin American history at UCSD in 2012. Relocating across the country and adapting to a (sometimes) punishing life of teaching, research, and writing made it difficult to arrive at a distinct topic for a dissertation.

Luckily, I could count on the intellectual guidance offered by my advisor, dissertation chair, tremendous historian, and multifaceted intellectual, Christine Hunefeldt. In our early research seminars, she emphasized an eclectic approach to historiography that was a revelation and a crash course for a young historian. Her focus on geography and nature as subjects for study and discussion nudged me towards many of the themes featured in the present work. As one of the leading forces behind UCSD's interdisciplinary Amazonia Project, she always encouraged



me to view things in a broader scope rather than the cloistered and specialist approach we sometimes fall into as scholars. She is not simply my advisor, but a trusted mentor and friend who has opened her home to myself and many of my UCSD comrades and shows unmatched kindness and compassion.

I would also be remiss not to mention Eric Van Young, a towering figure among Mexican historians whose insights, wit, wealth of knowledge, professional advice, and prodigious feedback on my written work were (and still are) incredibly important to my understanding of key debates and threads marking decades of Latin American historiography. I will always have fond memories of his historiography seminars and our meetings at Twiggs Bakery and Coffeehouse.

As a Brazilianist of the Department of History at UCSD, Jessica Graham has been incredibly helpful and generous in my development as a historian of Brazil. Sitting in on her lecture courses provided an excellent exemplar for my own nascent teaching experience and motivated me to get a better grasp of the historiography of colonial Brazil. She personally recommended numerous essential works of Afro-Brazilian studies, introduced me to senior scholars of Brazilian history, and pointed me towards valuable collections of primary sources such as the trove of digitized historical newspapers made available by Brazil's Biblioteca Nacional – not an insignificant development, as many sources found there were crucial to various stages of my research.

My dissertation committee had also benefitted greatly from the presence of two distinguished scholars of Atlantic history: Rachel Sarah O'Toole of UC Irvine, and Sara Johnson of UCSD's Department of Literature. O'Toole, a scholar of African slavery in Perú during the colonial era, has been such a positive force in helping me conceive of some of the broader

questions and discussions behind my dissertation. From the moment we met, O'Toole challenged me in ways only a considerate scholar could. Her detailed notes and feedback on my dissertation chapters have prompted me to reflect more thoughtfully on various elements of scholarship such as theory, structure, and argumentation. Johnson, an expert scholar bridging disciplinary and linguistic divisions in Atlantic history, draws on a comparative approach that inspired one of the chapters of this dissertation tracing the intersection of French hegemony and communities of runaway Brazilian slaves on the border with French Guiana.

Gary Fields was kind enough to participate as the sixth member of my dissertation committee, offering his insights as a geographer. His geography seminar was a formative experience in developing my understanding of the importance of space and territory as a component of critical analysis. I also want to extend my thanks to other professors whose seminars and sensibilities contributed so much to my scholarly formation: Frank Biess, Dana Murillo, Thomas Csordas, and Jeremy Prestholdt.

Just as members of my dissertation committee have provided so much valuable insight, I am eternally grateful to my friends and comrades whom I struggled and studied alongside at UCSD. Some of them have since added the magic letters—Ph.D.—to their names. Some are still completing dissertations. Some have since pursued other paths in life. I have great affection for all of them. Ulices Piña, James Deavenport, Manuel Morales, Young Hyun Kim, Jael Vizcarra, Troy Kokinis, Amie Campos, Gerardo Rios, Daniel Gutiérrez, Claudia Vizcarra, Amy Kennemore, and numerous other comrades whom I encountered during my studies or during our collective struggles as TAs fighting for better conditions with UAW Local 2865.

Though I did not have the opportunity to attend classes with them, I also want to acknowledge scholars who provided me with feedback and advice at various stages of the

dissertation writing process: Rafael Sanzio Araújo dos Anjos, Jan Hoffman French, Flávio dos Santos Gomes, Joana Coutinho, Istvan van Deursen Varga, Edna Castro, Oscar de la Torre, Alfredo Wagner, Edward Shore, Emmanuel de Almeida Farias Júnior, Davi Pereira Júnior, and countless others who could fill a tome.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the staff and specialists at the various institutions where I performed my research from 2013 to 2016. During my earliest research trips, the staff of the Cartography Section of the Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil helped me every step of the way as I stumbled through the archival research experience. I also must personally thank the legendary activist and scholar, Dr. Mundinha Araújo, who greeted this nervous *gringo* upon his first visit to the Arquivo Público do Estado do Maranhão and immediately dropped one of the most valuable primary sources used in this dissertation on the small desk I occupied in the research room. The librarians of the Fundação Cultural Palmares in Brasília were incredibly patient and helpful in helping me track down and scan rare secondary sources during my brief stay in 2014. In 2015 and 2016, short but fruitful visits to the Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará owed much to the kindness and hospitality of the staff. Andréa Torres, one of the archive's librarians, introduced me to the Director in 2016 and was always helpful in pointing to secondary materials and other archives. Coincidentally, this was crucial to my visit to the Centro de Memória da Amazônia, also in Belém. The small, obscure archive contained some of the most valuable historical treasures featured as primary sources in this dissertation, and I would advise any historian of the state of Pará to visit the institution.

Chapters 2 and 3, in part, reprint material I previously published in the *Journal of Latin American Geography* (Abreu 2018) of which I was the sole author.

I will end this brief section by affirming that, while this dissertation was only made possible through the help and guidance of dozens of friends, scholars, and archival staff, the mistakes and errors contained therein are my own.

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## FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Latin American History

Twentieth-Century Brazilian History  
Advisor: Professor Christine Hunefeldt

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Frontiers Beyond Abolition: Fugitive Slave Communities and Resistance in Maranhão and Pará,  
Brazil, 1860-1950

by

Johnathan Abreu

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California San Diego 2018

Professor Christine Hunefeldt, Chair

The *quilombo* – the name commonly used to describe fugitive slave settlements in Brazil – is firmly ensconced in Brazilian historical memory. My objective is to demonstrate the process by which quilombos in western Maranhão evaded and resisted the repression of the state in order to create autonomous cultural and geographical spaces in the state of Pará and defend those

spaces well after abolition when faced with the exploitation of their labor and land for the benefit of a nascent mining economy.

Fugitive slave activity was a well-known and continuous phenomenon in western Maranhão, particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Dense forests and abundant rivers offered a path to freedom for enslaved Africans. Quilombos profoundly shaped the land through various methods such as the creation of trails, the exploitation of rich alluvial gold deposits, and planting of various fruit trees. Quilombo inhabitants accumulated a knowledge of the land only matched by its indigenous inhabitants, establishing a territoriality recognized for decades thereafter.

This territoriality allowed quilombo descendants to bargain with state actors on the basis of their knowledge of gold deposits and geography along the Maranhão-Pará border region. Quilombo descendants formed permanent communities in this region and avoided capture, even while maintaining relationships with local judges, police officials, and representatives of the Brazilian Empire tasked with building a telegraph line in northern Brazil. With the advent of abolition, quilombo descendants were ignored as mining concessions delivered their lands to foreign capital. Their resistance took on many forms, but I will especially demonstrate how quilombo descendants used a deft understanding of major political events such as the Revolution of 1930 to defend their land and autonomy, fighting for freedom *after* abolition.

By demonstrating the complex nature of interactions between quilombo residents (*quilombolas*) and dominant political and economic structures and the nature of subaltern resistance therein, I will add new layers to historiographies of slave resistance as well as Afro-Brazilian political engagement following the abolition of slavery.

## Introduction

This work is about a group of fugitive slaves and their descendants who fought for and defended their freedom, even after the formal abolition of slavery. Using various sources, I establish a narrative of how hundreds of enslaved persons in the northern Brazilian territory of Maranhão continuously confronted slave society through the formation of *quilombos* (fugitive slave communities). Through forging bonds of solidarity with each other, bonds of territoriality with the landscapes they inhabited, and practical alliances with influential outsiders, these quilombolas achieved freedom from slavery and established communities that continued to mobilize against capitalist exploitation and displacement well into the twentieth century.

Quilombos have long formed part of Brazil's physical and political landscape. While many quilombos were created by small groups of fugitive slaves, many others attained such geographical scope and numbers as to invoke mortal fear in the slave owning classes. Quilombo activity (*Quilombagem*) occurred throughout Brazil and can be traced to the beginnings of the Atlantic Slave trade, but the most famous and enduring example was the Quilombo dos Palmares, a massive network of quilombos formed around 1605 with a population of thousands stretching across the present-day border between the states of Alagoas and Pernambuco.<sup>1</sup> The population of Palmares successfully defended its existence for most of the seventeenth century, but numerous cycles of quilombagem occurred throughout Brazil.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Funari 2001

<sup>2</sup> Providing a complete list of references for *quilombos* in Brazil would require a separate article altogether, but some notable works include: Nascimento 2014, Silva 2003b, Reis and Gomes 1996, Moura 2001, Gomes 2005 and 2007, Schwartz 1992, Salles 1971, Anjos 2009, Russell-Wood 2002, Reís 1993, Miki 2012, Moura 1994, and Araújo 1992 and 1994. Many of these are monographs pertaining to quilombos in a specific region, though Reis and Gomes (eds.) 1996 and Moura 2001 are excellent anthologies with chapters addressing multiple regions. Many of these works cover diverse regions of Brazil, capturing other notable periods of *quilombo* activity such as those in eighteenth-century Minas



Quilombos are hardly a neglected topic in Brazilian historiography. Numerous scholars have considered the importance of quilombos in economic, political, and cultural terms. Donald Ramos argues that quilombos were fundamentally escapist formations rather than revolutionary ones because of their commercial interactions with the broader society.<sup>3</sup> Stuart Schwartz evaluates quilombos in terms of their “parasitic” activities (cattle rustling, theft, etc.) in relation to the regional economies in which they operated.<sup>4</sup> Abdias do Nascimento, on the other hand, looks to quilombos as the historical basis for a “radical solidarity” on a global scale in the late-twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> Flávio dos Santos Gomes uses the example of the border region between the states of Maranhão and Pará to illustrate how quilombos provided the basis for sustained cultural interaction between black and indigenous populations which continued long after abolition.<sup>6</sup>

In recent decades, there has also been a wealth of scholarship based on field work conducted in communities that trace their origins to quilombos. As of 1988, such communities can seek recognition by the Brazilian government as *comunidades remanescentes de quilombo*. The language in the Brazilian Constitution pertaining to remanescentes is thus: “Aos remanescentes das comunidades dos quilombos que estejam ocupando suas terras é reconhecida a propriedade definitiva, devendo o Estado emitir-lhes os títulos respectivos.”<sup>7</sup>

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Gerais, the period leading up to the *Revolta dos Malês* in Bahia in early-nineteenth century, and the years before abolition in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>3</sup> Donald Ramos, “O quilombo e o sistema escravista em Minas Gerais do século XVIII” in Reis and Gomes (eds.) 1996, 175

<sup>4</sup> Schwartz 109-110

<sup>5</sup> Nascimento 155

<sup>6</sup> Gomes 2005, 271

<sup>7</sup> Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988. Título X. Atos Disposições Constitucionais Transitórias, Art. 68; Art. 322 of the Constitution of Pará has similar language, as is the case for many Brazilian states.

Additional initiatives from the Brazilian government have allowed for the possibility of collective land titling for *comunidades remanescentes* in a process mediated by various federal agencies. Though such processes can be initiated at the request of communities, receiving a legally binding title might take many years.<sup>8</sup> The advent of quilombo as a legal category within a neoliberal multicultural framework has itself inspired literature both inside and outside of Brazil, reflecting vibrant debates and discussions about Afro-Brazilian identity, historical memory, and the intersection (or tension) between liberal rights and racial justice.<sup>9</sup>

While the period of struggle following ADCT 68 is outside of the immediate purview of this work, it was responsible for a surge in academic interest in remanescentes and quilombos in general. As a historian, my methodological interest is to closely interrogate the historical record to find connective tissues between the quilombos of the pre-abolition period and the *comunidades remanescentes* of more recent decades whose practices, community ties, and fortitude in the face of exploitation are evident in the numerous works produced by Brazilian and non-Brazilian scholars. My contention is that, while quilombola or remanescente as a category of identity was significantly bolstered by ADCT 68, there are numerous indications that such

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<sup>8</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 4887/2003; the two most heavily involved agencies in the title granting process would be the Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário and the Ministério da Cultura, though other agencies are given a comment period; Decreto 4887 has weathered numerous challenges, particularly in recent years that have seen the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, a conservative caretaker presidency led by Michel Temer of the center-right PMDB, and a resurgent right-wing in the Brazilian legislature and many state governments.

<sup>9</sup> As is the case for pre-abolition quilombos, the wealth and variety of work prevents me from noting all the relevant scholarship but some examples include: French 2009, Torre 2011, Arruti 2005, Castro and Acevedo 1993 and 1999, Carvalho et. al 1996, Malighetti and Duarte 2007, Alberti et. al 2007, Projeto Vida de Negro 1998, Souza Filho 2008, Linhares 2004, Almeida 2006a and 2006b, Farias Júnior 2016. This literature generally portrays the importance of historical memory in framing contemporary social movements based in rural Afro-Brazilian communities. Certain works such as Almeida 2006a Malighetti and Duarte 2007 posit a certain correlation between the intensity of land conflict and a contemporary quilombola identity beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, while Arruti 2005 and French 2009 highlight the importance and shortcomings of legal definitions such *remanescente de quilombo* and how the creation of such categories shaped the contours of pre-existing rural struggles and reshaped identity at the village level.

identities, of solidarity rooted in geography and shared history, informed political action in regions such as the Gurupí long before 1988. I hope to use this work to find the crucial historical link between “isolated survivals of a past to be honored in the memory of the heroes that fought against slavery” with the “*nuclei* of the contemporary resistance founded on the collective property of the land, and as such, real counterpoints to the logic of the capitalist expansion in the rural areas.”<sup>10</sup>

As the nineteenth century unfolded in Brazil, a succession of legal actions placed limits on the institution of slavery—the end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1850, the *Lei do Ventre Livre* in 1871 and the *Lei dos Sexagenários* in 1885. During the same period, however, quilombos proliferated rapidly in many of Brazil’s imperial-era provinces. One of the key themes of this dissertation is how a small group of quilombos fared during three major periods of Brazilian history: late slave society, the neo-colonial *República Velha*, and the period between 1930 and 1945 marking the rule of the nationalist-populist ruler Getúlio Vargas. The present work will unfold mostly in chronological order, beginning with an account of a general upsurge of slave resistance during the 1860s and 1870s. I will then trace the political fate of the *quilombos* formed during that period through the end of slavery up to the 1940s, with brief observations about the subsequent decades. Quilombos were not simply archaeological structures to be confined to the period before 1888, but a series of practices and relationships rooted in solidarity and autonomy.

By focusing on the expansive border region between the present-day states of Pará and Maranhão in northern Brazil punctuated by the Gurupí River—I can present a detailed and complex narrative of quilombos capturing the dynamics of both power and resistance on a

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<sup>10</sup> Malighetti 2010, 110

regional and local level. The expansive forests, rivers, hills, and waterfalls which characterized the region were the integral texture upon which these dynamics unfolded and changed over a century. For this reason, a certain understanding of space and geography will be central to this study.

Far from simply fleeing slavery, quilombolas established an alternative form of territoriality, transforming geographical spaces within a very short period of time while outside of the reach of slave society. While “territoriality” in a general sense implies a relationship of occupancy between a group and a territory, it has been used widely in Brazilian literature on *quilombos* to encompass seasonal economic activity and land use based on “ties of kinship and neighborliness, based on relationships of solidarity and reciprocity.”<sup>11</sup> The way *territorialidade* is defined by Castro and Acevedo is as something which “concretizes in daily practices, the pursuit of strategies of life and work, in the execution of actions which create material and social existence.”<sup>12</sup> Isoldi and Silva also identify a political element whereby territoriality is also marked by “modos de vida singulares e de certa forma, à parte do que esteve proposto pelo Estado.”<sup>13</sup> I will argue that territoriality was a distinguishing feature of quilombola existence whose relevance was not *only* political, but also allowed quilombolas to maintain a presence in the historical record despite numerous attempts to render them obscure or invisible. As such, it is useful to heed Wagner’s warning against thinking of quilombos as remote, isolated entities.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Eliane Cantarino O’Dywer, “Terras de Quilombos no Brasil: Direitos Territoriais em Construção,” in Farias Júnior (ed.) 2010: 43

<sup>12</sup> Acevedo and Castro 1993, 29

<sup>13</sup> Isoldi and Silva 41

<sup>14</sup> Alfredo Wagner Berno de Almeida, “É necessário que nos libertemos da definição arqueológica” in Leitão (ed.) 1999: 12.

This oversimplification, according to Wagner, erases the very real connections that quilombos had to existing markets and represents them as having been completely marginal in their importance.<sup>15</sup>

Quilombola territoriality—that fugitive slaves and their descendants had an indelible knowledge of the land intertwined with a certain sense of communal identity—was often something both expressed by quilombolas *and* affirmed by various outsiders, hostile or friendly. This work will also document the Gurupí River region through the perspective of influential political and economic figures in the region and elsewhere. As it happens, such perspectives were often those of frustrated modernization.

For this reason, I also draw heavily from two key geographical concepts. The first is that of “fugitive landscapes,” a concept used by Ray Craib to describe lands upon which the state trained its modernizing and rationalizing fixations—never completely with success. Even before the abolition of slavery, politicians in Maranhão made no secret of their desire to seize lands formerly associated with quilombos in order to create agricultural colonies populated by migrants displaced by drought and other push factors. Such schemes only proliferated after 1888.

The other related concept is that of Edward Said’s “imagined geography,” “the invention and construction of a geographical space...with scant attention paid to its inhabitants.”<sup>16</sup> As these concepts applied to the desire of foreign and domestic capital and, later, the Brazilian State, there were continuous attempts to present the Gurupí region as a blank slate, or otherwise reinvent it for the purpose of facilitating schemes such as internal colonization, migrant labor, and the further capitalization and monetization of mining activity. This was a

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Said 181

unique manifestation of a generalized practice in Brazil where the elite had “construído para si um discurso de que grande parte de sua área se constituía de vazios demográficos.”<sup>17</sup> I trace such fixations parallel to the resistance they generated among quilombolas, which included an “inventive reordering and redeploying” of (counter)geography in the form of agricultural practices, knowledge of the land and its resources, and place names.<sup>18</sup>

To these two concepts developed specifically with space and geography in mind, I would like to add a third concept: legibility/illegibility. As defined by James C. Scott in relation to projects of statebuilding and consolidation:

the relative illegibility to outsiders of some urban neighborhoods (or of their rural analogues, such as hills, marshes, and forests) has provided a vital margin of political safety from control by outside elites. A simple way of determining whether this margin exists is to *ask if an outsider would have needed a local guide* (a native tracker) in order to find her way successfully. If the answer is yes, then the community or terrain in question enjoys at least a small measure of insularity from outside intrusion. Coupled with pattern of local solidarity, this insulation has proven politically valuable... Illegibility, then, has been and remains a reliable resource for political autonomy.<sup>19</sup>

As applied to the Gurupí region and the quilombolas who formed a large part of its population, we might point to attempts to make these communities legible through concession-granting processes which demarcated territory and allowed for mining exploration on an ever-wider scale, through scientific studies that relied on local knowledge to reproduce and advertise the mining resources of the region for potential capitalists, and later initiatives to enact populist controls over the mining industry in the Gurupí in order to curb illegal gold exports and pave the way for greater mechanization and expansion of the workforce. Likewise, this work will clearly

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<sup>17</sup> Isoldi and Silva 33

<sup>18</sup> Said 180; Sanzio 2009 includes highly detailed atlases reflecting the distribution of “historical” quilombos, comunidades quilombolas, among other historical phenomena pertaining to Afro-Brazilian history

<sup>19</sup> Scott 1998, 54. Italics added.

point to the *illegibility* of the region to outsiders until the mid-twentieth century and how this impacted the development of extractive capitalism along the Gurupí.

Demonstrating how these concepts—imagined geography, fugitive landscapes, and legibility/illegibility—are relevant to a historical narrative of resistance rooted in fugitive slave communities requires a close reading of primary and secondary sources mostly designed to minimize such phenomena in the historical record or relegate quilombolas to an atavistic past.

### **Sources**

Conducting research for this dissertation has presented all of the challenges inherent to subaltern history, with the added difficulty of focusing on a relatively remote region of Brazil outside of the scope of many Brazilianists. The primary sources used here are the fruit of archival research conducted in Rio de Janeiro, São Luís, and Belém – the capitals of Rio de Janeiro, Maranhão, and Pará, respectively.

The primary sources used here can be divided into three categories. The first category consists of official documents, usually manuscript, pertaining to correspondence with and within the State. These reflect both the relative presence and absence of the State in the Gurupí River region from the late-nineteenth century to the 1940s, also capturing the myriad ways in which quilombolas engaged existing political structures to safeguard their autonomy against their antagonists. The second category consists of newspapers and journals. These sources provide a wealth of information that official documents simply do not. Notably, published sources on the Gurupí provide some of the most detailed firsthand accounts (by outsiders) of quilombola life. They tend to provide more complete narratives of events, conflicts, and individuals not represented or accounted for in the archives. Notable examples of this include the volume of newspapers and journal articles produced on the gold deposits in the Gurupí region. This, in turn,

produced a subgenre of pieces detailing the history of quilombos in the region during the 1930s. The third category consists of rare published monographs, usually scientific in focus. Such works, carrying vestiges of a tradition of natural history, tended to offer brief and rudimentary sketches of the “human geography” of the Gurupí. Though such attempts were largely focused on the many indigenous groups of the area, there were historically substantive observations of quilombolas that at times were far more enlightening than other sources in spite of reflecting outsiders’ perspective. In general, the historical documentation used in this work does not reflect the firsthand experience of quilombolas themselves. I have attempted to acknowledge and remedy the silences presented in the archives through careful analysis and critical engagement. I will not claim that this work is an accurate depiction of the dreams and aspirations of quilombolas, but it does provide a historical narrative of community formation among quilombolas and how this was often in conflict with the projects of both State and Capital.

## **Structure**

There are several themes that are specific to individual chapters of this work, but over the course of the work I will return to three related questions that unify this work and position it uniquely in relation to historiographies of Brazilian slavery, quilombos, and Afro-Brazilian movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

First, what was the role of geography and territoriality in facilitating and sustaining slave resistance, the formation of quilombos? How did these factors serve as a site of political contestation? If we recognize the revolutionary potential of quilombos as institutions created by oppressed people that defended solidarity and freedom against both the slave economy and nascent vestiges of extractive capitalism in northern Brazil, then we can also acknowledge the



structural and voluntaristic factors that contributed to quilombo formation in Maranhão and Pará. The largest impetus for permanent settlements of quilombolas in the border region between the two territories was the flight of enslaved persons from western Maranhão. The scarcity of labor and composition of Maranhão economy created (structural) openings for quilombolas, but subsequent (voluntaristic) processes of community formation and cohesion allowed knowledge of the land to be passed down and reproduced in such a way that it served as a distinguishing characteristic of quilombola social life for the duration of the period covered in this work.

Second, what were the processes through which fugitive slave communities transitioned into the post-abolition period of Brazilian history? Abolition was mostly a gradual process, and at any rate the Lei Áurea of 1888 simply reflected a *fait accompli* of thousands of enslaved persons fleeing and resisting on a massive scale. Nonetheless, both Brazilian and non-Brazilian scholarship tends to artificially separate the pre-abolition period from the post-abolition period. This has mostly been true in regards to quilombo studies. Excellent monographs have been produced on quilombos in the pre-abolition period, while other monographs have discussed Afro-Brazilian culture and politics in the post-abolition period, with a surge in works reflecting field research conducted by Brazilian anthropologists among *comunidades remanescentes de quilombo*. There have been recent attempts to bridge the thematic and methodological divide and demonstrate continuity, for example, between contemporary rural black communities and fugitive slave communities.<sup>20</sup> Along the Gurupí River, the region forming the basis for this work, the abolition of slavery was not experienced as a legislative, top-down process. Instead, quilombos achieved their freedom by a deft navigation of regional politics that was partially based on their access to valuable gold mines as well as geographical factors. That this process

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<sup>20</sup> In terms of English-language scholarship, the work of Oscar de la Torre and Edward Shore come to mind.

differed greatly from other regions like São Paulo or Rio de Janeiro resulted in quilombola politics being conducted on a different basis following abolition.

Third, how did the historical fact of slave resistance and fugitive slave communities inform political developments in broader regional and national spheres both before and after the abolition of slavery? In spite of numerous attempts to “invisibilize” black and quilombola populations in the region or relegate them to the distant past, major political and economic shifts following abolition continuously reaffirmed the presence of a black population whose history was indisputably rooted in quilombos. Furthermore, their relationship to the land they inhabited provided a historical narrative that resurfaced in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s in response to displacement and subjugation augured by the intrusion of both foreign and domestic capital fixated on the gold mines scattered throughout western Maranhão and eastern Pará. This narrative produced nationalist and populist initiatives that resulted in concrete victories for quilombolas. Even where such victories were not clear, their struggles attracted the attention of the press and sympathetic outsiders.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the state of slave resistance in the mid-nineteenth century. The formation of quilombos in Maranhão and Pará was significant enough to merit a strong military response from both provinces. Nonetheless, large expanses of the border between Maranhão and Pará remained fertile ground for quilombagem.

I look at how increasing numbers of the enslaved participated in quilombo activity in western Maranhão and gained deep knowledge of the territory, a process which I link to the contemporary concept of territorialidade used by Brazilian scholars to articulate the relationship between quilombolas and the spaces they presently occupy. Among other things, this allowed quilombolas to develop subsistence economies and survival strategies against military

repression. Quilombola agriculture was recognized as superior, such that when participants in the Quilombo Limoeiro escaped and the space was converted into an agrarian colony, the *colonos* only survived by drawing from stores of crops cultivated by quilombolas and the hunting trails they had carved out while on the run from authorities.

This process was intricately tied to the development of an extractive mining economy in western Maranhão beginning in 1854, which initially attracted significant British capital. With an oblivious attitude towards slavery and a constant need for laborers in order to realize a return on their investment, the managers of the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company employed quilombolas as salaried laborers—a fact known both to British shareholders and authorities in Maranhão who were unsuccessful or lackadaisical in pursuing slaveholders’ claims against their “property.” Quilombolas distinguished themselves as excellent miners, building an unmatched skill in discovering gold deposits and extracting gold, often with little more than a *batea* (gold pan). They were also able to pilfer supplies and resources from Company property, arguably damaging its profitability and partially contributing to a British exit from the region. Quilombos built extensive supply networks to complement their survival economies based on gold and agriculture. I demonstrate this by focusing on the interplay between quilombolas and a major slave rebellion in the Maranhense town of Viana in 1867. Upon the destruction the Quilombo Limoeiro in 1878, hundreds of quilombolas fled west to the Gurupí River which forms a natural border between Maranhão and Pará.

Chapter 2 describes the process by which quilombolas transitioned politically and economically to the period following the abolition of slavery. It begins by recounting the flight of quilombolas from Limoeiro, who established themselves along the Gurupí River but faced many difficulties. Not least among them were attacks by the Ka’apor indigenous group native to

the Gurupí River region, a problem which had befallen previous quilombos in western Maranhão. The need to maintain autonomous spaces led quilombolas to make accommodations with existing political and economic actors, their expertise in gold mining often being the currency which made such bargains possible. One such bargain was with French merchant Jules Blanc, who claimed territory west of the Gurupí River and used these spurious claims to demand the gold extracted by quilombolas in exchange for his “protection.”

At the same time, many quilombolas would serve as laborers for a major telegraph construction project undertaken by the Imperial government along the border region. One quilombola in particular, Agostinho de Sá Caldas, would form a strong working partnership with Telegraph Inspector Silvio Ribeiro. This relationship was bolstered by the support of several self-interested police officials in the border town of Viseu in Pará. Because Ribeiro and other wanted to secure access to the gold so masterfully extracted by quilombolas, they were crucial in a campaign of legal and semi-legal harassment that pushed Jules Blanc out of the region by 1888 and allowed the quilombolas to secure autonomous physical spaces. Even after the abolition of slavery, there are indications that quilombolas in the towns of Camiranga and Itamoari were mostly self-governing and had access to a subsistence economy that delayed their transformation into a displaced rural proletariat.<sup>21</sup> This naturally invites a reevaluation of the recent historiography on “abolitionist quilombos,” which I engage during the conclusion of that chapter.

Chapter 3 primarily looks at unrest in the town of Viseu and how it related to the structural weakness of Viseu’s police force. I use a spectacular local rebellion sparked by an instance of fatal police brutality in 1885 to present the political climate as one favorable to

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<sup>21</sup> Both Camiranga and Itamoari, have appeared in primary sources under numerous spellings. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to them by their present spellings but maintain the variant spellings as they appear in various primary sources.

subaltern rebellion. This provides key historical context as to how quilombolas operated freely in the waning years of slavery.

Chapter 4 is a brief digression into a comparative study, framing the trajectory of quilombolas along the Gurupí by understanding the actions of fugitive slave communities elsewhere in Brazil. I use examples from elsewhere in Pará and present-day Amapá on the border with French-Guiana to address alternative strategies employed by quilombolas in their quest for freedom and autonomy. The quilombo of Itapucú outside of Cametá grew rapidly during the late 1870s and early 1880s, provoking the fear of the town's ruling class. Their strength and organization was such that, when one of their own committed a serious offense, they could form an armed expedition to deposit the offender with Cametá police without facing serious consequences. Despite their strength relative to the surrounding slave society, there are relatively few accounts of the immediate post-abolition period.

Along the Cunani River in the present-day Brazilian state of Amapá on the border with French Guiana, a group of quilombolas established themselves in territory disputed between France and Brazil. This group of quilombos actively courted French authorities and, according to some observers, adapted to French language and French customs and in turn received a small amount of material support from the French. This dynamic was part of a major diplomatic row between France and Brazil, with occasional interventions from self-interested adventurers, that worked to the advantage of quilombolas until brief armed hostilities between the powers led to direct Brazilian control, foreclosing on the possibilities of autonomous self-governance.

Finally, I look at quilombos in western Pará along the Trombetas River and find elements of political and cultural autonomy well after abolition. Using the publications which came out of

the Coudreau expeditions in Pará, there is also an element of cultural pride that suggests a rupture between what James C. Scott calls the “hidden transcript” and the “public transcript.”

Chapter 5 reengages the thread on the history of quilombolas following autonomy. I demonstrate that the widespread interest of foreign capital in terms of exploiting gold and other natural resources begins to translate into a solid presence during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To better illustrate this idea, I focus heavily on the figure of Guilherme Von Linde. Von Linde was a *gaúcho* (native of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul) of Swedish descent, a European-educated electrician and engineer who avoided punishment for his participation in the 1893 Naval Revolt. Arriving to Pará, Von Linde made connections with political figures such as the state governor. Becoming aware of gold deposits along the Gurupí, he supplied information used in U.S. Consular reports and drew greater attention to the possibilities of capitalist development in the region. Shortly thereafter, he began to exercise control over most of the gold mining territories of Pará stretching from the Gurupí to the Piriá River further west. His tenure was extraordinarily brutal, and ultimately based on false land claims. Frequent accounts of Von Linde and his labor abuses ironically led to greater visibility in terms of the presence of quilombolas engaged in gold mining. Such accounts also fed a nascent but growing economic nationalism that rejected the unpatriotic avarice of *aventureiros* (unscrupulous economic actors in remote regions) like Von Linde, notorious for avoiding taxes and participating in illegal exports of gold to the U.S.

The trajectory of these class-based and political tensions explode into Chapter 6. Until 1930, there had been very few serious challenges to Von Linde’s role as the undisputed mining baron of the Gurupí valley. With the triumph of the Revolution of 1930, however, Von Linde experienced an extraordinary reversal of fate. Workers had previously taken violent actions

against the boss, but they deftly used the opening provided by the Revolution to destroy mining infrastructure. Keenly aware of Von Linde and what he represented, the newly-appointed federal official in charge of Pará, Joaquim de Magalhães Cardoso Barata, issued a decree mere months after his term began which expropriated Von Linde's mining property in Pará on the basis of its dubious acquisition. I argue that such a measure would not have been possible without the storied history of quilombola resistance in the region, something explicitly referred to in the decree. I trace how these struggles transformed, and were transformed by, the populist corporatism of the 1930s.

This political framework left a dual legacy. On the one hand, individuals from Camiranga, a town founded by quilombolas, saw unprecedented government attention and improvements in terms of health, education, and infrastructure. In terms of the national government's participation, specialists sent to study the Gurupí's mineral potential recorded and transmitted many aspects of quilombola life and history in an unprecedented way. On the other hand, the ultimate goal of the state and national government was to facilitate a migrant labor force to colonize the region and work in the mines, thus creating profitable enterprises under state guidance. This translated to a process of proletarianization during the 1930s. Quilombolas did not disappear, of course, but their autonomy and solidarity was threatened by the gold boom of the 1930s and an influx of itinerant labor. The wave of radicalism among informal miners (*garimpeiros*) that culminated in a major armed attack on a mine owning family in 1941, as well as protests and labor actions that lasted for years, stemmed from class-based grievances common to proletarian struggle in most of the global south rather than the specific communal and territorial claims exercised decades earlier. The epilogue to this work traces a short history of how Camiranga and Itamoari faced both landgrabbing practices and cultural erasure until both

towns took advantage of changes in Brazilian law such as ADCT 68 to secure collective land titles in the late 1990s.



## Chapter 1: A History of Freedom Written on the Land

In 1878, the Brazilian province of Maranhão launched a military expedition led by Major João Manoel da Cunha with the goal of crushing a group of hundreds of elusive runaway slaves who managed to establish a fixed settlement. Cunha later recorded his observations of the living conditions of this group of quilombolas, expressing in great detail the alien nature of a recently abandoned part of the quilombo just outside of the heavily wooded area of Limão in western Maranhão—also known as the *quilombo* Limoeiro:

...and there are two more houses for the purpose of prayer, which are called *casas de santos*; one had images of the saints and in the other one we found extravagant wooden figures, gourds with rotten herbs and a number of stones that in very remote times served as axes, which the large part of the *mocambeiros* venerated with the invocation of Santa Barbara.<sup>1</sup>

Major Cunha also draws the reader's attention to the ninety-one houses and large plots of land forming the quilombo, but his emphasis on the use of practices from "very remote times" reminds us of the cultural and social conflict reflected in the military expeditions against quilombos in mid-to-late nineteenth-century Maranhão.

Far from simply fleeing the control of a slave society, quilombolas had established an alternative form of territoriality, transforming quilombo spaces within a very short period of time outside of the reach of slave society. The change was such that, these spaces were long after associated with quilombos and blackness even in cases where quilombolas fled to other areas to escape military repression. As I argue in this chapter, this territoriality manifested itself in numerous ways: a deep knowledge of trails and river navigation, the successful cultivation of manioc and fruit trees, and the exploitation of alluvial gold deposits that contributed to a nascent

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<sup>1</sup> Manoel da Cunha, João. "Expedição aos *Quilombolas*." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 24 February 1878.

gold trade in northwestern Maranhão. In addition, there was a widespread notion that the spaces occupied or formerly occupied by quilombolas were not suitable for “white” settlement. While such territoriality could be successfully exploited by the slaveocracy, particularly in cases where captured quilombolas served as guides for expeditions against quilombos, it ultimately furnished quilombolas with the means to establish autonomous spaces based on their superior knowledge of the land and access to material reproduction. In this chapter I focus on fugitive slave activity in western Maranhão, where unique political and geographic factors allowed quilombos to offer prolonged resistance to capture and elimination.

### **A “Chain of Quilombos”**

Limoeiro was one of many fugitive communities that offered resistance to slave society in the last half of the nineteenth century in northern Brazil. Quilombos had regularly made their presence felt in Maranhão with escaped slaves regularly crossing over the border to Pará.<sup>2</sup> In spite of increased efforts in the 1840s and 1850s by the provincial governments of Pará and Maranhão to capture and suppress quilombolas, quilombos continued to spread throughout western Maranhão.<sup>3</sup> This contributed to a growing fear of a widespread insurrection among the enslaved in the region. The significance of such events was not lost on local authorities, whose greatest fear was that “the permanent movement of quilombolas in various regions of the province would transform, in fact, into a generalized black insurrection linking up with the enslaved on the *senzalas* [plantations].”<sup>4</sup> It seemed that, by 1867, the various quilombos in the province as a whole constituted a ring closing in quickly on the capital of Sao Luís due to their

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<sup>2</sup> Gomes 2005, 142

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Gomes 2005, 209.

strategic locations.<sup>5</sup> Many of the points of this metaphorical ring were economically prominent towns in the interior of western Maranhão. Even before 1867, quilombo activity coincided with established trading networks whereby quilombolas used rudimentary methods to extract gold to sell or trade in exchange for arms and provisions.<sup>6</sup> As Cleary notes, “the river traders and the suppliers of goods in Santa Helena [Maranhão] and the coastal towns had come to a profitable accommodation with the mocambeiros. They must have resented military intervention, reasoning, correctly as it turned out, that it would interrupt their commercialisation of gold coming from the interior.”<sup>7</sup> Maranhão’s provincial President, Franklin Doria, referred to these individuals as “miserable traffickers” and compared them to criminals and deserters.<sup>8</sup>

The quilombo was an ever-present institution in many parts of the province of Maranhão. Various areas, particularly along rivers and large bodies of water in the western portions of the state, cradled centers of fugitive slave resistance and settlement. Beyond the outskirts of towns such as Turiaçu, Maracaçumé, Santa Helena, Viana, Pinheiro, and São Vicente Ferrer, residents perennially noted the presence of quilombos. The lifeblood of fugitive slave activity flowed through the larger river systems in the province. Namely, the Turiaçu, Maracassumé, and Gurupí rivers.

The pervasive fear of open slave rebellion materialized dramatically in July 1867, when hundreds of slaves staged an insurrection, simultaneously occupying various fazendas surrounding the town of Viana in the Maranhense interior. The rebellion spread to other towns,

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<sup>5</sup> The 15 October 1867 edition of the *Publicador Maranhense* uses the rather ironic phrase “chain of quilombos” (cadeia de quilombos) to describe quilombo activity between Viana and Turiaçu.

<sup>6</sup> Cleary 34.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> “Governo da Provincia.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 20 November 1867. Occasionally these “miserable traffickers” faced imprisonment for doing business with quilombolas.

where the well-armed insurgents expropriated goods and seized fazendas.<sup>9</sup> Some of these rebels had descended from quilombos, while the enslaved who left their fazendas would count themselves among the ranks of quilombos after fleeing.<sup>10</sup> In fact, many of the rebels had come from the quilombo known as São Benedito do Céu, which was located along one of the branches of the Turiaçu River a long distance from Viana.<sup>11</sup> Maranhão's provincial President during the uprising, Franklin Doria, later estimated that a detachment of eighty to one hundred quilombolas made the journey of nearly three hundred kilometers to organize the expropriation of goods from various fazendas around Viana.<sup>12</sup>

Among officials in smaller towns there was a palpable fear that a failure to act swiftly would allow the insurgents to push further north in the direction of Turiaçu, where they could link up with quilombolas in the surrounding forests there and survive through raiding cattle.<sup>13</sup> In addition, there was also a real concern that a standoff between this large group of escaped slaves and Maranhense authorities would create an opening for the Gamela, an indigenous group, to attack and invade a number of the towns.<sup>14</sup> The insurgents converted the fazenda Santa Bárbara near Viana into a makeshift headquarters, where they managed to hold the line until they were overwhelmed by a group of 120 troops and forced to flee a few days later.<sup>15</sup> While the rebellion

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<sup>9</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Gomes 2005, 209.

<sup>11</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 29.

<sup>12</sup> "Governo da Provincia." *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 20 November 1867.

<sup>13</sup> Auto de Perguntas do preto José de Colonia, escravo de Dona Mariana Porfíria Pinheiro. São Vicente Ferrer, 10 May 1867. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo 1994: 37-38.

<sup>14</sup> Auto de Perguntas do preto Florencio, escravo de Dona Delfina Pinto. Santa Helena, 22 October 1867. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo 1994: 46-47.

<sup>15</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 36.

was effectively over, many of the insurgents had escaped and there were still various foci of quilombola activity. As rebels retreated north and west they absconded with goods from various fazendas, “decorating” the forests with stolen items including an album of photographs.<sup>16</sup>

Only days after the flight of the insurgents from Viana, the *Publicador Maranhense* reported that slaves near the town of Maracaçumé much further west had also driven out owners and overseers from some fazendas before making off with various goods contained therein.<sup>17</sup> This group of six hundred to seven hundred rebels did in fact take refuge, settling in a quilombo along the left bank of the Turiaçu River.<sup>18</sup> This was the very same quilombo—São Benedito do Céu—that weeks earlier provided insurgents for the uprising at Viana. This demonstrates that there was an extensive network of quilombolas and their allies among the enslaved on fazendas in western Maranhão with an equally extensive knowledge of hundreds of kilometers of terrain and the ability to create economic and communication networks to facilitate escape and rebellion.

The large quilombo was not lacking in strategic sophistication. In addition to sparing a detachment to sack fazendas in and around Viana, São Benedito do Céu participated in cotton rustling, with its subsequent sale to itinerant merchants providing a source of income for the large quilombo.<sup>19</sup> But even more so than cotton, access to gold offered a crucial lifeline for the quilombos. São Benedito do Céu was an extensive operation that had various detachments of quilombolas stealing cotton, extracting gold, selling the gold and negotiating with river traders

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<sup>16</sup> “Gazetilha.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 17 July 1867.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 70.

<sup>19</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 70.

for basic commodities, and even providing labor to surrounding fazendas.<sup>20</sup> The presence of an English gold mining company would turn out to be a particularly important development for the quilombolas at São Benedito do Céu and other fugitive slaves in western Maranhão.

### **A Gilded Liberty**

Many small towns in the areas between Viana and Turiaçu in the northern end of the province were wary of any signs of quilombo activity. By 1860, the continued presence of quilombolas in the gold-rich territory of Montes Aureos west of Turiaçu was widely reported. The mining company in Montes Aureos, *Companhia de Mineração Maranhense*, had only formed little over a decade before for the purpose of mining exploration, and attempted to gather laborers by renting or purchasing the enslaved, with administrator João Baptista Miranda Lima going so far as to use advertisements to solicit either enslaved or free labor to fill the demand for carpenters, potters, bricklayers, and blacksmiths.<sup>21</sup> Even as engineers made their initial surveys, they noted traces of a strong quilombola presence in some of the most promising land for mining activity.<sup>22</sup> These were not simply traces, however. The company had been targeted by “pretos aquilombados,” who by May 1860 had robbed one of the company warehouses, making off with steel, salt, and likely other goods.<sup>23</sup> This information, divulged to Maranhão’s legislative assembly by provincial President João Silveira da Souza, was followed by a solemn promise to

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<sup>20</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 71.

<sup>21</sup> João Baptista Miranda Lima. “Companhia Mineração Maranhense.” *A Imprensa* (São Luís), 2 July 1859.

<sup>22</sup> Gomes 182-183

<sup>23</sup> “Mineração.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 12 May 1860.

take the necessary measures to defeat quilombos in the province.<sup>24</sup> This nexus of state and capital is underlined by the fact that the company apparently underwrote a portion of the cost of the provincial troops stationed in Montes Aureos, which in 1861 was to be shifted to the public coffers of the town of Guimarães.<sup>25</sup> It became quite clear that the areas surrounding the mining concession were once again a focal point for fugitive slave activity, with one 1864 article noting that it is “a known fact that in the surrounding forests there is a considerable number of fugitive slaves *and their descendants*.”<sup>26</sup>

Low population density, proximity to various waterways, difficulty of overland travel, and the availability of gold made the location attractive for quilombolas. As will be seen in the case of captured quilombolas from Limoeiro, many quilombolas remained out of captivity long enough to give birth and raise children outside of the control of slavery altogether. The relative strength of such communities provoked fears that with “an intelligent and energetic leader” the company would be subject to their “atrocities.” In addition, their presence had the potential of drawing the enslaved away from their fazendas.<sup>27</sup> There was a brisk trade being done between quilombolas who discreetly extracted gold from Company lands and various river traders (*regatões*) who could purchase the coveted product at below-market prices and resell at a profit.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> “Governo da Provincia.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 15 April 1861. It is interesting to note that Guimarães is a coastal town far from the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company’s area of activity at the time, suggesting the expansive territorial nature of quilombagem.

<sup>26</sup> “Quilombolas.” *A Situação* (São Luís), 14 July 1864.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

It can be argued in this instance that the quilombolas' market participation undermined the activities of foreign capital. Beginning in 1857, the company had been transferred to English ownership culminating in formation of the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company.<sup>29</sup> The new owners contracted the services of Gustavo Julius Gunther in the role of Supervisor, and the latter attempted to bring his experience in India and Africa to bear on the situation by drawing up side contracts with the owners of the various escaped slaves allowing him to exploit their labor for a period of six years should he and his employees succeed in "tracking down" the quilombolas.<sup>30</sup> It is unclear which owners signed off on this agreement, but it was a foreshadowing of the importance of quilombolas and their descendants would have in mineral extraction in that region as a labor force. Maranhão newspaper *O Paiz* endorsed Gunther's approach, arguing that it was beneficial for both parties (Gunther and the slave-owners.)<sup>31</sup>

J.F.S. Maya Junior, writing in *A Situação*, expressed harsh criticisms of Gunther's "unsuccessful" and "embarrassing" tenure as superintendent of the company.<sup>32</sup> Maya Junior had been under the Company's employ for nine years, but claims to have been fired on account of his strong opposition to Gunther's working relationship with a group of thirty-one quilombolas and escaped slaves.<sup>33</sup> Sharing details from letters and personal interactions, Maya Junior accuses Gunther of deliberately misleading the owners of escaped slaves, of delaying any return to their

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<sup>29</sup> Cleary 36.

<sup>30</sup> "Companhia Mineração Maranhense." *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 4 December 1862.

<sup>31</sup> "Quilombolas." *O Paiz* (São Luís), 19 July 1864.

<sup>32</sup> J.F.S. Maya Junior. "Publicações gerais." *A Situação* (São Luís), 23 August 1866.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*



owners so he could continue to employ their labor in the mines and on the property.<sup>34</sup> One example of this was a petition lodged by a slave-owner in which she accused Gunther of refusing to hand over an enslaved women named Lucrecia on the grounds of a lack of “authentic” documents.<sup>35</sup> In other cases, it seems that Gunther obfuscated by claiming not to know the owners of other quilombolas who performed labor for the company. And it seems that, rather than being returned to their owners, some simply returned to their quilombos unimpeded.<sup>36</sup> The provincial government of Maranhão was also aware of this arrangement, and repeatedly implored Gunther to return any fugitive slaves on Company lands to their owners or representatives of the latter.<sup>37</sup> These flexible labor arrangements allowed the quilombolas to operate without their owners knowing of their whereabouts, avoiding punishment and maintaining the autonomy that came with access to gold.

At any rate, Gunther would not be in charge for much longer, and by early 1866 company shareholders were already floating the possibility of winding down operations voluntarily, though further action was forestalled pending an internal review of the company’s activities.<sup>38</sup> These discussions roughly coincided with the increased publicity given to Gunther’s opportunistic strategy in relation to quilombolas. The committee tasked with this internal investigation unequivocally recommended a withdrawal from Montes Aureos not long after.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> “Secretaria de Policia.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 6 February 1866.

<sup>36</sup> J.F.S. Maya Junior. “Publicações Gerais.” *A Situação* (São Luís), 23 August 1866.

<sup>37</sup> “Governo da Provincia.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 18 October 1865.

<sup>38</sup> “Legal Jottings.” *The Shareholders’ Guardian* (London), 31 January 1866, 93.

<sup>39</sup> “Public Companies.” *The Economist* (London), 17 February 1866, 197.

Ironically, Brazil's Imperial government *extended* the term of the concession of the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company in a decree issued September 1866, just as the company was concluding its activities in Maranhão.<sup>40</sup>

Though it has been suggested that it was, in fact, Brazilian authorities who nullified the contract because of the company's dealings with quilombolas, the decree seemingly contradicts this explanation.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps it is more appropriate to argue that the company simply could not manage a return on its investment. One of the strongest Brazilian advocates of drawing foreign and domestic capital to Montes Aureos, the Barão de Mauá, looked backed on the project as a "complete financial disaster" and believed that the mines had already been tapped out during the 1860s.<sup>42</sup> A short missive sent to London's *The Money Market Review* from "A Large Shareholder" express shock that the directors of the company had elected to award themselves £500 each at a recent shareholders meeting despite the fact that they were not paying dividends on company stocks, a poor omen in terms of financial performance.<sup>43</sup> But quilombolas, serving as a mobile, autonomous "work force" while extracting gold illegally from company lands and selling it to river traders, certainly put a check on the company's potential for profitability even though the Brazilian government was willing to extend its support of the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company.

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<sup>40</sup> Império do Brasil. Decreto 3707, 26 September 1866.

<sup>41</sup> Cleary 37. He also reproduces part of an interview done in 1985 with a miner (*garimpeiro*) working along the Gurupí, who claims that the police were going to expel the English in 1865, which we know not to be the case. This explanation is reproduced in many works on this period.

<sup>42</sup> Paiva, et. al 9

<sup>43</sup> A Large Shareholder. "Montes Aureos Brazilian Gold Mining Company (Limited)." *The Money Market Review* (London), 27 Feb. 1864.

By 1866 and early 1867, advertisements for the sale of mines and other property at Montes Aureos make it clear that the exit of the English proprietors was a swift one.<sup>44</sup> It is also clear that the territory in question was quite large and contained plenty of infrastructure that could support large groups of quilombolas. The property consisted of forty “datas” of proven gold mines and an additional sixty of concessions for further exploration.<sup>45</sup> There were houses established for company employees and “cabanas para pretos,” the latter of which perhaps housed quilombolas under Gunther’s management. There was also an abundance of heavy equipment: a water mill and pump, iron presses run on steam power, assorted tools used for mining, a facility with a *farinha* oven, warehouses (*armazens*), and miles of roads and trails connecting Montes Aureos with ports along the Maracassumé and Gurupí rivers as well as towns like Santa Helena.<sup>46</sup> The conditions were ideal for quilombolas, and they did indeed maintain a continuous presence that prevented investment on any significant scale until well after the fall of Limoeiro in the 1880s and beyond.

The separate group of quilombolas that came to occupy Montes Aureos during these years were collecting gold and firearms, waiting for the right time to travel south in order to bolster the still-ongoing efforts of their comrades further east around Viana during the São Benedito do Céu uprising.<sup>47</sup> We will see in later chapters how this gold rich territory becomes

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<sup>44</sup> “Para Vender.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 23 July 1867.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.* The term “data” in relation to land implies that it has been donated to the recipient, but I cannot find a consistent measurement associated with the term in the same way as one might for “alquieres,” another imperial measurement used for land.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Ofício do subdelegado de Polícia do distrito do Paraná ao Ilm<sup>o</sup>. e Exm<sup>o</sup>. Sr. Dr. Franklin Americo de Menezes Doria, president da Província, em 24 de julho de 1867. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1994: 77-78.

central to the survival of quilombolas and their descendants. It is clear that the government of Maranhão was caught in an elaborate shell game with quilombos in the province, suppressing rebels in Viana only to see the formation of even larger quilombos in a wave pushing ever closer to the provincial border with Pará and into less populated areas and more difficult terrain that would impede military expeditions.

In late 1867, President Doria attempted to dispel the widespread fears of quilombos among the Maranhense elite by pointing to the successful rout of insurgents at Viana in July 1867, but conceded that quilombos around Maracassumé and Montes Aureos were still “problematic” for the provincial government.<sup>48</sup> Escaped slaves from towns such as Pinheiro and Santa Helena attempted to find safe passage along the Maracaçumé, demonstrating how the mining territory that had been very recently abandoned possibly only months before by the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company had created a key opening for quilombolas. Thus, Montes Aureos became “a true quilombo,” and accordingly allowed escaped slaves to find refuge and maintain their communities through illicit mining activity.<sup>49</sup>

### **São Benedito do Céu, Limoeiro and the Path to Freedom**

What began as a series of fazenda invasions in April 1867 had turned into an expansive rebellion striking at the very heart of slavery in northern Brazil, and months had passed without a decisive blow against the quilombos though the threat of rebellion had been thwarted in Viana. President Doria had deemed in the interest of “public order, farming, and civilization...to

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<sup>48</sup> “Gazetilha.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 15 October 1867.

<sup>49</sup> Ofício do juiz de direito da comarca de Turiaçu, Joaquim Costa Barcelos ao Ilm<sup>o</sup>. e Exm<sup>o</sup>. Sr. Dr. Franklin Americo de Menezes Doria, president da Província, em 25 de Julho de 1867. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1994: 80.

force the *calhambolas* [quilombolas] to return to obedience and the habits of regular life.”<sup>50</sup> It seems that the “calhambolas” did not listen to his counsel.

Montes Aureos had emerged as an important theater in the ongoing war against quilombos, along with the expansive forests surrounding Turiaçu and lands adjacent to the Maracaçumé River. One can see why: these locations were versatile, having provided shelter to quilombolas fleeing from troops in the interior, but also being excellent points from which to cross the Gurupí River into the province of Pará. It was estimated that the heavily forested areas of Montes Aureos, for example, sheltered eight hundred quilombolas.<sup>51</sup> But while the provincial government had been mostly unsuccessful apart from the capture of small groups of quilombolas and free individuals deemed to be collaborators, it seems that many of the quilombolas that had fled to the northwestern portion of the state were routed and driven away by the Ka’apor, an indigenous group historically referred to as the “Urubú” that had long practiced seasonal migration through the Alto Gurupí region in Maranhão.<sup>52</sup>

Nonetheless, São Benedito do Céu was never definitively destroyed. Instead, the large settlement splintered off into new quilombos, while continued raids resulted in the capture of small groups of quilombolas affiliated with São Benedito do Céu.<sup>53</sup> One account from October 1867 details how a group of quilombolas who participated in the Viana uprising was able to

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<sup>50</sup> “Governo da Província.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 20 November 1867.

<sup>51</sup> Ofício do delegado de polícia de Turiaçu, Francisco Domingues da Silva Junior ao Ilm<sup>o</sup>. e Exm<sup>o</sup>. Sr. Dr. Franklin Americo de Menezes Doria, presidente da Província, em 04 de Outubro de 1867. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1994 118

<sup>52</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994 133

<sup>53</sup> Ofício do chefe de Polícia, Eduardo da Silva Rebello ao Ilm<sup>o</sup>. e Exm<sup>o</sup>. Sr. Antônio Epaminondas de Mello, presidente da Província, em 13 de abril de 1868. Livro 09. Of. 194. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1994: 138-139

evade an unspecified number of troops in Montes Aureos, drawing them deep into the forest before opening fire on them in the middle of the night. While a handful of quilombolas were captured, the rest quietly escaped in small groups.<sup>54</sup> As in the case of most quilombos, those who weren't captured remained in the forest and joined subsequent quilombos in the following years. In 1874, a military expedition led by Lieutenant Pedro José Pinto scoured the Turiaçu River to find little more than a broken trail and rumors of a quilombo known as “Laranjal” consisting of 400 people along a tributary of the Turiaçu far to the south of Santa Helena.<sup>55</sup>

In October 1877, Maranhão provincial President Francisco Maria Correia de Sá e Benevides announced the capture of one hundred and thirteen quilombolas from the quilombo known as São Sebastião near Pinheiro, which included the abovementioned Laranjal.<sup>56</sup> As was the case with many defeated quilombos, many of São Sebastião's residents were returned to their owners, while perceived ringleaders were tried and convicted. In this case, two of the three leaders were sentenced to death while the third managed to escape once more on the way to Viana.<sup>57</sup> One of these captured leaders, Daniel, was Daniel Antônio de Araújo, also prominent in the 1867 São Benedito do Céu uprising. This would mean Daniel effectively managed to escape capture for a decade.<sup>58</sup> In this same statement, President Benevides mentions the failure to capture residents of a quilombo outside of Turiaçu, with the military expedition only succeeding

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<sup>54</sup> “Gazetilha.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 25 October 1867.

<sup>55</sup> “Governo da Provincia.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 2 May 1874.

<sup>56</sup> “Governo da provincia.” *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 19 October 1877. Other newspapers listed the number of captured quilombolas at 114 or 115

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* It is not made clear here which of the three managed to escape.

<sup>58</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994 141

in destroying their houses and agricultural plots after their escape.<sup>59</sup> The quilombo Limoeiro, as it was called, would become one of the most important developments precipitating the formation of fugitive slave communities in Maranhão and Pará that would outlast the institution of African slavery itself.

Beginning in late 1877, Major Cunha of the Fifth Battalion in Maranhão had been working to negotiate a settlement with Estevão, who was recognized in many sources as the leader of the quilombo and by authorities as a “capitão ou chefe.”<sup>60</sup> Estevão had been in flight since 1854, when he murdered an overseer on a fazenda near Turiaçu.<sup>61</sup> This was one of the many murders that would be attributed to Estevão by authorities in Turiaçu who were eager to expedite his capture. In order to parlay with Estevão, Cunha had engaged “intermediaries” to arrange for a meeting and even sent canoes to fete the arrival of the assumed leader (“similar uma festa”).<sup>62</sup> According to Major Cunha’s account, many quilombolas made their opposition to these overtures well-known to Estevão, believing that it was a betrayal and ready to tear at the flags adorning the Major’s canoes.<sup>63</sup>

In the next attempt to overtake the quilombolas militarily, Major Cunha and his forces traveled south along the Gurupí River and its tributaries, finding many sites either occupied or recently occupied by quilombolas, such as Igarapé Olho d’Água where Cunha found abandoned

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1992 14

<sup>61</sup> Araújo 1992 (ed.) 37

<sup>62</sup> Guia passada pelo Diretor da Colônia Militar do Gurupi, João Manoel da Cunha, ao colono de 3ª classe João Batista dos Santos e outros, para seguir até as Cachoeiras à procura dos quilombolas, em 19 de maio de 1877. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, São Luís, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 15

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

“ranchadas,” and along the Igarapé Cocal, just along the river only a few kilometers south where many quilombolas would later settle at what became the village of Camiranga the following decade.<sup>64</sup> Eventually arranging for a parlay with Estevão, Cunha allowed the quilombolas time to gather family members who fled into the surrounding woods following the first failed attempt to surround Limoeiro in January 1878.<sup>65</sup> It seemed that Estevão was simply stalling in an attempt to allow his fellow quilombolas to flee further from the grasp of Cunha and his troops, though a number of rebels were caught in the midst of flight while Cunha attempted to pursue Estevão.<sup>66</sup>

Facing a lack of supplies, demoralized troops, and the risk of a last desperate assault failing completely, Cunha reported that his decision was to return with the quilombolas whom he had already captured, some of which had surrendered to the troops upon encountering them.<sup>67</sup> This brings us back to Cunha’s observations about the living conditions of the quilombolas, with fields and huts being left intact so that they might return when the troops pulled out of the area. Cunha noted dozens of houses (ninety-one to be exact), with three to five people inhabiting each dwelling. Cunha estimates that the fields dedicated to agriculture were so large in scope that it would take a month to dispose of them.<sup>68</sup>

Symbolizing the extensive history of quilombagem west of the Maracassumé River was one of the captives, João, an older man who had been in the forest since 1838.<sup>69</sup> The captives of

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<sup>64</sup> Relatório de João Manoel da Cunha ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Dr. Francisco Maria Corrêa de Sá e Benevides, Presidente da Provincia, sobre a invasão do mocambo situado nas proximidades de Montes Áureos, em 24 de janeiro de 1878. (c/ relação anexa). Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso, APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 23

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Relatório de João Manoel da Cunha, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 27

<sup>67</sup> Relatório de João Manoel da Cunha, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 27-28

<sup>68</sup> Relatório de João Manoel da Cunha, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 28

<sup>69</sup> Relatório de João Manoel da Cunha, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 29



this expedition were by and large Brazilian-born slaves, with the exception of Joaquim, the escaped slave of João Gonçalves Teixeira who is classified as “preto” and “Cabinda”—a region of present-day Angola.<sup>70</sup> While this chapter adheres to a particular chronology, the presence of older quilombolas such as João demonstrate the deep continuity of flight and resistance, particularly since northern Brazil experienced a great degree of social upheaval during the 1830s as a result of popular revolts such as the Balaiada and the Cabanagem.

In the aftermath of the first expedition, Estevão sent two representatives to Cunha in Viséu. One of these was a quilombola by the name of Manuel, said to have been escaped since 1840. Maranhão newspaper *O Paiz* claimed, furthermore, that they made the journey because they were simply tired (“aborrecidos”) of being in the quilombo.<sup>71</sup> They explained to Cunha that Estevão was gathering his fellow quilombolas to present themselves before Cunha as he had promised to do earlier. There was only one catch: Estevão could not immediately comply with this request. The quilombolas were busy in the extraction of gold and would only be able to gather and present themselves *afterwards*, in June. Amazingly enough, Cunha was flexible on this point, and defended his nuanced approach to President Benevides.<sup>72</sup>

While being pursued by armed troops, the quilombolas affiliated with Estevão were already perpetuating a survival economy based on bartering with gold. Whether Cunha’s willingness to hold off immediate action was a concession to the difficulties of navigating the terrain and numerous waterways between Maranhão and Pará or a gambit to privately exploit the

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<sup>70</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1992, 30

<sup>71</sup> “Noticiario.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 21 February 1878.

<sup>72</sup> Ofício de João Manoel da Cunha ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Dr. Francisco Maria Corrêa de Sá e Benevides, Presidente da Província, em 6 de fevereiro de 1878. (c/ ofício anexo datado de 05/02/1878). Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 31

nascent gold trade being developed by his targets, such a stance was peculiar in the context of the public fear evoked by quilombos in Maranhão over the two decades. Cunha would be harshly criticized for the critical mistake of failing to prevent one of the quilombolas from fleeing ahead of the expedition and warning his comrades of the coming troops.<sup>73</sup> It is also worth pointing out the strategic brilliance of Estevão biding time on behalf of his comrades, a clever application of trickery (*malandragem*). Two weeks later Cunha made another unsuccessful attempt to invade Limoeiro, capturing eighteen quilombolas but missing Estevão and the majority of their comrades.<sup>74</sup> They had only succeeded in capturing a fraction of the hundreds of fugitive slaves that made up the population of Limoeiro.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, it seems that enough slaves had been captured that the provincial government could formally request of the Chief of Police that he expedite the processing the quilombolas in order to return them to their owners.<sup>76</sup>

Estevão, still at large, eventually held up his end of the bargain by sending quilombolas to surrender themselves at the Colônia Militar do Gurupí, a military post along the river. But Cunha's strategy would later be criticized harshly by Benevides' successor, Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, who wrote that Cunha "acted in a condemnable fashion by giving the slaves a chance to escape; this is what causes the rumors that he lived in harmony with them [the quilombolas], buying foodstuffs and gold extracted from the mines of Mineração Maranhense [the name of the predecessor to the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company]."<sup>77</sup> A teacher and

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<sup>73</sup> "Noticiario." *O Paiz* (São Luís), 21 February 1878.

<sup>74</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Francisco Maria Corrêa de Sá e Benevides ao Sr. Major Diretor da Colônia Militar do Gurupí (3<sup>a</sup> Seção Palácio do Governo) em 20 de fevereiro de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupí. Doc. Avulso. APEM, Araújo (ed.) 1992: 33-34.

<sup>75</sup> "Pará." *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 22 February 1878.

<sup>76</sup> "Governo da Provincia." *O Paiz* (São Luís), 1 March 1878.

<sup>77</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr.

former resident of the Colônia Militar, Francisco d'Assis Corrêa de Faria, accused Cunha's associate, João Pereira, of doing business with quilombolas freely.<sup>78</sup> Cunha, meanwhile, allegedly "disguised" himself in the coarse clothing of a fisherman or hunter in order to parlay with the quilombolas.<sup>79</sup>

Corrêa saw Cunha as a natural soldier who also allowed his ambition to get the best of him. The author asked: "But why would he capture them, if he what he wanted was to do business with them, which meant that they would stay where they were?!"<sup>80</sup> The withering denunciation continues, stating very frankly that Cunha had designs to possess Limoeiro as a colony, much like the *Capitanias* of early colonial Brazil, and for this reason abandoned his duties as a soldier, as the first in command ("preboste") on the battlefield.<sup>81</sup> Cunha later responded in his own defense, declaring that he was the worst enemy of those who conducted illegal commerce with quilombolas.<sup>82</sup> For his part, Cunha asked that President Pimentel understand that, even if he *had* conducted business with the quilombolas, it was simply a measure to gain their trust in order to later capture them.<sup>83</sup>

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Marquês de Herval, Ministro da Guerra, em 7 de junho de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 58.

<sup>78</sup> Francisco d'Assis Corrêa de Faria. "Publicações Gerais." *O Paiz* (São Luís), 27 March 1878.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Exposição de João Manoel da Cunha ao Ilmo e Exmo Sr. Dr. Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, Presidente da Província, em 18 de julho de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 67.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

Marking the beginning of a crucial pattern in the politics of fugitive slave communities along the Gurupí, leverage through trade in gold allowed for the persistence of community life, however embattled that may have been. The quilombolas' ability to enlist the protection or patience of intermediaries allowed them to avoid total defeat and erasure. In addition, many state actors who dealt directly with quilombolas, such as Major Cunha and individuals who will be featured in the following chapters, had countervailing material interests that often impeded the broader political goal of eliminating quilombos altogether. The quilombolas' strong connection to the land and landscape enabled them to survive, in terms of evading military expeditions and using their ability to foment agriculture and precious metal extraction to seemingly give themselves leverage over Cunha's expedition, beset by a lack of supplies in an unforgiving environment.

But Cunha's defense reveals that the known presence of gold in territories occupied by quilombos empowered members of his military expedition as well. There were vociferous protests by quilombolas "of both sexes" that had extracted gold and were fearful that the soldiers would take it from them. Cunha recalls one nameless quilombola who drew attention to "uma quarta de ouro em pó" that was said to have been removed by Captain Feliciano Freire Júnior, who was under Major Cunha's command but would later go on to lead the next expedition against Limoeiro in light of Cunha's failure.<sup>84</sup> Cunha noticed that everyone that had been under Freire's command boasted expensive rosaries made from calabash gourds (*cuia*), implying that they had enriched themselves surreptitiously.<sup>85</sup> While gold was a crucial medium for

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<sup>84</sup> Exposição de João Manoel da Cunha ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Dr. Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, Presidente da Província, em 18 de julho de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso, APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 69-70.

<sup>85</sup> Exposição de João Manoel da Cunha, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 70.

guaranteeing insulation from the harshest repression by state actors, it also left quilombolas vulnerable to unabashed extortion in light of their precarious legal status. This relationship, however, also reveals a certain weakness in state capacity that would prevent the regional elite from effectively exercising control over the resources of the Gurupí. As long as lower levels of officialdom could profit by ignoring or tolerating quilombo activity, including those in the military, quilombolas would be able to escape complete repression. The provincial government, however, wanted to eliminate quilombos altogether in order to transform the precarious western frontier through the creation of agricultural colonies populated by poor peasants.

### **“Whitening” the Amazon and Colonizing the Gurupí**

Long before the government had proposed it, indeed before the quilombolas had even been routed, proposals were being made to transform the land between the Gurupí River and the Maracaçumé into a colony for rural emigrants from Ceará. As Flávio dos Santos Gomes argues, “the greatest objective [of colonization in Maranhão was]...to control in whatever measure possible quilombola and indigenous peoples.”<sup>86</sup> This meant the use of military resources to expel and imprison quilombolas along with the rebellious elements of the indigenous groups populating the Maranhense frontier. But it also meant *replacing* such groups. One enthusiastic pitch from *O Paiz* did not fail to mention both the proximity to known gold mines as well as the availability of food and shelter that would be left behind by quilombolas.<sup>87</sup> Two days later the newspaper renewed its call in the context of reporting on the arrival of seven hundred Cearenses into the province.<sup>88</sup> The newspaper cited repeated calls for such emigrant labor from the state of

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<sup>86</sup> Gomes 2005, 276.

<sup>87</sup> “O Mocambo do Limoeiro.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 2 March 1878.

<sup>88</sup> “Noticiario.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 4 March 1878.

Pará, contrasting this demand with the state's alleged stubbornness in embracing Cearenses as a source of agricultural labor.<sup>89</sup>

Before colonization could occur, however, the government of Maranhão would have to organize the second invasion of Limoeiro. Captain Freire would command a force of eighty troops against Limoeiro and another quilombo referred to as "Piranha."<sup>90</sup> It was in mid-May that news broke of the second expedition's success, with Freire capturing nearly eighty slaves, including Estevão himself, who would stand accused of direct responsibility for over a dozen murders committed by residents of the quilombo.<sup>91</sup> Of the approximately seventy-eight quilombolas captured, many were the children of other residents.<sup>92</sup> Five of the captured were under the age of three, born outside of the system of slavery and unbaptized.<sup>93</sup> One of the slaves, Benedicto, shared an owner with Agostinho de Sá Caldas.<sup>94</sup> Both of these individuals were crucial figures in initiating gold mining along the Maracaçumé along with Estevão.<sup>95</sup> In Chapter Two, I will discuss the importance of Agostinho in particular as a unifying figure for those

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<sup>89</sup> "Emigrantes." *O Paiz* (São Luís), 23 April 1878.

<sup>90</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Francisco Maria Corrêa de Sá e Benevides, ao Juiz de Direito de Turiaçu, em 26 de fevereiro de 1878. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 41.

<sup>91</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província Francisco Maria Corrêa de Sá e Benevides ao Sr. Diretor da Colônia Militar do Gurupi, em 31 de março de 1877. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 13.

<sup>92</sup> "Os Quilombolas do Limoeiro." *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 21 May 1878.

<sup>93</sup> "Quilombolas." *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 22 May 1878.

<sup>94</sup> "Os Quilombolas do Limoeiro." *Publicador Maranhense* (São Luís), 21 May 1878; Though Agostinho's owner is referred to as "Antonio de Sá Caldas," while Benedicto's owner is referred to as "Antonio José da Silva Caldas" this could, in fact, be the same individual. This raises the question of how these common origins influenced networks of solidarity after abolition among surviving fugitive slave communities, particularly in terms of sharing knowledge of gold extraction.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

quilombolas who were *not* captured as they navigated the final years of slavery and a tumultuous transition to freedom after 1888 in the neighboring province of Pará.

Though Freire's victory was celebrated and the list of seventy-eight captured quilombolas widely reproduced in the press, his report of the successful expedition allows us to glimpse the great difficulty his forces had in making their way to the quilombo. Landing at Viseu in the province of Pará, it still took over a week to make the perilous journey downriver via canoe. Upon stopping at Igarapé Cicantan, a tributary along the Gurupí just north of what would later become the post-abolition quilombola settlement of Itamoari. Freire's men spent the entire day crossing the Gurupí River, then spending much of the following day (May 13) traveling east before reaching the site of the quilombo in the early hours of May 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>96</sup> Many of the dwellings, however, had been abandoned to the point that grass was growing on the once-dirt floors.<sup>97</sup>

The quilombolas did have some tools at their disposal. Freire makes specific mention of the “fornos,” wide pans raised from the ground used to dry manioc flour. One of these was made out of bronze and the other two from iron, demonstrating an appropriation of some of the previous materials left behind by the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company.<sup>98</sup> The quilombolas had succeeded in transporting these along with many of their agricultural implements. Later, Freire's trackers had come across two small *ranchos* with numerous food supplies including

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<sup>96</sup> Relação dos quilombolas capturados nas matas de Maracassumé e Paraná, assinada pelo comandante da expedição, Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, em 17 de maio de 1878. Doc. Avulso. APEM, Araújo (ed.) 1992: 49.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Dr. Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, Presidente da Província, sobre a 2<sup>a</sup> invasão do mocambo Limoeiro, em 22 de maio de 1878. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 49-50.

flour, sugar, salt, castor oil, and sarsaparilla. The ranches were destroyed and the provisions therein appropriated by Freire and his troops.<sup>99</sup>

The first quilombola they captured, “Thomaz,” explained that they were on a route used by the quilombolas to access the gold-rich territories further east close to the Maracaçumé River.<sup>100</sup> Thus they established a network of extracting and moving gold, and as we have seen they also had plots of land dedicated to agriculture adjacent to the Gurupí River to support this extended network. What’s more, rather than fleeing chaotically into the woods, Thomáz informed Freire that the quilombolas split up into “platoons,” each with their own “chefe.”<sup>101</sup> Each of these groups formed their own autonomous quilombo, though Estevão and his comrade Benedito remained at the gold mines with their groups.<sup>102</sup> A similar strategy was employed by the quilombolas affiliated with the São Benedito do Céu uprising.<sup>103</sup> A quilombola captured the next day, Pantaleão, denied that Estevão was still at the gold mines. In fact, he claimed that Estevão never intended to surrender but actually ordered the quilombolas to disperse.<sup>104</sup> This reinforces the idea that cunning and subterfuge were as much a part of the quilombola repertoire as traditional expressions of overt rebellion.

As they pushed further in their pursuit two captured quilombolas, Pantaleão and João Roberto, served the troops as guides.<sup>105</sup> João Roberto had been *aquilombado* for much of his life,

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<sup>99</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 50.

<sup>100</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 51.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Gomes 2005, 224.

<sup>104</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 52.

<sup>105</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 53.



having been taken to the quilombo by his own mother fourteen years prior.<sup>106</sup> He would later be emancipated for his service to the invading troops, with the announcement being carried in newspapers such as *O Paiz* praising him for guaranteeing the success of the mission and preventing the troops from getting lost in the woods.<sup>107</sup>

Pressing captured quilombolas into tracking their erstwhile comrades was a familiar pattern which had been employed years before when a contingent of troops relied on the services of the quilombola Feliciano Corta-Mato to find the quilombo São Benedito do Céu in the interior of the province.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, it was clear that the quilombolas exploited a certain knowledge of the terrain which allowed them easier *egress* than it allowed for the *progress* of their would be captors. Freire writes that, had it not been for the good judgement of their guide, “o preto João Roberto,” his troops would have been lost in the forest in the midst of heavy rains and treacherous waterways.<sup>109</sup>

But even if quilombolas did adapt to the forest, their path was not without great difficulty. Freire’s expedition, though not completely successful even after weeks of campaigning, had cut off the quilombolas from their means of sustaining themselves. When Freire’s men captured nineteen fugitives on May 30, Freire remarked that the women and children looked like “walking skeletons” due to being cut off from their *farinha* and afraid to hunt for fear of being discovered.<sup>110</sup> Weeks later, Freire’s crew found a *ranchada* established by

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<sup>106</sup> “Manumissão.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 30 May 1878.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Araújo (ed.) 1994, 62-63.

<sup>109</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 54.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

the quilombolas far to the southeast of the Maracaçumé in the woods near the Paraná River. After a siege during the dead of night, Freire managed to capture an additional thirty-one quilombolas, likely a substantial portion of the remaining group including Estevão himself.<sup>111</sup>

During Estevão's interrogation, the leader informed Freire that his was only one of the four splinter groups that formed in the wake of the first expedition led by Cunha in January.<sup>112</sup> In the midst of flight, the quilombolas had maintained points for agriculture and gold extraction. Equally worthy of note, the quilombolas maintained vestiges of a syncretic religious practice. Freire writes that his men had retrieved two female quilombolas, "Faustina" and "Feliciana," condemned to death as witches (*feiticeiras*). In fact, the very moment that Freire's troops began their final siege, the quilombo was in the middle of a ritual involving *pajés*, with a quilombola named Bernardo imploring Santa Barbara to provide a glimpse of future events.<sup>113</sup>

The ceremony was abruptly ended when a soldier caught a glimpse of Estevão and called out to the rest of the troops.<sup>114</sup> As a resident of Carutapéra put it, Estevão and the quilombolas were in the midst of a farce in order to glean the location of Freire and his troops.<sup>115</sup> These religious practices did not necessarily diminish, even decades after abolition, and traveled along with the quilombolas when they settled in Pará during the 1880s. Even immediately after the fall of Limoeiro, there were already indications that some of the fugitives had crossed the river into the province of Pará.<sup>116</sup> Nonetheless, Captain Freire received no shortage of effusive praise from

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<sup>111</sup> Relatório do Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 55.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 23 May 1878.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

the press for succeeding where Cunha had failed.<sup>117</sup> While Freire collected praise for his successes, Estevão would be put on trial in Turiaçu, having killed an overseer on his plantation before fleeing, but also for having “authored” the deaths of seventeen others carried out by quilombolas under his charge.<sup>118</sup> But with the quilombo seemingly neutralized, the thoughts of the Maranhense elite turned to the perennial goal of colonization.

The presence of a military colony along the Gurupí River since 1853 was designed to facilitate civilian settlement following the suppression of a quilombo. Major Cunha was instrumental in the relocation of the Colônia Militar do Gurupí to the area near the quilombo Limoeiro. As in numerous other cases, the military colony was a means of eliminating the slaves and their culture while creating nuclei of white citizens—migrants from other Brazilian regions or Portuguese immigrants.<sup>119</sup> Local authorities envisioned the so-called Colônia Prado, established on the territory of the fallen quilombo, as one in which migrants from the frequently drought-stricken state of Ceará in the northeast would form a nucleus of white citizenship in a formerly fugitive territory.<sup>120</sup> The strategies used by the regional elites of Maranhão to eliminate and repurpose the fugitive territories of quilombos in the mid-to-late nineteenth century was a variant of proposals circulating elsewhere in Brazil that would have seen immigrant labor supplant that of black slaves and their descendants.

By June 1878, the government of Maranhão was ready to begin its scheme to create an agricultural colony of emigrants from Brazil’s northeast, initiating a type of whitening within the

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<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> “O Chefe Estevão.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 23 May 1878.

<sup>119</sup> Gomes 2005, 274.

<sup>120</sup> Gomes 2005, 276.

realm of possibility. The day after the President of Maranhão communicated his intentions to the Imperial Minister of War, Cunha (who weeks later was stripped of his title as Director of the Colônia Militar) wrote to inform the Vice-President of the province that quilombolas who evaded capture during the sack of Limoeiro had reappeared around Carutapéra, a border town between Pará and Maranhão.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, there was news that a number of escaped slaves had previously made their way across the border to Pará.<sup>122</sup> Given the timing, this may have been one of the splinter groups that went on to form additional fugitive slave communities in Pará during the 1880s which will be discussed in the next chapter. What's more, late 1878 saw a number of advertisements for escaped slaves known to have fled to Limoeiro. Slaveholders Antonio de Oliveira Junior and José Gonçalves d'Oliveira combined resources to solicit any available information about their respective slaves, Justino and Francisco, who were said to be part of the quilombo.<sup>123</sup> The depth of the problem from the perspective of such slaveholders can be understood through the long life of the advertisement, which ran in various newspapers for weeks thereafter. Though Maranhense authorities celebrated a victory over a seemingly intractable quilombo, the abovementioned advertisements belie the idea that all or even most of the inhabitants of the quilombo were captured. Nonetheless, plans to convert Limoeiro into a "white" colony continued apace.

Having cleared the various agricultural plots and habitations used by the quilombolas, the state of Maranhão set out to expropriate those very same materials for the purposes of a further

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<sup>121</sup> Ofício de João Manoel da Cunha ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Dr. Carlos Fernando Ribeiro, Vice-Presidente da Província, em 8 de junho de 1878. (c/cópia anexa do ofício datado de 8 de março de 1876). Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 59.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Candido Rios. "Escravos Fugidos." *O Paiz* (São Luís), 4 September 1878.

colonization of the Montes Aureos region between the Gurupí and Maracaçumé. It is in this light that we should understand why Maranhense Vice-President Carlos Fernando Ribeiro wrote that it was necessary to keep troops at the site not only to prevent the quilombo from reemerging, but to safeguard the site for the province's objectives.<sup>124</sup> Once President Pimentel issued the order to create the colony in earnest, the abovementioned force became a rather large group of about fifty troops, "not just to maintain order in the colony to be established, but also to protect the migrants (*retirantes*) from the fugitive slaves that weren't captured and *índios* in the surrounding areas."<sup>125</sup>

The Maranhense press spent much of May 1878 lauding the conditions of Limoeiro, the rich lands and otherwise "superb" situation of the colony-to-be.<sup>126</sup> Laughably, the same article lauded the generally "satisfactory" nature of public health in spite of the numerous illnesses suffered both by quilombolas and the troops sent to capture them.<sup>127</sup> Much of this boosterism in the main newspapers exulted these general qualities along with the strategic importance of having compliant "white" settlers in areas that would impede any existing trade routes and points of egress that could be used by quilombolas. Some individuals, however, understood the risks of colonization. A group of unnamed "Viseuenses" wrote to the *Diário do Maranhão* in late June 1878, noting that Limoeiro was not developed enough to support so many people, and that many could even die of hunger.<sup>128</sup> Their principal motive was to move such a colony closer to the town

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<sup>124</sup> Mensagem do 2º Vice-Presidente da Província Dr. Carlos Fernando Ribeiro, à Assembléia Legislativa Provincial do Maranhão, em 9 de maio de 1878. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 79

<sup>125</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, ao Sr. Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior (4ª Seção Palácio do Governo) em 28 de maio de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 79-80

<sup>126</sup> *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 23 May 1878.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> "Alguns Vizeuenses." "A Colonia "Limoeiro."" *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 29 June 1878.

of Viseu on the eastern border of Pará, but much of what they said turned out to be fairly accurate.

Though the terms set out for the colony were seemingly egalitarian—for example, that land would be distributed to Cearense emigrants in an “equitable fashion” and that no *colono* would receive more land than they were capable of cultivating—it was clear that residents would not necessarily be free cultivators but would labor under the watchful eye of the state.<sup>129</sup> The colony, named “Colônia Prado” after then provincial President Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, would be under the day-to-day command of Captain Freire himself.<sup>130</sup> Part of the purpose of this was to create an effective template for dealing with the periodic exodus of northeastern emigrants into northern territories in Pará and Maranhão. President Prado Pimentel was wary that Cearense migrants were making their way across the province “without direction” and relying heavily on material assistance from the provincial government.<sup>131</sup>

As much as the colony was a beachhead for further colonization and exploitation of the Brazilian northern interior, it was also a mission of sorts meant to control poor Cearense emigrants and mold them into ideal laborers for a rural capitalist economy. In addition, military supervision would cut them off from any contact with quilombolas and still autonomous indigenous groups with whom they might unite if left to their own devices. The site was rarely

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<sup>129</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel, ao Sr. Capitão Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior (4<sup>a</sup> Seção Palácio do Governo) em 28 de maio de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 80

<sup>130</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Conselheiro Carlos Leôncio de Carvalho, Ministro e Secretário do Estado dos Negócios do Império (1<sup>a</sup> Seção do Palácio da Presidência do Maranhão), em 31 de maio de 1878. (Cod. Presidência da Província/Ministerio do Império—jan/dez 1878, p. 39-40), in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 82

<sup>131</sup> Ofício do Presidente da Província, Graciliano Aristides do Prado Pimentel ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Conselheiro Carlos Leôncio de Carvalho, Ministro e Secretário do Estado dos Negócios do Império (1<sup>a</sup> Seção do Palácio da Presidência do Maranhão), em 31 de maio de 1878. (Cod. Presidência da Província/Ministério do Império—jan/dez 1878, p. 39-40). APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 83

referred to by its mandated name, and was still often called “Limoeiro,” “mocambo Limoeiro,” or “quilombo.” In any case, Limoeiro would be one of many planned colonies with the stated aim of containing “thousands” of Cearenses.<sup>132</sup> When the colony was officially inaugurated in August 1878, there were already 885 Cearenses present.<sup>133</sup> Despite the fanfare, it was not very long before the colonos themselves began to openly bristle at the conditions in which they found themselves, finding the very life of rural hardship that they sought to escape from in the first place.

A number of colonos filed Declarations (*Declarações*) with the Maranhense government stating their grievances, usually written by a scribe or notary. One Cearense, Antonio de Oliveira Guimarães, lamented that he and his fellow Cearenses “were thrown into the sterile Limoeiro, where under the absolute and rigorous command of Captain Feliciano Xavier Freire Júnior, they have suffered life’s worst rigors, to such an extent that an increasing number of people have left, all broken and dead from hunger.”<sup>134</sup> In the face of Freire’s “indifference,” Oliveira states, many colonos had simply run away to try their luck elsewhere in the dense forests of northeastern Maranhão.<sup>135</sup> Another colono, Luís Alves de Oliveira, attempted to hunt in order to curb his family’s hunger, only to find himself lost in the surrounding forests for 14 days.<sup>136</sup> He evoked the

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<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Ata (cópia anexa) da inauguração da Colônia Prado em 11 de agosto de 1878. Doc. Avulso. APEM, Araújo (ed.) 1992: 89

<sup>134</sup> Declaração de Antonio de Oliveira Guimarães, imigrante cearense, ao Governo da Província, assinada a rogo por Felipe Santiago da Fonseca, em 28 de dezembro de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 91

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Declaração de Luís Alves de Oliveira, imigrante cearense, assinada a rogo por Raimundo Nonato de Moraes Rego, em 28 de dezembro de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992 92-93

image of families that had arrived in the Summer living under trees and resembling “corpses,” while Freire and his lovers lived in relative comfort.<sup>137</sup> Another colono, Francisco Martiniano do Nascimento, said of the colony that “no christian could live there,” yet Freire made it quite difficult for him and other colonos to leave.<sup>138</sup> There was one individual, however, that Nascimento singled out for praise: Padre José Thomáz de Albuquerque.<sup>139</sup>

The abovementioned priest had arrived just before the inauguration of the colony in July 1878 along with hundreds of desperate refugees from the drought that had overtaken Ceará and other northeastern territories.<sup>140</sup> Just before leaving for Limoeiro, he had high hopes for the colony and asked them to look kindly upon their unfortunate Cearense brothers: “The work of the Cearense people would always be entirely free; there each man, regardless of how poor he may be, is never purely a *jornaleiro* (day laborer), but also tends his own field, and cares for his own field without having to answer to anyone. In Ceará you don’t have the *patrões* of Amazonas, or the slavocratic fazendeiros of the south.”<sup>141</sup> He was apprehensive of these Cearenses laboring under the same conditions as slaves, and therefore becoming “white slaves.” Of course, this view was fraught with a certain racism as well: “the sentiments of the Cearense people are free and noble, and have nothing of the African in them.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Declaração de Luís Alves de Oliveira, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 93

<sup>138</sup> Declaração de Francisco Martiniano do Nascimento, imigrante cearense, assinada a rogo por Abel Pinheiro dos Santos, em 28 de dezembro de 1878. Maço: Colônia Militar do Gurupi. Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 94-95

<sup>139</sup> Declaração de Francisco Martiniano do Nascimento, in Araújo (ed.) 1992 95

<sup>140</sup> Padre José Thomáz. “Notas de Minha Viagem ao Limoeiro.” *O Paiz (São Luís)*, 27 August 1878.

<sup>141</sup> “O padre *José Thomáz*.” “Publicações Gerais.” *O Paiz (São Luís)*, 12 July 1878.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*



It was only days after this cautious editorial that Padre Thomáz would himself travel to “Colônia Prado” to minister to the Cearenses there.<sup>143</sup> Having lived in Ceará for a number of years, overseeing charitable works “without spending from the coffers of the state,” he was a popular figure among many of the migrants.<sup>144</sup> But Padre Thomáz was certainly apprehensive just before his departure, “not having good information with respect to Limoeiro, much in relation to the poor choice of location and the disorder that reigns there,” and for this reason he did not oppose the efforts of many colonos to leave for established towns such as Viseu.<sup>145</sup> Lamenting the poor state of agriculture and development in general in and around the colony, Padre Thomáz insisted that colony would never move past being a quilombo. He sarcastically remarked that the one building that had been constructed at the entrance of the colony, rather than demonstrating its future prosperity, heralded a new, exotic, quilombo architecture (“*arquitectura mocambica*”).<sup>146</sup>

Over the next four days, the priest published a series of investigative articles detailing his experience at Colônia Prado. The second part of the series began with an unforgiving journey between the nearest port at Igarapé Cicantan along the Gurupí River and the colony. The conditions were enough to move Padre Thomáz to write that the colony substituted a “mocambo de pretos” for a “*mocambo de brancos*.”<sup>147</sup> According to his account, residents of the colony freely related their misery and poverty to the priest—the lack of basic possessions, the high cost

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<sup>143</sup> “Colônia Prado.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 18 July 1878.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Padre José Thomáz. “Notas de Minha Viagem ao Limoeiro.” *O Paiz (São Luís)*, 29 August 1878.

of food, the false promises that drew them there. Residents up to that point had been subsisting on the stockpiles of manioc cultivated widely by the quilombolas, which the military expeditions had encountered in various locations around the quilombo Limoeiro.<sup>148</sup> Further indication that the quilombolas had achieved some kind of balance with their environment can be seen in a quote from one resident, as reported by Padre Thomáz, to the effect that “the only hope that we have to feed ourselves to this day is a trail opened up by the other mocambeiros *our predecessors* in the direction of the Paraná [River], where they would go to rustle cattle...” The unnamed resident goes on further to explain that the Director of the colony (Freire) “had gone to explore it [the trail], taking as a guide one of the *antigos pretos*; many of us accompanied him voluntarily so we could also know the trail, so we could use it to escape.”<sup>149</sup>

Not only had these residents implicitly praised the organization of the quilombo, “their predecessors,” in leaving behind sufficient food supplies and trails for exploration, but it seems that they wanted to use the geographical knowledge of the “antigos pretos” in order to flee from their own oppression! Such knowledge was truly the only thing that could keep the colonos alive and allow them to navigate the region without getting lost in the forests as Luís Alves de Oliveira had. Nearly twenty years later, geologist Miguel Arrojado Lisboa noted that the mining regions on the border between Maranhão and Pará didn’t have any regular roads except for the forest trails opened up by the *negro* in search of a *placer* [mine].<sup>150</sup> The Cearenses fulminated against remaining in the colony under “the most monstrous despotism, [and] *our senhores* would want to force us free Brazilians to remain stuck here in this place at the point of a saber, without a future,

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<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Lisboa 5

isolated from the whole world, and wasn't it only because of this that the *pretos* chose this location for their mocambo?"<sup>151</sup>

In a very short time, to various observers, it seems that the quilombolas had imprinted their identity onto the land itself, such that it was not considered "fit" for free peasants from Ceará, whites, or Christians. Over a few short months the quilombolas who settled at Limoeiro had carved out a free space that maintained that characteristic even when the actual fugitive slaves had been driven out. Nonetheless, Padre Thomáz described how a combination of military expedition and the sad state of the colony had led to the destruction or deterioration of many of the ranches and agricultural implements used by the quilombolas, while the Cearense colonos had neglected the numerous pineapple, orange, guava, and banana trees left behind by the fugitive slaves.<sup>152</sup> Geologist Miguel Arrojado Lisboa contends that these same fruit trees had been abandoned with the displacement of quilombolas by Ka'apor attacks in Montes Aureos, who then incorporated those fruits into their diet.<sup>153</sup> Lisboa writes elsewhere, without specifying which of the quilombola communities, that fruits were highly valued by members of the community and many of the fruits typical to the region were a part of their regular diet even after abolition.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Padre José Thomáz. "Notas de Minha Viagem ao Limoeiro." *O Paiz (São Luís)*, 29 August 1878.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Lisboa 52

<sup>154</sup> Lisboa 57; When Major Honorato Cândido Ferreira Caldas led a military expedition against the quilombo São Sebastião, he also observed the cultivation of bananas and other fruit trees along with a distinct circular pattern in the organization of dwellings (as reported in the 16 January 1877 edition of the *Diário do Maranhão*).

On the other hand, the colonos made little progress of their own account, and they weren't even capable of "raising even one new rancho, knocking down an inch of the forest, and they didn't plant anything at all in a way that would give hope to anyone."<sup>155</sup> An anonymous ex-colono, writing in the *Diário do Maranhão*, challenged the logic of placing a "colony many kilometers inland away from the nearest river [the Maracaçumé], and [which] during the present season (Winter) is almost inaccessible because it is surrounded by floodplains and plants (*bamburraes*), [and] it is impossible that it could offer the comforts of life or the means of subsistence."<sup>156</sup> Apart from repeating the damning accusations of the testimonies given above by other residents of the colony to the effect that Capitão Freire mistreated the colonos and used the colony for his own enrichment, the author claims to have it on good authority that "in spite of the vacancies in the colony, we figure that business is still being done with the quilombolas who were [previous] residents of the current colony and maybe Major Cunha still has the pleasure of entertaining relations with them [the quilombolas]."<sup>157</sup> The seeming neglect suggested by the writer once again indicates a lack of state capacity to effectively administer the colony. And though no other sources suggest that quilombolas maintained a presence in the area in terms of actual commerce with Colônia Prado, it is not beyond the realm of possibility given the scandals that had entangled Major Cunha at the end of his tenure as the Director of the Colônia Militar and replacement with Captain Freire as the leader of the subsequent military expedition.

On 9 October 1879, a letter from a judge based in Turiaçu made it clear that Colônia Prado had disintegrated. He facilitated the relocation both of remaining goods and remaining

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<sup>155</sup> Padre José Thomáz. "Notas de Minha Viagem ao Limoeiro." *O Paiz (São Luís)*, 29 August 1878.

<sup>156</sup> "Um ex colono." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 5 January 1879.

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*

residents to various towns and locations outside of the colony, indicating that the effort was officially dead.<sup>158</sup> In the present day, residents of Limão/Limoeiro are in the process of obtaining recognition from the federal government as *remanescentes de quilombo* (quilombo descendants), which under the terms of Article 68 of Brazil's 1988 Constitution and Decreto 4887 of 2003 would allow them to occupy land in Limão under a collective title. Various cabinet-level agencies of the Brazilian government such as the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) and the Secretary for the Politics of Promoting Racial Equality (SEPPPIR) record the names of these communities as "Limão," "Limoeiro," and "Limoeiro dos Pretos." That the latter name would be used at all is a testament to the fact that the quilombo provided the basis for struggles over land and redistributive justice long after the Lei Áurea was signed by Princess Isabel in 1888 abolishing African slavery. On the other hand, the moniker of "Colônia Prado" faded completely from use shortly after its unfortunate Cearense inhabitants left the area in 1879.

Though both the quilombo and the doomed colony had passed from the scene in quick succession, there was still the matter of Estevão's trial. Captured in mid-1878, Estevão—named as "ex governador" of Limoeiro—and his comrades Cândido and Benedicto were not sentenced until 1880.<sup>159</sup> After two days, the jury decision came down in favor of the death penalty for Estevão, whose actions had done much to shake Maranhão's slaveocracy to its core. Cândido and

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<sup>158</sup> Ofício do Juiz de Direito Interino da Comarca de Turiaçu, Ernesto de Carvalho Pires Lima, ao Ilm<sup>o</sup> e Exm<sup>o</sup> Sr. Dr. Luís de Oliveira Lins de Vasconcellos, Presidente da Província, em 9 de outubro de 1879. (c/ cópia anexa de ofício datado em 26 de agosto de 1879). Doc. Avulso. APEM, in Araújo (ed.) 1992: 96-97.

<sup>159</sup> "Tury-assù." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 4 April 1880; according to the 27 June 1878 edition of *O Paiz*, a quilombola named Agostinho is listed as another defendant. This is likely Agostinho de Sá Caldas, who figures prominently into later chapters. It is highly improbable that he ever stood trial given his documented presence among quilombolas very quickly thereafter, or perhaps this was another quilombola of the same name. In any case, there is no Agostinho listed among those who were captured at Limoeiro.

Benedicto were “absolved,” which likely meant placement back into the custody of their owners.<sup>160</sup> The article communicating the news celebrated the indefatigability of the judge and the “decisão final deste monstro processo dos Thugs.”<sup>161</sup> But the trial only signaled a superficial defeat for the quilombo Limoeiro, and quilombolas in general. Their continued access to gold deposits would prove to have a lasting impact on the region.

### **Conclusion: A Golden Future?**

Gustavo Dodt was a First Class engineer employed by Brazil’s Imperial government whose exploration of the Gurupí region formed the basis of his work *Descrição dos Rios Parnaíba e Gurupy*. Though his work was completed in 1874, the work was not widely published until 1939. Nonetheless, a number of specialists drew from his work and cited Dodt in later bibliographies of gold mining in Pará and Maranhão. The author reiterated what was known on some level: that gold deposits were distributed throughout the region, but later authors who published works on the region directly cited his research. Furthermore, they must have responded to his assertion that locating gold deposits would be “a great and special task.”<sup>162</sup> Though his work would not be widely circulated for many decades thereafter, many of Dodt’s colleagues were engineers and geologists who would establish themselves in the Gurupí’s mining industry over the next two decades. In the following chapter, I argue that many of these professionals used their knowledge to carve out a material advantage for themselves in the form of mining concessions and positions in foreign mining concerns.

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<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.* Estevão died while in police custody, apparently before an official execution took place (See Araújo (ed.) 1992, 38) .

<sup>162</sup> Dodt 166

Dodt's journey allows us understand how the geography of the region was uniquely suited to fugitive slave communities and less hospitable to large-scale exploitation by transnational capital, describing how the Gurupí River has numerous obstacles such as trees and branches, in addition to the numerous waterfalls that make for a perilous crossing, and obstruct anything other than canoes from effective navigation even when the waters are low.<sup>163</sup> Indeed, this inability to conquer the “hinterland,” the “frontier” marking the border between Pará and Maranhão characterized state efforts at colonization and privately-funded efforts at resource extraction. The failure of the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company to attract a stable workforce and the failure of Colônia Prado over a decade later to establish an agricultural colony contributed to a cumulative effect of ensuring “that the area would be kept in trust for the mocambeiros, as their monopoly of the mineral rights together with the continuing hostility of the Ka'apor combined to make the area unattractive to others who might have wished to enter it.”<sup>164</sup> It should be noted, however, that Dodt does not record any contact with specific quilombos during his expedition.

As is common among the extant works specifically about the Gurupí region, Dodt's attempts at ethnography are mostly concentrated on the indigenous Tembé and Ka'apor groups. For his part, Dodt goes to great lengths to stress the pacific nature of most indigenous groups living on the margins of the Gurupí, describing the Ka'apor as being “*não sem industria*” with many women wearing cotton dresses. An interesting observation that is little explored in subsequent accounts is the degree of cooperation with quilombolas that had already passed through the area in the years before the formation of the quilombo Limoeiro: “They (the

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<sup>163</sup> Dodt 166-167

<sup>164</sup> Cleary 37

Ka'apor) use many iron-tipped arrows and they say that these were provided to them by *mucambos negros*, that are said to exist around these parts.<sup>165</sup>

There are other explanations for this phenomenon that tend to write out the role of mocambeiros. One Maranhão newspaper, publishing an article in 1928 based on an account by traveler Adalberto Macedo, claimed that the iron-tipped arrows were actually furnished by various down-and-out Europeans—fugitives from French Guiana and other European adventurers who allegedly achieved dominance over the Ka'apor as their “chiefs.”<sup>166</sup> Aside from being wild speculation, this account confuses indigenous agency and collaboration with quilombolas for domination and manipulation by a rogue’s gallery of European “chiefs.” A more credible account comes from Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, who suggests that it is equally as likely that this supply of iron came from various raids on commercial outposts, mining nuclei, villages, and other such sources, though he acknowledged the long-held belief among locals of the upper Gurupí that quilombolas from surrounding regions did in fact provided the material.<sup>167</sup>

Later observations seem to corroborate the idea that close relationships *could* exist between quilombolas and native peoples in the region. Even after the fall of Limoeiro, other localities in the western part of Maranhão noted the existence of quilombos. In 1880, a resident of Penalva warned the readers of *O Paiz* of the existence of a mysterious town near Rio Pindaré southeast of Limoeiro populated “with individuals of every color; some of them have firearms, but they make more use of arrows, and they trade along the Gurupí.” The author speculates that

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<sup>165</sup> Dodt 177

<sup>166</sup> “A Sorte dos Selvicolas no Territorio Maranhense.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 29 Nov. 1928.

<sup>167</sup> Ribeiro 1970 179



it must be a large quilombo, and would not likely have been wrong in that assumption given the aforementioned location.<sup>168</sup> In later chapters, we will see that quilombolas and their descendants formed increasingly amicable social bonds with indigenous groups along the Gurupí such as the Ka'apor and the Temb  as expressed through cohabitation, miscegenation, and a certain overlap between quilombola and indigenous cultural traditions. The presence of gold and the repression of the state increasingly drove quilombolas in western Maranh o towards areas inhabited or frequented by members of indigenous groups, a tumultuous process marked by physical violence, but also by moments of possible cooperation and even acculturation.

Equally important was the fact that the presence of gold along the Gurup  and Maraca um  rivers attracted greater numbers of educated and ambitious individuals, such as Dodt, who traveled the region in order to study mineral deposits. Many of these geologists and engineers would use this knowledge for their own material benefit, often at the expense of those already inhabiting the areas around the Gurup  and Maraca um  Rivers—a phenomenon which the following chapter will explain in detail. At the same time, however, these studies would also leave behind amateur ethnographies of indigenous groups as well as quilombolas. Increasingly, quilombolas would also serve as guides for those who were eager to demonstrate the shining wealth of the region to potential investors.

At the end of a long process of resistance and flight, black slaves in western Maranh o delivered a series of critical blows to the slave economy of the region between Turia u and the Gurup  River. While it would be premature to affix a firm number to the phenomenon, the instances of quilombagem cited in this chapter suggests that the number of slaves who escaped and entered into quilombos could have been easily in the low thousands from the 1860s to

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<sup>168</sup> “Ao governo.” *O Paiz* (S o Lu s), 15 June 1880.

abolition. At times this resistance could include a full-on attack on various plantations, as was the case in 1867.

The geography of this resistance meant that quilombos mostly formed in locations that were physically difficult to reach while also being excellent locations for creating autonomous economies based both on subsistence agriculture and the illicit extraction of gold. Quilombolas introduced land use patterns that had repercussions outside of their own communities. The manioc they planted for their own sustenance was perhaps the only thing that kept many Cearense immigrants alive when Limoeiro was transformed into Colônia Prado. Quilombolas transformed the land as well, introducing varieties of fruit trees well suited to the climate and soil of the heavily forested areas of western Maranhão, which would later be extended to quilombola settlements in Pará. In the process of extracting gold to trade for various goods, quilombolas created trails and cultivated a deep knowledge of the land that was only matched by its indigenous inhabitants.

Though the remoteness of quilombo settlements in western Maranhão were an objectively important factor in their survival, it would be a mistake to represent these communities as ones existing in complete geographic isolation. That is to say, in a social and economic vacuum with no ties to the existing society or surrounding lands. Taking a critical stance towards what had become an officialized definition of the quilombo over the course of more recent discussions of recognizing the land claims of quilombo descendants in contemporary Brazil, Wagner Almeida argues against the idea that quilombos were necessarily isolated entities.<sup>169</sup> This oversimplification, according to Almeida, erases the very real connections that

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<sup>169</sup> Alfredo Wagner, “É necessário que nos libertemos da definição arqueológica” (presentation, Direitos Territoriais das Comunidades Negras Rurais—Aspectos Jurídicos e Antropológicos, São Paulo, SP, April 1997) in Leitão (ed.) 1999: 12.

quilombos had to existing markets and represents them as having been completely marginal in their importance.<sup>170</sup> Indeed, this was certainly not the case for those who formed the quilombo Limoeiro. For such an idea to become reified, it would be necessary to present quilombolas and their descendants as having been frozen in time, with subsequent histories of conflict, resistance, and exploitation involving the encroaching capitalist and extractivist economies of the Amazon being swept aside completely. In a more immediate sense, the events of the July 1867 uprising at Viana demonstrated that quilombos could also effectively communicate with and recruit those enslaved Africans on fazendas in regional population centers.

Even if quilombolas occupied territories that were difficult to access on foot or on canoe, they regularly interacted with individuals outside of their community. In this regard, the regatões were highly important to the quilombola economy in terms of providing goods in exchange for access to cheap, illicit gold. Quilombolas also had certain understandings with the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company whereby they provided their labor for gold extraction and other activities to the company's supervisors while still evading their owners and maintaining openings for fleeing elsewhere or surreptitiously extracting gold from company lands for their own benefit. Finally, quilombolas maintained vaguely defined business dealings with the very troops whose mission it was to capture them and return them to their owners. Major Cunha, while defending his actions, did certainly admit in a circuitous fashion that there was an exchange of goods between him, Estevão, and other quilombolas. What Gomes has described in terms of quilombos using this commerce to secure a certain amount of autonomy and freedom extended past abolition and even past the destruction of physical spaces in the case of the quilombo

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<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*

Limoeiro.<sup>171</sup> In the next chapter, I will describe how this complicated web of relationships with intermediaries of state power deepened with the approach of abolition and extended to public officials and those employed by the state in a professional and technical capacity.

The confluence of these trends late in the life of the Brazilian Empire created a situation where the lands occupied by quilombolas became symbolically associated with them as well. This is demonstrated in abundance by the words and testimonies of various individuals associated with Colônia Prado. One of multiple attempts to create agricultural colonies and effectively exploit the labor power of northeastern migrants, the colony continued to be referred to as a quilombo and the name “Limoeiro” outlasted the moniker of “Colônia Prado.” Various colonos and Padre Thomáz expressed their resentment over the conditions of the colony, including certain disagreeable features of the land and climate, in terms that associated physical geography with the political geography of the then recently displaced quilombolas. Land that had been used semi-frequently as a space for quilombos for a few decades became land that was unfit for white settlement and *only* suitable for escaped slaves. Another development that likely played a part in this outlook was the fact that these very *colonos* survived due to the successful cultivation of foodstuffs by quilombolas, trails eked out by those same fugitive slaves in order to hunt and conduct cattle raids elsewhere, and the knowledge imparted by “antigos pretos” that would have allowed others to successfully navigate the very forests that impeded and confounded the soldiers sent to capture the quilombolas of Limoeiro as well as the Cearenses who populated the colony founded after the dispersal of Limoeiro. These are certainly expressions of a nascent territoriality. The way this term is defined by Castro and Acevedo, as something which “[c]oncretiza-se em práticas quotidianas, na perseguição de estratégias de vida

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<sup>171</sup> Gomes 2005, 154

e de trabalho, na execução de ações que são criadoras da existência material e social,” should also be applied to groups that are outside or even opposed to the quilombos and their forms of social and economic organization.<sup>172</sup>

While Marin and Castro , among other authors, base the concept of quilombola territoriality on the subjectivity of quilombolas, their lived experiences, and their historical memory, we can perceive the shadow of that territoriality in the frustrated attempts of the late slaveocracy to conquer the rich forests and gold producing territories of western Maranhão. Various actors involved on some level with this attempt at colonization rationalized their failure in terms that implicated the land itself as being more favorable to fugitive slaves. This nascent territoriality, therefore, necessarily constitutes the failure of the Maranhense elite to create what Ray Craib has referred to as a “stage space” where:

the struggles for, and alternative visions of, a better social life; the myriad ways of organizing and conceiving space; the spatial practices and relationships that were transformed in the process of primitive accumulation and state formation; and, not least of all, the techniques and technologies of domination—all are flattened and neutralized in the teleological quest for legitimacy, foundational coherence, and the naturalization of the social world.<sup>173</sup>

Alfredo Wagner, who devised the term “terras de preto” to understand the myriad alternate configurations of land and community structures that proliferated among Afro-Brazilian rural communities after abolition and well into the twentieth century, outlined criteria such as “fatores étnicos, elementos de consciência ecológica e critérios de gênero e de autodefinição coletiva” as unique factors which distinguished Afro-Brazilian territorialities—those who could trace their origins to a quilombo, those who lived on lands originally belonging to the Catholic

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<sup>172</sup> Marin and Castro 1998 29

<sup>173</sup> Craib 5

Church, or even former slaves who inherited land from their owners—from other contemporaneous social movements such as unions.<sup>174</sup> But while Almeida identifies these factors as having become active ingredients in rural social movements beginning in the 1970s, I would argue that the actions of quilombolas a century before created the basis for resistance to capitalist and private property relations in the countryside, a dynamic which will unfold in later chapters and constitute a continuity that links the instances of resistance and flight documented in this chapter with struggles that emerged and reemerged in the subsequent decades among populations with origins in the region's quilombos. While quilombo territoriality was certainly in flux, particularly because those who evaded capture at Limoeiro continued to move west, it expressed itself in tangible ways to the representatives of the dominant political and economic order.

Though quilombolas had no choice but to flee in order to preserve their freedom, they left an impression on the land they occupied and served as a powerful force counteracting the hegemony of landed elites and those who wanted to establish private wealth through agriculture and mining. But this is not where their story ends. While dozens and likely hundreds of the quilombolas who fled from Limoeiro were not captured, they also did not disperse or disappear.

When David Cleary conducted fieldwork among *garimpeiros* in Montes Aureos in 1985, a few of them were able to recount stories and legends of these very quilombolas. One *garimpeiro* spoke of a “Rei Serafim,” who in this incarnation ruled over Montes Aureos with the exit of the English.<sup>175</sup> Serafim was said to have gone mad, killing newborn children and driving his own comrades to denounce him to the authorities, leading to his capture.<sup>176</sup> Though there is

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<sup>174</sup> Wagner 2006, 21

<sup>175</sup> Cleary 41

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*

little to suggest that this story has any credibility or even that there was such a character among the quilombolas, this garimpeiro goes on to describe to Cleary that “Serafim” was the first to introduce cocoa, as well as a number of citrus trees.<sup>177</sup> Other garimpeiros spoke of “Rei Estevão,” who is most certainly the Estevão who led Limoeiro and was subsequently captured and sentenced to death.<sup>178</sup> This particular account, while containing some lurid and possibly fictitious details such as Estevão’s proclivity to sleep with all of the women in the quilombo, also recalls his success in obtaining a sluice for the quilombo’s mining operations and the planting of numerous cocoa, mango, and orange trees in different locations in and around Limão that even a century after the fall of Limoeiro were understood to be a marker of quilombola territoriality.<sup>179</sup>

A large group of these very same escaped slaves continued to forge freedom in flight, drawing upon the economic activities that quilombos in gold-rich western Maranhão had developed in order to support permanent settlements that would last beyond abolition. In the following chapter, I will detail the difficult journey of this group of quilombolas into the neighboring province of Pará. In order to defend their freedom and their territoriality, they were faced with a series of alliances, difficult decisions, and struggles that would set the stage for life after the abolition of slavery.

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Cleary 42

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*

## Chapter 2: The Freedom Before Abolition

As I have argued in the previous chapter, many of the larger quilombos that proliferated in the western extremities of Maranhão were never completely suppressed. Escaped slaves fled into the forest, leaving captivity behind for a tenuous freedom outside of the grasp of their would-be masters. When the quilombolas at Limoeiro were captured, their assumed leader Estevão later dying in prison, they had already created the conditions which would carry their comrades to freedom forged in gold. Having effectively scouted mineral deposits throughout western Maranhão, those who escaped capture at Limoeiro were well positioned to apply their renowned skills to the territory of eastern Pará. After encountering numerous setbacks, those who remained in flight settled along the Gurupí River separating the provinces of Maranhão and Pará. It was here that the remaining quilombolas would establish themselves, discovering numerous gold deposits with promising potential while also creating fixed settlements.

To an even greater extent than before, quilombolas accumulated geographical knowledge and expertise that was highly valued by distinct and sometimes conflicting segments of the domestic and foreign elite in Brazil. Representatives of the Imperial government in Rio de Janeiro, ambitious foreign adventurers, and local officials in Pará and Maranhão all attempted to exploit the quilombolas to their own ends. But Quilombolas were able to deftly exploit the weaknesses of and cleavages between these groups in order to hold on to a tenuous autonomy rooted in land settlements and the transplantation of social and cultural practices that survived a difficult exodus from slavery.

Just as military expeditions failed to eliminate quilombos and deter further instances of slave resistance, the series of reforms resulting in the abolition of African slavery failed to dissolve the bond formed by quilombolas in Maranhão and Pará. Struggles waged by fugitive



slaves over decades created a durable network of survival based on illicit commerce, geographical knowledge, and a certain cultural cohesion that did not end with the quilombo Limoeiro in 1878. Having escaped immediate capture, dozens of quilombolas were now faced with the task of leaving their erstwhile stronghold in Montes Aureos and Limão. In the process of safeguarding their immediate liberty, fugitive slaves formed permanent settlements where they remained long after the abolition of slavery itself while also forming relationships with regional merchants and politicians. Both endeavors depended to a significant degree on the exploration of mines in frontier areas, but also other pursuits such as agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

It goes without saying that these activities would not have been possible if imperial authorities had succeeded in their goal of wiping out the quilombos altogether. By navigating a complex series of relationships with decision-makers in the region, quilombolas established and defended geographical spaces for their social and material reproduction at a time when such social formations were plainly illegal. Knowledge of gold mining and territory along the Gurupí was crucial to this process, as quilombolas used their access to gold to trade for basic necessities. Their knowledge of the land made them invaluable for scientific expeditions and as salaried laborers in the construction of a network of telegraph lines in Maranhão and Pará. Knowledge creation emanating from quilombos served to perpetuate a unique socioeconomic formation which survived abolition. One former quilombola, Agostinho de Sá Caldas, was at the center of this process, making a reputation based on his prowess in mining exploration accumulated while he was fugitive. His experiences as outlined in the next section and throughout the chapter are central to understanding how quilombos related to the Gurupí region as distinct social spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> Flávio dos Santos Gomes, “Roceiros, mocambeiros e as fronteiras da emancipação no Maranhão,” in Cunha and Gomes (eds.) 2007: 162-163.

## Agostinho de Sá Caldas: Quilombola and “Vanguard of Progress”

Born into slavery sometime during the 1840s, Agostinho de Sá Caldas nonetheless managed to spend most of his youth in various quilombos. As one newspaper puts it, “Old Agostinho was connected, since 1850, with all of the business that sought to take the wealth of Montes Aureos. After being persecuted by military and police forces, he escaped with the rest of his comrades to the other side of the Gurupy, where he founded two *aldeias* in Paraense territory.”<sup>2</sup> On 8 April 1901 the *Diário do Maranhão* published an article written under the pen name “Veritas” providing a fairly comprehensive account of Agostinho’s life.<sup>3</sup> This is itself quite astonishing considering that the subject was a former slave and quilombola, but provokes more curiosity still in its overall tone and excessive praise of a man of African descent from a humble background who by all accounts participated in rebellious activities denounced in no uncertain terms by regional elites.

The author begins the article by recounting Agostinho’s nicknames: “Agostinho das Minas” [Agostinho from the mines] and “o homem de ouro” [the man of gold]. Veritas goes on to admire his physicality: “Agostinho, strong black man, well prepared. “*porte bien son age*,” as the French say; he still has muscles of steel, going for entire days dedicated to his explorations.” The use of French, a valued language among Brazilian intellectuals, establishes an uncommonly high level of commendation.

Agostinho was employed by as an explorer by the Companhia de Mineração Maranhense, in Montes Aureos during the 1850s.<sup>4</sup> Agostinho and a small number of his comrades who

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<sup>2</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. “O ouro do Maranhão e seu esquadrinhamento.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 21 April 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Veritas. “As minas de ouro.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

<sup>4</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. “O Ouro do Maranhão e seu esquadrinhamento.” *Pacotilha* (São

managed to evade authorities after the fall of another quilombo, Jacaréquára, led mining efforts for a number of years. Agostinho was one of dozens of fugitive slaves who survived “for many years” by maintaining subsistence plots and engaging in the type of clandestine mining in Montes Aureos that imperiled the profits of English investors in the region during the 1860s.<sup>5</sup> For the better part of the 1870s Agostinho returned to his owner, Antônio de Sá Caldas, in the Maranhense capital of São Luís. Though Agostinho ultimately escaped to the quilombo Limoeiro, Veritas describes this as “nostalgia that compelled him to the jungle so he could satiate himself from the pure air of liberty....” The author goes on to write that Agostinho “fixed his residence in the mocambo of Limoeiro....”

Such statements give the reader the impression Agostinho’s skill as an explorer of potential gold mines allowed him to make a name for himself in spite of his status as an enslaved person and quilombola in the last decades of slavery. In any case, the casualness with which the author asserts that the act of quilombagem was akin to changing one’s area code suggests that the field was wide open for those who would slip the bonds of African slavery and form independent communities in the gold-rich region of western Maranhão. But Agostinho was not simply a witness to these events. By some accounts, he had a prominent role among the quilombolas at Limoeiro due to his skill as an explorer and was identified as part of the leadership circle by at least one newspaper in 1878.<sup>6</sup>

Like many of the enslaved who “fixed their residence” in Limoeiro, Agostinho slowly made their way to the state of Pará along the Gurupí River. According to Paiva, Agostinho and

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Luís), 21 April 1927.

<sup>5</sup> Veritas. “As minas de ouro.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

<sup>6</sup> “Tury-assù.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 4 April 1880

the other quilombolas who escaped in 1878 settled near the waterfall of Cicantan a few kilometers north along the Gurupí, during which time they met fierce resistance from the Ka'apor before settling in Pará by 1883.<sup>7</sup> This essentially marked the quilombolas' founding of the settlement that would become the village of Itamoari.<sup>8</sup> Shortly thereafter, Agostinho and his quilombola comrades provided labor in the installation of dozens of kilometers of telegraph lines extending from Viseu to the south along the Gurupí River under the direction of Joaquim Silvio Ribeiro.<sup>9</sup>

Ribeiro was a retired army captain who had served with distinction in the Paraguayan War, and later became a First Class Inspector employed by the *Repartição Geral dos Telégrafos*—a subdivision of the Ministry of Agriculture—during much of the 1880s.<sup>10</sup> According to Veritas, Ribeiro later purchased land on the border between Pará and Maranhão where Agostinho founded the town of Camiranga.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Veritas asserts that Ribeiro helped Agostinho purchase his manumission though this is not necessarily corroborated by any other sources.<sup>12</sup> The establishment of the telegraph line in the Gurupí was the most extensive infrastructure project in the region at that time, with the goal of laying hundreds of kilometers of telegraph wire meant to bridge the provincial borders between Maranhão and Pará. Ribeiro's colleague in the *Repartição* was none other than Gustavo Guilherme Dodt, also a First Class

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<sup>7</sup> Paiva et. al 10

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> “Telegrapho terrestre.” *Diário de Notícias* (Belém), 17 November 1883; There are few indications of whether quilombolas worked on the one hundred and thirty-two kilometers of line to be established from Turiaçu, but it is highly likely that quilombolas had some role in that project as well.

<sup>10</sup> Laemmert (ed.) 384

<sup>11</sup> Paiva, et. al 18

<sup>12</sup> Veritas. “As minas de ouro.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

Inspector, whose then recent work on the Gurupí—*Descrição dos Rios Parnahyba e Gurupy*—was unpublished though it was well known to geologists and other specialists interested in the prospects for gold extraction along the Gurupí.

By no means did the telegraph line only impact quilombolas along the Maranhão-Pará border. Indigenous communities also assisted with the construction of telegraph lines. Early on in the construction process many newspapers noted the recruitment of a Guajajara indigenous leader and merchant, “knowledgeable about the whole region, where he will assist with the opening of the line to the Gurupy. There one can find, according to him, Timbiras, Gamo’las, Coroados e Mocambeiros; with the latter the chief of the team at Viseu had already come to an understanding.”<sup>13</sup> This demonstrates that, as knowledgeable masters of regional geography, both the ‘mocambeiros’ and indigenous groups played a complex role in development that was not always oppositional. Moreover, it directly states to readers that the leader of the crew laying sixty-six kilometers of telegraph line from Viseu, Silvio Ribeiro, had a particular understanding or agreement with the “mocambeiros” very early on in the construction process when work was still being done in western Maranhão.<sup>14</sup> This was, for all intents and purposes, a matter of public record.

If there was any pressure to use state resources to effect the capture of these quilombolas, it is likely that their status in working on the telegraph line under the aegis of a former war hero supervising public works on behalf of the Empire shielded them. More specifically, Article 1, Section 2 of Decreto 8354—the legal basis for the creation of telegraph lines in the Brazilian Empire after 1881—prohibited municipal police forces from interfering with the construction of

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<sup>13</sup> “Linha telegraphica do norte.” *Jornal do Recife* (Recife), 13 May 1883.

<sup>14</sup> “Telegrapho terrestre.” *Diário de Noticias* (Belém), 17 November 1883.

telegraph lines though it also charged these same authorities with defending telegraph lines when necessary.<sup>15</sup> This same decree mostly delegated responsibility for recruiting laborers with the First and Second Class Inspectors, meaning that Ribeiro did not face much resistance in his choice to use active fugitive slaves in his crew.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps for this reason, the public knowledge of the involvement of fugitive slaves in a major infrastructure project did not have punitive consequences for the quilombolas or those who benefitted from their labor.

The above-mentioned account also implies that the telegraph project was the site of interaction between quilombolas and the twenty-six Guajajar  who accompanied their “leader” Camiranga. The latter group was to encounter the laborers working under the supervision of Silvio Ribeiro in the area of Tr s Furos, a small town in Maranh o along the Turia u River.<sup>17</sup> It is difficult to know what was the exact nature of such interaction in the context of their shared labor for the Empire, but it demonstrates the importance of quilombola labor, as Ribeiro’s team crossed precisely through territories mostly unknown to those of European descent.<sup>18</sup> This understanding or agreement between Ribeiro and the ‘mocambeiros’ was so widely known that it could be published in various newspapers and periodicals as far away as Pernambuco. Quilombolas, even in the twilight of Brazilian slavery, could be identified as a distinct ethnic group alongside various indigenous groups. In rejecting the control of slave society certain black

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<sup>15</sup> Imp rio do Brasil. Decreto 8354, 24 Dec. 1881.

<sup>16</sup> Imp rio do Brasil. Decreto 8354, 24 Dec. 1881, Article 23, Section 8.

<sup>17</sup> “Linha telegraphica do norte.” *Jornal do Comercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 1 September 1885. Tr s Furos was itself an area that saw activity among quilombolas affiliated with the S o Sebast o quilombo which was routed in 1877. The telegraph team passed through or near many of the territories and waterways that had been frequented by quilombolas.

<sup>18</sup> The abovementioned article suggests that other indigenous groups remained pacific during the construction of the line in addition to cooperating with Silvio Ribeiro, though this was not necessarily the case. Attacks on telegraph workers and infrastructure were a well-known occurrence, particularly in Maranh o.

Gurupenses distinguished themselves, and the unique identifier of ‘mocambeiro’ would be applied to these black communities long after abolition.

What’s more, the construction of the telegraph line demonstrates a network of intra-elite connections. Gustavo Dodt and Silvio Ribeiro both served the imperial government as First Class Inspectors for telegraph lines, while the Barão Guilherme Schüch Capanema—who would later obtain numerous mining concessions on behalf of his son for the auriferous regions of Pará and Maranhão—served as General Director of the Repartição Geral dos Telégraphos, and thus both Dodt and Ribeiro answered directly to him.<sup>19</sup> Capanema remained director until 1889, while Dodt advanced to the level of Engineer, and Ribeiro remained as an Inspector. These specialist employees of the Imperial government were key to integrating quilombolas into the regional economy, opening up the process of gold extraction through accumulating knowledge of the region while also securing concessions for said extraction. In any case, Ribeiro’s direct involvement in supervising the telegraph construction probably ended by December 1885, when an illness forced him to return to his native Bahia while convalescing, though at that point most of the work had been set into motion and his absence was not a serious impediment to the progress of the line.<sup>20</sup> As we will see later, Ribeiro frequently returned to Maranhão and Pará for the purpose of mining exploration.

In order to protect this important advance in the region’s infrastructure, the state of Maranhão established a police department (*subdelegacia de policia*) at São Pedro de Alcântara on the right bank of the Gurupi River, the same location that had formerly served as a hub of

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<sup>19</sup> Laemmert (ed.) 383

<sup>20</sup> “Telegrapho terrestre.” *Diário do Gram-Pará* (Belém), 10 December 1885.

military expeditions against quilombolas only a decade before.<sup>21</sup> It is doubly interesting, then, that there are few records of direct official harassment aimed at quilombo descendants along the river, and the absence of such harassment speaks volumes to the success of the quilombolas in cultivating alliances to shield themselves from punitive actions. A little over a year later, an anonymous article published in the *Diário de Notícias* accused Gustavo Dodt of having reversed the progress made by Silvio Ribeiro, impeding the settlement of the lands along the telegraph line, “unmaking everything that the engineers employed with the service had accomplished.” The author accused Dodt of putting on the airs of a sultan in taking all of the credit for Ribeiro’s work.<sup>22</sup> But at any rate, it does not seem that Ribeiro’s assistance to quilombolas was reversed as such in spite of his absence.

Agostinho and his connections allowed him to survive through marginal economic arrangements while also allowing him and his comrades to establish and maintain independent settlements at Itamaoari and Camiranga along the Gurupí River. The increasing actual value of the region due to its gold deposits and its theoretical value as an engine of progress and development increasingly entangled quilombolas, and their descendants, in economic networks that would attract an ever-growing number of commercial players with connections to foreign capital. Perhaps community members were already suspicious of this, as Veritas points out how Agostinho “[was] far from guarding his secret like the miser guards his wealth. He preferred to confide [his knowledge of gold deposits]. In spite of the reluctance of the better part of his comrades, *who consider those mines as being their property.*”<sup>23</sup> We can glimpse once again a

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<sup>21</sup> *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 13 April 1886.

<sup>22</sup> “O amigo sincero.” “Vizeu, 9 de Maio de 1887.” *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro), 27 May 1887.

<sup>23</sup> Veritas. “As minas de ouro.” *Diário do Maranhão* (Sao Luís), 8 April 1901. Italics added.



sense of territoriality and community cohesion, the sense that they were of the land; its resources were not for others to exploit at will. Nonetheless, Silvio Ribeiro's involvement developed into a more permanent arrangement and he frequented the region often in order to explore potential mineral wealth years after abolition, evidently in tandem with Agostinho as late as 1900 and perhaps later.<sup>24</sup> This is interpreted by Veritas as "gratitude" on the part of Agostinho and his comrades, presumably for the protection and assistance afforded by Ribeiro during the transition from slavery to abolition.

As Agostinho presided over the "opening" of the Gurupí's gold mines, early concession holders gained the mining exploration rights over broad swaths of land. As early as 1887, the Imperial government of Pedro II awarded a two-year mining concession to none other than Guilherme Capanema, son of the Barão de Capanema, and the terms of the contract allowed for mining exploration between the headwaters of tributaries on the right bank of the Piriá River (about twenty kilometers west of the Gurupí) and the Turiaçu River (roughly one-hundred kilometers east of the Gurupí).<sup>25</sup> This large expanse of land encompassed all of the territory studied by his subordinates in the Repartição in establishing the telegraph line, as well as the mining territories in use by quilombolas.

Capanema's concession alone was renewed by the imperial government numerous times, reinforcing his legal claims.<sup>26</sup> Another decree issued in 1896 approved his plans for mining within the concession territory, projected to take place north to south between the Gurupí-Mirim

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Império do Brasil. Decreto No. 9730, 26 Feb. 1887.

<sup>26</sup> Decreto No. 10284, 30 July 1889; Decreto No. 1456, 5 July 1893; Decreto No. 1854, 22 October 1894; Decreto No. 2184, 23 September 1895. (Estados Unidos do Brasil).

River and the Caramugy River, and from east-west between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers.<sup>27</sup>

Effectively, Capanema's concession encompassed the stretch of land along the Gurupí River just south of Camiranga to Itamoari, and the terms of the concession meant that the gold extracted by the quilombolas in this territory for over a decade was legally his. The only opportunity for redress for existing inhabitants of the concession area was if they were the legally recognized property holders, in which case the concession holder would have to obtain their permission and make restitution for any adverse effects on adjacent properties.<sup>28</sup> Since the quilombolas had nothing resembling a legal title, they were without legal recourse.

José Pedro Ribeiro, brother of Silvio Ribeiro and regional shipping magnate, managed to snag concessions for himself and his company allowing for exploration rights in Maranhão north to south between the Gurupí and Pindaré rivers, a long sliver that extended through most of Maranhão's western border with Pará, including higher elevation regions that presented significant potential for gold extraction but were also traversed by quilombolas in the series of flights that occurred in the decades before the end of slavery.<sup>29</sup>

In light of the complex interactions between quilombolas, engineers, and explorers around the time of abolition, what should we make of the laudatory retrospective by Veritas published in 1901? A crucial point to consider is how the narrative gradually erases Agostinho's past in the quilombos, and acknowledges his role as a quilombola in a lackadaisical fashion. This

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<sup>27</sup> Estados Unidos do Brasil. Decreto No. 2276, 7 May 1896.

<sup>28</sup> For example, this was stipulated by Clauses Three and Four of the abovementioned Decreto 9730.

<sup>29</sup> Estado do Maranhão. Lei 141, 27 April 1896, in Amaral (ed.) 1897. 1897. São Luís: Typographia Vapor-Frias, 41. According to the 19 Nov. 1898 edition of *O Pará* he received another two-year concession in 1898.

is particularly jarring when we take into account how terrifying the prospect of quilombos had recently been for the political elite of Maranhão.

The image of Agostinho as quilombola is concealed by gold dust, as it were. He instead becomes a champion of mining exploration and infrastructure, working with foreign firms and trusted representatives of the nation in these pursuits. Writing at a much later period, Ludovico Schwennhagen mentions that Agostinho was a slave but fails to refer to his pursuits in terms of fugitive slave activity. Rather, Agostinho and his comrades “wanted to continue panning for gold [lavagem de ouro], on their own account...[Agostinho] brought a group of *pretos* to a place called Limoeiro, where he discovered other mines.”<sup>30</sup> Agostinho’s individual story is symbolic of how quilombo territoriality and quilombo identity had an ever-shifting position in Brazilian society. Before abolition, quilombos were considered a major public safety threat and were a regular fixture of public discourse as such. After abolition, the role of quilombo descendants was often minimized where these communities might have impeded access to land and raw materials. Quilombos were figuratively erased from the landscape to make way for telegraph lines and large mining operations; in a word, for progress.

Such a narrative would substitute Agostinho the quilombola for Agostinho the “man of gold,” responsible for the “strong probabilities [that] exist for the next development and progress, as much as in Maranhão as Pará, fated perhaps to transform themselves into the two most important states of the Brazilian Union.”<sup>31</sup> This subsumes the former fugitive slave to regional economic designs, and ultimately, to a wider endeavor of national economic

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<sup>30</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. “O Ouro do Maranhão e seu esquadrinhamento.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 21 April 1927.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

modernization. But this image fails to conceal the central reality that Agostinho presided over quilombola communities on the Gurupí River as something like a “prefect, where he governs his people...like a true patriarch.”<sup>32</sup> This leaves us with an impression of Agostinho as a respectable, tireless champion of progress, specifically gold mining who at the same time represented mostly autonomous communities of fugitive slaves and their descendants. This duality is crucial to understanding how quilombolas defended a certain liberty long after the act of flight.

The construction of telegraph lines was an important moment in a territory that, before abolition, had largely been the province of recalcitrant indigenous groups and quilombolas. Indeed, fear of being attacked by indigenous “savages” caused flight among many of the workers on the telegraph line in western Maranhão, who only returned when troops were sent to secure the project.<sup>33</sup> Knowing the context of fugitive slaves assisting with the construction of telegraph lines, it is interesting that one Pará newspaper reported on the work being “done with *order and discipline*, under the immediate vigilance of the engineers.”<sup>34</sup> Another newspaper stressed the importance of a “perfect system of telegraphic communications” upon which the development of the entire nation is dependent.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Viseu would be a particularly important telegraph hub because of its geographic position, particularly as a point of origin for submarine cable which could be used to communicate with the United States and other foreign nations.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Veritas. “As minas de ouro.” *Diário do Maranhão* (Sao Luís), 8 April 1901.

<sup>33</sup> “Linha telegraphica do norte.” *Jornal do Comercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 1 September 1885.

<sup>34</sup> “Telegrapho terrestre.” *Diário de Noticias* (Belém), 17 November 1883. Italics added.

<sup>35</sup> “Telegrapho terrestre.” *Diário do Gram Pará* (Belém), 10 December 1885

<sup>36</sup> “Noticias do paiz.” *Jornal de Recife* (Recife), 13 August 1885.

The telegraph line even figured into schemes of attracting foreign immigrants, with one editorial exclaiming: “The employees of the telegraph line declare that they have never enjoyed such good health as they have in the climes of the Gurupy...communication routes presently facilitate, at least, the experience of those who will try for themselves to identify the state of the territories that we are dealing with.” In this case, the periodical simply reprinted what was sent to them by the newspaper *Defensor Liberal*, based in the municipality of Bragança where there was a thriving colony of Spanish immigrants.<sup>37</sup> The work completed by Silvio Ribeiro and other employees of the Repartição, along with quilombolas already in the Gurupí region, was at the center of this aspect of Brazil’s modernization.

The fall of the quilombo Limoeiro did not signify the disappearance of the quilombolas. The example of Agostinho de Sá Caldas demonstrates how a person on the geographic and social margins of the Brazilian Empire could traverse such boundaries, albeit with great difficulty. At the same time, the article by Veritas symbolizes how the ideal use of space among Maranhense elites – gold mining, infrastructure, and colonization – discursively expunged traces of African or quilombo identity.<sup>38</sup> One can view the retrospective by Veritas as an incipient account of racial democracy, a tale of hard work rewarded by assimilation into ‘Brazilian Civilization’ and its diminution of unsavory African identities. Nonetheless, Agostinho’s skill set allowed him to negotiate the strict boundaries between the quilombo and slave society to ensure survival for himself and a number of his comrades. In an intriguing turn of events, the fugitive slaves who found shelter in Pará found themselves making unlikely allies in their struggle with an ambitious

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<sup>37</sup> “Terras na Provincia do Pará.” *A Imigração* (Rio de Janeiro), November 1885.

<sup>38</sup> What I am referring to is a specific assumption by certain authors and public figures that the Gurupí was virgin territory awaiting exploitation, a salient talking point that is reproduced constantly from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards despite the presence of quilombolas, sedentary indigenous communities, and other small cultivators.

French merchant. Like the complex interactions embedded in the process of building the telegraph line, this conflict demonstrates that the path to freedom and autonomy for quilombolas was a turbulent and serpentine one.

### **State, Capital, and Quilombo in a Time of Abolition**

Agostinho and other quilombolas evaded military repression and reestablished the illegal commerce based on gold mining that had sustained quilombos in western Maranhão since the 1850s. One Frenchman, Jules Blanc established such a relationship with Agostinho and others in Itamoari under the false pretense of representing the Imperial government. Allegedly claiming to be a relative of the French-born Brazilian aristocrat the Condé D'Eu, Blanc used promises of manumission to extort gold from the quilombolas.<sup>39</sup> Though Blanc had a legal mining concession pertaining to territory in western Maranhão, Jules Blanc exceeded the terms of the legal agreement that he had with the Imperial government. His activities became the subject of a criminal investigation spanning across the border between Maranhão and Pará, involving quilombolas, prominent political figures in both provinces, and Blanc himself.

In 1882, Blanc received permission to explore for “gold, silver, and any other metals” in an area stretching from the headwaters of the Gurupí River to the Pericumã River—nearly 150 kilometers of territory in western Maranhão bordered only by the sesmaria then held by José Gonçalves Teixeira.<sup>40</sup> Large though his concession was, Blanc came under scrutiny when he began to conduct business on the left bank of the Gurupí River, particularly the acquisition of gold extracted by the very quilombolas who had only recently fled from Maranhão. The

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<sup>39</sup> Gomes 2005, 287

<sup>40</sup> Império do Brasil. Decreto 8516, 6 May 1882.

investigation into Blanc's activities, spanning from 1884 to 1888, provide a profound insight into the interplay of political and social forces at work along the Gurupí.

In addition to the basic issue of Blanc being accused of conducting illicit commerce with quilombolas, there was a vigorous and at times acrimonious debate as to what actually constituted the border between Maranhão and Pará. This was a jurisdictional dispute involving authorities in both provinces represented by the *municípios* of Viseu and Turiaçu, respectively. It is clear from the documentation pertaining to the Jules Blanc investigation that there were frequent recriminations being exchanged on both sides. The reigning law in this instance, a decree passed by the Imperial government in 1852, failed to firmly establish which of the adjacent provinces had jurisdiction over the Gurupí River.<sup>41</sup> But officials on both sides also disagreed as to Blanc's culpability in his dealings with quilombolas.

Augusto Rodrigues Pinto, Subdelegado de Polícia of Carutapéra (a district of Turiaçu), expressed the feeling that Blanc had been mistreated by the police in Viseu, just across the river.<sup>42</sup> He also placed blame on the authorities in Pará, stating that, in addition to denying that Maranhão's border was in fact the left bank of the Gurupí, authorities there had not "taken measures to curb illicit commerce [involving quilombolas] which continues to grow."<sup>43</sup> Pinto does not hesitate to assert that authorities and private individuals from Pará had "invaded" Itamoari numerous times without any authorization from Carutapéra, reflecting Pinto's assertion that the quilombo settlement fell within the jurisdiction of Maranhão rather than Pará.

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<sup>41</sup> Império do Brasil. Decreto 639, 12 June 1852.

<sup>42</sup> Augusto Rodrigues Pinto to João Luiz Rodrigues Pedreira, 30 August 1887. Secretária de Polícia. Avulso, Arquivo Público do Estado do Maranhão (APEM), São Luís.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

Pinto was indignant at accusation from the Delegado de Polícia of Viseu that officials and private individuals from Carutapéra were also “extorting” gold from the quilombolas at Itamoari. By way of a retort, the Subdelegado asserted that it was not only private individuals from Viseu, but also public officials that made every effort to get close (*estreitar-se*) to the quilombolas, “going there publicly to buy and sell, something which doesn’t happen here [in Maranhão],” and whose respect for the law “had no rivalry with the gold interest.” By contrast, officials from Carutapéra were said to remain within their jurisdiction, mostly the location of the former military colony on the right bank of the Gurupí.<sup>44</sup> Pinto presents Jules Blanc as someone whose reputation was being unduly tarnished by the manipulation of authorities in Viseu in spite of conducting his business under the terms of his concession.

Blanc’s legal mining concession was within the purview of police in Turiaçu and Carutapéra. Pinto railed against the abuse of authority on the part of Viseu authorities in violation of their jurisdiction, best seen in the statement that this suppression of commerce was “sacrificing the rights of some to the well-being of others,” a demonstration of “political bias.”<sup>45</sup> Pinto deflected by pointing towards an inability of his counterparts across the river to effectively contain fugitive slave activity: “The Delegado [de Polícia] of Vizeu is asking for the creation of a *povoado* at Tamauary where there is no administrative presence [*pessoal*], nor the extinction of the mocambo existing there where only *pretos* reside, in order to sign off on a place for speculation among adventurers.”<sup>46</sup> Pinto uses the space of the *ofício* to engage in political grandstanding by denouncing “certain people” and “sordid interests” arrayed against Blanc.

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*



After a barrage of lofty moral appeals, the report addresses the fact of Blanc's imprisonment and confiscation of some of his goods in 1884 and 1885, effected in the former military colony of São Pedro de Alcântara on the right bank of the Gurupí by a convoy sent from Viséu.<sup>47</sup>

In a certain sense, the illegality of the commerce being conducted by quilombolas during this period gives them a stronger presence in the historical record in the form of the testimonies provided by various individuals over the course of the investigation against Blanc. The attached files include testimony from individuals living along the Gurupí at the time, such as resident Romão Martins de Oliveira, who witnessed Blanc on a canoe with Subdelegado Pinto during a search for a suspected murderer (*criminosa de morte*), with the latter being accompanied by two troops.<sup>48</sup> During this time, Romão claims that Blanc was going to acquire *farinha* before conducting business with one José de Oliveira, “residente em mucambo.”<sup>49</sup>

The line of questioning turned again to Subdelegado Pinto when Romão was asked “if on this occasion the Subdelegado [Pinto] also went to the previously referenced mocambo in Pará,” to which Romão replied in the negative<sup>50</sup> There was clearly a concern about authorities on both sides of the river exceeding their jurisdiction, and perhaps this inter-municipal politicking prevented a thorough crackdown on the illicit commerce that was the lifeblood of quilombos in the final years of Brazilian slavery. Finally, Romão was asked whether there was any mutual

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Testimony of Romão Martins d'Oliveira, 30 December 1887. Avulso, Secretária de Polícia, Arquivo Público do Estado do Maranhão (APEM), São Luís. For the sake of clarity, I will simply write “de Oliveira” where there is inconsistency in the spelling of that surname, i.e. “d'Oliveira.”

<sup>49</sup> This turn of phrase is intriguing in that it either implies that José de Oliveira was an actual quilombola, or simply a person who resided in the “mucambo.” The latter suggests the notion that, just as they had in Montes Aureos, quilombolas established a recognized territoriality in which a particular territory was identified in terms of the quilombolas who occupied it.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

estrangement (“dizavença”) between Blanc and the Subdelegado on account of any business between them, to which Romão also replied in the negative.

Blanc addressed a letter to Subdelegado Pinto in his own defense, written in mostly fluent Portuguese, framing the response to his activities on the Gurupí as administrative arrogance on the part of authorities in Viseu against Carutapéra.<sup>51</sup> For authorities in Viseu to complain about authorities in Carutapéra enabling illicit commerce with quilombolas, Blanc writes, would be like “accusing a virgin of loose morals.”<sup>52</sup> Blanc makes it clear that he was being harassed for activities in Itamoari.<sup>53</sup> Blanc writes pages of furious counter accusations against the authorities of Viseu, accusing them of continuing a “war of demoralization...above all to forever destroy the small amount of influence I have had, on the decisions of the Presidency of Maranhão with respect to the margin of the Gurupí belonging to this province, to justify the injustices and violence committed directly and inadvertently against me and *my goods*.”<sup>54</sup>

Blanc wields his Gallic indignation at all parties while affirming that, though he was a French national, he was at the time of his missive “the only Maranhense that resided on the right bank of the Gurupí River; arriving there in 1882.”<sup>55</sup> But he had spent a number of years in Brazil,

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<sup>51</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto (Subdelegado de Polícia de Carutapéra), 30 August 1887, Avulso, Secretária de Polícia, Arquivo Público do Estado do Maranhão (APEM), São Luís, 1. In citing this particular document I will follow the original pagination of the letter—a copy of a document originally produced by state and local authorities in Pará and provided to their counterparts in Maranhão who were also involved in the investigation.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 2. Italics added.

<sup>55</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 3. His claim is highly unlikely given that Agostinho and the other quilombolas had been present around the Gurupí since well before 1882, to say nothing of the various indigenous inhabitants who at the very least traveled seasonally through the right bank of the Gurupí.

visiting Rio de Janeiro for the first time as a French naval Lieutenant in 1848 before returning various times in the late 1860s and 1870s before receiving a mining concession.<sup>56</sup> At some point in the recent past—perhaps in 1879 or 1880—Blanc claims to have been an official in the French-owned Pirocáua Mining Company.<sup>57</sup> Blanc believed that, by rights, he could also remain active in Viseu on the left bank of the Gurupí, assisting in the “development of commerce” along the river.<sup>58</sup> Much in the same manner that authorities in Carutapéra justified their jurisdiction encompassing the entirety of the Gurupí, Blanc cites the decree passed in 1852 which annexed all of the territory “between” the Turiaçu River and Gurupí River to the Province of Maranhão to justify operating on the other side of the Gurupí.<sup>59</sup> Because the decree does not firmly settle to which province the Gurupí River itself belongs, this created a grey area which stoked debate between Maranhão and Pará while allowing Blanc to justify exploitative practices in relations to quilombolas residing along the River.

Among those whom Blanc singled out for criticism was none other than Silvio Ribeiro of the Repartição dos Telégrafos. Blanc sharply disagreed with the route of the line, writing that it was of “no utility,” giving the impression that this criticism was met by punitive actions from

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<sup>56</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 56.

<sup>57</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 3. The company began its activities in 1880 with a plan to bring imported machinery via a much-delayed French steamer from Nantes that year for the purpose of mining exploration on the concession belonging to José Gonçalves de Teixeira (*Diário do Maranhão*, 18 April 1880). Teixeira had previously generated interest from investors by sending mineral samples to New York and European cities before received an offer from the French for a six-hundred thousand Franc contract payable upon a year of successful gold extraction. (*Diário do Maranhão* 14 December 1887) They had also received permission to use slave labor for their activities through a subcontractor, Almeida & Cia. (*O Paiz*, 2 April 1880). Blanc’s concession was granted shortly thereafter on territory adjacent to that of Gonçalves de Teixeira. The latter bitterly complained years later of inadequate management at a mine that had supposedly produced twelve pounds of gold in a single day. (*Diário do Maranhão* 14 December 1887)

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Decreto 639. The Decreto is incorrectly cited numerous times by Blanc as being dated 12 July 1852.

Ribeiro and his local allies.<sup>60</sup> Doubling down on his perceived martyrdom, Blanc erroneously argues that he was “the first to risk his life and fortune in the forests of the Gurupí region in order to *discover* gold mines,” thus giving him “the right to conserve the privilege of exploration that was recently denied to me by the intrigue of the Vizeuenses.”<sup>61</sup> Of course, this privilege consisted of Blanc illegally extracting gold or simply appropriating it from the quilombolas based on his questionable legal claims.

An example of this supposed intrigue from Viseu was the role of José de Almeida, said to be a resident of the “mocambo” [of Itamoari] who had dealings with Jules Blanc. Blanc claims that Almeida was acting in an official capacity as a representative of Viseu, a Subdelegado de Polícia supposedly handpicked by Silvio Ribeiro.<sup>62</sup> Blanc labels him as “deserving of prison”<sup>63</sup> calling him “entirely dedicated to the wishes and orders of those governing the left margin [of the Gurupí], an instrument in their hands, having as his only objective to support with the appearance of legality whatever violence that he would decide to practice against me,” violence which supposedly included an attempt to kill Blanc.<sup>63</sup> The ambiguity of the phrase “those governing the left margin” could imply that Almeida was as responsive to the quilombolas who operated there as he was to the authorities in Viseu.

Blanc knew that he should have a privileged place in Brazil’s political economy, but he found it lacking in the political practice implicit in his dealings on the border of Maranhão and

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<sup>60</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 4.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.* Italics added.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.* There were two individuals with similar names living in the region at the time. One was José Antonio de Almeida, and the other was José Rodrigues de Almeida. The subdelegado in question is likely the latter.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

Pará, with his supposed enemies forgetting “any obligation that matters for the loyalty and respect owed to any citizen, especially a foreigner.”<sup>64</sup> Viseu authorities went so far as to prevent Blanc from navigating along the Alto Gurupí at all, feeding the latter’s desire to wash his hands of the region altogether.<sup>65</sup> In Blanc’s view, Viseuense authorities had a grudge against him “and no one else.”<sup>66</sup>

In his lengthy defense of his reputation, he begins to divulge details of his encounters with quilombolas. On the right bank of the Gurupí, six léguas (about 36 kilometers) inland “in the middle of the forest.” Blanc found “established on this side of the river, for more than thirty years, the *negros* mocambeiros currently associated with Itamaouary on the Pará side [of the river]; it was here that they had a place called “Belém” that at the end of August 1883 they carried out the celebrated delivery of gold that they performed for me in favor of Liberty, that they say I appropriated; and that they were exploited [according to claims] by my detractors for lack of other means of demoralization.”<sup>67</sup>

Blanc does not deny having abused quilombolas and exploited their labor, but rather argues that “if I tricked, robbed, [or] killed *pretos*; I did it on my territory in Maranhão in the district of Tury-assú. The police there don’t gage the completion of their duties according to the police in Viseu...”<sup>68</sup> He then dwells on the subject of his rival, the “powerful and vindictive

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<sup>64</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 5.

<sup>65</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 7. This was one of measures aimed at controlling the illegal commerce between Maranhão and Pará.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 9. The name “Belém” suggests the location of Igarapé Belém, just southeast of Itamoari in Maranhão. Coincidentally, Igarapé Belém is itself not far from Limão, the location of the quilombo Limoeiro—a strong indication that quilombolas were still operating in the area after the capture of their comrades in 1878 and the failure of Colônia Prado in 1879. It also makes sense that quilombolas might have ended up at that location while migrating westward.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*

contractor from the telegraph line” Joaquim Silvio Ribeiro, said to have been “dragging behind his mule almost all of the authorities in Viseu...” In the supposed war being carried out against Blanc in the Gurupí, Ribeiro’s counted as his allies the municipal judge of Viseu, Carutapéra police official Camilo Mattos Torres and the “salaried employees” of the telegraph line.<sup>69</sup> Ribeiro is even said to have personally handpicked the Delegado de Polícia during that period.<sup>70</sup>

Agostinho was actually questioned by authorities in Pará in the summer of 1885, described by Blanc as “the thieving and murderous *negro*”<sup>71</sup> Blanc vociferously dismissed one of the main accusations against him: that he had presented himself to the quilombolas as the cousin of the Conde d’Eu, extorting copious amounts of gold from Agostinho and his comrades (“d’estes miseraveis”)<sup>72</sup> He states that Silvio Ribeiro had intervened on Agostinho’s behalf in presenting him to the Delegado de Polícia for the purpose of lodging complaints against Blanc.<sup>73</sup> Accusations between the two parties—Blanc and the alliance of Silvio Ribeiro with the quilombolas—flew freely, with Ribeiro supposedly presenting himself as the protector of Agostinho, “d’este miserável.”<sup>74</sup> In keeping with his paranoid style, Blanc interprets this as an act of vengeance against him for his criticism of the “misconduct” of the telegraph project.<sup>75</sup> This

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<sup>69</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 10.

<sup>70</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 17. This is most likely a reference to Vicente Ramos, but could also be a reference to his successor Antonio Pedro de Oliveira, who took office in November 1885 and is discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>71</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 10.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 9.

<sup>74</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 10.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

claim likely reflects Blanc's criticism of the route itself in addition to the use of quilombola labor and other alleged indiscretions which will be outlined later in the chapter. This leads Blanc to express his sense of outrage that, on the scales of justice, his words and evidence would be "weighed equally to the brazenness of the escaped *negro*, one of the worst of their stripe, that was presented [to authorities] by Sr. Silvio Ribeiro."<sup>76</sup>

With all appeals having failed in Viseu, Blanc turned to authorities in Turiaçu. Interestingly enough, Agostinho was also brought before a police official there and interrogated about the entire affair while still technically a fugitive slave.<sup>77</sup> Blanc insists that, in spite of trying to "wake up" the police of Turiaçu to the problem at hand, he had little success.<sup>78</sup> Blanc was indignant at the fact that Agostinho was taken to Turiaçu and allowed to testify against Blanc before Torres and the Delegado de Polícia.<sup>79</sup> Blanc's infuriated response of wanting to immediately charge him with some criminal offense speaks to the impact of Agostinho's testimony about the Frenchman's activities. Undeterred, Blanc continued to justify himself: "but I say loudly, to the courts or the police I have no satisfaction to give with respect to the gold I received from the *mocambeiros*; the gold was legally mine."<sup>80</sup>

In August 1885, Agostinho was indeed deposed by authorities in Viseu, qualified by Vicente Ramos as "o preto Agostinho Caldas quilobolo[sic] do Rio Gurupy." Though Agostinho was not labeled as such in the transcript of the deposition itself, Ramos uses this phrasing in a

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<sup>76</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 11.

<sup>77</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 12.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* As if to highlight the irony, he underlines Turiaçu in the manuscript, the very place from which Agostinho escaped less than a decade before.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

letter to the Chefe de Polícia getting him up to speed on the case against Blanc.<sup>81</sup> Agostinho was forty years old at the time “more or less”, and described his profession as a bakery employee (*official de padeiro*) and did not know how to read or write.<sup>82</sup> It was Agostinho who had confirmed to the authorities that Jules Blanc presented himself as the cousin of French-born Brazilian aristocrat Conde D’Eu, son-in-law to Emperor Pedro II.<sup>83</sup> Agostinho claimed that Blanc offered conditional freedom on the basis of the quilombolas extracting and delivering gold to Blanc himself. Indeed, Blanc was said to have asked for “all of gold they had.” While it was uncertain how much gold Blanc appropriated upon his introduction to Agostinho and his comrades, Agostinho testifies that he had to transport it in a very large jar (being that the gold was of a fine texture extracted from alluvial sources). In addition, Blanc had established some agricultural fields on the left bank of the Gurupí, where the quilombolas provided agricultural labor for the same end of earning freedom for the rest of their still-enslaved comrades through Blanc’s promised intervention.<sup>84</sup>

These fields on the right bank of the Gurupí and on an island in the middle of the river were the site of an attack by “índios brabos” that claimed the lives of the women and children that remained while many of the men were busy with gold extraction, an event which Agostinho

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<sup>81</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d’Oliveira to Dr. Chefe de Polícia do Pará, 9 August 1885.

Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém. It would seem from description of Agostinho as a quilombola that he had perhaps not received or purchased manumission by 1885, though this does not rule out the possibility that this might have been done shortly thereafter.

<sup>82</sup> Testimony of Agostinho Caldas, 9 August 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém. It is also interesting to note how quickly this testimony and related documentation was forwarded by Ramos to the Chefe de Polícia, though this in and of itself does not necessarily suggest that Ramos was eager to prosecute Blanc.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*



claimed to have witnessed first-hand as one of the individuals present during the attack. In the meantime, the gold that was extracted was passed to Blanc's lawyer, one Dr. Coqueiro.<sup>85</sup> Agostinho went out to suggest, furthermore, that Blanc's scheme with the quilombolas had diverted labor from the telegraph team, whose work had begun roughly during the same period Blanc was actively pursuing commercial interests along the Gurupí.<sup>86</sup> This could partially explain the tensions between Blanc and Silvio Ribeiro, and why Ribeiro and his local allies were willing to support efforts to eject Blanc from the region by antagonizing his commercial activity. While he initially focused on gold extraction, he had extended himself to general commerce. The scribe uses an interesting turn of phrase to describe Blanc's trajectory as a businessman, describing his initial activity as "searching for the gold of the *pretos no mucambo* [sic]."<sup>87</sup>

In Blanc's version of events, he first came across quilombolas who were fleeing from the Ka'apor, having lost fourteen of their number in an attack which took place in October 1883. The devastated remainder, about eighty quilombolas, took refuge in Blanc's private residence, where for a period of nine months "they ate no bread but his."<sup>88</sup> He claims to have spent "seis contos de reis" on this "charity work" which he provided to the unfortunate fugitive slaves.<sup>89</sup> Blanc takes responsibility for having transported them to the left bank of the Gurupí, where the large group of quilombolas formed permanent settlements. For having obfuscated and deflected with the

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<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.* There were a number of witnesses to Agostinho's testimony present at the home of Vicente Ramos where said testimony was given. In addition to the scribe, at least one police official (José Francisco Ramos of Viseu's Second District) was present.

<sup>88</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 14.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

space afforded by this letter, he actually makes a bold statement: “It was me who established at the cost of my wealth and blood this *mocambo* where today the Vizeuenses wanted to create a village.”<sup>90</sup>

Far from expropriating quilombolas, Blanc insists that he sheltered them when they came to his residence in Itamoari after their rout by the Ka’apor!<sup>91</sup> He argues that he did not want to be seen as breaking the “laws of hospitality.”<sup>92</sup> Reacting to the idea that he was systematically extorting quilombolas for their gold, Blanc argues instead that during the three years in which he had active business dealings along the Gurupí he only visited Itamoari four times and stayed a total of eight days.<sup>93</sup> One has to wonder why Blanc radiated anger through his written response to the authorities over what was apparently a marginal business interest. Blanc does quantify his gains, stating that the three unspecified mines which he claimed produced forty contos de reis in value.<sup>94</sup> Blanc, to some extent, was held as a scapegoat for a phenomenon which had been taking place around the Gurupí for decades: illicit commerce between quilombolas in the border area and various merchants.

Blanc accuses the Delegate of Police of Viseu, José Ignacio da Silva Coelho, of having conducted such business before he even arrived to the area, of essentially being the “provider” for the quilombolas.<sup>95</sup> He also accuses José Ignacio of looking the other way, or having failed to

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<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 15-16.

<sup>93</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 16.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.* He later claims to have “sunk” twenty-five contos de reis in the Gurupí, one would imagine between his “good works” and any additional costs of doing business.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

“make himself aware of” the quilombo.<sup>96</sup> It is true that various levels of officialdom maintained such transactions with quilombolas, as seen in the previous chapter. Blanc writes that if his motivation was not altruistic, he would have simply turned each and every one of the quilombolas (“estes diabos”) over to the judge in Turiaçu and their respective owners who lobbied for him to hand them over, with six among them being wanted for unspecified crimes.<sup>97</sup> Later he reverses the charges leveled against him, stating that he was the victim of extortion by the quilombolas who took advantage of his good will.<sup>98</sup> He credits himself for having saved them from slavery, dedicated like a “French imbecil” to the the “ideas of his land, sublime ideas of dedication to liberty...”<sup>99</sup>

After recounting the fate of Estevão, sentenced to death for his role in the quilombo Limoeiro, Blanc reasons that the next most culpable individual is none other than Agostinho, “o amigo do sr. Silvio Ribeiro.”<sup>100</sup> The true illegality, Blanc insists, was the canoe that, “at cost to the State, invited all of the *pretos* to enter into service on construction of the telegraph line” in July 1885 under the guidance of Silvio Ribeiro. Ribeiro was allegedly doing this on advice from the municipal judge of Viseu, Major Olímpio Pereira, and with the help of the Delegado de Polícia.<sup>101</sup> It was in the midst of this arrangement that a number of residents of Itamoari (“uma porção de pretos”) came to occupy lands belonging to Silvio Ribeiro, run by his “factotum”

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<sup>96</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 17.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 44.

<sup>99</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 44.

<sup>100</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 16.

<sup>101</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 17. As mentioned previously, news that quilombolas were participating in the construction of the telegraph line was well known *before* 1885.

(likely a reference to Agostinho) in his absence with gold mining as the main economic activity.<sup>102</sup> Agostinho is presented less as a representative of an autonomous community and more of a pawn of Silvio Ribeiro, moving the community to a parcel of land across the river from the old military colony at Ribeiro's request that became the quilombola settlement known as Camiranga.<sup>103</sup>

Though the terms of his concession under Decreto 8516, which Blanc cites directly, did not give him specific mining rights for the left bank of the Gurupí, Blanc still believed that the lands and labor of the people inhabiting them could be legally harnessed for his economic benefit. Only in Viseu, he argued, could he be accused of “stealing” gold from quilombolas even though he claimed to have the legal right to file charges against anyone who mined for gold on his so-called property. Exasperated at the perceived truculence of the quilombolas, Blanc claims of them that “the *negro* believes himself to be superior in rights to the citizen.”<sup>104</sup> This line of thinking is fascinating in the way it separates the two categories, the *negro* and the citizen, subtly demonstrating the extent to which quilombolas were very much outliers in spite of their connections to influential individuals.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 18.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Blanc claims that the move was unsuccessful but Camiranga quickly became the more commercially viable town. As this and later chapters will demonstrate, Agostinho and exercised an organic leadership role in Camiranga.

<sup>104</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 12.

<sup>105</sup> Blanc was a foreign national while conducting his business in Brazil. Some of the testimonies given cite Blanc as a “cidadão francez [sic]”. At any rate, the barriers to becoming a naturalized citizen of Brazil were quite low for ambitious foreigners. One simply had to maintain residency in the country for two years, marry a Brazilian subject, own land or part of an industrial enterprise based in the country. Provided that these conditions were met, a foreigner could become a citizen and even and exercise important functions of the imperial state except for the positions of Minister or Regent. On page 53, Blanc recounts how the head of the Conservative Party in Carutapéra advised him to seek naturalization and serve as a municipal judge.

In the process of conducting business along the Gurupí, Blanc had dealings with an associate from France, Agostinho Laurenceau, also present in the region who according to Blanc was the first “to attack my conduct with respect to the *pretos mocambeiros*.”<sup>106</sup> There were numerous conflicts between the two, not the least of which was money which Laurenceau owed to Blanc and goods which he allegedly stole from Blanc’s residence.<sup>107</sup> The French Consul actually convoked an “honorary jury” to mediate the dispute between the two that ended in blows being exchanged when Laurenceau denied any wrongdoing against Blanc.<sup>108</sup> With the support and friendship of Major Olímpio and Silvio Ribeiro, Laurenceau allegedly escaped scrutiny when Blanc made his counter claims and is said to have been a close associate of Silvio Ribeiro and even an employee of the telegraph line.<sup>109</sup> Laurenceau’s “lieutenant,” “accomplice,” and “compadre” in his actions was none other than Agostinho de Sá Caldas: “this *negro* to whom [Laurenceau] promised a post as a *feitor* in the company that he would soon form in Cayenne [French Guiana]; just as today the same *negro* [Agostinho] is a *feitor* in the private works of Sr. Silvio Ribeiro in the Gurupy, for having been his war horse against me.”<sup>110</sup> This can be read in different ways: as a vertical alliance with certain layers of authority against an economic actor threatening their immediate autonomy, as Agostinho accommodating himself to the role of a domestic *comprador* in a region in which foreign immigration had failed to materialize

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<sup>106</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 13.

<sup>107</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 22-23.

<sup>108</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 13.

<sup>109</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 21. For the purpose of clarity, I have chosen to transcribe the name as Laurenceau rather than the spelling “Laurenciu” favored by Blanc. Both spellings appeared in scant mentions of the French national in Paraense newspapers.

<sup>110</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 22. Italics added.

concretely, or as Agostinho carving out an independent enclave for his community, taking back a certain measure of authority while satisfying the immediate economic ambitions of key figures in and around Viseu.

Having complained to then Delegado de Polícia in Viseu Vicente Ferreira Ramos de Oliveira about the theft of his personal property by Laurenceau in 1884, he found out that many of the items in question—half of them—were in the possession of Agostinho in Itamoari!<sup>111</sup> Some of the items were in Agostinho’s private residence, and others were “spread out” in other locations along the Gurupí.<sup>112</sup> Blanc attributes this to Agostinho and Laurenceau personally collaborating to rob his home. For his part, Agostinho testified in 1885 that, while he did indeed have a trunk in his home with numerous articles belonging to Blanc—such as mining tools, a small boat, and a saddle—these were willingly provided to him by Blanc.<sup>113</sup> Though there are obviously two competing narratives of what occurred, there is a strong possibility that Agostinho expropriated the expropriator, so to speak, with the assistance of certain members of Viseu’s police force.

In response to the theft, Ramos joined forces with the Subdelegado in Carutapéra to investigate the crime. It was in this capacity that Blanc was accompanied by Camillo de Mattos Torres to Itamoari.<sup>114</sup> When the latter located the thieves, the “administração telegraphica[sic]” “put the [telegraph] station of the village of Gurupy, the canoe, and the staff of the repartição to

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<sup>111</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 23.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> “Auto de pergunta feita a Agostinho Caldas,” 9 August 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém.

<sup>114</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 23-24

protect the thieves and hide the objects which they stole,” certainly a reference to Ribeiro.<sup>115</sup> Afterwards Blanc claims that Torres and himself ended up in Viseu and held a meeting with Silvio Ribeiro and Vicente Ramos, said to be Ribeiro’s “compadre.”<sup>116</sup> After Blanc requested that his goods be returned to him, Blanc was presented with false documents ten days later regarding the crime that “were never furnished by any authority in Brazil after Cabral discovered it.”<sup>117</sup> Evidence of these crimes was destroyed, the ensuing paperwork altered to present a different narrative, and witness testimony tampered with by Viseu authorities and with the connivance of Mattos Torres (if Blanc is to be believed).<sup>118</sup> It was at this point that Blanc took his complaints to authorities in Turiaçu, which turned him and Mattos Torres into “capital enemies,” provoking the latter to issue his own formal complaint about Blanc regarding his treatment of the quilombolas on the other side of the river.<sup>119</sup>

In September 1885 Mattos Torres filed a *denuncia* against Blanc with Viseu’s Delegado de Polícia Vicente Ramos, which the latter then passed on to his provincial superior.<sup>120</sup> Blanc, Torres wrote, did not reside at a certain location, but rather crisscrossed between Carutapéra and the left bank of the Gurupí River. Two years later, Blanc would attack this assertion that he lived

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<sup>115</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 25

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 25

<sup>118</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 25-26

<sup>119</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 27

<sup>120</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d’Oliveira to Chefe de Polícia da Provincia do Pará, 10 September 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Provincia, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém. On page 35 of his letter, Blanc claims that Ramos and Mattos Torres were “compadres” and “amigos.”

in a “lugar incerto,” being that he was personally known to Torres for many years as a resident of Carutapéra and an official of the French mining company at Pirocaúa<sup>121</sup>

Torres denounced Blanc on grounds found in other testimonies implicating the Frenchman, that he came into territory that was part of Viseu’s jurisdiction to engage in commerce with the quilombolas at “Tamauary,” building a commercial house and using the promise of manumission to coerce the quilombolas’ labor. He claimed to have at least seven different individuals whose testimony would have also implicated Blanc.<sup>122</sup> One would imagine that these were quilombolas, though the only familiar name is that of “José Antonio d’Almeida,” who has been referenced elsewhere in this chapter as one of the many antagonists of Jules Blanc who was not himself a quilombola but resided at Itamoari. Torres went so far as to assert that Blanc was responsible for the death of thirteen quilombolas. This number is similar to the number of quilombolas that Blanc claimed were killed in an attack by the Ka’apor in his own letter two years later. Torres was committed to making sure that this “captain of industry” (*cavalheiro da industria*) would be punished for violating the law.

This complaint led to an order for Blanc’s capture and imprisonment in September signed by Vicente Ramos and executed by a force of four troops supported by eight deputized citizens.<sup>123</sup> On the occasion of his capture on 18 September 1885 he was arrested in his residence

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<sup>121</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 32. According to Blanc, Mattos Torres first came to his attention when he was an official with the French mining company in Maranhão. Mattos Torres came to apparently extort money from Blanc even though he actually owed money to the latter.

<sup>122</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d’Oliveira to Chefe de Polícia da Provincia do Pará, 10 September 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Provincia, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém. Strangely enough, Agostinho was not listed among these witnesses though Blanc has pointed to the former giving testimony to support Torres’s charges. The other six names listed are: José Pereira de Limão, Fausto Augusto Silveira, Francisco de Freitas Cardim, Clementino Antonio Franco, Francisco Belchior de Souza, and Manoel Belchior de Souza.

<sup>123</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 29



in Itamoari, and Blanc complained of being tied up like “a *negro fugido*” or “a Calabrian bandit.”<sup>124</sup> After his capture, the “official de Justiça” of Carutapéra summarized the accusations against him made in various testimonies given in Turiaçu. Blanc, of course, casts doubt on the impartiality of these testimonies, as these “were mostly my workers and people living along the Gurupy.”<sup>125</sup> It was not only Agostinho, but likely multiple quilombolas that offered their testimony and cooperated with authorities in Turiaçu without being arrested or otherwise held on behalf of their former owners.<sup>126</sup> Once Blanc was arrested two soldiers knocked him down and carried him downriver, but being inexperienced with their canoe, Blanc claims that he was forced to act as a pilot through the stretch of river leading north to the *povoado* of Gurupí where they arrived the following day.

During his transfer, Blanc was sheltered by a local priest, Padre Lins d’Annuiação, and a brief standoff ensued. The police broke the impasse by confiscating various goods that Blanc had brought with him.<sup>127</sup> During his arrest, at least one of the soldiers from Viseu was responsible for the attempted theft of some of Blanc’s personal belongings including a valuable rifle, a trunk, and a fishing net.<sup>128</sup> Blanc stressed that one of the troops from Carutapéra put a stop to the larcenous behavior of one of his counterparts from Viseu, and this conceit of contrasting the two localities—Viseu and Carutapéra—serves as a convenient way to deflect any culpability on

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<sup>124</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 37

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> The testimony that was given by Agostinho and others was given in Viseu. I have yet to find other testimony given by quilombolas in Turiaçu.

<sup>127</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 39-40. Blanc partially interpreted this on page 41 as revenge for having thrown his hat, “em minha qualidade de francez [sic].”

<sup>128</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 39

Blanc's part and focus on administrative confusion and bureaucratic incompetence or venality.<sup>129</sup> Blanc resorts to a highly abstract argument that, because the island where he was arrested (in the middle of the Gurupí River) was closer to the Province of Maranhão than the Province of Pará, he was firmly outside of the jurisdiction of Viseu.<sup>130</sup> Blanc was accused of "provoking violence," and thus not even a signed order from the President of Maranhão could help Blanc avoid arrest.<sup>131</sup> In spite of the drama accompanying the incident, Blanc had not been formally charged with a crime at the time of his arrest.

Only weeks before Blanc's capture, Camillo de Mattos Torres had appealed for a concession from the Imperial government in 1885 to explore gold on the left bank of the Gurupí River.<sup>132</sup> With a heading of "Senhor!" Mattos wrote a letter addressed directly to Pedro II for a six-year term of mining privileges along the headwaters of the Gurupí-Mirim River, a tributary flowing from the left bank of the Gurupí just south of Camiranga.<sup>133</sup> His letter was dated August 19<sup>th</sup>, less than a month before his denuncia was processed and put into effect. The timing is convenient, to say the least.

Mattos Torres argues that this particular territory is "devoluto," and should fall under the control of the Imperial government. As someone who personally played a role in the drama which unfolded between Jules Blanc and the quilombolas, his claim that these lands were

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<sup>129</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 40

<sup>130</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 38

<sup>131</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 40

<sup>132</sup> Camillo de Mattos Torres to Pedro II, 19 August 1885. Secretária do Governo. Secretária da Presidência da Provincia. Caixa 1822. Avisos da Agricultura, APEP, Belém.

<sup>133</sup> As I demonstrate later in the chapter, it was Guilherme Capanema—the son of the Barão de Capanema who also headed up the Repartição—who succeeded in obtaining the mining rights than Mattos Torres requested.

devoluto was particularly disingenuous. Arch-Conservative Antonio da Silva Prado, Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works, sent a letter addressed to the President of the Province of Pará informing him and any other interested parties of Mattos's request.<sup>134</sup> Nonetheless, there is no record of Mattos Torres receiving such privileges, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works seemingly balked at granting Mattos Torres such rights. Even though the request did not go through, it is a testament to the intense conflict between sectors of the elite unfolding over the potentially lucrative gold along the Gurupí.

As to the role of opportunism among other public officials, Blanc paints it as a generalized situation from which only he and police officials from Carutapéra can be exonerated. Without specifying the source of his information, Blanc informs us how a *Juiz Suplente* from Viseu actually had livestock grazing on the quilombo. Meanwhile, the Subdelegado of Viseu's third police district, which included territory settled by quilombolas, resided in Itamoari—"no meio dos pretos"—with his family for a number of months as of 1888. Accordingly, Blanc asserted that the third district, which included Itamoari, "didn't have authority" over its nominal territory and the Subdelegado de Polícia from the fourth district (Polycarpo José Tavares) conducted business with the quilombolas "as he pleased."<sup>135</sup> In addition, he points to a merchant based out of the old Colônia Militar, Antônio Cardozo, "the most dedicated slave of Silvio Ribeiro" and compadre of judge Olímpio Pereira who apparently did excellent business in Itamoari without repercussions.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Antônio da Silva Prado to the President of Pará, 26 September 1885. Secretária do Governo. Secretária da Presidência da Província. Caixa 1822. Avisos da Agricultura, APEP, Belém.

<sup>135</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 18

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*

What is strongly implied is that Itamoari was protected by certain political forces representing Viséu and the state of Pará. Itamoari, in this telling, is kind of a nexus of crony capitalism, with various public officials and connected individuals benefitting through business dealings involving quilombolas in some capacity. Blanc depicts himself as a victim of a “maneuver of people who had already appropriated all of the profit from the *mocambo*, and who were taking measures to safeguard their property...and to this end to place me at a distance from Itamoari...”<sup>137</sup> The actions of the state’s police officials, “are enough to prove that they have an idea of possession buried in their heads about people in territory where they’ve never stuck their noses.”<sup>138</sup> Even if one is not particularly motivated to sympathize with Jules Blanc, local authority figures had ample material motives to intimidate him. Records from the Ministry of Agriculture reveal that Prado had endorsed a similar request made by Antonio Pedro de Oliveira, Vicente Ramos’s successor as Delegado de Polícia of Viséu who continued to pursue the case against Blanc.<sup>139</sup> And Oliveira did indeed receive a concession for gold exploration within the territory of Viséu in 1886.<sup>140</sup> At the same time that Blanc came under scrutiny, representatives of law and order had clearly made moves to establish mining rights over some of the lands where Blanc had himself been implicated in illegal commerce with quilombolas.

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<sup>137</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 19

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. The original quote, which translates quite awkwardly into English, is as follows: “basta para provar as ideias de possessão que lá na terra d’elles, se achão enterrados no cerebro das gentes sobre um territorio aonde elles não tem que pôr o nariz.”

<sup>139</sup> Ofício to Antônio da Silva Prado, 24 March 1886. Secretária do Governo. Secretária da Presidência da Provincia. 1860 – Minutas de Ofícios ao Ministerio de Agricultura, Commercio, e Obras Publicas 1886, APEP, Belém.

<sup>140</sup> “Mineração.” *Revista de Engenharia* (Rio de Janeiro), 14 May 1886, 104. It is not clear how successful Oliveira was in mining exploration, but he did maintain a presence in Viséu and this would not be this last time that he would be involved in a conflict over mining territory.

There was clearly a strong sense that the quilombolas represented a threat to Blanc's property rights, though said land rights were essentially aspirational and not based on the concession awarded to him in 1882. Like other early adventurers in the region, he had a background as a geographer, and he cites his membership (something he apparently shared in common with none other than Pedro II) in the Geographic Society of Paris as a testament to his character.<sup>141</sup> But if Blanc was ultimately a scapegoat, he justified his actions in terms that borrowed from a general ideology of development, framing his actions in as "sacrifices" made in order to establish gold mining in the Gurupí.<sup>142</sup>

1885 was a significant year in the case against Blanc, with testimonies having been given against him and authorities in Viseu detaining him briefly in September. In November 1885, for reasons which will become clear later in the chapter, Vicente Ramos was replaced as the local head of police with Antonio Pedro de Oliveira. It is interesting that less than a month after he assumed the post of Delegado de Polícia, Oliveira wrote to the Provincial head of police and sent various documents relating to the investigation of Blanc, passing blame to his predecessor and "political rival" Vicente Ramos for failing to pursue the case vigorously.<sup>143</sup> Picking up with some of the facts established by previous testimonies, Oliveira recounted the flight of quilombolas from Maranhão into Pará, and charged Blanc with exploiting (*explorar*) the quilombolas rather than the mines, i.e. simply expropriating gold mined by the quilombolas themselves rather than exploring potential gold mines. But while Oliveira paints Blanc as a self-interested manipulator, he also states: "with the help of the first [quilombolas] that came to him,

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<sup>141</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 33

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Antonio Pedro de Oliveira to João Polycarpo dos Santos Campos, 30 November. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém.

it was easy [for Blanc] to gather them into a new quilombo, of which he constituted himself as the chief, taking as his headquarters the island of Itamaury” in the middle of the Gurupí River. It is obviously jarring to consider a French national as the “chief” of a quilombo, and this interpretation is one which erroneously strips Agostinho and his comrades of their agency.

Oliveira implies strongly that Blanc placed the quilombolas, “os infelizes negros,” in harm’s way when they were attacked by *índios bravios* and fourteen of their comrades were killed while Blanc sat in the safety of the residence he had set up, essentially the same charge Torres leveled against Blanc in his own *denuncia*. At this point according to Oliveira, Blanc convinced them to leave Maranhão once and for all—since the island could still be considered part of that province’s jurisdiction. Blanc, in the meantime, would remain on the island of Itamoari, “which [Blanc] maliciously referred to as neutral ground.” Because the quilombolas were from Maranhão, Blanc could develop his “business” in Pará since there were no Maranhense agents or officials sent to capture the quilombolas. Oliveira states that by some pretext Blanc (perhaps due to his claim to be connected to the Conde D’Eu or influence with the provincial government of Maranhão) was able to ensure the cooperation of police from Carutapéra to bolster his position of extracting gold in Pará using quilombolas from Maranhão! Oliveira says that Blanc was successful enough that he sent seven or eight kilos of gold to the quilombolas “to manage their liberty.”<sup>144</sup>

Oliveira said it was pointless to reiterate the fact of Blanc having robbed and stolen from the quilombolas, because Agostinho’s testimony had already been provided nearly three months prior. An order had previously been given to bring Blanc to Viseu for questioning, but this was confounded by the fact that authorities in Viseu had not obtained a court order, as well as the fact

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<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*

of the jurisdictional tug-of-war between Viseu and Carutapéra.<sup>145</sup> He expressed the hope that authorities from Turiaçu and Viseu could work together to prevent any ambitious “captain of industry” from operating in their territories in an illegal fashion. Making a moral appeal for punitive action, Oliveira argues that this illegal commerce Blanc carried on with the quilombolas made them thrice unhappy: unhappy when they were enslaved, unhappy when they escaped only to be violently repelled by indigenous inhabitants of the region, and unhappy when they were “ruthlessly” robbed and exploited by Blanc. Once Oliveira arrived at the island of Itamoari, he found only a *rancho* that small merchants of the Alto Gurupí had used as a trading post, with the implication that Maranhão authorities should have no further jurisdiction in the Blanc case because he had already moved his operations out of Maranhão.<sup>146</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The conflict between Blanc and the authorities in Viseu is representative of the counterintuitive dynamic that existed between certain layers of the state and quilombolas who by then had formed settlements along the Gurupí. Local authorities could take punitive actions against an individual like Blanc, who was performing illicit commerce and exploiting quilombola labor power, while other representatives of the Brazilian state such as Silvio Ribeiro could offer a sort of transactional protection to the quilombolas which offered them opportunities for social and material reproduction.

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<sup>145</sup> *ibid.* Indeed, in an ofício dated February 17 the Secretária de Polícia do Maranhão sent the series of documents concerning the Blanc investigation cited below to the Provincial President of Maranhão, José Bento d’Araujo. The issue of geographical jurisdiction is mentioned specifically and the language of the ofício makes it clear that these documents were requested by the President himself. In an ofício addressed to the Subdelegado de Polícia of Turiaçu, Augusto Rodrigues Pinto accuses the Paraense authorities of propagating false information about their jurisdiction.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

It is very telling that authorities in Viseu had still failed to respond to repeated requests by Blanc to produce certain documents and testimonies related to the criminal investigation against him. This was based on his assertion that these testimonies were either recanted, based on second-hand information, or simply coerced. As of 1888, Blanc had waited for two years with no apparent result, having made an official request of Antonio Pedro de Oliveira.<sup>147</sup> This means that Agostinho and his comrades were faced with multiple sectors of the state and political elite working at cross-purposes. But for the moment, it seemed that the quilombolas' immediate tormentor Jules Blanc would no longer extract gold from the lands they occupied. Blanc's case demonstrates that we cannot think of the Brazilian state during the late imperial period as a unitary, reified, or even coherent entity.

We get relatively few details from Blanc about his antagonist, Agostinho de Sá Caldas, apart from the latter repeatedly being described as a murderer “who speaks loudly and brazenly.”<sup>148</sup> Agostinho, in a sense, engineered the “Gordian knot” from which Blanc was having such difficulty extricating himself.<sup>149</sup> He sarcastically advises authorities: “Leave the black excellence of the rio Gurupy in peace. Allah is great and Mohammad is his prophet. For the moment, Agostinho is the Mohammad of the gurupyense Allah, Sr. Joaquim Silvio Ribeiro. The protection given to this ignoble *negro*, here also is another measure of good faith, of human respect, of probity, of legality, of the civilization that reigns in Vizeu...”<sup>150</sup> Batting away accusations that he reined over Itamoari, he maintained that he spent relatively little time there,

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<sup>147</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 43.

<sup>148</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 50.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 50.



that a *mocambo* had existed there for at least thirty years—long before Blanc’s arrival. This is implied to be the same group that was associated with Agostinho.<sup>151</sup> Blanc calls upon authorities in both provinces to take firmer measures against the quilombolas, who in spite of everything else he judges to be “more cunning and wise” than those who were accused of extorting gold from them. For Blanc it was the quilombolas who extorted gold, turning “his” profits into ruins.<sup>152</sup>

Borrowing a quote attributed to Brahma of Hindu lore, Blanc writes of the whole affair: “ne derangez pas le monde laissez chacun comme est.”<sup>153</sup> He was left beaten and exhausted by the resistance and alleged harassment against him, in which quilombolas played a crucial part. Bringing his letter to a meandering conclusion he recalls his first time visiting Guanabara Bay while circumnavigating the globe with a French expedition, where he describes the passengers, “sons of all nations of Europe, [arriving] to salvage as I did of the prime works of nature, and today when I judge Brazil I will forget the swamp of Viseu and [instead] see the full height of Tijuca dominating the capital that gives impulse to the giant.”<sup>154</sup> He remained defiant, declaring his willingness to go to war (metaphorically) to defend his rights.<sup>155</sup> In reality, Blanc’s letter was

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<sup>151</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 51-52. It is certainly not true that this particular group had been in Pará for that long, but Agostinho’s group had certainly been there before Blanc’s arrival. One might note the inconsistency of Blanc claiming to be the only resident of the right bank of the Gurupí around 1882 while also citing the existence of a quilombo that had been around for thirty years, only to claim later that he took in the quilombolas who fled to his property after their rout by the Ka’apor.

<sup>152</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 51.

<sup>153</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 55. The quote roughly translates to: “don’t disturb the world, leave each as it is.”

<sup>154</sup> Jules Blanc to Augusto Rodrigues Pinto 56. Clearly there is some wordplay at work, with Blanc contrasting the area of Tijuca in Rio de Janeiro, today a prosperous suburb overlooking much of the city, with the swamp of Viseu.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*

the last gasp of an aspiring neo-colonial baron. Lest one be tempted to believe that this was a staggering defeat for Blanc, he was recruited by the Repartição as an Inspector soon thereafter in 1890. For a number of years thereafter, Blanc assisted with the extension of the telegraph line from Belém to the city of Manaus in Amazonas.<sup>156</sup>

This chapter reprints material I previously published in the *Journal of Latin American Geography* (Abreu 2018) of which I was the sole author.

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<sup>156</sup> “De Belém à Manaus,” *A República* (Belém), 29 July 1890. If the 14 March 1895 edition of the *Diário Oficial* is any indication, Blanc remained with the Repartição for a number of years.

### **Chapter 3: A Snapshot of Local Authority Before Abolition**

The town of Viseu was continuously neglected by Pará's provincial government during the final years of slavery, in spite of the area's strategic importance as a crossing point for quilombolas, particularly those fleeing from Maranhão. This lack of state capacity ironically empowered local officialdom to monetize the presence of quilombolas in Viseu's municipal territory, in concert with Silvio Ribeiro and a small number of his colleagues working on behalf of the national government. Much of the historical record of quilombolas along the Gurupí River during this time comes from provincial and local police archives. This section will detail the role of the police in Viseu as a means of chronicling state capacity and how the lack thereof may have created the structural conditions in which quilombolas and their descendants could establish a foothold for community and autonomy before 1888.

During much of the 1880s, police correspondence makes it clear that the police force stationed in Viseu was poorly supplied and understaffed. Provincial police officials regularly asked for reinforcements or extra troops. In 1883, only months after the arrival of quilombolas from Maranhão, the corporal of Viseu's detachment of police was struck with smallpox, while there was also a standing request to add additional troops to said detachment.<sup>1</sup>

Once the presence of quilombolas was firmly established during the period of the telegraph line being constructed, authorities in Viseu continued to see territory along the river to the south of the town as difficult to effectively police. One communication to the provincial Chefe da Polícia from Delegado de Polícia Vicente Ramos dated 11 January 1885 argued that it “did not serve any purpose” to establish the headquarters of the third police district in the Alto

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<sup>1</sup> Ofício to Major Comandante do Corpo de Polícia of Pará, 21 November 1883. Secretária do Governo. Caixa 1762. Ofícios ao Comandante do Corpo da Policia 1883, APEP, Belém.

Gurupí region—which was the central point for quilombo descendants from Maranhão—because there was a lack of personnel to serve as clerks, land inspectors, and other roles related to policing functions.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, Vicente Ramos called for the transfer of the district police headquarters to the small town of São José do Gurupí about thirty-six kilometers to the north. Perhaps this is a practical concession to the municipality’s inability to combat the quilombagem taking root downriver. He also proposed to reduce the total size of the third district so that it only extended to the Gurupí-Mirim, a tributary of the Gurupí south of Camiranga but well to the north of Itamoari.<sup>3</sup>

Months later, Ramos repeatedly called for additional police to provide security for the telegraph team in Viseu, citing the “most urgent necessity.” He mentions the “agglomeration” of people along the work sites, but also in the village of São José do Gurupí and reminds his superior that the requested troops should be properly armed in order to render the Delegacia “ready to lend the Engineer any help he might happen to need.”<sup>4</sup> It seemed that the telegraph project commanded a great deal of the attention of Viseu’s Delegado de Polícia. As of June 1885 the request had not yet been fulfilled.<sup>5</sup> Dramatizing the gravity of the situation, Ramos insists that his men didn’t have a fuse or cartridge among them. The request for extra personnel was one which came not only from Ramos, but also from the “Director of the telegraph line.”<sup>6</sup> Ramos

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<sup>2</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d’Oliveira to Chefe de Polícia da Província do Pará, 11 January 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, January to July 1885, APEP, Belém.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d’Oliveira to José Joaquim Palma, 11 May 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém. A similar request had been made in April.

<sup>5</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d’Oliveira to José Joaquim Palma, 10 June 1885. Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

indicates that the size of the work crew for the line was numbered over three hundred people—perhaps larger than any recent infrastructure project in the region.<sup>7</sup> It is not clear whether this is the team headed by Silvio Ribeiro or a different crew building a line from Viseu to Belém, but in either case quilombolas had to have been involved in some capacity. One can infer that, because this request pertains partially to a location south of Viseu, it fell along territory entrusted to Silvio Ribeiro’s crew. At any rate, this was not the final word on the potential threat to public order. Only two months later, a series of violent incidents involving residents and police in Viseu laid bare the growing tensions in the region sitting at the crossroads of the police, the telegraph project, and the strong quilombola presence.

In August 1885, a scuffle broke out the night of the 12<sup>th</sup> at Viseu’s police barracks. The investigation reveals some interesting details as to what transpired. Francisca Machado Portella, a Cearense widow who was living in Viseu, observed that the attackers numbered over one hundred and sought to enter the barracks by force, shouting various threats to the troops in the meantime. They were only dispersed by another town resident who insisted that they should redirect their animus to Emperor Dom Pedro II instead. Though this seemed to be enough to stop the attack, a number of would be rebels remained in the streets shouting *vivas*.<sup>8</sup>

One of the deposed was a young worker from the telegraph service named João Antônio Barbosa who testified that on August 12 he was invited by his colleagues from the Telegraph Service to come with them because “there was going to be a *revolution*” that night. He names

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Testimony of Francisca Machado Portela, 23 Aug. 1885, Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém. In a separate letter addressed to the provincial president contained in this same *caixa*, a judge cites the number of “attackers” as being two-hundred, with lower estimates being around fifty.

two of his colleagues, Estelino Antonio Lopes and Joaquim José dos Santos, insisting that they invited all of the telegraph workers to join in the revolutionary expedition.<sup>9</sup> The revolution, however, would only come after making stops in town to drink *aguardente* and *tiquira*, with their last stop leaving them at a tavern outside of the barracks. Other than a skirmish with a soldier who tried to take away some of their clubs, the workers ended up in a standoff outside of the barracks before a police representative arrived to calm the situation.<sup>10</sup>

It is certain that there wasn't a "revolution" as such, but the workers did demonstrate outside of the home of Vicente Ramos. Testimony offered by André Antônio de Mendonça offered a possible cause for the tumult: various police troops had assaulted Viseu residents at gunpoint the previous night, while two other witnesses specified that it was a single individual named João Francisco that had been beaten by police the previous night. Though certain individuals in the crowd were identified by police and witnesses, we cannot be completely sure about the compositions of the crowd in terms of ethnic makeup and how many were locals as opposed to telegraph workers from elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

In later police documents from September 1885, the interim *Chefe de Polícia*, referring to the "disagreeable" events of August eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, recommended to Provincial President Carvalho that the entire detachment be replaced and a special delegate brought in to conduct an inquiry in order to punish anyone responsible for the disorder.<sup>12</sup> Those who were in

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<sup>9</sup> Testimony of João Antonio Barbosa, 23 Aug. 1885, *Segurança Pública*, *Secretária de Polícia da Província*, *Ofícios*, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará, Belém. Italics added. It seems that none of the instigators identified by authorities or witnesses can be directly tied to quilombolas.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Many of the witnesses, such as Portela and Barbosa were born in the northeast (Ceará and Paraíba, respectively).

<sup>12</sup> *Ofício* from *Chefe de Polícia Interino* to Dr. Carlos Augusto de Carvalho, 3 September 1885, *Secretária da Presidência da Província*. Caixa 415A, *Ofícios da Secretária de Polícia da Província do Pará* 1885, APEP, Belém.

Viseu during the tumult were also there partially because there were festivities taking place at the time. According to a letter sent from Viseu's Municipal Council to President Carvalho, Vicente Ramos actually conceded the request to remove certain abusive police soldiers from Viseu, though this consisted of merely sending away six of the "disorderly" police soldiers (*desordeiros*).<sup>13</sup>

The Delegado de Polícia defended himself, saying this measure was necessary to avoid a "bloody scene" between the abusive police in question and the crowd, whose passions were said to be "inflated" by a small group of local agitators.<sup>14</sup> He acknowledged that many people had been in town, and ] many of them were not from Viseu—likely a reference to the revolutionaries who gave their labor to the telegraph line. The end of the letter laments the inability to discern all of the facts in light of the absence of many of the *desordeiros*—seven in total—while also noting that a certain animus still existed between the soldiers stationed there and town residents.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps because of his poor showing during the tumult and its political aftermath, he would be replaced shortly thereafter by Antonio Pedro de Oliveira.

It is clear that the members of Viseu's Municipal Council were trying to pass the blame onto Ramos, of whom they comment that he carried out his duties as Police Delegate in "the most irregular manner possible."<sup>16</sup> The police chief was said to imprison town residents without

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<sup>13</sup> Câmara Municipal da Villa de Vizeu (Estevão José Pereira, et. al) to Dr. Carlos Augusto de Carvalho, 17 August 1885, Secretária da Presidência da Província. Caixa 415A, Ofícios da Secretária de Polícia da Província do Pará 1885, APEP, Belém.

<sup>14</sup> Vicente Ferreira Ramos d'Oliveira to José Joaquim da Palma, 13 August 1885, Segurança Pública, Secretária de Polícia da Província, Ofícios, Julho à Dezembro 1885, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará, Belém.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Ofício from Câmara Municipal da Villa de Vizeu (Estevão José Pereira, et. al) to Dr. Carlos Augusto de Carvalho, 17 August 1885, Secretária da Presidência da Província. Caixa 415A, Ofícios da Secretária de Polícia da Província do Pará 1885, APEP, Belém.

any legitimate motives whatsoever, using his soldiers for the same purpose, “giving the sabre” to said prisoners.<sup>17</sup> These reveal a deep division simply within the political structure of the town, one that the members of the Municipal Council were clearly hoping to resolve by appealing to President Carvalho. The police were said to be in a flagrant state, flogging numerous town residents in public places, presumably contributing to the tense climate during the Summer of 1885. Consider that this public revolt took place merely weeks after Vicente Ramos pleaded for additional troops to police the telegraph workers, and two days after Agostinho appeared in Viseu to provide testimony in the still ongoing investigation against Jules Blanc.

On the night of the 11<sup>th</sup>, the police troops stationed in Viseu engaged in what the Council refers to as “the most complete theater of savagery” around the house of the Delegado Ramos himself, beating on various citizens and “setting crooked [their] rights” in a seemingly indiscriminate fashion. The next day one of the police attacked a town resident in full view of a local judge and other onlookers. Timely intervention from the judge, Estefanio José Ribeiro de Filgueiras, prevented further damage, his bloody hands providing proof of the ferocity with which the victim was attacked. Though Judge Filgueiras recommended a prison sentence for the soldier, it was apparently never carried out.<sup>18</sup> This is key to understanding why, according to this account, a number of town residents came to the aid of João Antônio Martins. Martins had been passing in front of the police barracks on the twelfth of August when he was beaten by police without provocation, at which point a number of other town residents came to his aid and made a commotion. Both sides (police and town residents) began exchanging insults and heated comments. The police threatened the crowd with stabbing them to death by sabre or grenade

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*



blasts, while the crowd invited the police to come onto the street without their weapons.<sup>19</sup> But even before this inciting event, individuals such as the radicalized telegraph workers had already resolved to challenge authorities in Viseu.

The standoff at the police barracks lasted for an hour before the timely intervention of the André Antônio de Mendonça—who invited both sides to stand down and retire for the night—ended the tension with the exception of that part of the crowd that continued to march and shout vivas before the end of the night. The Council members used this context to remind the President that the town would be much more peaceful with a limited number of police, being that the existing troops were labeled as disturbers (*perturbadores*) of the peace and possible alcoholics. While the police had been asking for reinforcements and additional supplies, the disorder raised by the town succeeded in forcing the Council to ask that the number of troops in Viseu be reduced to five (from thirteen), that these troops should not be from the existing force, and that Ramos be replaced in his post. The main judge of Viseu gave his own response, attesting to the presence of some disorderly troops while also criticizing Ramos's lack of resolute action, emphasizing that the troops were taking refuge in their barracks from a crowd of two hundred, “almost all of them armed.”<sup>20</sup> This event and its aftermath, though contingent upon various factors such as the presence of non-locals, the inciting incidents mentioned above, and the fact that it was a holiday, revealed an undercurrent of rebellion against police overreach at a time when quilombolas strengthened their hand through a network of alliances outlined elsewhere in this chapter. Events in Viseu ensured that the police force would be contained, surely something

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

which would have boded favorably for the administrative autonomy of quilombos within Viseu's territory.

In 1886 police stationed in Viseu voiced complaints about not receiving back pay, leading to a request that the provincial treasury of Pará release the necessary funds.<sup>21</sup> These ofícios give the strong impression that Viseu's police force underpaid in addition to being understaffed. This points back to the issue of weak state capacity—certainly at the regional level—as a means of understanding how police and police officials could act indirectly in favor of quilombolas in the intervening years between their flight from Maranhão and the abolition of slavery. Troops associated with the police force experienced wage theft to the extent that the idea was proposed of requisitioning forty-eight thousand reis abandoned by a merchant based out of Viseu, Mariano Aurelio Lisboa.<sup>22</sup>

Viseu's police continued to petition the provincial government for resources. Another request for troops sent 13 October 1886 asks for an additional handful of reinforcements in Viseu's first, second, and third districts for the purpose of blocking the entry of fugitive slaves entering through Maranhão, “following the road of the telegraph line.”<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to consider that the telegraph line, constructed by the labor power of quilombolas and indigenous groups, was a figurative lifeline for those quilombolas who previously fled from Limoeiro while

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<sup>21</sup> Ofício to the Major Comandante do Corpo Militar de Polícia, 16 February 1886, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 1877, Minutas de Ofícios ao Comandante do Corpo de Polícia 1886, APEP, Belém.

<sup>22</sup> Ofício to the Major Comandante do Corpo Militar de Polícia, 30 April 1886, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 1877, Minutas de Ofícios ao Comandante do Corpo de Polícia 1886, APEP, Belém.

<sup>23</sup> Ofício to the Major Comandante do Corpo Militar de Polícia, 13 October 1886, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 1877, Minutas de Ofícios ao Comandante do Corpo de Polícia 1886, APEP, Belém. There is almost a continuum between the settlement of quilombolas along the Gurupí in Pará, the progress of the telegraph line, this particular concern from Viseu's police officials, and reports around the same period of quilombolas in Maranhão fleeing and seeking employment on the telegraph line.

also possibly becoming a literal lifeline for those who might have fled in the following years due to the fact that roads were few and far between in the region. Once again, the state had to compensate for the fact that quilombolas (or would be quilombolas) were successful in mastering trails in the forest. Such activities were not only taking place in Pará, but continued in Maranhão as well.

An *expediente* sent from the office of the President of Maranhão on 16 April 1886 instructed a police official to respond to allegations made by a delegation from the town of Pinheiro—a key site of quilombola activity during the uprising of São Benedito do Céu in 1867—“against the abuse that continues to be practiced by the head of the construction of the telegraph line, from Engenho Central to Três Furos in this province, of luring slaves to the service of said [telegraph] line.”<sup>24</sup> Another such *expediente* on the subject was sent by the Provincial President to the police Delegado of the capital (São Luís) asking that the seven hundred workers on the line between Engenho Central and Três Furos be deposed by the authorities, citing concerns by local police in Pinheiro and Santa Helena.<sup>25</sup>

In a session of Maranhão’s Provincial Assembly, legislators cited a lack of the “necessary scruples” in hiring wage laborers for the line. This led to the presence of *aquilombados* from the forests around the Turiaçu River as laborers on the line, with “such examples contributing to continuous flights of slaves from Pinheiro, São Bento and Vianna [sic].”<sup>26</sup> Not only does this demonstrate the continued persistence of quilombagem in western Maranhão in spite of previous

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<sup>24</sup> “Secção Official: Expediente do dia 16.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 8 May 1886.

<sup>25</sup> “Secção Official: Expediente do dia de 19 de Abril de 1886.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 14 May 1886.

<sup>26</sup> “Assemblea Provincial: Discurso pronunciado na sessão de 13 de maio de 1886.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 28 May 1886.

military repression, but it also is an example of the continued adherence of many political figures in Maranhão to the institution of slavery at a time when it was on the wane or practically extinct elsewhere in the Brazilian Empire. Though one of the legislators, Alfredo Leite, gave the benefit of the doubt to the supervisor of the line, he presented the topic during the session as one “well known in these parts [of the Province].” Meanwhile, Leite’s colleague Viriato Lemos wondered aloud whether the administrator in question wasn’t “inflating the slaves with subversive ideas.” Leite in turn conceded that this might be the case.<sup>27</sup> It is possible that they were referring to Gustavo Dodt, who was recognized as the main Repartição official in Maranhão and frequently spent time in western Maranhão as part of his duties.<sup>28</sup> Dodt received much of the public credit when the telegraph line was finally capable of transmitting to the neighboring state of Piauí and later Rio de Janeiro in 1884.<sup>29</sup> Though Dodt did not receive any mining concessions in Viséu, he did receive a concession for mineral exploration in the area surrounding the town of Codó in the Maranhense interior.<sup>30</sup>

As late as 1887, the President of Maranhão sent a reply to an *ofício* from the Provincial Chefe de Polícia regarding the fact of “mocambos that are incorporating themselves to the grounds of the telegraph division between Engenho Central and Três Furos,” citing two separate settlements on the margin of the Turiaçu River and another at Pedreiras further to the east in the

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> “Prolongamento da linha telegraphica.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 6 March 1885. According to the 3 August 1885 edition of *Pacotilha*, Dodt is named as the “engineer in charge of the settlement of the telegraph landline between Engenho Central and Vizeu” and often spoke to the press about the frequent attacks on the infrastructure and crew by Ka’apor or Timbiras.

<sup>29</sup> “O telegrapho.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 3 November 1884; “Telegrapho terrestre.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 12 December 1884.

<sup>30</sup> Império do Brasil. Decreto 8840. 5 January 1883.

interior of the state. The President requested that the Chefe de Polícia request further information from a judge in Viana.<sup>31</sup> In a debate held in the Brazilian Parliament, Maranhão Deputy Luiz Antônio Domingues da Silva, questioned the reasoning of the Ministry of Agriculture in establishing the telegraph line in territories “infested by *índios*” as well as the paucity of labor owing to the fact that the poor pay was not enough for workers to risk facing “the arrow of the *índio bravo*.”<sup>32</sup>

Though no mention of quilombolas is made in the abovementioned complaint by Domingues da Silva, one can surmise that fugitive slaves and indigenous groups were both seen to be a threat to established authorities in the town of western Maranhão. Though this had been the status quo for much of the late-nineteenth century, the construction of the telegraph line actually provided an impetus for the enslaved to flee, seeking autonomy by giving their labor power to the telegraph project much as Agostinho and his comrades had done in years past. In spite of this, the perceived threat of quilombolas to the line on the Maranhão side was such that a telegram sent to the Barão de Capanema from the telegraph station at Engenho Central posited that a thorough attack on infrastructure which took place near Três Furos and resulted in the uprooting of ten support posts and various electric insulators could have been the work of *either* “caboclos or quilombolas,” though said telegram concludes that it was likely the former due to the proximity of Timbiras to the location.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> “Secção Official: Expediente do dia de 19, Officios.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 14 April 1887.

<sup>32</sup> “Parlamento: Discurso pronunciado na sessão de 17 de Agosto de 1887.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 12 September 1887.

<sup>33</sup> “Estragos na linha telegraphica.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 31 December 1886.

The telegraph line—meant to become a symbol of the authority of the Brazilian Empire and the conquest of nature—served as a focal point for destabilizing the waning hegemony of both the Imperial government and the slaveocracy generally speaking. A telegraph from the President of Maranhão to the President of Pará sent 1 March 1887 contains an urgent request for reinforcements and arms for the defense of the telegraph station at Maracaçumé, which at the time was surrounded by apparently hostile *índios*.<sup>34</sup> Weeks passed before troops under Paraense command could intervene.<sup>35</sup> Even in 1885, attacks by indigenous groups were enough to send workers fleeing in spite of the higher salaries promised by Gustavo Dodt.<sup>36</sup> Certain individuals placed blame on Dodt for not having promoted settlement and colonization along the telegraph line to curb such attacks.<sup>37</sup> In 1889, telegraph workers at Três Furos were attacked again, prompting then supervisor Alexandre Haag to assemble a team of armed guards to intervene.<sup>38</sup> While the telegraph was seen as a modernizing innovation which could have had the secondary effect of providing an easy conduit for colonization, it was actually beset by numerous setbacks including less than ideal climate conditions, few personnel to maintain the telegraph stations, attacks by indigenous groups, and its use as a refuge for quilombolas, both as laborers and as

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<sup>34</sup> Telegram from José Bento d’Araújo to the President of Pará, 21 June 1887, Secretária do Governo. Secretária da Presidência da Província. Caixa 1889. Telegramas 1887, APEP, Belém.

<sup>35</sup> Telegram from Juiz de Paz João de Deus Soares to the President of Pará, 9 July 1887, Secretária do Governo. Secretária da Presidência da Província. Caixa 1889. Telegramas 1887, APEP, Belém. Periodically such attacks would interfere with the functioning of the telegraph, occasionally resulting in physical harm to the staff present at the telegraph stations in 1891 and 1896, for example. This was a more common problem on the Maranhão side of the border.

<sup>36</sup> “Despachos da Presidencia.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 3 August 1885.

<sup>37</sup> “O amigo sincero.” “Vizeu, 9 de Maio de 1887.” *Diário de Noticias* (Rio de Janeiro), 27 May 1887.

<sup>38</sup> “Interior.” *Jornal do Commercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 11 September 1889.

runaways traveling along the path of the telegraph line as indicated by the concerns of police in Viséu in 1886.<sup>39</sup> Though the general abolition of slavery was near, quilombolas in Pará and Maranhão had effected an abolition on their own terms. Though quilombolas would be faced with many of the same economic and political pressures as other former slave after 1888, the communities of Camiranga and Itamoari managed to preserve a certain autonomy rooted in their territoriality.

### **Navigating Abolition**

Both Camiranga and Itamoari were technically within the territory of Viséu, though it is difficult to conceive of how these communities would have been represented in the county seat, even after abolition. In 1893 an article published in *O Democrata* there are oblique references to a “great number of crimes that look like bank notes circulating.”<sup>40</sup> Though this was in reference to partisan violence, the author intimates that this was easier to ignore because Itamoari was isolated due to its circumstances, and thus “if it wasn’t calculated to hurt the *partido democratica*, [Itamoari] certainly wouldn’t need to accommodate consulates or the Government.”<sup>41</sup> The scant information offered here indicates that political operatives were at least active in Itamoari, bolstered by the thin presence of authority in the town.

A few years later, however, we see a rather mundane announcement in *Folha da Norte* that that a new *subprefeito*, José Antonio de Almeida, had been assigned to “Itamaraty, no rio Gurupy,” which we can only assume is Itamoari given the frequency of this particular

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<sup>39</sup> Ministro e Secretário de Estado dos Negocios da Agricultura 32.

<sup>40</sup> A Justiça. “Interior.” *O Democrata* (Belém), 5 December 1893.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

misspelling.<sup>42</sup> Almeida had arrived to the region from Ceará, and developed commercial interests in the region before later being displaced by an aspiring mining baron who will be the subject of later chapters.<sup>43</sup> It is very possible that this is the same “José d’Almeida” who comes under attack in Blanc’s letter as a violent police Subdelegado operating along the Gurupí.<sup>44</sup> It does seem certain that there was at least the semblance of an administrative presence in Itamoari, though it is uncertain to what extent this was accommodated by quilombo descendants who had clearly established the community. As we will see, communities of fugitive slave descendants might still be described as quilombos or mocambos in spite of the fact that abolition made this description technically moot.

Guilherme Capanema, the aforementioned son of the Barão de Capanema, called upon engineer Miguel Arrojado Lisboa to survey his considerable mining concession along the Gurupí in 1895 and evaluate its potential for mineral production. As early as 1884, the Barão had contracted surveyor to explore mining territories in the north of Maranhão.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, the quilombolas who had inhabited and worked within the newly titled quadrant had no recognition whatsoever. Because the quilombolas’ claim to the land could not possibly be recognized by Brazilian law, they had little choice but to provide a source of surplus value in the form of gold and physical labor that could be exploited or skimmed by aspiring commercial actors coveting

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<sup>42</sup> “Echos e Noticias.” *Folha do Norte* (Belém), 6 June 1896. Itamaraty is actually a common abbreviation for Brazil’s Foreign Ministry (Ministério das Relações Exteriores).

<sup>43</sup> Hurley 1932, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Both surnames—d’Almeida and de Almeida—were incredibly common but given that Blanc mostly conducted his dealings with the quilombolas in Itamoari one can reasonably assume that Jose de Almeida was already in Itamoari during the 1880s and this 1896 announcement was simply a lateral move from police official to political representative. One can say at the very least that Almeida had lived among quilombolas for years and was not an outside figure imposed on them.

<sup>45</sup> Lisboa 4.



the region and its resources. But slavery and the resistance to that institution were not the only barriers to the expansion of mining, and quilombola communities had created a durable social structure based on a sense of territoriality in a region that was not easily navigable.

The terrain along the Gurupí River was quite difficult to navigate, as detailed by Arrojado Lisboa's first description of Itamoari: "Itamaguary, that the *negros* call Tamauary, the most notable waterfall along this stretch," with entry and egress only possible with a mastery of canoe navigation.<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere, Lisboa notes how easily one can be prevented from travelling during the wet season that accompanies the Summer during which swollen waterways impeded overland travel.<sup>47</sup> Though his survey took place years after the end of African slavery, Lisboa refers to "Tamauary" (actually Itamoari) as a "mocambo," demonstrating that though the year 1888 is an important point of demarcation for the historiography of race and slavery in Brazil, communities of quilombo descendents could be recognized as distinct ethnoterritorial formations that complicate such academic boundaries. The residents of Itamoari were not enslaved anymore, not fugitives, and no longer needed to evade and repel the reactionary forces commanded by the slaveocracy. Yet it was not necessarily anachronistic for Lisboa and later observers to refer to their community as a mocambo.

Though by Lisboa's estimates the combined population of Camiranga and Itamoari was only in the hundreds, these and other groups of quilombo descendants were pivotal in the region—not only as a labor force, but also as one of the main sources of resistance to the landgrabbing practices of a coalition made up of foreign capital, local elites, and political actors

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<sup>46</sup> Lisboa 10-11.

<sup>47</sup> Lisboa 13.

on the national and local level.<sup>48</sup> Arrojado Lisboa's account—*A Bacia do Gurupy e as suas Minas de Ouro*—was completed in 1897 but, much like Gustavo Dodt's work, remained unpublished until the 1930s. Though his purpose was scientific, and this for the benefit of his patron's commercial activities, he also provides a history of the region and gives a prominent place to the role of quilombos. Lisboa's narrative stresses conflict between indigenous and black inhabitants of the Gurupí, describing continuous warfare between the Ka'apor and quilombolas leading up to the aftermath of the quilombo Limoeiro: "a powerful savage nation, the Urubú [Ka'apor], to the same region, the *negros* were defeated by those who disputed the soil."<sup>49</sup> Rather than being "invisibilized," black inhabitants of the Gurupí region are portrayed as victims of indigenous "savagery." Lisboa references the tragedy experienced by one quilombola in particular: "we heard the narratives of these battles that occurred in the interior shade of the savages through which [the quilombolas] bought their freedom at the cost of the destruction of their mocambo and the life of [his] companion and five children."<sup>50</sup>

Mining continued on a small scale during this period when fugitive slaves formed the quilombo Limoeiro, after which further pressure from the Ka'apor kept the quilombolas from forming a fixed settlement. The Ka'apor "crossed the river, taking advantage of the dry season, and they invaded the right margin next to the headwaters of the Maracassumé, dispossessing the Quilombos."<sup>51</sup> Perhaps this was even the crucial incident that preceded the meeting between the quilombolas and Jules Blanc. The arrival of Silvio Ribeiro during the early 1880s proved

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<sup>48</sup> Lisboa 49.

<sup>49</sup> Lisboa 1.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Lisboa 51.

invaluable for the quilombolas: “now in a position secured from the persecution of their enemies, they began to once again openly explore for gold, finding various deposits in the igarapés of Itamaguary and Gurupy-Mirím.”<sup>52</sup> Arrojado Lisboa refers to a “mocambo de Tamauary”—likely a reference to the settlement of Itamoari.<sup>53</sup> Arrojado Lisboa and later generations of explorers and technical experts relied on local knowledge, most certainly that of quilombolas and indigenous groups, in order to successfully navigate the region. This makes sense, as Lisboa notes the difficulty of reaching Itamoari—the strength of the nearby waterfalls and difficulty of navigating the adjacent stretch of river even during dry season.<sup>54</sup>

Describing the waterways along the extent of the Gurupí, Lisboa cautions his reader that the “inattentive explorer” can easily be caught unawares by peculiarities in navigating the currents. Lisboa attributes this realization to the wisdom of the “preto Agostinho,” his guide in traversing the Gurupí. One cannot overlook the significance of this fact. This was most certainly none other than Agostinho de Sá Caldas, the very same individual who fled slavery and was a key figure in the construction of the telegraph line and the scandal involving Jules Blanc’s dealings in the region.<sup>55</sup> In serving as a guide, Agostinho demonstrated the already strong links between his community and their new surroundings—territoriality—upon fleeing from Maranhão. The knowledge cultivated by the quilombolas would become ever more crucial to the natural sciences as “learned men” explored the region to the extent which the talents and geographical knowledge of quilombolas and their descendants allowed them too.<sup>56</sup> As Veritas

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Lisboa 6

<sup>54</sup> Lisboa 11

<sup>55</sup> Lisboa 12

<sup>56</sup> It is worth mentioning, however, that Agostinho got lost in the forest during a hunt.

writes later, Agostinho was responsible for the discovery of numerous gold mines on both sides of the Gurupí River and one can imagine that this also generated geographical knowledge within and outside of the community.<sup>57</sup> Agostinho and other black residents of the Gurupí who acted as guides or served as crew members of Lisboa's expedition were described as being "chosen *negros* of the greatest confidence," providing a service alongside representatives of indigenous groups who also assisted Lisboa as crew members.<sup>58</sup>

He claims much of the existing knowledge of the Ka'apor came from those who inhabited the quilombo.<sup>59</sup> In a sense, the hierarchy inherent in the interaction between an educated white Brazilian and a group of quilombolas was inverted by way of their knowledge of mining deposits, navigation, and the ability to provide the details for Lisboa's secondhand anthropological sketch of the Ka'apor. Relying on a description furnished by "os negros," Lisboa informs readers that among the Ka'apor only the women wear rough coverings while men went completely nude and both sexes painted their bodies with urucú and genipapo fruit.<sup>60</sup> A detailed description of the Urubús is followed by the qualifier that "the little we know of this tribe [the Ka'apor] from information that the *negros do mocambo* provided us with."<sup>61</sup>

Ironically, Arrojado's narrative of victimization reveals the degree of leverage possessed by the quilombolas. Not only were they indispensable in their capacity as guides, but they also possessed and shared knowledge about the region with Lisboa. Lisboa, in turn, provides his

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<sup>57</sup> Veritas. "As minas de ouro." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

<sup>58</sup> Lisboa 53.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Lisboa 52.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

readers with a brief but revealing anthropological sketch of the social structure shared among the quilombolas. That provided by Arrojado Lisboa was perhaps the first since the account of cultural practices in the quilombo Limoeiro found the correspondence of Major Cunha and Captain Freire during their military campaigns in 1878.

Arrojado Lisboa focuses exclusively on the two established black communities of “Itamaguary” and “Camiranga,” finding that even in 1895 “the better part [of the population] was born in the *mocambo* in the forest itself and they remained there. Returning to the forest, they constructed a society there of mixed customs, combining, to the uses of their land [in Africa], others that they acquired in Brazil, from indigenous and civilized populations.” This observation is curious, though, as Arrojado Lisboa also extensively refers to black-indigenous conflicts which prevented the acquisition of indigenous language or other “cruzamentos,” leaving the quilombolas distinct and “bastante puros.”<sup>62</sup>

Even after abolition, an “emissary” responsible for trading precious metals for arms, gunpowder, and tools conducted commerce with coastal towns on behalf of the quilombolas. This commerce and contact with Brazilian “civilization” apparently did not result in the adoption of their customs, as these individuals wore little more than a piece of loincloth, while longer treks through the wilderness or during a hunt would be done completely nude. Of religion, Arrojado Lisboa says little more than that they mix sorcery (*feitichismo*) and Christianity along with “adulterated aspects” of “savage beliefs.” The political structure of the quilombo was a

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. The implication that the quilombolas retained African cultural and agricultural practices is difficult to quantify, particularly since many of those living in Camiranga and Itamoari were either born in those respective settlements, or crioulo veterans of quilombos in Maranhão. The most reasonable explanation is that knowledge was transmitted or passed down between generations, a process which guaranteed the persistence of effective gold mining practices from the mid-nineteenth century onward among quilombolas in western Maranhão, something alluded to by Ruben Almeida (see *Prosa, Poesia, Iconografia de Ruben Almeida*, 1982).

similarly hybrid system whereby “a chief whose will is absolute and blindly obeyed” governs, “but the important deliberations are taken before a council that meets in the *praça* of the *aldeia* under a hut designated for that purpose.”<sup>63</sup> The use of the term *aldeia* denotes an indigenous village or structure rather than a *povoado* or district linked to Viséu.

The “chief” of the quilombo presided over meetings of this advisory council with the rest of the community members sitting in a quadrant. These meetings, in spite of the discipline implied by the description, had the “least amount of order” where “everyone speaks at the same time, remaining in their places...” At intervals, the chief would cut through the uproar in order to make a decision (*sentença seguida*) amidst “a long series of recriminations.”<sup>64</sup> Arrojado Lisboa writes that only recently had the *aldeia* abandoned the practice of applying the death penalty to those accused of witchcraft or others who, through a process of divination, were judged to be dangerous to the existence of the “mocambo.”<sup>65</sup> Usually accusations of such crimes came from dreams “had by any one of the *negros*,” after which a council of the “principals of the *mocambo*” would hand down a sentence without the accused having been formally charged or forewarned.

After 1889, the “chief” served as an intermediary of sorts between the quilombo and outside authorities, though the council still formed part of local decision-making.<sup>66</sup> From the context it seems fairly certain that the “chief” in question could have been Agostinho de Sá Caldas, the “homem de ouro,” guide, and “negro da maior confiança” in Lisboa’s expedition.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Lisboa 56.

<sup>64</sup> Lisboa 57.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Lisboa 57.

<sup>67</sup> While I defend this assertion, I will concede that it is strange that Lisboa does not indicate the

The same year as Lisboa's expedition, an investigation into a homicide which took place in Camiranga provides us with some details concerning the integration of the *aldeia*-like quilombo village described by Lisboa into the "civilized" political structure under the Republic. In this sense, it is interesting that the scant section on the black population is separate from the manuscript's subsequent section on the civilized population of the Gurupí. Just as contact with Brazil's rural economy did not subsume an autochthonous economic modality within the quilombo, the same holds true for the process of political decision making.

Though slavery had been abolished and Camiranga was nominally a simple town within the *município* of Viseu, the reality of post-abolition was much more complicated. The town rarely received mention in official documents and clearly still functioned as an autonomous enclave mostly populated by quilombolas. Certain areas of activity, however, such as criminal acts were sure to attract the attention of municipal authorities. Though the process of reconstructing life immediately after abolition is difficult, police records from Viseu give us a tantalizing glimpse into how quilombolas figured into the broader political system once their fugitive status was no longer a deterrent to open commerce and colonization.

On the night of 27 August 1895, sixteen-year-old Procopio Raimundo Nonato entered the home of resident Manoel Nunes and fatally shot Nunes's neighbor, Izabel da Conceição, in the chest accidentally.<sup>68</sup> The act took place in Camiranga, which as we have seen was already a firmly established settlement which emerged from the efforts of Agostinho and his fellow quilombolas after their flight from Maranhão. The Promotor Público of Viseu sought the death

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name of the chief. Having already made Agostinho's acquaintance but not naming him as said chief can also suggest that it is, in fact, a different individual. Nonetheless, Agostinho was the most likely person to fill the go between role specified by Lisboa between the quilombolas and existing political authority.

<sup>68</sup> Promotor Público João Antônio Gonçalves to Juiz Substituto, 19 September 1895, Comarcas. Viseu, Crime, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

penalty for the defendant, and in the process began an investigation during which testimony was collected from various individuals including residents of Camiranga, giving us a rare echo of the voices of individuals living in Camiranga who generally did not produce written documents due to being largely illiterate.

In a letter from the Subprefeitura de Segurança of the town of São José do Gurupí—also a part of Viseu—to his superior, we learn that a local of Camiranga was integral to the process of gathering testimony: Agostinho de Sá Caldas, who only a few years before was on the wrong side of the slavocracy. Specifically, he informed and delivered witnesses for the purpose of giving testimony while also discovering Izabel’s body, interrogating the defendant the day after the homicide took place, and even assisting in the burial of the deceased.<sup>69</sup> More interesting still, Agostinho was named in official communications as an *Agente de Segurança* (Security Agent). This is a curious title—seemingly neither a police or political post under the traditional structure of most *municípios*. And yet other officials in charge of securing public order acknowledged his role and entrusted him with certain investigative authority in spite of his inability to read or write.<sup>70</sup>

The first witness in the investigation, Lazaro José dos Santos, mentions in his testimony that upon being shot, Izabel was taken to Agostinho’s home. This indicates that he was most certainly an authority figure within the community, being the main respondent to a major crime such as homicide. Agostinho did not have a completely free hand in the case. Francisco

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<sup>69</sup> Testimony of Lázaro José dos Santos, 4 November 1895, Comarcas. Viseu, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>70</sup> “Subprefeito de Segurança Manoel Belchior de Souza to Prefeito de Segurança Pública da Comarca de Viseu,” 30 August 1895, Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém. As was the case for most *autos de perguntas*, all testimony was recorded by a scribe rather than Agostinho himself.



Marcellino Raiol, Prefeito Público de Segurança of Viseu, also took testimony and assisted with transcription in the town of Viseu itself. According to witness Tertulliano Antônio Cardoso, Agostinho interrogated Procopio after the shooting took place. Among the witnesses was Raymundo Nonato de Sá Caldas, who testifies to being a single farmer with roots in Maranhão. Raymundo was Izabel's lover. Not having courage to look over the corpse, he left that grim task to his uncle, Agostinho, whom he describes in his testimony as the *prefeito* of Camiranga.<sup>71</sup> Based on these witness, one can draw certain conclusions about life in Camiranga.

First, it is clear that Agostinho was invested with a certain amount of authority by the municipal government of Viseu, and that this arrangement was probably known to state-level authorities. Furthermore, Agostinho is recognized in multiple testimonies as a representative of residents of Camiranga—some of which included Agostinho's own family—as the main authority figure there (*prefeito de lá*). Other accounts stated that Agostinho had a brother whom he worked with after settling in Camiranga, in addition to his nephews Raymundo and Lazaro, possibly Raymundo's mother.<sup>72</sup> There is also the strong possibility that Agostinho's authority was one which was rooted in the structural power and leverage that residents of Camiranga possessed as effective small-scale miners (*garimpeiros*) and guides. Insofar as Agostinho is named by title (*prefeito*, *agente de segurança*), the extent to which these constituted official positions is unclear. It is also unclear what functions Agostinho was expected to fulfill while holding these titles; that is, the extent to which he determined his own responsibilities as opposed to the formally constituted state and local authorities.

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<sup>71</sup> Testimony of Raimundo Nonato de Sá Caldas, 8 September 1895, Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A, Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>72</sup> Galheiro, Lucas. "Riqueza Maranhense." *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 20 July 1930.

My impression is that local authorities in Viseu (and by extension the state of Pará) were either unwilling or unable to rout Agostinho and his comrades, and saved face through an awkward political alchemy which convoked upon him a vague level of officialdom. They simply consecrated what they could not control. It is noteworthy, however, that we see little indication in the testimony of the Aldeia-like council decision-making that Arrajado Lisboa refers to in his work. All the same, Camiranga did not and could not possess full legal autonomy, as the investigation involved various individuals from town traveling to Viseu to give their testimony before officials there. But Agostinho did correspond in some fashion with police officials in Viseu on questions such as testimony and the delivery of documents pertaining to the case.

There are also some indications in the witness testimony about the entry of outside actors into the mining economy sustained by the quilombolas. José Mariano de Jesus had commented that on the night of the murder, he had been preparing tools to depart for “the mine” with “the doctor,” Guilherme Capanema.<sup>73</sup> As the case was being prosecuted, Manoel Nunes, whose home was the scene of the crime and whose firearm was used to commit the crime, provided testimony. Like José Mariano, he had to make a journey to the mine with Guilherme Capanema, the man who had obtained exploration rights in the area and enlisted Miguel Arrojado Lisboa to survey mining territory around the Gurupí River around the same time. Manoel had to help deliver cargo along a land route through the “middle of the forest.” This aspect of the testimonies is instructive as to the extent to which purported property owners (such as Capanema) were on the ground

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<sup>73</sup> Testimony of José Mariano de Jesus, Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém. Doutor can denote an actual doctor, though it is often used as an honorific to describe someone with an education or from a privileged social background. Going by other testimony given in this case, the Doutor in question was probably mining concession-holder Guilherme Capanema.

interacting and supervising the labor of residents of Camiranga—an indicator that these residents were being integrated more fully into the orbit of the regional and national economy.

Lazaro José dos Santos, upon being questioned a second time how he knew that Procopio had committed the crime, recalled that “the following day his uncle Augustinho [sic] sent the witness to bring the defendant to [Agostinho’s] home, and upon interrogating him [Agostinho] declared him to be the author of the crime.”<sup>74</sup> We will see in the following chapter later chapter that Lázaro dos Santos, Agostinho’s nephew, will play a particularly violent role in opposition to land grabbing practices in mining territories around the Gurupí.

The defendant himself was born in Viseu, though it is not clear whether he was born in Camiranga. Not having the funds to mount a legal defense, his doctor Francisco d’Assis Corrêa de Faria represented him pro bono. In a written defense addressed to the judge and jury (julgadores), Faria attempts to drum up sympathy by noting that Procopio is a young boy without a father born to a *liberta*—a freed slave. Former Delegado de Polícia Antonio Pedro de Oliveira and another Viseuense put up the bond for Procopio as the case dragged out into the following year.<sup>75</sup> It wasn’t until the end of January that the jury selection process started.<sup>76</sup> The verdict came back divided, with jurors not agreeing unanimously that Procopio shot Izabel that night—at least not on purpose—which prompted the Procurador on the prosecution side, João Antônio Gonçalves, to appeal the decision to exonerate, albeit unsuccessfully.<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, Procopio was

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<sup>74</sup> Testimony of Lázaro José dos Santos, 4 November 1895. Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>75</sup> Promotor Público Interino Severino Duarte to Juiz de Direito da Comarca [de Viseu], 4 January 1896, Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A, Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>76</sup> Tribunal do Jury, 23 December 1895, Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>77</sup> “Razões de appelação,” 31 March 1896, Comarcas, Crime, Viseu, Caixa A, Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

not convicted of murder. Having been cleared of the charges, he was simply asked to pay some of the costs incurred by the municipality during the trial: eighteen-hundred and ninety reis.<sup>78</sup>

Although it is difficult to discern simply based on the testimonies given during the investigation which of the witnesses were former quilombolas—since racial and ethnic identity were not mentioned by the scribe or by the witnesses and other indicators such as literacy or profession are not sufficient to make such determinations—it is clear that residents of Camiranga were at least partially integrated into the criminal justice system. Nonetheless, the various roles occupied by Agostinho suggest that communities such as Camiranga had some latitude in managing their own affairs. But in terms of resources, a number of players were eager to gain access to the elusive riches of the Gurupí. To a greater extent than any previous period, quilombolas who endured slavery, flight, and abolition were faced with the arrival of domestic and foreign capital.

### **From Quilombo to Investment Opportunity**

With slavery having been abolished, quilombolas no longer being seen as a public security threat and numerous individuals eager to exercise existing or potential land claims, the two decades after abolition saw an influx of outside interest and outside capital. These developments followed closely on the heels on the knowledge created by previous explorations. As I argue above, the scientific pursuits of Guilherme Capanema, Miguel Arrojado Lisboa, Silvio Ribeiro and others went hand in hand with economic pursuits in the form of claims on gold-rich territory. Quilombolas were inextricably linked to this process, even as it increasingly led to encroachments on their territory and labor. Veritas mentions that Agostinho was still

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<sup>78</sup> Acta da septima reunião da primeira sessão ordinária do jury da comarca de Vizeu, 31 January 1896. Comarcas. Crime. Vizeu, Caixa A. Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

leading expeditions as of 1900 (through the Piriá River), and there is the implication that telephone lines would soon be established at Camiranga connecting to key mines further inland to the west of the Gurupí.<sup>79</sup>

Agostinho's longtime friend Silvio Ribeiro was also still active at this time in surveying and exploring mining territories. Among the frequently published manifests of arriving steamships in the pages of Maranhão newspaper *Pacotilha* was the news that the *Colombo* had come into port "from the north," perhaps Ceará. Among the passengers were Agostinho, a relative of his by the name of Antônio Augusto, Silvio Ribeiro, and the latter's son Miguel Silvio Ribeiro.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, Agostinho had made many such trips for the better part of a decade on his own account, demonstrating the extent to which the connection forged before abolition afforded him a certain social mobility.<sup>81</sup> For this continued labor Agostinho is deemed by Veritas as a "bold" and "daring" man deserving of praise from his contemporaries.<sup>82</sup> The *Diário do Maranhão* reported in July 1901 that Silvio Ribeiro was going to inspect and supervise the opening of key roads meant to link Camiranga to the lesser-known regions of mineral wealth between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers. There had been, of course, much interest in mining exploration on the part of Brazilian and European entrepreneurs long before abolition, but these attempts evidently

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<sup>79</sup> Veritas. "As minas de ouro." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

<sup>80</sup> *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 30 October 1899.

<sup>81</sup> Agostinho appears on numerous manifests between 1889 and 1899 under his full name, mostly on steamers circulating between Maranhão and Pará as well as the *Colombo* which featured service to Ceará. The 20 May 1890 edition of *Pacotilha* lists Agostinho as having traveled with a female companion. The 30 August 1892 edition of the same journal mentions Agostinho having traveled on the *Cabral* with Justiniano Costa Ferreira da Silva, whose name bears a strong resemblance to a black merchant based out of Itamoari whose story is briefly recounted in author Jorge Hurley's unpublished work *Rio Gurupy*.

<sup>82</sup> Veritas. "As minas de ouro." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

did not result in success.<sup>83</sup> The previous chapter established in detail how the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company failed to thrive in spite of a significant injection of physical capital that would be unmatched for decades afterwards. A series of attempted expeditions in the 1880s, most notably by the French in western Maranhão on land belonging to José Gonçalves Teixeira, either resulted in failures or in the collection of mineral samples with little follow-up.<sup>84</sup> But by the turn of the century, the advances made in gold exploration led to sustained interest on the part of foreign economic actors.

Perhaps it was no mistake that Veritas published his retrospective on Agostinho just after the turn of the century, presenting a gold-rich region ripe for development and populated by benevolent residents willing to share their knowledge with outsiders. Foreign companies were clearly involved at this point, as the article mentions the presence of English miners, and news of an American “syndicate” expressing doubts about the purchase of two léguas (about twelve kilometers) of land that did not connect to a previously discovered mine as intended.<sup>85</sup> In 1901 there was news of “important capitalists” forming the “Pará and Maranham[sic] Mining Syndicate.”<sup>86</sup> The name, of course, implies an interest in the rich mineral deposits scattered throughout the two states, and the article also indicates that the founders were also interested in international mining explorations in such locations as South Africa’s Transvaal. Very shortly after abolition, we see that northern Brazil could be place among the ranks of other hotspots of

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<sup>83</sup> Paiva, et. al 10-11.

<sup>84</sup> Almeida 41.

<sup>85</sup> “Minas de ouro.” *Diário Maranhense* (São Luís), 12 July 1901.

<sup>86</sup> “Diversas.” *A República* (Curitiba), 9 May 1901.

mining exploration. Indeed, Arrojado Lisboa himself favorably compared mineral deposits on the left margin of the Gurupí River to the gold-rich regions of Venezuela.<sup>87</sup>

The article indicates that the newly formed concern would procure and explore concessions hitherto being held by José Pedro Ribeiro and José Pedro Ribeiro and Co. The author explicitly references territory along the Gurupí River, including Itamoari and “Vizeus [sic]”. Ribeiro’s concession covered huge swaths of land on both sides of the Gurupí River, with lands stretching north to south from Igarapé Itapuriteua to Itamoari itself. From east to west, Ribeiro held exploration rights from the Pindaré River in Maranhão to the Piriá River in Pará—an expanse of hundreds of kilometers.<sup>88</sup> Ribeiro obtained this concession in 1896, bolstered no doubt by the years of knowledge his brother Silvio Ribeiro had collected with the help of quilombolas on the location of key gold deposits.<sup>89</sup> This is especially likely given that Itamoari was located in the territory under exploration. This made it possible for foreign capital to enter the region in earnest, with the concession holders traveling to London and showing off gold samples. The samples were said to be the best to have been collected from the Gurupí Valley up to that point, and the author noted the “excellent impression” made on investors who formed the syndicate.<sup>90</sup> By 1903 mineral samples and other specimens were already being sent to the United States, while an American prospector was active on the Maranhão side of the border developing mining capacity in tandem with the unspecified property owners.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Lisboa 46.

<sup>88</sup> “Diversas.” *A República* (Curitiba), 9 May 1901.

<sup>89</sup> Almeida 42.

<sup>90</sup> “Diversas.” *A República* (Curitiba), 9 May 1901.

<sup>91</sup> International Union of American Republics 119.

The land hunger in the general Gurupí region is also evidenced by conflicts among established landowners over boundaries. In the *Diário do Maranhão* one family published a statement of protest regarding “any occupation...[or] gold mining done on the aforementioned plot of land without the consent of the undersigned” on their plot of three square *léguas* (about eighteen kilometers).<sup>92</sup> It seems that their particular plot was on the eastern side of the border in the state of Maranhão near Carutapéra, and the family’s protest was filed from Turiaçu. The family had inherited the plot from the matriarch of the family Gertrudes Itosa Teixeira Callado.

In spite of these problems, the state government of Maranhão openly announced that it was soliciting proposals for mining exploration in Carutapéra and Turiaçu for a ninety-day period between July and October 1905, including from individuals outside of the state.<sup>93</sup> The stipulations included exploration rights covering up to 100 square kilometers as a part of the mining concession. Theoretically, the state of Maranhão would tax a percentage of 5% for the first decade, with a climbing scale further into the 50-year term of exploration. However, this aspect of state law fell short according to the accounts offered by various authors that there was a lack of enforcement with the result that contraband was widespread. This evidently included usufruct rights over the lands surrounding the mine.<sup>94</sup> In addition to these very generous terms, the Blanc affair demonstrated firmly that there was a certain drift in terms of mining concessions that could easily exceed the expansive legal limits afforded to various concessionaries, including those recounted in this chapter.

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<sup>92</sup> Teixeira Callado, Bento Camillo, et. al. “Terras do Gurupy.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 14 June 190. A *légua* generally denotes a unit of measure of either 6 or 7 kilometers, though it can vary. The Teixeira family was long established in Maranhão, but their inability to sufficiently attract capital perhaps made them more vulnerable to such encroachments.

<sup>93</sup> “Edital.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 1 June 1905.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*



## Conclusion: A New Type of Quilombo?

Debates over slavery in the provinces of Maranhão and Pará never reached the gulf of opinion which characterized the national contest over questions of abolition in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, but quilombos in northern Brazil were no less important than their southern counterparts in achieving a type of abolition before the hallowed day of 13 May 1888. Though quilombos were not unique to northern Brazil, fugitive slave communities in Pará and Maranhão achieved abolition of their own account. While they had functional relationships with political and economic nodes of power, they also represented a unique model of slave resistance.

In his study of the quilombo of Leblon in Rio de Janeiro on the eve of abolition, Eduardo Silva makes a distinction between the “traditional model of resistance, the *quilombo-rompimento*,” in which quilombos practiced a guerrilla-like politics of evasion and remained separate and hidden from the dominant society and the “new model of resistance” represented by the “abolitionist quilombo.” Quilombos of the latter type boasted “well-known leaders, proper citizens, with up-to-date civil documentation and, mainly, very well-articulated politically.” Having multiple commercial and personal points of contact with the broader society, they were a crucial part of the landscape of Brazilian society even if the space they occupied on the physical landscape was quite far-flung.<sup>95</sup>

In cases such as that of the famous quilombo Jabaquara in São Paulo’s port city of Santos, the actual lands occupied by quilombolas were provided by the abolitionist movement, and its leader Quintino da Lacerda could be considered an intermediary between the quilombo and the dominant class, in spite of having connections to labor and abolitionist figures.<sup>96</sup> The

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<sup>95</sup> Silva 2003a, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Machado 255.

relationship between Quintino and the owner of the lands on which the quilombo was established, Benjamin Fontana, was such that Quintino gave testimony in favor of his patron in numerous legal disputes between Fontana and other landowners.<sup>97</sup> Helena P.T. Machado has highlighted the role of quilombolas at Jabaquara in breaking a number of strikes among Santos dockworkers after abolition in addition to acting as “foot soldiers in the factional struggles that emerged in the city.”<sup>98</sup> Going from “slave rebels to strikebreakers” after abolition residents of the former quilombo “lost their bargaining power and were forced to exit the main political stage. They were thereby blocked from occupying the political, social, and work spaces that corresponded with the republican ideal of citizenship that began to emerge following 1889.”<sup>99</sup> In the case of the quilombo Leblon, a Portuguese merchant and bag manufacturer was a key ally and leader associated with the quilombo.<sup>100</sup> It was not uncommon for abolitionists to make social expeditions from the city to the Leblon.<sup>101</sup>

It seems clear to me that in piecing together the narrative of fugitive slave communities that survived or evaded repression in Maranhão and Pará, that neither of Silva’s designations truly fit in cases such as those of Camiranga and Itamoari. Few quilombos in Maranhão and Pará, especially not those associated with Agostinho de Sá Caldas, could be classified as abolitionist quilombos. While Agostinho and his comrades did benefit from the protection of a small number of patrons and interested parties such as Silvio Ribeiro, none of these loudly proclaimed

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<sup>97</sup> Machado 259.

<sup>98</sup> Machado 270.

<sup>99</sup> Machado 249.

<sup>100</sup> Silva 2003a, 13.

<sup>101</sup> Silva 2003a, 15-16.

abolitionist sentiments in their dealings with the quilombo. In fact, I have argued that, for a time, quilombolas along the Gurupí River had sufficient leverage through a strongly manifested territoriality in a difficult to navigate region and access to gold deposits that authorities in Maranhão and Pará did not make any significant moves to affect their capture. Instead, Agostinho exercised functions of political leadership *de facto* in a manner that was not proscribed even years after abolition. The dreaded transition from slave rebels to strikebreakers never transpired on the Gurupí River in spite of the commercial and political connections between the quilombolas and individuals who possessed political or economic influence in the region.

According to Machado, Quintino held on to power by appealing to the sensibilities of his elite patrons while harsh punishment to maintain control in Jabaquara. Machado unequivocally depicts Quintino as a front for elite interests who used his position to achieve economic and political success.<sup>102</sup> In his post-abolition career, he was appointed as an “inspector” for Jabaquara, awarded the title of “Major” for assisting to repel the 1893 Naval Revolt, and was elected to the Municipal Council of Santos in 1895.<sup>103</sup> Quintino’s ascension went hand in hand with the conversion of his comrades into wage laborers, though Machado is careful to point out that this transition was not complete and some residents of Jabaquara used legal tactics to defend the small landholdings that allowed them to maintain self-sufficiency.<sup>104</sup> In terms of administrative autonomy, Machado maintains that the absence of quilombolas from legal and

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<sup>102</sup> Machado 256.

<sup>103</sup> Silva 2003a, 13.

<sup>104</sup> Machado 266.

criminal records serves as an indication that Jabaquara did maintain a certain type of autonomy from the nearby city of Santos under Quintino's paternalistic hand.<sup>105</sup>

At first glance, there are a number of parallels between Jabaquara and the quilombos of Camiranga and Itamoari that should figure into subsequent discussions of the so-called "quilombo breach" identified by Helena Machado and Eduardo Silva. For one thing, there is a clearly identifiable leader in the legal documentation of the time and in subsequent histories: Agostinho de Sá Caldas along the Gurupí and Quintino da Lacerda at Jabaquara, respectively. Both benefitted from the intervention of outside patron figures with a strong commercial or political motivation.<sup>106</sup> It seems that both benefitted from this association in terms of personal wealth and reputation. Though Agostinho never held an elected position, the adulatory article published in the *Diário do Maranhão* in 1901 suggests a "man of gold" rather than an anti-capitalist rebel, *per sé*. Machado also astutely critiques the "romantic and traditionalist" tone used to cast quilombo leaders as organic monarchs, thereby undermining the capacity of fugitive slave communities to exercise democracy.<sup>107</sup> This brings to mind the way in which Agostinho is referred to as a "patriarch" over his comrades.<sup>108</sup>

The parallels are clearly abundant, but one never gets the sense that Agostinho was a cipher who purely represented outside interests. While Agostinho simultaneously maintained relationships with various outside actors, there were instances where these connections allowed Agostinho and his community to repel abusive would-be capitalists. This is best exemplified by

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<sup>105</sup> Machado 269.

<sup>106</sup> As I have argued above, these designations also apply to the officials of the Repartição Geral dos Telégrafos, who transformed geographical knowledge into concessions for mining exploration among themselves and certain family members (in the cases of Silvio Ribeiro and the Barão de Capanema).

<sup>107</sup> Machado 259.

<sup>108</sup> Veritas. "As minas de ouro." *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.

the case of Jules Blanc, who in the end was forced to leave the region under pressure from local officials in Viseu aligned with figures of national stature such as Silvio Ribeiro. Moreover, Agostinho's shrewd maneuvering effectively protected the internal autonomy of Itamoari and Camiranga—for a time, anyway. Indeed, the fact that a separate community of quilombo descendants emerged at Camiranga at all was the result of the patron-client relationship (and perhaps even friendship) between Agostinho and Silvio Ribeiro.

To borrow Wolf's parlance, there were two manifestations of the peasant coalition at work simultaneously during the 1880s: the horizontal coalition based on ethnic and class solidarity in the context of a slave society along with a shared connection to the land, and the vertical "manystranded coalitions of the patron-client type...[which] exploit the resources of society for their own special and highly segmentary benefit."<sup>109</sup> If Arrojado's Lisboa's account is any indication, the social structure of at least one of the communities of quilombo descendants was a type of gerontocracy with elements of collective participation and decision-making. Though not a black Soviet by any stretch of the imagination, quilombos along the Gurupí were also not abolitionist or neo-colonial fiefdoms.

This conclusion is also borne out by what we know of the nascent post-abolition economy of Camiranga and Itamoari. Basic economic activities were split between cultivation of subsistence crops, tobacco, and cassava and gold mining in the interior, with part of the year devoted to each activity.<sup>110</sup> Inasmuch as they might be gathered into a social class, they vaguely resemble that category of peasantry outlined by Eric Wolf in which the peasant, "in line with his consumption aspirations, [is compelled] to turn some special skills of his own into a part-time

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<sup>109</sup> Wolf 94.

<sup>110</sup> Lisboa 57.

occupation capable of earning him money or to integrate some specialty with his agricultural cycle.”<sup>111</sup>

There is little to indicate labor specialization among quilombolas beyond the role of lavrador and perhaps the special tasks required of guides, trackers, and the more experienced garimpeiros.<sup>112</sup> They cultivated for subsistence with certain crops such as tobacco being cultivated for the market in small amounts, but they also migrated seasonally to extract gold.<sup>113</sup> Even in this latter activity, they extracted gold of their own account in addition to doing so under the employ of outsiders to their communities. In this sense they defy classification as a rural proletariat. Though the testimonies given in the 1895-6 homicide trial point to residents of Camiranga performing labor for Guilherme Capanema, signs were not yet pointing to proletarianization. Though their economic activity resembled that of a peasant economy, the degree of social and ethnic cohesion and the fact of a certain ethnogenesis which took place after the flight of the community’s original residents from the quilombo Limoeiro make it impossible to simply label them as a black peasantry. Though the quilombos’ mining economies served as the basis for an increasing integration into the global economy, a large portion of their labor was invested in subsistence plots in the context of a social structure that could be seen as an *aldeia*.

While Eduardo Silva’s juxtaposition of a “quilombo breach” with his proposed model of an “abolitionist quilombo” is conceptually a useful starting point, it should be expanded to contain the many examples of quilombos that were neither Palmares nor Jabaquara. For one thing, the category of “abolitionist quilombo” can be frustratingly elastic. Machado uses the term

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<sup>111</sup> Wolf 46.

<sup>112</sup> A rare exception is Agostinho’s 1885 testimony in which he gives his profession as a bakery employee—perhaps his profession while still laboring under his former owner.

<sup>113</sup> Thus far I have seen very little in terms of historical documentation outlining the extent to which quilombolas participated in tobacco cultivation.

“quilombo” in relation to Jabaquara with serious reservations, while the quilombo Leblon seems to offer a more salutary example of the relationship between quilombolas and abolitionists. The traces of ethnogenesis comprising indigenous and black cultural elements that took place among quilombolas fleeing from western Maranhão as they settled along the Gurupí River suggest a completely different category altogether. The fact that Jules Blanc, wounded by his failure to establish an economic foothold in Pará and Maranhão, compared Agostinho to the Prophet Mohammad in 1888 is indicative that quilombos along the Gurupí River were perhaps not so easily incorporated into the dominant order. They were durable and autonomous formations with deep roots in the lands which they occupied, the most obvious manifestation of this territoriality being the already legendary skill possessed by quilombolas to work gold deposits.

Though these quilombos functioned in the context of patron-client relationships, such relationships facilitated further social and material reproduction within the space of the quilombo. I hesitate to label such formations in a totalizing fashion, but suffice it to say there is much more to be said about the quilombo breach before *and* after abolition. After all, the fate of Camiranga and Itamoari after 1888 was partially determined by the geographic spaces they occupied: difficult terrain rich in mineral resources, adjacent to numerous indigenous groups and challenging even for skilled navigators to handle. Spatiality must play a larger role in any “typography” of quilombos.

As later chapters will demonstrate, the historical memory of the quilombo and identity of quilombola which survived abolition continued to shape community life and relationships with the surrounding society. This is not to say, however, that a certain type of “neo-colonial quilombo” was never a possibility. Though gold production in Maranhão did not compare to well-established mineral producers such as Minas Gerais, it was certainly presented as a means

of bolstering civilization in the form of capital accumulation and immigration. The gold mines along the margins of the Gurupí, Turiaçu and Maracaçumé rivers could be invoked as a selling point for potential immigrants.<sup>114</sup> Arrojado Lisboa certainly had this end in mind as he concluded his survey of mining territory along the Gurupí. Though he spent time among quilombo descendants and recruited them to assist him in his expedition, Arrojado Lisboa envisioned an imminent whitening process:

“The well-placed European, with all of the comforts habitual to him, will acclimate easily to the Gurupí and, we are certain, will find, in little time, the climate to be delicious. The unimpeachable testimony of all of the travelers in the north is significant and to the recalcitrant spirits we recommend that beautiful pages of Coudreau, writing on the healthy climate of Cunany in [French] Guyana, and the sensible considerations that he makes about the acclimation of the white race in Amazônia, *also apply to the Gurupy.*”<sup>115</sup>

These observations suggest yet another facet to the “quilombo breach”—that of quilombos as potentially neo-colonial structures *within* the neo-colonial manifestation of Brazil as a nation-state. The next chapter will discuss quilombos in frontier areas of Brazil which took different trajectories from those established along the Gurupí River, including those which fit a neo-colonial dynamic.

This chapter reprints material I previously published in the *Journal of Latin American Geography* (Abreu 2018) of which I was the sole author.

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<sup>114</sup> Guia do Imigrante 8

<sup>115</sup> Arrojado Lisboa 39. The comparison between the two regions will be relevant to Chapter 3, where I discuss how a nucleus of Brazilian quilombolas in the contested territory between Brazil and French Guiana becomes a proposed hub of neocolonialism and European settlement. He also refers to famed French naturalist and geographer Henri Coudreau. Coudreau and his wife Otille carried out numerous expeditions throughout the Brazilian Amazon and on a number of occasions interacted with quilombo descendants.



#### **Chapter 4: Quilombo Power Along the Periphery–Western Pará and Amapá**

In the previous chapters I have argued that quilombos in western Maranhão and eastern Pará developed durable communities based on geographical knowledge and a shared resistance to slavery before abolition. Along the Gurupí River, these factors provided a basis for resistance to extractive capitalism before and after slavery. In this chapter I will examine other instances of quilombagem in areas of Pará further to the west of the Gurupí. By examining other communities of quilombo descendants in Greater Pará, I hope to highlight the processes by which such communities could secure, or fail to secure, their autonomy in the face of similar historical pressures.

Quilombos along the Maranhão-Pará border were not the only significant threat to the slaveocracy during the 1870s and 1880s. The existence of multiple concentrations of quilombolas around Pará demonstrated the precarious position of that province's landed elite. Along Brazil's border with French Guiana, along the Trombetas River region, and along the Tocantins River, quilombolas possessed enough strength to provoke mortal fear among slaveholders and public officials. These groups of fugitive slaves employed myriad tactics: fleeing to relatively remote physical locations that impeded easy discovery and exploration, presenting the threat of armed force to stave off local police and military expeditions, conducting trade with the infamous *regatões*, and even aligning with representatives of a foreign power in order to maintain a relative freedom.

The possibility for profound social transformation, however, never became a reality. I will use this chapter to explore the trajectories of quilombos in Pará, and the different outcomes they experienced, while also underscoring the diverse tactics of quilombos in Pará in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

## “Coizas da Epocha:” Quilombo Autonomy on the Tocantins River

Writer Ignacio Baptista de Moura refers to a quilombo formed near the Tocantins River south of the large Paraense city of Cametá in 1861 that resisted all armed expeditions against it and until 1888 “viveram por largo tempo em verdadeira communa republicana e com jurisdicção policial por elles investida,” but as of abolition “estão hoje, reduzidos a pacatos e simplorios lavradores, reconduzidos voluntariamente ao regimen legal do Pará.”<sup>1</sup> The quilombo Itapucú, also referred to simply as the quilombo of Cametá, was a well-known and long-established quilombo that during the 1870s figured among the most threatening concentrations of fugitive slaves in the Province of Pará along with quilombos near municipalities such as Óbidos, Muaná, and the provincial capital of Belém.<sup>2</sup>

By 1877 the quilombo was comprised of around three hundred people and growing, “escravos, desertores, réos de policia,” situated in the third and fourth districts of the city eighteen kilometers (three léguas) from Cametá proper on the left margin of the Tocantins River.<sup>3</sup> The strength of the quilombo was purported to be significant enough that slaveowners held their tongues even in moments when their own human “property” threatened them. Indeed, there was said to be no “lavrador ou proprietario, que não tenha já pago o tribute ao quilombo....”<sup>4</sup> In 1878 a petition published in the *Jornal do Pará* reputed to have over two

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<sup>1</sup> Moura 1910 84. Vicente Salles also cites Moura in his work *O Negro no Pará*.

<sup>2</sup> “Relatorio: com que o exm. sr. president da provincial, dr. Francisco Maria Correa de Sá e Benavides, entregou a administração da mesma ao exm. sr. dr. João Capistrano Bandeira de Mello Filho, em 18 de julho de 1876.” *Jornal do Pará* (Belém), 1 Aug. 1876. At this point quilombo activity along the Gurupí was not particularly pronounced.

<sup>3</sup> O amigo do povo. “Quilombo Itapucú.” *O Liberal* (Belém), 4 Aug. 1877.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

hundred signatures from individuals based in Cametá called for a crackdown on regatões—lifeblood of quilombolas around Cametá who had access to commodities of interest such as cacao, rubber, and Brazil nuts—through placing a steeper tax on their canoes and fly-by-night commercial houses (*casas commerciaes*) among other things.<sup>5</sup> These regatões, asserted the petition, set up shop far from population centers “em igarapé qualquer,” undercut law-abiding merchants based in said population centers, disobeyed municipal laws, and did business with quilombolas or perhaps were even quilombolas or army deserters themselves.

Expounding further on this point, the petition continues: “Em Cametá o commercio de fóra presta-se ainda a fornecer o quilombo de todo o necessario,” particularly after about ten in the evening when “escaped slaves and deserters from the quilombo of Tapucú shamelessly roam the district.”<sup>6</sup> While assuring readers that some merchants only do business with quilombos under duress, others act as informants to the quilombos out of self-interest and give them ample notice of what happens in the city.<sup>7</sup> But as was the case of quilombos along the Gurupí, access to regatões was only part of the equation.

In the month of May 1878, by which time the perceived threat of the quilombo Itapucú was well publicized, a group of thirty quilombolas from said settlement—described as a *diligencia*, the same term used to describe the groups that traditionally carried out armed expeditions *against* quilombolas—presented themselves before the subdelegado of Cametá’s third district, delivering into his custody one of their comrades who had allegedly committed

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<sup>5</sup> José Calandrini d’Azevedo, et. al. “Brigue barca *Aprendiz Marinheiro*.” *Jornal do Pará* (Belém), 19 Feb. 1878.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

murder.<sup>8</sup> The newspaper reporting the story, stalwart conservative publication *A Constituição*, expressed astonishment that the quilombolas felt confident enough to do this. According to this reasoning, the Subdelegado would not have accepted the prisoner unless he considered the quilombolas to be his “agentes subalternos.” The newspaper sarcastically asked whether statements were taken on that occasion or whether the “*cidadões* de quilombo” would be notified to come back later to give their testimonies.<sup>9</sup> The newspaper continued, “we wouldn’t be shocked if they presented themselves asking for food, munitions, or whatever other object that they might need,” concluding with the lament that such occurrences were “coizas da epocha.”

Though it comes in a sarcastic fashion, the newspaper acknowledges that their show of strength confirmed them as citizens in a certain way, capable of making even greater demands upon Cameté officials. Though men of property had been clamoring for punitive actions, the strength and organization of the quilombo Itapucú remained a salient political fact even as slavery was gradually coming to an end.

In another infamous encounter which occurred in 1880, a quilombola by the name of Figa shot his cousin Cordolino in the ribs. Figa was “imprisoned” by his fellow quilombolas and delivered to Cameté authorities along with his fatally wounded cousin.<sup>10</sup> In fact, it was a detachment of fourteen quilombolas that delivered them, while armed, to an official post and returned to the quilombo “em santa paz.”<sup>11</sup> This demonstrates a certain premeditation along with

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<sup>8</sup> “Gazetikka.” *A Constituição* (Belém), 11 May 1878.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* Of course this was meant as outraged humor, but this was exactly what happened in the investigation carried out against Jules Blanc during the 1880s in Viseu and Turiaçu. Another interesting fact, the Delegado of the third police district had some land claims along the igarapé Itapucú, suggesting a relationship similar to that of police officials in Viseu during the 1880s. (*Estado do Pará* Nov. 11 1912).

<sup>10</sup> “Quilombo de Cameté.” *O Liberal* (Belém), 15 Dec. 1880.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

a willingness to cede certain functions to the existing government—crime and punishment in this case. It is difficult to determine the nature of the moral universe of the particular quilombolas of Itapucú, but it is clear that a fairly large number were willing to punish certain infractions with exclusion. In this course of action, we can see both a practical concession to authority and a radical sense of solidarity, i.e. that a fellow quilombola who took a life was unfit to remain within the quilombo and would be returned to a life of captivity.

Even if the transfer of prisoners to Cametá police seemed like rather orderly conduct on the part of quilombolas, *A Constituição* published a letter in 1881 warning of a path towards “a true state of anarchy” caused by quilombolas freely traveling “to the mocambo to enjoy their liberty at the expense of their masters...”<sup>12</sup> According to the correspondent, all demands for the government to act were marginalized, because they had “nothing to do with elections.” The author then cites “various assassination attempts” as proof that the lack of enforcement “inspires the desordeiros and compels them to practice acts that the police cannot allow without correction to prevent their reproduction.”<sup>13</sup>

In a debate held in the Chamber of Deputies on February 15 1882, Imperial Deputy Guilherme Francisco Cruz directed a formal complaint to the Provincial President of Pará citing the existence of “a gathering of people living outside the law, every species of criminal, military deserters and escaped slaves...such is the daring of these criminals, whose number is greater than one thousand, that they established for themselves a political constitution, or to put it another way, a criminal code, in virtue of which, it is only a crime among them to steal or kill.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Cametá.” *A Constituição* (Belém), 9 Aug. 1881.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> “Camara dos srs. Deputados: Sessão em 15 de Fevereiro.” *A Constituição* (Belém), 10

As the quilombo grew ever larger, Cruz perceived the existence of the very internal code of conduct or “constitution” which Baptista de Moura later saw fit to label as an egalitarian republican commune.

In a discourse given by Cruz decrying the lack of armed expeditions against quilombos, he cites a report from the Ministro de Justiça in 1883 that estimated the population of the quilombo Itapucú at about six-hundred, which would mean that the size of Itapucú doubled over a period of six years. Much as the quilombolas at Itamoari and Camiranga, they conducted business with merchants based out of Cametá.<sup>15</sup> The numbers and persistence of the quilombolas at Itapucú led Cruz to conjure up a nightmare scenario in which “these criminals could take possession of Cametá whenever they would like with minimal effort.” These occurrences only inflated as they were utilized as a partisan complaint in the following years, with conservatives bitterly recalling the use of troops to swing the election to liberals in Cametá rather than suppress the quilombo, said to count “thousands” of *pretos fugidos*.<sup>16</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain how or if this intractable source of slave rebellion came to resemble the pacific group of ex-slaves described by Baptista de Moura. The territory comprising at least part of the quilombo in Cametá’s southern districts were incorporated into the povoado of Juaba. At this point it becomes difficult to ascertain what role the former quilombolas might have played in local politics. Other than the recollections of Baptista de Moura, there is little

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March 1882. The “one thousand” members of the quilombo were said to be “negros” and “escravos fugidos.”

<sup>15</sup> “Parlamento Nacional.” *A Constituição* (Belém), 15 July 1885.

<sup>16</sup> Um cametaense. “Ainda os factos prostituidos pelo órgão liberal.” *A Constituição* (Belém), 18 July 1886.

indication of the presence of a community of former quilombolas apart from the attention given to Afro-Brazilian folklore of Cametaense origin at a much later date.<sup>17</sup>

Though quilombos were widespread in Pará and Maranhão, to say nothing of the rest of late-imperial Brazil, perhaps many such as Itapucú simply reverted to being small rural towns. Perhaps such quilombos were indeed “coisas de época.” Nevertheless, the quilombo Itapucú mounted a serious challenge to local authority in Cametá without having the geographic and economic benefits enjoyed by Agostinho and his comrades along the Gurupí. Perhaps the difference was that of leadership and not one of numbers or relative strength. Though the large contingent of quilombolas successfully resisted capture, there is no mention of the territoriality or a cultural identification with the land. Much further west, another group of quilombolas mounted a challenge of such proportions that it not only undermined slavery on a local basis, but also undermined Brazil’s sovereignty along the nation’s border with France.

### **Cunani River: Power on the Periphery**

Though the presence of fugitive slaves was a long established fact of Brazil’s international borders, newspapers and Brazilian politicians increasingly took interest in the happenings along the Cunani River near Brazil’s border with French Guiana in the 1880s, where Brazilian authorities and journalists indignantly accused the French of providing protection to a “quilombo” composed of runaway slaves from Pará.<sup>18</sup> The River was on the Brazilian side of the international border between the Empire and French Guiana, an area that proved to be a constant

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<sup>17</sup> “Músicas e danças populares voltam em Cametá.” *O Liberal* (Belém), 17 February 1989.

Of the various folkloric manifestations mentioned in the article, the festival of *Bambaê do Rosário* is specifically mentioned as the legacy of quilombolas in Juaba.

<sup>18</sup> “Os interesses da Amazônia.” *Diário de Pernambuco* (Recife), 6 February 1884.

source of tension between the two nations, with the total area under dispute comprising about one-hundred thousand square miles.<sup>19</sup> Susanna Hecht has argued that the abolition of slavery in French Guiana decades before served to bolster the flow of runaway slaves from various regions of Brazil to the contested region bordering French Guiana, referred to as the *contestado* because neither sovereign power could fully exercise its authority there.<sup>20</sup>

The Brazilian press writhed in outrage over the idea that the French would protect “fugitive slaves and criminals” in all defiance of the Brazilian mission for Amazonia “to be known to the civilized world for the wealth of its products.”<sup>21</sup> In particular, extractive industries along the Cunani promised to deliver riches for whichever nation could effectively control the river or exercise its influence in the area. Though not formally a part of France or French Guiana, the quilombo of “Coanany” was said to actively fly the French flag, with a government consisting of a French liason, locals who served as police while wearing the uniform of the French *gendarmes*, and a doctor provided free of charge by French authorities among other posts.<sup>22</sup>

The leader, “o preto Trajano,” had taken the rank of captain and dressed in a military uniform complete with braids. In this capacity, the article accused Trajano of intimidating Brazilian citizens such as merchant Joaquim de Magalhães by attempting to force him to end his business early on a particular day in August 1883. Having failed to get his point across, Trajano levied a steep fine on the clerk and expropriated his merchandise in lieu of payment.<sup>23</sup> Stories

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<sup>19</sup> “France and Brazil.” *The Rio News* (Rio de Janeiro), 25 June 1895.

<sup>20</sup> Hecht 129 .

<sup>21</sup> “Os interesses da Amazônia.” *Diario de Pernambuco* (Recife), 6 February 1884.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> “Os interesses da Amazônia.” *Diario de Pernambuco* (Recife), 6 February 1884.



circulated of similar treatment befalling merchants Daniel Ferreira, whose business was robbed of merchandise and cash, and Carlos de Vasconcellos, whose commercial establishment was robbed numerous times and its owner placed in prison at the behest of the “então chefe do Macambo.”<sup>24</sup> The Barão de Marajó claimed that Trajano practiced this in general terms during the 1880s, “mistreating” merchants and forcefully extorting them, thus making the contested territory a more difficult climate for business transactions—at least for Brazilians.<sup>25</sup>

Many publications in 1884 provided a list of civil and military officials representing this Gallicized quilombo, wherein one can see that many key posts such as *capitão*, *anspeçada* (private first class), mayor (*maire*), *fiscal*, *juiz de paz*, and *capitão do porto* were all held by individuals confirmed as runaway slaves from particular owners based in Pará.<sup>26</sup> There were claims that various “creoulos” and other fugitive slaves had entered Cunani on a stolen canoe the same day that Trajano had returned from Cayenne with a doctor provided by authorities in French Guiana.<sup>27</sup> A letter was sent to the owner of the canoe, Manoel de Carvalho Filho, promising to return it in exchange for the sum of 100 *mil-reis*.<sup>28</sup> The letter, signed by Pedro Antonio de Souza and Emilio Bazini and adorned with an outdated stamp from the French

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<sup>24</sup> “Pará.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 13 Aug 1895.

<sup>25</sup> Barão de Marajó. “O Conflicto do Amapá e as Considerações Dadas pelo Governo Francez.” *Gazeta de Noticias* (Rio de Janeiro), 29 September 1895.

<sup>26</sup> “Os francezes no Amazonas.” *O Despertador* (Rio de Janeiro?), 23 February 1884. One individual named as *maire*, Pedro de Souza, is also mentioned in the Comissão de Limites documents as one of the captains, “strongly constituted.” “No one blinks” when Pedro de Souza’s presence was made know to the village.

<sup>27</sup> “Questão do Amapá.” *Correio Paulistano* (São Paulo), 23 February 1884.

<sup>28</sup> “Questão do Amapá.” *Diário de Pernambuco* (Recife), 6 Feb. 1884.

Republic, refers to a “Communa de Coanany hoje francez.”<sup>29</sup> Under the aegis of French influence, it seemed that the leaders of Cunani were taking aim at propertied Brazilians.

In 1858 Trajano fled from slavery in Vigia, a town northeast of Belém. He eventually fell in with quilombolas who already had a presence along the Cunani River. In fact, that was the same year that quilombolas in the contested territory had successfully repelled a military expedition sent from Pará.<sup>30</sup> Once he was installed in the Cunani, Trajano was said to make a sufficiently strong impression on the governor of French Guiana that he was appointed “gouverneur de Counany” by the latter though it is not clear from this account how contact was first made between the two parties.<sup>31</sup> The Barão de Marajó attributed Trajano’s influence among quilombolas to the “ill will he demonstrated towards whites and mulatos.”<sup>32</sup> This would be an interesting starting point to interrogate how ethnic solidarity functioned among quilombolas in the contestado, but the Barão de Marajó’s observation must be tempered by the fact of French influence among those same quilombolas.

Certain newspapers such as *O Liberal* took a fairly circumspect approach regarding the role of the French, expressing faith that the French government would not betray its high ideals in order to support such an affront to Brazilian sovereignty, mirroring the cautious approach of the Imperial government.<sup>33</sup> Other publications expressed some doubt about the claim that

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Coudreau 1887, 232.

<sup>31</sup> “Derniers Télégrammes.” *L’Etoile du Sud* (Rio de Janeiro), 8 June 1895.

<sup>32</sup> Barão de Marajó. “O Conflictio do Amapá e as Considerações Dadas pelo Governo Francez.” *Gazeta de Noticias* (Rio de Janeiro), 29 September 1895.

<sup>33</sup> “Os francezes no Amazonas.” *O Despertador* (Rio de Janeiro?), 23 February 1884.

Trajano actually received an officer's uniform on behalf of the French Republic.<sup>34</sup> The assembly of a *Comissão de Limites* to study the border problem led by French naturalist Henri Coudreau, who as we will see later in this chapter led numerous scientific expeditions in Brazilian territory inhabited by quilombolas, eased some tensions. But there was still a great deal of suspicion expressed by the Brazilian press. The *Jornal de Recife* wondered whether Coudreau should be dispatched to Alsace-Lorraine rather than the border with Brazil, referencing France's humiliating 1871 military defeat and territorial loss during the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>35</sup>

Coudreau was not an insignificant figure in the international row over the contestado. The Frenchman made a career as a geographer of Brazil's frontier and border regions, including a lengthy expedition to the contestado between 1883 and 1885. In the process, he formed relationships with quilombolas residing in Cunani both during and after his expedition. Coudreau observed of the Cunani that much of its demographic composition reflected the concentration of quilombolas: "Counani, black, mulatto, and zambo, slaves or the children of slaves." At the same time, there was also a smaller group of about 70 quilombolas along the Cassiporé River, where "everything is black."<sup>36</sup>

The French geographer most certainly supported France's claims to the disputed territory, but Coudreau also emphasizes the desire for quilombolas such as the abovementioned Raymundo Macedo (transcribed as "Raymond de Macede"), "who has already affirmed his French sentiments to me with a rare energy."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Macedo had apparently gone so far as to gather

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<sup>34</sup> "Questão do Amapá." *Correio Paulistano* (São Paulo), 23 February 1884.

<sup>35</sup> "A missão Coudreau e o territorio contestado." *Jornal do Recife* (Recife), 29 May 1884.

<sup>36</sup> Coudreau 1887, 397. Coudreau uses the term *negrè*, which carries a much harsher connotation.

<sup>37</sup> Coudreau 1887, xvi. Macedo, of course, was one of the individuals. The original text is as follows: "qui avait déjà affirmé devant moi ses sentiments français avec une rare énergie."

other residents of the region along the Cunani for the purpose of petitioning the governor of Cayenne to send French administrators in June 1883.<sup>38</sup> With thirty out of forty “heads of family” signing said petition, Coudreau reflected proudly on having been the “involuntary cause” of this expression of French nationalism among a group that included a significant number of Brazilian-born quilombolas.<sup>39</sup> While it is certainly possible to debate the degree, it is difficult to deny the strong affiliation between the quilombolas and French proxies.

Trajano, “le premier capitaine,” arrived a few weeks into Coudreau’s stay, also demonstrating enthusiasm for the petition and tasking himself with getting signatures from the remaining family heads.<sup>40</sup> Both Trajano and Raymundo continually asked Coudreau to intercede on their behalf to set up a meeting with the Governor of Cayenne.<sup>41</sup> In spite of what seems like a mutual enthusiasm between the explorer and the residents of the Cunani, Coudreau’s presentation of a Gallic utopia with scenic Amazonian vistas in the latter part of his *La France Equinoxiale* was simply build-up to his thesis that the savannas of the contestado were “made” for European colonization.<sup>42</sup>

All told, it seems that Cunani was governed by a triumvirate of quilombolas. The third member of the triumvirate—Pedro Antonio de Souza—was a young quilombola from Vigia with remarkable intelligence and an infectious energy, though not capable of reading or writing.<sup>43</sup> He

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* This was the incident referred to in the Comissão de Limites documents as the plebiscite conducted without any notice to the French or the Brazilians.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Coudreau 1887, xviii.

<sup>41</sup> Coudreau 1887, xix.

<sup>42</sup> Coudreau 1887, 407.

<sup>43</sup> *Le Territoire Contesté (Copy)*, August 1887, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 376, Ofícios sobre questão de limites 1880-1887, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém: 11. The citations below will use the pagination of the report.

is described as commanding great respect among his “co-captains,” often maintaining order in his own right. Indeed, the report states that the other two captains (Trajano and Raymundo) wouldn’t go against his orders.<sup>44</sup>

Further describing the role of the general population in the governance of Cunani, a report produced by the Comissão noted that whichever grievances were not directly resolved “par le peuple,” were adjudicated by authorities in Pará or Cayenne depending on whether the person involved was Brazilian or French.<sup>45</sup> If the latter was true, it would bear some similarity to the way in which quilombolas in Cametá rendered those guilty of extraordinary crimes to the police in that *município*.

While his enthusiasm for the climate and environment of the Cunani was boundless, Coudreau expressed a more cautious view with regards to the ad hoc political structure of Cunani. It was not a “republic according to the heart of [Russian anarchist Peter] Kropotkin,” but then again, the French and Brazilian authorities had not governed at all.<sup>46</sup> Coudreau was nonetheless able to sing the praises of the landscape as something evocative of Rousseau and the social contract.<sup>47</sup>

Their apparent embrace of French culture and customs aside, Coudreau’s view seems to be that the quilombolas were essentially holding the Cunani in trust for later European colonization and administration. Perhaps Coudreau thought of the “captains,” Trajano and

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Le Territoire Contesté (Copy)*, August 1887, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Coudreau 1887, 394-395.

<sup>47</sup> Coudreau 1887, 395. The original quote is as follows: “Rousseau, que as inventé le *Contrat*, et toi.”

Raymundo, as a nucleus for a reliable comprador class. While the latter is merely speculation, it was certainly true that individuals such as Trajano were at the forefront of some degree of social differentiation within their community. At the time of Coudreau's visit, Cunani was a small village of about three hundred people along the river of the same name.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to everyone else in the village, Trajano occupied a well-appointed house with floors.<sup>49</sup> The report from the French delegate to the Comissão de Limites mentions a "monsieur [Trajano] Bento owner of prairie cattle...."<sup>50</sup> And if Coudreau is to be believed, Trajano also had a supply of absinthe and perhaps other luxury goods.<sup>51</sup> He is also mentioned as one of the main merchants in the regular commerce between the contestado, Cayenne, and certain cities in Pará such as Vigia.<sup>52</sup>

Though Coudreau's conclusions about the Cunani were objectionable for Brazilian politicians eager to exercise their authority over the contested territory, they also provided encouragement to individuals such as Arrojado Lisboa who advocated the European colonization of the Gurupí River and specifically referenced Coudreau in making such appeals.<sup>53</sup> In a way, Coudreau's expedition was a template for a neocolonialism in territories occupied by quilombolas on the eve of abolition. Despite the undeniable presence of quilombolas in Cunani, Coudreau could see them giving way to an inevitable and beneficial European migration. As

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<sup>48</sup> Coudreau 1887, 411. On page 397 of *La France Equinoxiale* Coudreau also counts the village of Amapá as one of the quilombos in the contestado, but says little about quilombolas in Cassipore or Amapá.

<sup>49</sup> Coudreau 1887, 412

<sup>50</sup> *Le Territoire Contesté* (Copy), August 1887, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Coudreau 1887, 412. While Coudreau only mentions Trajano's name in relation to absinthe, he goes on to catalog a variety of other luxury goods to be found in Cunani such as beer, liquor, chocolate, tobacco, etc.

<sup>52</sup> Coudreau 1887, 414.

<sup>53</sup> Lisboa 39.

Coudreau put it elsewhere when referring to the contestado: “The air is dry, the climate healthy, white labor possible.”<sup>54</sup> Though such schemes were never realized, the Governor of French Guiana approved the allocation of prisoner labor to a private citizen, M. Conrad, for transporting unspecified industrial equipment to Cunani. Governor Charvein cites the perilous state of industry and agriculture, need for immigration, and lack of labor power as justifications for Order 374.<sup>55</sup>

The sense of quilombo territoriality that had subverted the efforts of Colônia Prado did not seem to be matched in the case of the Cunani. Perhaps what quilombolas demonstrated was the opposite of territoriality, instead constructing “a history of the border...[that] actually gave the oppressed a degree of control over their own destinies,” taking advantage of the fluidity of the contestado as runaway slaves in Texas had done by crossing the border into Mexico.<sup>56</sup> The “bordered lands” of the Cunani did not necessarily offer an ideal place for establishing the type of territoriality that had taken root among different groups of quilombolas along the Gurupí and Trombetas rivers, but those who fled there had access to a certain mobility. One of the most prominent examples of this type of situational allegiance to nation-states among runaway slaves was the U.S. War of Independence, where the approach of the British encouraged the defection of runaway slaves belonging to patriot slaveholders as well as the enlistment of enslaved men willing to fight for the British in order to obtain their freedom after the conflict.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Coudreau 1890, 147. Part of the chapter is dedicated to advocating for a French colony in Amazonia.

<sup>55</sup> Bulletin Officiel de la Guyane Française 1894, 169.

<sup>56</sup> Nichols 6.

<sup>57</sup> Jennison 46-47.

Coudreau's push for French influence and migration was certainly more than national pride. The report from the Comissão de Limites does not fail to mention the wealth of cocoa, wood, and fish in the area surrounding the village, with fertile lands producing sugar, vegetables, and coffee in abundance.<sup>58</sup> Heart of Kropotkin or no, there were very tangible motives for facilitating contacts between Cunani and Cayenne. At any rate, this was not Coudreau's last excursion in quilombo territory. Until his death in 1899, Coudreau continued to explore the far-flung corners of Brazil, becoming one of the foremost chroniclers of Brazil's communities of quilombolas at the turn of century.

Brazilian authorities continued to worry about French influence, but new players complicated the situation further. A small group of European expatriates and adventurers attempted to establish a separatist republic in the contestado which would have comprised of territory between the town of Oiapoque and the headwaters of the Araguari River—a substantial portion of the present-day state of Amapá—which in a later incarnation would also claim sovereignty over the southern reaches of present-day Suriname and Guyana.<sup>59</sup> This filibuster republic was referred to as the Republic of Cunani and later as the Independent Republic of Guiana.

There were firm ties between those who eventually assumed leadership of the ephemeral and oft-mocked Republic—French intellectual Jules Gros and Swiss nationals Paul Quartier and Jean Guignes—and those who were leaders among the quilombolas at Cunani, particularly Trajano.<sup>60</sup> Quartier went so far as to marry the Raymundo de Macedo's daughter in order to

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<sup>58</sup> *Le Territoire Contesté* (Copy), August 1887, 16.

<sup>59</sup> “Vêr, Ouvir, e Contar.” *Jornal do Comercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 17 August 1886. Also see p.413 of *Conquistadores et Roitelets* which includes a reproduced map of the so-called Republic.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* Trajano's name was frequently transcribed as “Trajane” or “Trajan.” For the sake of clarity I will use the Lusophone version of “Trajano.”



cement the alliance between the adventurers and the quilombolas.<sup>61</sup> The apparent goal of these explorers was to exploit an independent territory in the Brazilian Amazon roughly equivalent to the size of France.<sup>62</sup> The original declaration of the Cunani Republic was signed by Trajano and included proposals to adopt French laws and the French language in spite of the Republic being nominally independent of both France and Brazil.<sup>63</sup>

Writing from the Câmara Municipal, an official from Macapá raised alarms about the proclamation of the Cunani Republic, the arrest of a resident named “Raimundo” for having hoisted a Brazilian flag in front of his property, and the presence of the dreaded French clergymen, who by virtue of carrying out their regular duties of hearing confessions, officiating weddings, and performing baptisms were turning residents into *de facto* French subjects.<sup>64</sup>

Brazilian merchant Joaquim Severino Netto, a Brazilian from Vigia who had established himself as a merchant in Amapá, affirmed that though Cayenne and the French clergy were not as strong in Amapá as some had claimed, the Republic of Cunani was an attempt to exercise French control over Brazilian territory, and that French clergymen were at least active in Amapá.<sup>65</sup> According to his testimony, he felt like he was treated like a foreigner. Though Netto concedes that most of the residents of the towns of Amapá and Cunani were Brazilian, they “live outside of the law, for a lack of authorities and a legal regime,” and could not really be thought

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<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *cit. in Sarney Pronunciamento 12/12/2000.*

<sup>64</sup> Procopio Antonio Rolla Sobrinho to João Antonio de Araújo Freitas Henriques, 29 Oct. 1886, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 376, Ofícios sobre questão de limites 1880-1887, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém.

<sup>65</sup> Testimony of Joaquim Severino Netto, 19 November 1886, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 376, Ofícios sobre questão de limites 1880-1887, Arquivo Público do Estado do Pará (APEP), Belém.

of as Brazilian subjects in the same way that Netto likely considered himself to be.<sup>66</sup> Asked about the general feeling regarding citizenship among residents of Cunani, Netto responded that they vastly preferred to be incorporated into French Guiana because they were “deserters, slaves, and escaped criminals” from elsewhere. Residents of the village of Amapá apparently did not feel the same way, something which might be attributable to the number of quilombolas in Cunani as opposed to Amapá.<sup>67</sup>

When the first Republic of Cunani was declared in 1887, Trajano signed the declaration in his capacity as “Captain in Chief of Counani.”<sup>68</sup> A later account asserts that Trajano’s signature was not accepted when this declaration was taken to the Mayor of Cayenne on the grounds that he was not a French citizen.<sup>69</sup> In excerpts from an interview given by Trajano to a member of the Société de Géographie Commerciale de Paris, the former quilombola claims that the leaders of the so-called Republic essentially forced the complicity of leaders such as Trajano at the barrel of a gun.<sup>70</sup> In this way, Trajano was treated as a French representative but not a French citizen, and thus found himself caught between the Brazilians, the French, and the “kinglets” claiming to govern Cunani as a Republic.

By Summer 1887 this volatile situation was increasingly brought to the attention of the Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros by the Provincial President of Pará, João Antônio de Araújo Freitas Henriques, who described it as “a project on the part of some French citizens to

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Terrage 416.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Terrage 417.

establish a republic in the town of Cunani at the mouth of the river of the same name.”<sup>71</sup> It is interesting to ponder the significance of the blanket use of the term “French citizens.”<sup>72</sup> Was the governor also including the former quilombolas who had aligned with the French? In escaping from slavery and supporting other foreign powers, had Trajano and others begrudgingly won recognition as foreign citizens from Pará authorities? Quilombola identity in terms of nation-state, therefore, was fluid and situational rather than fixed as far as Cunani was concerned.

Brazil’s Foreign Minister, the Barão de Cotegipe, advised a cautious approach in everything from the presence of French clergy to the alleged arrest of that resident of the Cunani who flew the Brazilian flag. The Barão seemed to give the benefit of the doubt to the French as far as the influence they were suspected to exercise in the Cunani of their own account or through the Republic of Cunani.<sup>73</sup> But there was concern over a possible upset in the balance of power. Approval for the Republic allegedly came from a plebiscite, which France and Brazil construed as a sort of provocation.<sup>74</sup> In contrast to Brazil’s political system, Cunani’s residents voted in the plebiscite despite not being able to sign their names (using crosses to indicate a signature instead.)

As mentioned previously, French citizen and geographer Henri Coudreau fomented his own plebiscite in 1883 upon visiting Cunani. He did this without consulting France *or* Brazil, but

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<sup>71</sup> Ofício 4448, 13 July 1887. Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 1908, Minutas de Ofícios ao Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, APEP, Belém.

<sup>72</sup> There is also the fact that most residents of Cunani were Brazilian-born by most accounts.

<sup>73</sup> Barão de Cotegipe to the President of the Province of Grão-Para, 12 November 1886. (the name of the province is given as Grão Pará.)

<sup>74</sup> Ofício 4448, 13 July 1887. Secretária do Governo, Caixa 1908, Minutas de Ofícios ao Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, APEP, Belém. In the original text, the verb *provocar* is used and translated loosely here as *agitate*.

the effort to firmly align Cunani with authorities in Cayenne did not succeed.<sup>75</sup> This led Pará's president to express doubts about Coudreau, whose expeditions through the contestado "could be seen as a scientific expedition without the least political character, but on the other hand it is evident that it is hanging onto an attempt to create a republic on the Cunani."<sup>76</sup> This was seemingly unfounded, as Coudreau had expressed elsewhere his desire to see a diplomatic resolution to the problem of the contestado rather than leave the path open for adventurers.<sup>77</sup>

In spite of the relationship between quilombolas and the leaders of the Republic of Cunani, one cannot go quite so far as to argue that the so-called Republic of Cunani simply represented the quilombo becoming a breakaway state seeking international recognition, as Hecht does.<sup>78</sup> Though the context of this relationship—a breakaway republic of Europeans operating from Paris in tandem with local quilombolas—should be a matter of great interest to historians, it was little more than a running joke to observers after 1887. When this separatist tendency emerged once again in the first years of the twentieth century under the leadership of filibusterer Adolphe Brezet, *The Brazilian Review* dismissed the episode as "too silly and [one which] scarcely claims notice," especially since neither attempt to create a republic in the area ever succeeded in gaining diplomatic recognition from any other nation.<sup>79</sup> And it is unclear what role quilombolas played in the administration of the Republic itself, even if they seemingly

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<sup>75</sup> Le Territoire Contesté (copy), 19.

<sup>76</sup> Ofício 5256, 7 September 1887. Secretária do Governo, Caixa 1908, Minutas de Ofícios ao Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, APEP, Belém. Coudreau's position, best expressed in his works *La France Equinoxiale* and *Les Français en Amazonie*, was strongly in favor of French immigration and French influence. While he never gave his direct endorsement of the Cunani Republic, he never denounced it in certain terms.

<sup>77</sup> Coudreau 1890, 151.

<sup>78</sup> Hecht 129.

<sup>79</sup> "Notes." *The Brazilian Review* (Rio de Janeiro), 13 June 1905.

offered some type of support. There is much more evidence to support a connection between the quilombolas and authorities in Cayenne.

Trajano did frequently travel to Cayenne and had regular correspondence with authorities in French Guiana. The *Revue économique française* reported news that Trajano traveled to Cayenne to appeal for the end of the French blockade of the Contestado and for the French to stop ignoring “a country French at heart.”<sup>80</sup> Having performed French citizenship, Trajano seemingly tried to appeal to the French government in a way he never could have done as an enslaved person in his country of birth. Trajano was also paid 150 French francs by the Governor of Cayenne to lead a mission to explore the coastal area of the contestado on the ship *l’Oyapock*. The brief text of the order does confer some respect on Trajano, “given the exceptional nature of the mission entrusted to the captain.” The order also exempts his mission from any fees.<sup>81</sup>

Trajano maintained a close relationship with Coudreau as well. When the latter returned to the contestado, the two met with elation in Cayenne, Trajano greeting the Frenchman “as his natural protector.”<sup>82</sup> Parties representing French interests established strong connections in the contestado, but this would not always be so. An increased Brazilian presence pushed the situation towards armed conflict during the 1890s, and in the process generated splintering narratives centered around Trajano’s position in the Cunani.

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<sup>80</sup> “Correspondance.” *Revue économique française* (Paris), May 1890.

<sup>81</sup> *Bulletin officiel de la Guyane française* 1892, 430.

<sup>82</sup> Coudreau 1893, 264.

## Contested Lands, Contested Narratives

Tensions continued to simmer as Brazil transitioned from empire to republic. The circumstances of this odd game of diplomatic shuttlecock between France and Brazil limited the authority of each power within the contested zone. This check on the capacity of the Brazilian state, combined with the desire to facilitate potential gold mining wealth under Brazilian control, provided an opening for Brazilian adventurers to increase their presence in the contestado. In 1894 Paraense explorer Francisco Xavier da Veiga Cabral filled the role of an authority figure ostensibly representing Brazil:

Veiga Cabral having arrived with the goal of exploring the mines, it is understood that it is necessary to organize a local Government to maintain and respect the reciprocal rights of the existing citizens there, it is resolved by agreement of some companheiros to organize the government of Counany, of which [Veiga Cabral] was acclaimed the leader.<sup>83</sup>

Trajano allegedly reaffirmed his Brazilian nationality, recognizing Veiga Cabral's authority and consequently "vivendo os dous nas melhores relações possíveis," at least according to the Brazilian narrative.<sup>84</sup> This "understanding" satisfied both commercial and geopolitical ends. Veiga Cabral confirms that his original purpose in traveling to Amapá was to profit from the recent discovery of gold along the Calçoene River, bringing associates and 20000 *reís* in merchandise to set up operations in 1894.<sup>85</sup> For his part, Trajano maintained his own position and that of his community amid a diplomatic back and forth, though this would be shattered by a major armed skirmish between Veiga Cabral's forces and French troops in 1895.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Francisco Xavier Veiga Cabral. "Questão da Guyana." *O Pharol* (Juiz de Fora), 25 October 1895.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

After his arrival, Veiga Cabral involved himself in the task of constituting a local government for the neutral territory in the village of Amapá in the northeastern part of the territory, with the apparent consensus favoring the familiar model of a “triumvirate” consisting of Brazilians including Manoel Gonçalves Tocantins, who had extensive knowledge of the region but could not accept the position. Veiga Cabral took the place of Tocantins, joining the Triumvirate himself.<sup>87</sup> One of the substitutes (*supplentes*) for the triumvirate was Manoel Joaquim Ferreira, a freeman that newspapers had identified as one of the *praças* for the quilombo that allegedly bore the uniforms of French gendarmes.<sup>88</sup> Perhaps quilombola influence carried over somewhat even in the face of an eventual return to Brazilian control. On the other hand, the fact of abolition made such recognition easier on the part of Veiga Cabral.

Though individuals connected to the quilombo had a nominal role in this new triumvirate, Veiga Cabral was clearly shifting the area back into the Brazilian orbit by blocking the entry of individuals from French Guiana, particularly “creoulos” and “negros.”<sup>89</sup> This was a major about face for a village that entertained good relations with Cayenne and other individuals connected to the French.

In light of increased tensions with French forces, who were transporting laborers from French Guiana to the mines and mapping the contested territory, Veiga Cabral reached out to Trajano, “ex-capitão de Counani.”<sup>90</sup> But the explorer was charged with effecting Trajano’s removal from the Cunani, sending his associates with letters addressed to the quilombola. By his

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<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Francisco Xavier Veiga Cabral. “Questão da Guyana.” *O Pharol* (Juiz de Fora), 25 October 1895.

own account, Veiga Cabral appealed to Trajano's Brazilianess: "telling him that he would always remember that he was Brazilian and that his motive for fleeing to the Contestado has disappeared, which was slavery; that today he could consider himself a free man...that there would be no reason for him to lend his services to the creoulos of Cayenne...that he was simply deceived by the the French." Following this, Trajano relocated to Amapá with a friend and domestic partner.<sup>91</sup> But as we will see later, there are alternative accounts as to the role of Veiga Cabral and Trajano's attitude towards Brazilian authority.

Though Veiga Cabral clearly sought out Trajano for the influence that he had established as a quilombola and ally of the French, patriotic entreaties were being used to obscure this fact. In any case, Veiga Cabral had a stable relationship with the former quilombolas and their allies, such that the former made mention of a friendship with Manoel Joaquim Ferreira, whose sick daughter he took care of months earlier when she suffered from an unnamed illness.<sup>92</sup> What remains unclear is whether Trajano's supposed alliance with Veiga Cabral was simply a case of the former correctly reading the political tea leaves despite having been a steadfast supporter of French influence. As Trajano's contemporaries addressed this question, it is easy to detect sharp divergences among French and Brazilian narratives regarding Trajano and the contestado, especially around a bloody skirmish between French forces and Brazilians loyal to Veiga Cabral in 1895.

A French contingent led by a military captain with nineteen soldiers in tow disembarked in Amapá on 15 May 1895 with the apparent purpose of taking Trajano into custody. According to Veiga Cabral's account, he pointedly refused any proposal to hand the former quilombola

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*



over, saying that he would rather die than turn over a Brazilian citizen on a whim.<sup>93</sup> After a rather rough series of interrogations, Veiga Cabral made a break for it and assembled a group to repel the French in a brief armed skirmish between French troops and Brazilian partisans. Returning to their ships, French forces opened fire on the town for an extended period before laying siege to the town once again, taking retribution on residents who had not taken part in the fighting, with casualties totaling nearly sixty people.<sup>94</sup>

Veiga Cabral barely escaped, but in the following months he communicated his side of the story in various newspapers. He received a hero's welcome upon returning to his native Pará two months after the 15 May massacre.<sup>95</sup> One newspaper expressed contempt, observing that the presence of a European military was more typical of "tribal" areas in the African interior rather than the "blessed soil of free America."<sup>96</sup> Not only did this surge of patriotism affirm the Brazilianess of the contestado, but it also evidently affirmed its non-blackness by drawing a contrast between the contestado and the tribal territories of the "interior of Africa." Henri Coudreau, himself an exponent of French colonization and the Gallic character of the contestado, was allegedly disgusted at the events of 15 May and distanced the mainland French government from responsibility.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> "Revista dos Estados." *Minas Geraes* (Ouro Preto), 24 July 1895.

<sup>96</sup> "Territorio do Amapá." *Minas Geraes* (Ouro Preto), 22 June 1895. The original quote is as follows: "a força armada de uma nação tão poderosa mentalidade supponha-se no centro dos cafres ou das antropophagas tribus do interior da Africa, quando pisa o solo abençoado da livre America."

<sup>97</sup> "Territorio do Amapá." *Minas Geraes* (Ouro Preto), 7 July 1895.

There was an alternative account for the context of the French intervention that received much less attention in the Brazilian press in which Trajano was, in fact, taken prisoner by Veiga Cabral. In relaying a news item about a U.S. diplomat in Madagascar who was imprisoned by French authorities when he wrote a letter detailing certain political and military details about French troops there, they relished the apparent hypocrisy of the French. If this had happened to a French citizen under similar circumstances in Amapá, reasoned the article, the French press would have clamored against Brazilian savagery, “like what happened for much less in the case of the preto Trajano.”<sup>98</sup> The structure of this comparison indirectly depicts Trajano as a French citizen in Amapá who had been victimized by “selvagens brasileiros.”<sup>99</sup> At the very least it hints that the French attempt to reclaim Trajano was due to the perception that he was a willing subject of the French, not because he willingly embraced Brazilian nationality. The French-language press made these connections much more explicitly.

French publication *Le Correspondant* featured reporting on the French invasion with language citing Trajano as “our representative in Cunani, having been taken by force by Brazilians from Amapá and taken prisoner in that locality...”<sup>100</sup> This account supports the assertion that Governor Charvein of French Guiana and Captain Lunier—responsible for leading the May 1895 invasion by French troops—conceived of the mission as one in which French forces would “deliver” Trajano from the pirates, adventurers, and partisans forces representing Brazilian interests in Amapá.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> “Um consul à ferros.” *Diário de Notícias* (Belém), 7 June 1896.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> “La Guyane et le Contesté Franco-Brésilien.” *Le Correspondant* (Paris), 25 Sept. 1895.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.* In yet another permutation of his name, Trajano is named as “Trajane” and “Trajan Bento.”

Weeks before, Trajano was allegedly captured in by Veiga Cabral's partisans who had arrived from the village of Amapá. These same men then villainously trampled the tri-color in a show of defiance.<sup>102</sup> After the events of May 15 unfolded, *Le Correspondant* claimed not to know what became of Trajano, but dwells instead on the necessity of taking action in order to make the contestado French again.<sup>103</sup>

A letter sent to the director of the French publication *Revue Bleue* on May 7, a little over a week before the French invasion, asserted that Trajano was the best possible choice to defend French interests in the Cunani.<sup>104</sup> He is celebrated as the legitimate leader of the *Counaniens*, acting as “mayor, judge, and even priest.”<sup>105</sup> In the editorial reply, written after the botched French operation, the editor laments that Trajano was taken away as if he was a “victory trophy” or a hostage—an “intolerable situation” from the perspective of the editor.<sup>106</sup>

Compare this to the uncharitable perspective of certain Brazilian media. In the *Quarto Centenário do descobrimento do Brasil*, Trajano's supposed role in “a supposed comissão de limites, where he was nothing more than an old preto boçal, a friend to the French in their persecution of Brazilians.”<sup>107</sup> Sometime before the French invasion, Trajano had become a member of French delegation to the Comissão de Limites, the body charged with resolving territorial disputes between Brazil and the French Republic.<sup>108</sup> Various sources do confirm that

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<sup>102</sup> “Une Page d’Histoire Coloniale.” *L’Illustration* (Paris), 6 July 1895.

<sup>103</sup> “La Guyane et le Contesté Franco-Brésilien.” *Le Correspondant* (Paris), 25 Sept. 1895.

<sup>104</sup> A. “A La Guyane: Les événements de Counani.” *Revue Bleu* (Lyon), 1 June 1895.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> O Pará em 1900 250.

<sup>108</sup> “A Questão do Amapá.” *Jornal do Comercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 20 June 1895.

Trajano played a role in the bilateral commission as a representative of French interests in resolving the border question.<sup>109</sup> In the sources quoted above, this development is scoffed at and downplayed due to Trajano's place as a "velho boçal," a term used to describe African-born slaves in the Americas.

*The Rio News*, an English-language newspaper published in Brazil at the behest of American manufacturers operating there, presented Cabral as the head of a "considerable party of bandits" rather than a patriotic hero.<sup>110</sup> A French-language newspaper also based in Brazil, *L'Etoile du Sud*, took a similar tack in vilifying Cabral as a bandit who captured Trajano against his will. But in an official statement included in the article, the French Minister of Colonies denied that Trajano was a French citizen. Instead, the Minister depicts Trajano as "un indigène, un tapouille." While the Minister acknowledged that he had some commerce with Cayenne ("sans importance") and friendly relations with the colonial administration, Trajano seemingly found himself disavowed.<sup>111</sup>

The narrative of Trajano as a pro-French traitor was strong in Brazilian media. Despite Cabral's insistence that Trajano had accepted Brazil, there were accounts that Trajano claiming that he would tear and trample the Brazilian flag, and continued to raise the French flag even with Veiga Cabral's triumvirate firmly in place. These supposed provocations led the triumvirate to proclaim him as a traitor, leading to his imprisonment and the outrage of the French authorities in Cayenne.<sup>112</sup> It is noteworthy that Reis records the reaction in Cunani, "foco de

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<sup>109</sup> "France and Brazil." *The Rio News* (Rio de Janeiro), 25 June 1895.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> "Le Territoire Contesté." *L'Etoile du Sud* (Rio de Janeiro), 22 June 1895.

<sup>112</sup> Reis 1949, 100. Reis, of course, wrote these lines long after the resolution of the Franco-Brazilian conflict.

franceses ou afrancesados,” to the international judgement validating Brazil’s claims to the contested region in 1900 as being that of “indifference” because it didn’t benefit the French.<sup>113</sup> If this is true, than Veiga Cabral’s account of a peaceful understanding with the residents of Cunani would lack a certain veracity.

Henri Coudreau returned to play a role in settling the border dispute, and weighed in on the events of 15 May. Having been thoroughly “indignado” by the actions of the French, Coudreau expressed his view that the governor of French Guiana, Camille Charvein, was the one responsible for the massacre, and furthermore that he was still in league with Trajano in some unspecified fashion.<sup>114</sup> In Coudreau’s reprinted words, Charvein was presented as an anti-colonial Jacobin ready to deploy the *negro* Trajano against the Brazilians of the contestado.<sup>115</sup>

Another newspaper, citing unspecified sources, stated with certainty that the 15 May massacre was “uma combinação entre Trajano e os francezes.”<sup>116</sup> Even if this collusion did not occur, a report from one of Charvein’s top commanders as reprinted in *A Noticia* suggests that Charvein truly believed Trajano was in need of rescue.<sup>117</sup> According to the report, Governor Charvein convoked an advisory council, asking during their deliberations whether they could ignore their duty to free Trajano from his illegal confinement in Amapá.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Reis 1949, 109.

<sup>114</sup> “Amapá.” *A Republica* (Curitiba), 15 June 1895.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.* The original quote about Charvein is as follows: “grande jacobino anti-colonial, que deslealmente lança mão de seu negro nas combinações auríferas do territorio contestado.”

<sup>116</sup> “Conflicto entre francezes e brasileiros.” *A Federação* (Porto Alegre), 13 June 1895.

<sup>117</sup> “A Questão do Amapá.” *A Noticia* (Rio de Janeiro), 23/24 August 1895.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.* According to Reis 1949, this meeting took place on 9 May 1895. “não lhes parecia que chegou o momento de fazer respeitar os nossos compatriotas e os nossos direitos, ou pelo menos de procurar prender alguns dos larapios que perturbavam esta região, dando-se liberdade ao capitão Trajano, preso ilegalmente em Amapá.”

Nearly a decade after the end of slavery, the Barão de Marajó described the historical base of Amapá's population as "a group of 400 or 500 individuals, slaves and criminal desertors of any origin, which always appointed semi-chefes, and among those figures the much-celebrated *Trajano Cypriano* though in his brutality he has become *Trajano Superiano!*"<sup>119</sup> Marajó obviously expresses a great deal of enmity for Trajano, relating second-hand information from the French Consul in Pará that he was "um negro bruto" who would never become French.<sup>120</sup>

The Barão de Marajó argues that Trajano played both sides, demonstrating "francezismo" in Cayenna to the same degree with which he would proclaim himself Brazilian in Amapá.<sup>121</sup> The author strongly doubted that Trajano's presence in Amapá was anything more than a pretext for the French to extend their influence into Brazilian territory, and that they were not actually interested in reclaiming Trajano.<sup>122</sup>

But Trajano had some defenders in the Brazilian press. For example, when Veiga Cabral returned to Pará he was accompanied by "o preto Trajano."<sup>123</sup> The telegram that served as the basis for the story describes Trajano as "an intelligent man, speaks Portuguese clearly, at times interspersing some words in French. He told us he was born in Curuçu and had escaped to Vigia."<sup>124</sup> The report was quick to point out that Trajano "affirmed that he never had the

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<sup>119</sup> Barão de Marajó. "O Conflictio do Amapá e as Considerações Dadas pelo Governo Francez." *Gazeta de Noticias* (Rio de Janeiro), 29 September 1895.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.* The insulting use of the phrase "pé no chão" is rather ironic considering Coudreau's observation that Trajano had the only house with a floor in Cunani.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> "Revista dos Estados." *Minas Geraes* (Ouro Preto), 24 July 1895.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*

intention of giving up his title of Brazilian citizenship [and that] he has shown gratitude for the benefits received from Veiga Cabral and he told us that he wants to end his days here.

Disgusted”<sup>125</sup> One must wonder whether Trajano was expressing Brazilian patriotism or demonstrating a keen awareness shared by quilombolas in anticipating the politics of the moment and navigating them to preserve their place in a society that on many levels moved strongly in the direction of exploiting, replacing, or erasing them. Perhaps Trajano bitterly detested the French for having been complicit in the death of his wife/domestic partner.

Whether Trajano was simply a former quilombola who mostly came to represent his own influence and self-interest, or whether he could be said to be a legitimate representative of his fellow quilombolas in exploiting a unique geopolitical conflict, it is telling enough that so much ink was expended on telling the story of an illiterate runaway slave who managed to operate in a transnational context, obtain authority, and even secure material assistance along with his comrades. Trajano’s strategy of tapping into an amorphous and flexible cultural identity that would seamlessly satisfy many different interests present in the Cunani seems to have failed in the end. What’s more, media representing French and Brazilian interests could not present a coherent message about Trajano’s alignment and motivations.

It is unknown what happened to Trajano after returning (perhaps forcibly) to Brazil. There are some landmarks that attest to his presence along the Cunani, such as a tributary that bears one of his surnames (*Igarapé Supriano*).<sup>126</sup> An 1897 French publication refers to the activities of “the ex semi-independent ex chief” who “escaped from Amapá and arrived to

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<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Kohler et. al 31

Cayenne.”<sup>127</sup> This implies that *after* fleeing from Amapá, presumably around the time of Lunier’s invasion in May 1895, he somehow ended up in Cayenne. It further states that Trajano “has given the details of his horrible treatment that he was submitted to during two years of captivity.”

Far from embracing his Brazilianess, Trajano was demanding “definitive naturalization,” swearing that he wouldn’t return to Brazil for any price lest he be subject to further abuses.<sup>128</sup> In the context of where this information was published, it seemed that Trajano became a patriotic cause to rally around in certain sectors of both French and Brazilian opinion.<sup>129</sup>

He still occupies a small part of Brazilian lore surrounding Amapá and the border dispute with France. It was none other than political patriarch José Sarney, who for a long time occupied the post of Governor of Maranhão and elevated members of his family to various political offices before becoming a Senator representing Amapá, who included Trajano in his historical novel *Saraminda: Black Desire in a Field of Gold*. He is first mentioned as a “delegate of the governor of Cayenne,” a “representative of France” presiding over the village of Cunani which counted a French majority.<sup>130</sup> While never mentioning Trajano’s origins, Sarney used the May 1895 conflagration as a set piece for a later chapter of his tale. In this fictionalized account, Cabral did

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<sup>127</sup> Renseignements Politiques, 437

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.* Considering that the account of Trajano’s return to Belém was published in July 1895, it is conceivable that Trajano could have both gone to Cayenne and later to Belém.

<sup>129</sup> The same publication lauds Lunier as a hero and mourned the French troops killed during the invasion of May 1895.

<sup>130</sup> Sarney 26.



indeed take Trajano prisoner.<sup>131</sup> In fact, Trajano, his wife, and his children had their hands tied as they were taken as prisoners to the village of Amapá.<sup>132</sup>

The same year the book was published, Senator Sarney issued a *Pronunciamento* celebrating the centennial of the international judgement resolving the issue of the contestado in Brazil's favor. His use of primary sources here is commendable, but Sarney presents a flawed narrative. Failing to even refer to Trajano's history as a runaway slave, he is simply introduced in Sarney's address before the Brazilian Senate as both the "creator" of the Cunani Republic and a *protegido* of France in the Cunani.<sup>133</sup> Veiga Cabral, "mix of hero and fanatic," comes in for praise for his patriotic role. Citing a document issued by Veiga Cabral's triumvirate, Sarney emphasizes that Trajano was rejected by residents of Cunani in their patriotic affiliation with Brazil. He convincingly argues that Captain Lunier and the French troops that invaded on 15 May 1895 had as their mission Trajano's rescue rather than his capture, but then skates lightly over Veiga Cabral's dissimulations about the matter in the Brazilian press in the following months. Though I argue that Trajano's strategies of survival and adaptation ultimately failed to overcome the international intrigue which served as a boon to himself and other quilombolas for a time, his actions still challenge later historiographies that attempt, in vain, to produce a clean patriotic version of events in the contestado.

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<sup>131</sup> Sarney 165.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Pronunciamento*. Senado Federal. 12/12/2000. José Sarney (PMDB)

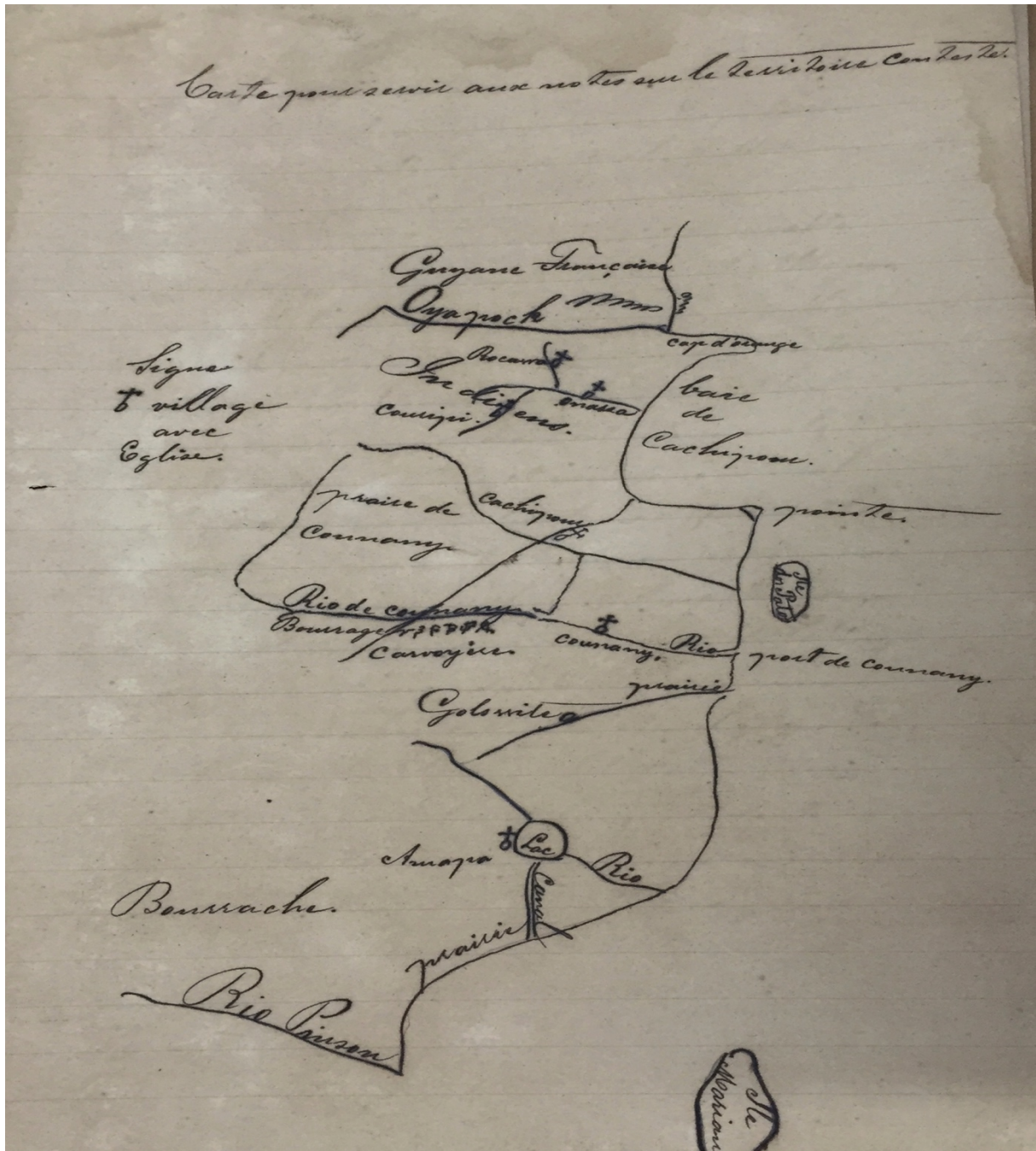


Figure 1. Hand Drawn Map of the Contestado

## Anti-Conquest and Quilombos in Pará at the Turn of the Century

With multiple sites of quilombo activity during the 1880s, these myriad forms of resistance would inevitably interact with the longstanding goals of provincial politicians: immigration, colonization, and exploration. This was especially true of the Trombetas River and its adjacent waterways in western Pará.

Even with the advent of abolition, the settlements of quilombolas along the Trombetas were not completely forgotten by provincial authorities in Pará. In a debate in the Provincial Assembly held 16 March 1889, a Deputy mentions that in certain areas mostly unserved by cargo ships “lately many individuals who were in the Mocambo have established themselves, and have descended to farm and plant cacao trees. I want to create a transportation link between this population and Óbidos.” He proposed an amendment to set up a route with 2 monthly trips through the lower Trombetas.<sup>134</sup> In April 1889, an article published under the nom de plume “Justos” appeared in the *Diário de Belém* denouncing Henrique Joaquim d’Almeida, who claimed lands in the upper Mapuá River region to which he allegedly had no title. Indeed, “Justos” ignores the fact that the land was occupied mostly by quilombolas until the 1870s, with legal ownership only being established during that decade through settlement.<sup>135</sup>

Years after Condurú stated his intention to incorporate the area into the steamship route, Henri Coudreau entered the scene once again and began a series of expeditions along river systems in western Pará and Amazonas that were carried on by his wife Octavie in the years following his death in 1899. In their travels, they recorded their experiences among several

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<sup>134</sup> “Assembléa Provincial: Sessão Ordinaria em 16 de Março de 1889.” *O Liberal* (Belém), 2 May 1889.

<sup>135</sup> Justos. “Medições de terras.” *Diário de Belém* (Belém), 7 Apr. 1889.

distinct communities of quilombolas who, like their counterparts along the Gurupí, provided their expertise to the Coudreau expeditions as guides and navigators. Though the Coudreaus, particularly Octavie, were fairly straightforward in their disdain for the quilombo descendants of Pará, they also reproduced quilombo microhistories for a wide audience of readers both Brazilian and non-Brazilian. That these expeditions could proceed at all reflected on the degree of territoriality among such quilombo communities.

When the Coudreaus began their expedition along the Trombetas River in 1899, they could not help but notice the superior skill demonstrated by quilombolas in canoe navigation—such that the author dubbed them the “best canoe mariners in South America.”<sup>136</sup> During the war with Paraguay, the quilombolas had been offered their liberty in exchange for participating in the conflict. The détente allowed them to move from their original site along the upper Trombetas to the lower part of the river, which is where Coudreau encountered his subjects in 1899.<sup>137</sup> As they recorded the names of waterways along the Trombetas, they did so seemingly by using the indigenous names with the common names attributed to them by the quilombolas, such as “Caphu (Turuna des Mucambeiros),” and “Wanamú (Poana des Mucambeiros). . . .”<sup>138</sup> In other cases, names such as the Mapuera River were recorded alongside the quilombola appellation (“Rio de Faro”).<sup>139</sup>

At the time of arrival, Coudreau commented that each quilombolas had a small cacao plot, “just large enough to produce enough farinha for a family supplemented by fishing and

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<sup>136</sup> Coudreau 1900, 19.

<sup>137</sup> Coudreau 1900, 131.

<sup>138</sup> Coudreau 1900, 70.

<sup>139</sup> Coudreau 1900, 105.

hunting”—subsistence agriculture.<sup>140</sup> But market participation, though sparse, was not unheard of: quilombolas had cultivated tobacco for a time before moving on to extract Brazil nuts, though only to such a degree as to allow one to buy “un pantalon, une chemise et de faire des fêtes.”<sup>141</sup>

Octavie Coudreau pushed on with the explorations, and early on arrived at the *barraca* of the de facto leader among the quilombolas:

[Joaquim] Santa-Anna, the oldest of the Mucambeiros of Cuminá, the indispensable Santa-Anna, the Santa-Anna who knows how to do everything, the Santa-Anna who was a guide to père Nicolino during this two expeditions, the Santa-Anna who guided the Tocantins expedition, the Santa-Anna who helped M. Couto during his trip, the Santa-Anna without whom an excursion through the Cuminá is impossible, the Santa-Anna to whom you should only speak with your hat lowered, and who will tell you to your face whether or not you will go, the Santa-Anna who commanded the massacre of the Pianocotó Indians of Poanna, the Santa-Anna who completely detests whites but won't do them any harm because he is afraid.<sup>142</sup>

After such an extraordinary introduction, Santa-Anna was not actually present to receive Coudreau's expedition. But “Santa-Anna” did certainly have a reputation that extended outside of his community. Several natural features along the Cuminá River bore the name Sant'anna.<sup>143</sup> Much like Agostinho, Sant'anna was recognized as a leader among the quilombolas and a guide to individuals from outside of the Trombetas.

Another individual presumably related to Joaquim Sant'Anna is mentioned, without reference to his history or ethnic identity, as “Taurino de Sant'Anna,” and served as a guide to an expedition composed of prominent individuals representing the state of Pará, including Lourenço

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<sup>140</sup> Coudreau 1900, 131.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Coudreau 1901, 18.

<sup>143</sup> Coudreau 1901, 49.

Ferreira Valente do Couto (mentioned above as “M. Couto”).<sup>144</sup> It is not clear exactly which other members of the expedition were quilombolas, but the series of articles covering its exploits mentioned that, upon reaching the waters of the Curuá River, “temido até dos proprios mucambeiros.”<sup>145</sup> Eventually reaching Pacoval, there is mention of a meeting with “capitão Blanc,” more likely than not Jules Blanc, once again finding himself along the quilombola frontier. In this telling, Blanc and the members of the expedition were feted by the locals (almost certainly quilombolas) and prayers were made to ensure the good fortune of their travels.<sup>146</sup> According to Paul Lecointe, Blanc provided support to the Coudreau expeditions in western Pará during the 1890s.<sup>147</sup>

An expedition years earlier makes mention of the need, upon arriving at “porto S. Joaquim” along the Cuminã belonging to Joaquim Bentes de Sant’Anna, to hire the latter as a “hired hand to guide the expedition beyond the waterfalls. This citizen, of the mestiça race...launched into the center of the woods for many years...passing through part of the prairie, living for some years with the indigenous people from whom he learned the dialect,” leaving the “nomad” life behind with the abolition of slavery. He was identified as an important member of the expedition in terms of “speaking and dealing with the indigenous groups, bringing them the gifts brought by the chief of the expedition.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> João Salles. “Os Campos Geraes da Guyana Brasileira.” *Folha do Norte* (Belém), 6 Mar. 1896. A few days later in the 9 Mar. edition of *A República* Salles mentions that Taurino and two other workers returned to Óbidos, not having been quite as useful as was hoped.

<sup>145</sup> João Salles. “Os Campos Geraes da Guyana Brasileira.” *Folha do Norte* (Belém), 14 Mar.

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Lecointe 122.

<sup>148</sup> J. Rotciv. “Impressões de viagem.” *A República* (Belém), 31 Oct. 1890. In this sense quilombolas are also acting as informants, much as they did for Arrojado Lisboa’s expedition. The original quote is as follows: “falar e tratar com os gentios, entregando-lhes os brindes que leva-o chefe da

Once the expedition began their journey in earnest, they noted the paucity of agriculture accompanying the *palhoças* along the river, remarking that they seemed to be mostly for family agriculture and supplemented by daily fishing and proceeds from the regular collection of *castanha*.<sup>149</sup> The author took a patronizing approach, describing the population as wary of hard work due to slavery, which caused them to flee from any traces of “civilized man”—a curious idea disproven by the commercial and social contacts many quilombolas had.<sup>150</sup>

The various expeditions undertaken through the Trombetas in the 1890s were meant to open a path to the vast lands to the north closer to present-day Suriname, Guyana, and French Guiana, the so-called “campos geraes,” with the purpose of accessing the “incalculable riches” contained therein.<sup>151</sup> There was a reluctance on the part of Brazilian observers to categorize individuals living along the Cuminá as quilombolas, instead mentioning nothing more than residents living in poorly constructed huts each at some distance from the next.<sup>152</sup>

This suggests a very similar path to that taken by quilombolas along the Gurupí, where expeditions seemingly reinforced the idea that the Trombetas-Cuminá region was black at its roots, with inhabitants (quilombolas) from the region being referred to as “aborígenes.” But the quilombolas were not isolated either. Apart from subsisting based on commerce with regatões, they were also capable of expropriating individuals such as Nicasio Joaquim Pinheiro in 1880,

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expedição. Medida de subido alcance, pois sabe-se, por informações dos próprios quilombolas-terem estes feito acreditar aos índios o imaginário ódio que os brancos votão raça indígena, que deseja escravizar.”

<sup>149</sup> J. Rotciv “Impressões de viagem.” *A República* (Belém), 2 Nov. 1890.

<sup>150</sup> J. Rotciv “Impressões de viagem.” *A República* (Belém), 2 Nov. 1890.

<sup>151</sup> “Revista Local.” *Gazeta de Alemquer* (Alemquer), 18 Oct. 1894.

<sup>152</sup> J. Rotciv “Impressões de viagem.” *A República* (Belém), 30 Oct. 1890.

with fourteen quilombolas participating in the act.<sup>153</sup> The impression the quilombolas made upon the land around the River Cuminá is reinforced by the fact that French geographer Paul Lecoite, in listing the dozens of waterfalls to be found along the Cuminá, singles out Tira-faca as being near the site of the “mocambo de Santa-Anna,” while also registering another waterfall by the name of Papai Joaquim—possibly a reference to the same individual mentioned by Octavie Coudreau.<sup>154</sup>

Having relied on the knowledge of her guide Guilherme to navigate a series of waterfalls and tributaries along the Cuminá River, Octavie Coudreau still concluded her journey with a profound sense of exasperation. She rained down scornful appraisals of every aspect of the quilombola life. Coudreau recounted that leadership was contested between two female shamans (*pagés*) who numbered among the original fugitives who settled along the Cuminá, each of whom was more than willing inflict death on someone (through sorcery) simply for looking at them the wrong way.<sup>155</sup> Authority, she wrote, was simply based on who could inspire fear in the rest of the community.<sup>156</sup>

Social and spatial qualities alike—loquacity, laziness, humble dwellings—made them “nearly” useless to civilization in Mme. Coudreau’s estimation.<sup>157</sup> Their society was a matrilineal one, where children only spoke of their mothers and supposedly had little affection for the biological fathers.<sup>158</sup> The prospects for mineral wealth along the Cuminá were still mostly

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<sup>153</sup> “O “Diário do Gram-Pará.”” *O Liberal do Pará* (Belém), 11 Jan. 1880.

<sup>154</sup> Lecoite 144.

<sup>155</sup> Coudreau 1901, 175.

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> Coudreau 1901, 178.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*



theoretical in spite of the presence of a few merchants and residents of French Guiana, and a majority of quilombolas participated in the extraction of the usual commodities: Brazil nuts, copaiba oil, gutta-percha resin, and rubber.<sup>159</sup> In this sense, they were certainly connected to the regional economy. Octavie, despite relying on the quilombolas for their geographic knowledge and labor, spoke poorly of both of these traits.<sup>160</sup>

We get a very clear sense that even as early as 1899, there were some vestiges of a quilombola identity. One example of this is rooted in a playful conversation between Adão and Coudreau's group of sailors from Minas Gerais and Goiás convincing them that they would not be able to carry out an exploration of the Trombetas. When one of them pointed out that Adão had been in the Upper Trombetas for a long time, he responded knowingly: "Yes, but I am a Mucambeiro," implying that this facilitated their knowledge of and connection to the land.<sup>161</sup>

What followed was a barbed exchange between Adão and the "Mineiros" in which the latter swore to show him what they were capable of. Adão responded: "you won't upset me." This was followed by an incredulous response on the part of the Mineiros at having been addressed in such a casual way.<sup>162</sup> Aside from an identity rooted in physical capability and a rooted knowledge of the terrain, Adão also asserted a defacto equality by colloquially referring to Coudreau's party as his *parents* (relatives): a denial of any assumed social or racial superiority. Perhaps this indignation was bolstered further by a member of the expedition,

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<sup>159</sup> Coudreau 1901, 180.

<sup>160</sup> Coudreau 1901, 135.

<sup>161</sup> Coudreau 1901, 21.

<sup>162</sup> Coudreau 1901, 22. It is probably better to reproduce the entire exchange, beginning with Adão saying "Mais, parent, ne vous fâchez pas avec moi," followed by the response of the Mineiros who were scandalized by being addressed as family (parents): "Nous, vos parents! Mais nous ne sommes pas parents de nègres."

Charles, expressing his desire to live among the Quilombolas—an idea which Coudreau called “the most senseless idea.”<sup>163</sup>

After Henri Coudreau succumbed to illness during the expedition in November 1899, Octavie was left to write up conclusions about the journey through the Trombetas and its various tributaries.<sup>164</sup> Providing the reader with a short origin of the quilombos of the Trombetas, she informs us that of those who went into flight, there were five individuals left, two of which were the Adão and Esyidio. Far from a stable gerontocracy, she mentions that there was no mutual understanding between them, and perhaps they quarreled over leadership.<sup>165</sup>

Much more distrusting than her late husband, and perhaps embittered by the whole experience, she saw all members of the community as mendacious and incapable of reliably telling their own histories accurately.<sup>166</sup> The quilombolas of Trombetas were held as little more than a republic of disreputable characters: “in their Mucambos they unite around questions of insubordination and to steal their women.” To the colonial mind, this was a regression to the qualities of “primitive black” (presumably pre-colonial) societies such as the Kingdom of Dahomey, and Uganda.<sup>167</sup> A failure to promote an effective colonization of the region, Coudreau warned, could leave the region “prey” to “the black races of the Antilles,” transforming the region into a new Sudan rather than a new “Far-West,” with California being the ideal of colonization and exploration in this case.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Coudreau 1901, 89.

<sup>164</sup> Coudreau 1901, 121.

<sup>165</sup> Coudreau 1901, 129.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Coudreau 1900, 130. Fiji is improbably grouped with these examples.

<sup>168</sup> Coudreau 1900, 132.

Esydio rejoins the narrative later as the head of a small expedition to explore for gold. The other members were a group of three white men, one a North American, one a German, and the other an Englishman. They were not sure they would find gold, but hoped to replicate the kind of success enjoyed by miners who found gold in larger quantities not far from the Franco-Brazilian border.<sup>169</sup> Coudreau found this gold fever distasteful, wondering why they couldn't simply establish themselves as agriculturalists on such fertile lands. This reinforces the idea that quilombola territories presented enticing investment opportunities for foreign capital, particularly for extractive industries.<sup>170</sup>

In late 1900, Octavie Coudreau made yet another voyage through the Curuá River, site of a famous quilombo whose inhabitants were defeated in 1876. Early in her trip Coudreau and her crew passed through Pacoval, described here as “the village of Mucambeiros.”<sup>171</sup> This group of quilombolas and their descendants, according to Coudreau, simply returned to a “savage state.”<sup>172</sup> The first resident she speaks about is one Chico Cardozo, who upon receiving Coudreau's inevitable criticisms responds: “The land is ours and we are free to do as we like. We don't understand whoever is coming to make the law for us.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Coudreau 1900, 91.

<sup>170</sup> I would argue that this is still the case, with afro-descendants constituting an increasingly attractive constituency for multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, IDB, etc.

<sup>171</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 16.

<sup>172</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 17. This is certainly in keeping with her warning in *Voyage au Rio Trombetas* about allowing “primitive black” spaces to flourish in Pará in the absence of a strong state presence.

<sup>173</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 19. The original quote is as follows: La terre est à nous et nous somme libres de faire tout ce que nous voulons, nous n'entendons pas que quiconque vienne nous faire la loi.”

The Church in the village was to Coudreau a ghastly assemblage of multicolored figures of saints (“Quasimodos”).<sup>174</sup> Behind the church was the so-called *ramada*, the central point that served as a dance hall for the quilombolas. Festivities there typically involved a fermented alcoholic beverage made from manioc, with dances being accompanied by rhythmic singing and clapping which to Coudreau’s untrained ear must have survived the exodus of their ancestors from Africa.<sup>175</sup>

Further confirming a well-known pattern, Coudreau argues that the government gave limited recognition to a figurehead among the quilombolas in order to keep the community within “certain limits.”<sup>176</sup> This figurehead was Alexandre, a “lazy drunk” and an absentee ruler who used fear in some unspecified manner to rule over his comrades.<sup>177</sup> Upon greeting Coudreau, Alexandre wasted no time in informing her that he was the “governor” of Pacoval, with whom the government was happy, and that he was an agent (*argente*).<sup>178</sup> By his own account he was helping to complete a road to Alenquer, a major castanha-producing town close by, one of the many ways in which he was superior to the “doctor-engineers” from outside the community.<sup>179</sup> Alexandre, even absent this unflattering portrayal, was probably a disagreeable character. Nonetheless, he was aware of Coudreau and suspicious that she would speak poorly of

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<sup>174</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 20.

<sup>175</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 20.

<sup>176</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 21.

<sup>177</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 22.

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*

them in her inevitable book (which she did). He advised her that neither him nor the other quilombolas would do any work for her unless they were paid in advance.<sup>180</sup>

At the time of Coudreau's expedition, she commented that "mucambeiros" and their descendants constituted the main part of the population outside of the town of Curuá up to Arapari.<sup>181</sup> Coudreau observes that all quilombolas share the trait of "not working any more than anyone else, which is to say as little as possible." Their main economy activity was the collection of *castanha*, mostly along the rivers or a short distance into the interior.<sup>182</sup> They also apparently practiced slash-and-burn agriculture.<sup>183</sup>

The quilombolas of Baixo Trombetas were far from gone from the scene during the twentieth century. According to Adolpho Ducke, writing in 1910 that of the quilombolas, "many exercised the position of "cachoeristas," being indispensable for a journey along any of the waterways of the Trombetas." This was, of course, in addition to the perennial harvest of *castanha*

When Gastão Cruls conducted his explorations through Amazonia, later the subject of the multi-volume series *A Amazônia que eu vi*, his 1928 travels through the Cuminá turned up continued traces of a quilombola population "in humble huts where the aforementioned pretos live, or *mocmabeiros* as they are still known today."<sup>184</sup> As was the case along the Gurupí, place names told the tale even when the residents no longer inhabited sites of quilombagem. When

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<sup>180</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 23.

<sup>181</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 102.

<sup>182</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 103-104.

<sup>183</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 103.

<sup>184</sup> Cruls 30. Italics added.

Gastão Cruls arrived to Sitio do Lautherio in September 1928, he came to learn the history of the location, where “in bygone times, there lived a mocambeiro who gave it his name.”<sup>185</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In understanding the formation of quilombos in other regions of Pará and Amapá, we can better understand what allowed certain communities of quilombo descendants to be better positioned to defend their rights. Situations contingent upon accidents of history and geography created openings of varying effectiveness to be exploited by quilombolas. In the case of Cunani, its unique position between two conflicting nation-states—the old world colonial power of France and the new world power of Brazil—provided quilombolas such as Trajano with significant leverage. If early reports are to be believed, the French provided material assistance to runaway slaves in the contested territory and realized a certain cultural influence upon the quilombolas as measured through various indicators such as French priests and the apparent adoption of French customs, language, and even the use of flag.

In this scenario, quilombolas found themselves in the advantageous position of holding official titles through which they presumably held power. But the marked decline in Franco-Brazilian relations during the 1890s revealed this to be somewhat of a chimera, with Trajano’s story serving as a kind of counterpoint to that of Agostinho. To the extent that Coudreau’s account was veracious, it seems that Trajano used his position to secure material wealth above that of his fellow quilombolas and other individuals living along the Cunani. In the wake of the French attack in May 1895, it seems that Cunani was integrated into the Brazilian Republic. Unlike the case of quilombos along the Gurupí, traces of the quilombo presence seemingly made

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<sup>185</sup> Cruls 76.

less of an impact on the region's politics after 1895 though later historiographies of the contestado did have to address Trajano's presence.

The Trombetas represents an example of developments which more closely paralleled those along the Gurupí River. Much as was the case for Arrojado Lisboa, Coudreau remarked on the uncanny knowledge of territory and ability to navigate demonstrated by quilombo descendants—"mucambeiros"—around the Trombetas River. Even at the dawn of the twentieth century, the quilombolas' internal social and political structure was at best only nominally anchored to the dominant political system. They were small producers of commodities such as cacao for the regional market, but were far from being a landless rural proletariat even a decade after abolition.

Something which is easy to miss in the hundreds of pages produced by the Coudreaus documenting their expeditions among quilombolas is the complete rupture between what James C. Scott refers to as the "public transcript" and the "hidden transcript." The public transcript, "the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate," inasmuch as the work of the Coudreaus could constitute a type of public transcript in this case, betrays very little desire "to curry favor...[or] appeal to the expectations of the powerful..." on the part of the quilombolas.<sup>186</sup> The types of behaviors that Scott attributes to the hidden transcript—"offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript"—are made in the open.<sup>187</sup> In the second chapter of *Voyage au Rio Cuminá*, for example, she bitterly describes the joy of Pacoval's population upon her departure, who "from

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<sup>186</sup> Scott 1990, 2.

<sup>187</sup> Scott 1990, 5.

the bottom of their heart” never wanted to see her again.<sup>188</sup> Perhaps this was, in part, imagined, but there were multiple instances of such defiance: the argument between Adão and the Mineiros, quilombola leader Alexandre of Pacoval impugning Mme. Coudreau’s motives and demanding that she pay for their services in advance, the brusque treatment of Mme. Coudreau by Joaquim Sant’anna’s wife, and others.

During Coudreau’s 1901 expedition through the Mapuera River, her canoe pilot João employed a risky maneuver to navigate past an impassable part of the river. When asked why he made such a dangerous move, he replied that he would have rather died than risk having to return and face being mocked by the quilombolas.<sup>189</sup> If the barrier between the public and hidden transcripts is normally porous and fluid, in the cases outlined above perhaps it was even less than that. The defiant attitudes documented by the Coudreaus germinated in a “secure social space, *however sequestered*, where they could exchange and elaborate their criticism.”<sup>190</sup> Though such social spaces attained autonomy or perhaps hegemony to very uneven degrees, they remained important social and geographic entities in vast expanses of Pará.

Juxtaposing the foci of quilombo activity found in this chapter also forces us to further consider the question of “quilombo typographies” posed in the previous chapters. Once again, the various examples of quilombo leaders, named and unnamed, frustrate attempts to categorize quilombos according to a dichotomy where Palmares is the militant counterpart to the politically compliant Jabaquara quilombo. An armed quilombo—Itapucú—within the municipal boundaries of Cametá continued regardless of the hysterics offered by certain politicians during the 1880s,

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<sup>188</sup> Coudreau 1903a, 27.

<sup>189</sup> Coudreau 1903b, 14.

<sup>190</sup> Scott 1990, 9. Italics added.



with sufficient strength in numbers and arms to avoid definitive military defeat. But Itapucú was hardly a Palmares, remanding those among them judged to have committed crimes into the custody of Cametá police. In the case of Trajano Benitez, one can certainly view him as a type of comprador since he was an invaluable go-between with the French and was also an influential merchant among his fellow quilombolas. His close relationship with Henri Coudreau was probably interpreted by the latter as a promising sign as he continued to advocate for French immigration into Amapá.

At the same time, Trajano's relationship with established political power was much more multifaceted than it was in the case of Quintino Lacerda. Trajano operated in a transnational context, forming links with French and Francophone actors in a period when the nation-state of his birth was also the last to abolish African slavery. Taking this course of action earned Trajano a great deal of enmity among Brazilian politicians such as the Barão de Marajó and in the Brazilian press. This was presumably the reason why, according to many accounts, he was kidnapped from Cunani and beaten by Veiga Cabral's men in their quest to return the contestado—or at least the profits from the mineral riches therein—to Brazilian control. Though Trajano's actions in the political sphere did not guarantee the autonomy of his fellow quilombolas they could be interpreted, at least partially, as an affront to Brazil's slaveocracy.

Henri and Octavie Coudreau leave us with further details about leading quilombola figures. Two that stand out are Joaquim Sant'anna and Alexandre. Joaquim Sant'anna, and likely some of his relatives, derived a great deal of recognition as stewards of the territory along the Trombetas River. Thus, he filled a role not unlike that of Agostinho de Sá Caldas in serving as a guide or in some support capacity to previous scientific expeditions. It is interesting, however, to contrast this role with the behavior of his partner towards Octavie Coudreau. Even though

quilombolas offered their services to explorers representing the dominant classes, they did not necessarily do so with a sense social deference.

The same can be said about the notorious Alexandre of Pacoval. Though he was represented as an absentee leader, a brute, and a drunk who ruled through fear, his reaction to Octavie Coudreau's visit also invites further analysis. Not only did Alexandre demand payment upfront and express his suspicion about Coudreau's motives, but he also claimed to be a liaison to the Paraense government on a road-building project. Whether this was true or not, this claim likely emboldened him to challenge Coudreau. Deference on one side—a supposed status as a “government agent”—allowed Alexandre to fulminate against a foreign explorer with seemingly dubious motives on the other.

But just as in the case of the Gurupí, taking a multigenerational approach allows us to better understand the nature of decision-making, as illustrated by Emmanuel de Almeida Farias Júnior in referring to “territórios de parentesco” along the Trombetas, not “estritamente consanguíneos...definidos por regras de utilização dos recurso naturais...que orientam a gestão dos castanhais, não dizem respeito somente aos castanhais.”<sup>191</sup> The use of natural resources, though organized according to kinship units, really consists of “uma série de etiquetas e relações de reciprocidade.”<sup>192</sup>

By embracing a more complex approach, we can see the construction of quilombo leadership as the result of factors such as geography, personality, proximity to valuable resources, linkages to existing political actors, and the presence of foreign capital, among others. Leaders such as Alexandre, to the extent that Coudreau's account is trustworthy, presented a

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<sup>191</sup> Farias Júnior 349.

<sup>192</sup> Farias Júnior 352.

profile similar to that of Quintino Lacerda. However, Alexandre operated within a society in which leadership was a much more fluid concept based on kinship relations and an extractive economy in which the land itself was not treated as property.

The historical trajectories outlined in this chapter demonstrate a multitude of structures employed by quilombos that endured past 1888. In the next chapter, I will return to the Gurupí River to explore how quilombolas fared under the increased push by both foreign and domestic capital to acquire quilombola lands for gold extraction.

## Chapter 5: “Um Caso Gravíssimo”–The Gurupí Region before 1930

When we last left the Gurupí, the region was at a crossroads. While residents of Camiranga and Itamoari continued to exercise autonomy many years after abolition, foreign capital made increasing inroads into these communities. One example of this was the fact that individuals such as Guilherme Capanema, who held mining rights over much of the gold-rich territory of the Gurupí region, directly supervised mining activity carried out by workers at Camiranga. British, French, and U.S investors had not achieved much success before the turn of the century, but their interest potential gold deposits continued unabated.

This chapter will detail the activities of Guilherme Von Linde, an individual who came to exercise property rights over the mines of the Gurupí under dubious circumstances. Von Linde would become an outsized, almost mythical figure who appeared prominently in many accounts of the Gurupí and its mineral wealth during the early twentieth century. Aside from being important as a regional phenomenon in its own right, Von Linde’s reign serves as a microcosm for the shift in the balance of social and political forces that characterized the period before the Revolution of 1930, commonly referred to *A Velha República*.

Von Linde used legal maneuvering and extralegal terror to expand and defend his claims to the gold produced along the Gurupí, provoking mobilization among residents of Camiranga and Itamoari, the press, and eventually, political actors at the state and national level. His tenure as a dominating figure in the region’s mining industry represented the acceleration of previous trends of foreign ownership and investment, but the spectacular violence that he employed against black and indigenous residents of the region as well as his exploitation of black labor came under increasing scrutiny during the 1920s and precipitated how the Revolution of 1930 would unfold in the state of Pará.

## From Monarchist to Mining Baron

Powerful figures often serve as bookends in histories of oppression. Guilherme Von Linde was precisely such a figure in Maranhão and Pará over a period of nearly forty years. Von Linde was likely born to foreign parents in Rio Grande do Sul during the 1860s, in the town of Uruguaiana near Brazil's borders with Uruguay and Argentina. Though he was a native-born Brazilian, his education and connections frequently led observers to mistake him for numerous other nationalities: French, German, and North American, among others. Von Linde left little more than a faint, wraith-like presence in archival documents, but his debut in the Brazilian historical record was nonetheless a spectacular one.

His name appears in reporting from the *Comercio de São Paulo* pertaining to the so-called *Revolta da Armada* that transpired in Rio de Janeiro in 1893. This failed uprising was organized by high officials from the Brazilian Navy against the then-recently installed republican government, mobilizing monarchists and younger officers, among others. Among the captured combatants was Carlos Aleixo Frederico Guilherme Krum Von Linder, “sueco, engenheiro militar residente em S. Paulo, e contando 29 annos de idade.”<sup>1</sup> Another account of the Naval Revolt lists Von Linde among the prisoners under another iteration of his name: Carl Axel Wilhelm Krum Von Linden, simply describing his profession as an electrician (*electricista*).<sup>2</sup>

This matches certain details about Von Linde that emerge in later sources, particularly that “Von Linder” was of Swiss background and an engineer with a European education.

According to the *Comercio de São Paulo*, Von Linde was responsible for designing arrays of

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<sup>1</sup> *Comercio de São Paulo* 31-32. For reference, I have opted to use the most common iteration of his name: Guilherme Von Linde.

<sup>2</sup> Caldas 178. Curiously, the volume lists a “Dr. Guilherme Linder” in a separate entry on the list though there is a high probability that Von Linde's name was simply recorded under two different spellings.

explosive mines and torpedoes to be used by a group of rebels based out of Ilha das Cobras, northeast of the erstwhile capital—Rio de Janeiro.<sup>3</sup> Upon being captured and processed with other prisoners, authorities discovered a certain number of “designs, plans, and papers” among his possessions pertaining to his role in the revolt.<sup>4</sup>

Von Linde was forced, upon his capture, to lead government forces to the entrance of a rebel stronghold at gunpoint. He then pointedly refused to help government troops disarm the mines he helped to lay at Ilha das Cobras, “saying he didn’t have any obligation to risk his life on behalf of the government.”<sup>5</sup> It is unclear exactly why he joined the revolt, though many of his fellow *gaúchos* had participated in the contemporaneous *Revolução Federalista* in southern Brazil that broadly aimed to topple the central government.

In a demonstration of Von Linde’s importance to the military strategy of the rebels, he was allegedly brought before none other than the “Iron Marshal” himself, President Floriano Peixoto, who promised that Von Linde would be compensated and released for aiding in the destruction of explosive devices.<sup>6</sup> Von Linde’s simple response, upon being reassured by the President, was: “That’s fine. I will go then.”<sup>7</sup> Von Linde apparently collaborated with government forces, and in so doing avoided further punishment. Sometime after the conclusion of the revolt, he set his sights on the state of Pará—far afield from the two states, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, that served as competing *foci* of political power under the Velha República.

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<sup>3</sup> *Commercio de São Paulo*, 32.

<sup>4</sup> “Os mysterios da correcção.” *O Commercio de São Paulo* (São Paulo), 27 Nov. 1894.

<sup>5</sup> *Commerio de São Paulo*, 32.

<sup>6</sup> “Os mysterios da correcção.” *O Commercio de São Paulo* (São Paulo), 28 Nov. 1894.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

Sources suggest that Von Linde firmly established himself in Pará as a fazenda manager in the town of Quatipurú and was an associate of then Governor José Pais de Carvalho by 1898.<sup>8</sup> That same year, Von Linde was part of a group of businessmen who received the governor on a visit to the agricultural colony of Benjamin Constant. An account of that visit describes Von Linde as a property owner in Quatipurú, “civil engineer and electrician trained in the colleges of Stockholm and Mittweida.”<sup>9</sup> One of the stops on the Governor’s trip was the fazenda Santo Antônio in Quatipurú, about 130 kilometers northwest of Viseu. The newspaper celebrated the fazenda as an example of “notable prosperity...owing exclusively to the individual efforts of its owners. Under the management of sr. Guilherme von Linde, rio-grandense do sul, the fazenda in question demonstrates maximum development in its agriculture and pastoral industry.”

The newspaper noted the cordialness of the meeting between Von Linde and Governor Pais de Carvalho, further cementing the idea that a certain vision of progress rested on the close relationship between the economic elite and political elite, but particularly between outside economic actors such as Von Linde and key players in the state of Pará. Von Linde was also a powerful figure in the town of Bragança eighty kilometers northwest of Viseu. Shortly after the Governor’s visit, Von Linde was accused of interfering in local elections there in 1898:

“crowning himself prefeito of alto Quatipurú, nominated by the Governor, threatening voters with imprisonment for wanting to vote for our candidates...”<sup>10</sup>

As the twentieth century commenced, Von Linde aligned himself ever more closely with political power. In 1900 he was part of an expedition of influential Paraenses convoked by the

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<sup>8</sup> “Dr. Paes de Carvalho.” *O Pará* (Belém), 30 July 1898.

<sup>9</sup> “A Viagem do Governador.” *O Pará* (Belém), 30 July 1898. Mittweida is a small town west of Dresden, Germany. This might indicate his professional training.

<sup>10</sup> “Bragança.” *O Pará* (Belém), 1 September 1898.

governor to scout land for future colonization.<sup>11</sup> Just as he staked out territory for agriculture and mining, so did he stake out a place among the Paraense elite. The 13 June 1900 edition of the federal publication *Diário Oficial* listed Von Linde as a Lieutenant Colonel in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Pará National Guard.<sup>12</sup> What better symbol of the obstacles that would confront black residents of Camiranga and Itamoari in the early-twentieth century than an unscrupulous businessman with ties to the segment of the state government responsible for maintaining order through force? Through advantageous political connections and a ruthless manner of advancing his personal agenda, Von Linde amassed significant influence in Pará over a short period of time.

In 1902, Von Linde had made a bid to build a railroad between Bragança and Benjamin Constant, an agricultural colony consisting mostly of Spanish immigrants of which Von Linde was briefly an administrator. One can imagine that his professional training and connections gave him a significant advantage in winning the bid to build the railroad. Due to a failure to fulfill his contractual obligations with the state, however, Von Linde lost the contract. It is after this time that we will begin to see the earliest references to Von Linde in relation to mining along the Gurupí River. Having made a name for himself in northeastern Pará, he was well-positioned to bring his technical training and knowledge to bear in exploiting gold deposits along the Gurupí River.

An investigation into a murder committed within Viseu's borders gives a firmer idea of the beginning of Von Linde's tenure as a mining potentate in Viseu. A quarrel between two residents of the village of Bela Aurora—just north of Camiranga along the Gurupí River—in

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<sup>11</sup> "Colonização do Estado." *O Pará* (Belém), 3 March 1900.

<sup>12</sup> *Diário Oficial* (Rio de Janeiro), 13 June 1900. The spelling and name of the *Diário* change slightly, but I will use DOU as an abbreviation



February 1903, ended in an act of homicide.<sup>13</sup> One of the witnesses testified that in the process of committing the homicide in question, the defendant Estevão Alves de Souza passed the *barração* of “Doutor Guilherme.” I would contend that this was certainly Guilherme Von Linde, and he was already in Bela Aurora if not in Camiranga and Itamoari in early 1903.<sup>14</sup> At least four other witnesses mentioned over the course of their testimony that they were employees of Von Linde, and the latter had a large physical establishment with a kitchen, indicating the need to accommodate a larger number of laborers.<sup>15</sup>

In his summary of the case, the *Promotor Público* (Alfredo d’Araujo Cunha) makes it clear that Von Linde, who was not under suspicion himself but owned the *barração* that served as the scene of the crime, was already a known quantity with an established operation on the Gurupí. One witness refers to “Dr. Guilherme K. Von Linde, engineer who explores the gold mines of the State” and commanded a crew of miners.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that he was known to authorities and had a team of workers in early 1903 suggests that he began his operations even earlier.<sup>17</sup> After all, Von Linde already had a

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<sup>13</sup> Alfredo Gonçalves Teixeira to Joaquim Gomes de Mattos, 22 Feb. 1903, Comarcas, Viseu, Crime, Caixa A, Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>14</sup> Testimony of Estevão Alves de Souza, 22 February 1903, Comarcas, Viseu, Crime, Caixa A, Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>15</sup> Nearly all of the witnesses in this case were Von Linde’s employees or had some business in his *barração*, and many were *nordestinos* who migrated to Pará for work. Antonio Paixão, Francisco d’Alencar da Silva, Casemiro Carneiro de Amorim, and Manoel Pereira Filho. In Souza Araújo’s *A Prophylaxia Rural no Estado do Pará*, he states that Von Linde had over 80 men at his disposal when exploring in western Maranhão.

<sup>16</sup> Alfredo d’Araujo Cunha to Joaquim Gomes de Mattos, 2 May 1903, Comarcas, Viseu, Crime, Caixa A, Centro de Memória da Amazônia (CMA), Belém.

<sup>17</sup> Estimates of when he arrived to the Gurupí vary widely. Ruben Almeida claims that Von Linde was active in Pará as early as 1886. Pacheco writes that Von Linde was exploring in western Maranhão shortly after the proclamation of the Brazilian Republic in 1889. Jorge Hurley cites the beginning of Von Linde’s mining activities along the Pará-Maranhão border at around 1905-1906. I personally believe that he was already mining along the Gurupí at the beginning of 1902 and perhaps as early as 1901.

significant gold mining operation and a workforce consisting of *nordestinos*, carrying on the colonizing work of previous failed projects. Apart from his name being mentioned by numerous witnesses, Von Linde was not questioned by authorities over the course of the investigation. Not only was Von Linde already known to local authorities in Viseu in 1903, but he also commanded the attention of influential diplomats in Belém by that point.

In 1902, Von Linde's activities were attracting notice among hemispheric elites. The Pan-American Bureau's *Monthly Bulletin* reproduced news from Brazil of one "Dr. William Van Linde, a mining expert representing an American syndicate." The brief news item mentions that Von Linde was prospecting for gold and emphasized the high value of mining property at Montes Aureos.<sup>18</sup> Though his operations were in a nascent stage, their mention in a publication such as the *Monthly Bulletin* makes it clear that representatives of foreign capital were anxiously awaiting the success of extractive industries along the Gurupí.

In fact, Von Linde had the ear of the American Consulate in Belém for as long as he was active in the mining territories along the Gurupi River. Certain sectors of the U.S. political elite were well-aware of the economic potential of the Gurupi River. In a diplomatic report filed in November 1902 by Belém-based U.S. Consul Kavanaugh K. Kenneday under the heading "Gold in Maranhão," he reproduces a long excerpt of a letter sent by "Guilhermo Von Linde:"

The auriferous portion of *my* property is situated in the State of Pará in mountains dividing the Gurupy and Piria rivers...About the year 1888, gold was discovered by fugitive slaves, who sought a refuge here. The negroes washed the gold only with pans, and work is carried on to-day in the same manner. They work only the heads of the creeks, where many nuggets are found...There are still more than 20 creeks which have *never* been worked.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Mining Notes 24.

<sup>19</sup> Bureau of Foreign Commerce 1903, 724-725. Italics added.

Von Linde goes on to extol the virtues of the region, not only in terms of gold mines—which he insists had already produced 1000 pounds of ore as of 1888—but also of available water, timber, and quartz. Von Linde tries to convince the Consul that the construction of thirty miles of railroad between the Gurupi and the Guamá River whose headwaters reach the southern portion of Belém would allow for lower transportation costs and “would cost only about \$150000, as all material imported for mining, inclusive of rails, is free of customs taxes. Nearly all the land between the Guama and Gurupy rivers is mining territory, *belonging, with the exception of my land, to the Government.*”<sup>20</sup>

He claims to have property measuring twelve square leagues, which “do not necessitate any special concession from the State or Federal Governments to work the mines.” Though Von Linde made this assertion in 1902, it seems that none of “his” mining territories in Pará were registered until about 1920, and this under false pretenses according to Jorge Hurley’s case in *Nos sertões do Gurupy*, which will be covered later in this chapter. Von Linde plainly admits in his correspondence that he was operating in territory inhabited by fugitive slaves, claiming extensive territories as property seemingly on the basis that they did not require an *explicit* concession by state or federal governments.<sup>21</sup>

It is my contention that Von Linde was falsely claiming this territory in order to attract capital through his line to the U.S. Consul. Laws that showed a preference for extractive industries (a lack of tax on capital imported for mining) made Von Linde’s pitch attractive, while

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Further highlighting the absurdity of Von Linde’s claims, Guilherme Capanema had specifically been granted a series of concessions along the Gurupí during the 1890s as specified in Chapter 2.

a notorious lack of enforcement mechanisms allowed Von Linde's trade in precious metals and minerals to escape the routine export taxes that would be levied by the government.

In July 1902 Consul Kenneday filed another report to which he attached briefs by engineers Rudolf Seyler and Guiherme Gerdeau. In his preface to these briefs, he mentioned two mines long attached to Agostinho de Sá Caldas: Alegre and Anélio (referred to as "Annel.")<sup>22</sup> Speaking to the state of mining along the Gurupí, the report boasts of the "best part of the country in the Gurupy River district, and from there south through the State of Maranhão." Interestingly, this account repeats a historical falsehood discussed at some length in Chapter 1, which is that the Montes Aureos Gold Mining Company left the region because slaveowners jealous of the company's access to quilombola labor pressured the government into ending the concession.<sup>23</sup>

Seyler stresses the excellent potential of gold deposits while lamenting that the climate "is perhaps the worst in South America, rendering it practically impossible for white men to exist there."<sup>24</sup> The latter quote affirms the legacy of quilombo territoriality as reflected in frustrated attempts by state and capital to turn the Gurupí into a "stage space," demarcated and duly sanitized for colonization and extraction for the benefit of regional and hemispheric elites. Even if the climate of the Gurupí wasn't ideal for white men, the fact that the report appeared in *Monthly Bulletin* of the Pan-American Union with Spanish and Portuguese translations suggest that those who sought profit were not yet finished with the region.

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<sup>22</sup> Department of State 1903, 496.

<sup>23</sup> Department of State 1903, 497.

<sup>24</sup> Department of State 1903, 496.

U.S. interest was enough to be a deciding factor in consolidating control over mineral resources in Pará. Seyler states that the mines were private property, and that an “American prospector now had a contract with the holders of the property...*and he will endeavor to interest American capital to develop the mines.*”<sup>25</sup> Perhaps this is why Von Linde would have received considerable support and attention from U.S. diplomats, something which could have offset the legal grey areas in which Von Linde was operating.

The connection between dollars and diplomacy is clear, as “American prospectors are now at work in the consular district of Para, and, once they can induce substantial investigators to examine their discoveries, no doubt many rich quartz reefs will be opened up and a large and immensely wealthy mining district will be developed. The first comers will take all the prizes.”<sup>26</sup> Explorer Guilherme Gerdeau, like most experts on mining in the Gurupí region, understood that runaway slaves had been panning for gold in the region “in former days...as far back as fifty years ago with considerable success, a large amount of gold, in the aggregate, having been taken out by them.”<sup>27</sup>

The latter point, all the more amazing when taken in conjunction with Von Linde’s estimate that quilombolas had removed a ton of gold over the course of a decade with little more than gold pans, does not seem to give pause to Kenneday or those who read his reports. The U.S. Consul was not the only diplomat who had caught wind of the potential of the Gurupí as a mining hotspot. In 1903, the state of Maranhão awarded an eighteen-year mining concession to Edmund Compton and José Tavares extending between the Gurupí River and the Pindaré

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<sup>25</sup> Department of State 1903, 497.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Department of State 1903 498.

River.<sup>28</sup> Not coincidentally, Compton was a Vice-Consul for Great Britain posted in Maranhão at the time the contract was awarded to him and his business partner.<sup>29</sup>

As for the existing workforce, Gerdeau states that mining companies could find “no skilled miners...and the miners will not perform manual labor for any price. They can be employed only as hunters.”<sup>30</sup> This was a common refrain among foreign capitalists in certain regions of Brazil. Should Gerdeau’s use of the term “natives” be understood to mean indigenous or *caboclo* laborers, or is this also a description of the quilombolas still residing there? If the former is true, then the report is discursively removing quilombolas from the landscape. If the latter, then it indirectly demonstrates a reticence on the part of quilombolas to participate in the burgeoning extractive economy.

Perhaps aware of the activities of Von Linde and other aventureiros (adventurers), Gerdeau continued: “It is very difficult to work mining claims in Brazil, as there are no mineral laws, and the Government is slow to grant or sell mineral claims, especially to foreign companies. No license is granted or sold to explore or prospect for gold in this country, so that it is practically impossible to secure a good mine here upon a reasonable basis.” He also insisted on the difficulty of obtaining rights to mine on former *sesmarias*.<sup>31</sup> This almost seems like a retroactive justification for someone mounting mining operations without any concessions, as Von Linde had done, to say nothing of the fact that even a “legitimate” concession holder only

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<sup>28</sup> “Official.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 17 Apr. 1903.

<sup>29</sup> Ministério de Estado das Relações Exteriores 1904, 112

<sup>30</sup> Department of State 1903, 498.

<sup>31</sup> Department of State 1903, 499.

realized profit based on the exploitation of the lands and labor of quilombolas whose land tenure and rights continued to go unrecognized.

Rudolf Seyler, a U.S. national himself, apparently received an astonishing concession of twenty thousand square miles from Maranhão's state government—an area stretching between the Pindaré and Gurupí rivers. Seyler was then able to raise \$5 million in capital in New York.<sup>32</sup> According to the sources used by *Pacotilha*, there was considerable enthusiasm for the possibility of extensive work because the climate “é saudável e próprio para o homem branco.”<sup>33</sup> The news made a significant impression in both Brazil and the United States, though the coverage on the concession from *Pacotilha* demonstrates a certain degree of offense at the fact that such concessions were not in the hands of Brazil's native sons, oblivious to the reality that foreign capitalists were simply playing the game much more effectively than their domestic counterparts.<sup>34</sup>

Not long after, in 1904, Von Linde made requests to the Ministry of the Navy to make use of unspecified waterfalls along the Gurupí, presumably as a means of generating power for mills or other machinery.<sup>35</sup> He was setting the stage for a comprehensive attempt to exploit the region and its resources. And he was supported by a tight network of diplomats and engineers

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<sup>32</sup> “Riquezas no Maranhão.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 22 Nov. 1904. According to the 6 Nov.

1904 edition of the French-language Brazilian newspaper *L'Etoile du Sud*, Seyler entered the United States with Adolphe Brezet, self-proclaimed leader of the Free State of Cunani for a time. The 14 Sep. 1904 edition of Rio's *Jornal do Comercio* reports that Seyler was being referred to as “o novo Brezet.” It is also unclear how this concession related to that awarded to Compton and Tavares, also said to extend between the Pindaré and Gurupí rivers.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> The article ends: “um terço do Maranhão, agora, amanhã, quem sabe lá?”

<sup>35</sup> *O Século* (Rio de Janeiro), 14 Feb. 1907. This was done in the name of “Guilherme Linde & Cia.” It is unclear when the company was incorporated in Brazil.

who confirmed the both the natural wealth of the region and the need for economic exploitation as guided by their expert hands.

Such exploitation was made possible by larger legal frameworks. After the founding of Brazil's First Republic in 1889, the federal government demarcated "unclaimed" territories in states such as Maranhão and Pará and labeled them as *terras devolutas* (vacant lands), which the states were then free to parcelize and offer to private individuals through leases and outright purchases.<sup>36</sup> Whether or not he was simply winking at U.S. Consul Kenneday in summarizing his business, Von Linde certainly invoked the *idea* of terra devolutas to justify his claims. At any rate, the fading division between foreign and domestic capital in the Gurupí meant that quilombolas lacked the allies that they had bolstered their struggle against dubious land claims two decades prior.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Von Linde forged a commercial relationship with residents of Camiranga and Itamoari, purchasing gold extracted from nearby mines by local residents.<sup>37</sup> As Almeida puts it: "he met the pretos of Camiranga and Itamauari, later entering in struggle with them, resulting in a police inquiry in Vizeu. He was involved in many cases ..."<sup>38</sup> Writing at a much later date, Schwennhagen makes it explicit that with Agostinho's passing, Von Linde established dominance over those same mines, "over which he took power after the death of Old Agostinho, the famous senhor Guilherme Linden."<sup>39</sup> But Von

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<sup>36</sup> "Projeto da Constituição." *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 26 March 1890.

<sup>37</sup> Hurley 1928, 50.

<sup>38</sup> Almeida 42. These complaints are often referred to obliquely without reference to the complainants or the details of such cases.

<sup>39</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. "O Ouro do Maranhão e seu esquadrinhamento." *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 21 April 1927.



Linde was not necessarily the only player as far as gold extraction along the Gurupí was concerned.

Early in 1906, for example, Governor of Pará Augusto Montenegro received a visit from João de Abreu and George W. Anderson—the latter representing a gas company.<sup>40</sup> Abreu, highly interested in the possibility for gold extraction in eastern Pará, asked the Governor to whom those lands belonged. Governor Montenegro replied that “that river belongs to Pará, with the exception of 4 léguas which are the property of sr. Guilherme Von Linde, who has soil and subsoil rights.” At any rate, Abreu was promising to return to Viseu to purchase and explore the surrounding territory.<sup>41</sup>

On 11 April of that year, Von Linde had also signed a contract with Maranhão’s state government allowing for mining exploration on the western border in lands belonging to the *municípios* of Turiaçu and Carutapéra, respectively.<sup>42</sup> However, Von Linde did not start delivering on the contract until about 1910 when he began gold extraction along the Cachoeira Itapeua just south of Itamoari.<sup>43</sup> About a year later, the contract was cancelled.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, this was proof that Von Linde was capable of mounting mining operations on both sides of the Pará-Maranhão border and was active in large swaths of gold mining territory worked by quilombolas.

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<sup>40</sup> “As Minas do Gurupy.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 19 Feb. 1906.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.* Note that Governor Montenegro only mentioned 4 léguas, in contrast to the 12 of which Von Linde boasted in his letter to Consul Kenneday. At any rate, it seemed that the state governor believed Von Linde to be a legitimate property holder (albeit not to the same extent as what Von Linde advertised to his foreign associates.)

<sup>42</sup> “O Governo do Estado.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 28 April 1911.

<sup>43</sup> “O governo do Estado.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 15 April 1910.

<sup>44</sup> “O Governo do Estado.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 28 April 1911.

Mining concessions at the state level generally provided incentives for concession holders. In 1905, for example, the state of Maranhão solicited proposals for mining in the Turiaçu-Carutapéra area. The guidelines contained favorable stipulations including exploration rights covering up to 100 square kilometers as a part of the mining concession. Theoretically, the state of Maranhão would also levy a tax of 5% for the first decade, with a climbing scale further into the fifty-year term of exploration. This evidently included usufruct rights over the lands surrounding the mine.<sup>45</sup> Those who extracted and exported gold could also depend on a lack of enforcement, at least in northern Brazil. Commercial actors such as Von Linde took ample advantage of this situation: “the kingdom of Guilherme doesn’t have fixed limits. Wherever you find a gold nugget, the terrain is his, and he controls and explores on the maranhense side as well, without accountability to anyone.”<sup>46</sup> Camiranga and Itamoari received little mention during this time, other than their categorization as fields (*arraiais*) in an article detailing various locations in eastern Pará.<sup>47</sup>

Though Maranhão’s state government had rendered his contract void in April 1911, an undeterred Von Linde traveled to London and returned to Pará “armed with all of the necessary equipment for exploring gold mines in the Gurupi”<sup>48</sup> Perhaps he was playing the same game as Jules Blanc had before him: operating close to the state border to muddy the waters in terms of enforcement and jurisdiction. As mentioned previously, he also had excellent political connections in Pará. Von Linde was hardly the only one with ambition as it pertained to grabbing

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<sup>45</sup> “Edital.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 1 June 1905.

<sup>46</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. “O Ouro do Maranhão.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 11 May 1927.

<sup>47</sup> “O rio Gurupy.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 30 October 1907.

<sup>48</sup> “Telegrammas.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 24 July 1911.

mineral-rich territory. State governments enabled the parceling of lands known to be inhabited by quilombolas, and there was an active solicitation of proposals for mining exploration open to both Brazilians and non-Brazilians.

In 1910 the government of Maranhão reported various contracts for exploring so-called terras devolutas involving French, British, and U.S. citizens. One such contract made with Charles Ernest Clissold, another British diplomat, indicated that he would lease a territory consisting of 50 square miles of land surrounding the Maracassumé River in the northwest portion of the state.<sup>49</sup> Out of this acquisition the Maracassumé Mining Exploration Mining and Development Company, Ltd. was born, and became an ongoing concern in western Maranhão despite its lack of success.<sup>50</sup> This was highly contested territory, traditionally held by the family of slaveowner José Gonçalves Teixeira. Many of his descendants had previously lodged a protest through the Maranhense press in the Summer of 1901 over the ever-increasing frequency of gold mining activity by squatters on “their” lands.<sup>51</sup> Years later, rubber planter Carlos Ferreira Coelho lodged a similar protest against individuals who destroyed his rubber plants in an area spanning from Turiaçu to the Gurupí.<sup>52</sup> Coelho mentioned the impending transfer of rights to a “sindicato inglês”—and perhaps certain individuals wanted to beat the English investors to the punch by extracting rubber on what was still Coelho’s land. Even in a nascent stage, gold fever was competing for land with other extractive industries, and long-established landowners were not immune to the unique manifestation of creative destruction reshaping the Gurupí valley.

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<sup>49</sup> Domingues 21. Clissold managed the property together with the U.S. citizen Walter Ellsworth Brown.

<sup>50</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. “O Ouro do Maranhão.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 12 May 1912.

<sup>51</sup> Bento Camillo Teixeira Callado, et. al. “Terras do Gurupy.” *Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 14 June 1901.

<sup>52</sup> Carlos Ferreira Coelho. “Protesto,” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 9 August 1910.

During the same period, Von Linde formed the North of Brazil Finance and Development Company with a group of partners. With GBP 20000 of start-up capital, the company had as its goal to “carry on the business of prospectors, explorers, financiers, miners, company promoters, etc...”<sup>53</sup> Though the company prominently featured “North of Brazil” in its name, its headquarters was thousands of miles away in Central London, in the heart of what would today be considered the City of London—a hub of frantic, high-volume financial activity. Thus, this company represented an important nexus of Brazilian and British capital that had as its goal the continued exploitation of land and labor power belonging to fugitive slaves and their descendants. The principals—Guilherme Von Linde along with regional capitalists Manoel Gonçalves de Brito and Joaquim Vieira de Miranda—were to receive a salary of 100 pounds per year and an unspecified share in the profits.<sup>54</sup>

The North of Brazil Finance and Development Company did not actually receive authorization to function in Brazil until a presidential decree was issued June 1912 allowing them to do so. Former Pará Governor José Pais de Carvalho would serve as one of three directors for the Company’s operations in Brazil, suggesting that political connections were a factor in the authorization process. Only a few years after its formation, the company was issuing shares in order to raise its available capital to GBP 100000.<sup>55</sup>

The firmament of a maturing dependent political economy was being brought to bear on quilombolas in the Gurupi region, involving domestic and international capital as well as political actors such as former governor Pais de Carvalho, who had done much to advance Von

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<sup>53</sup> “New Issues.” *The Brazilian Review* (Rio de Janeiro), 12 April 1910.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* Miranda and Brito were partners in the regional shipping company Miranda Silva & Cia.

<sup>55</sup> Estados Unidos do Brasil. Decreto 9609, 5 June 1912. Multiple members of Carvalho’s family held shares in the company. Many of them, including the former governor, were living in Paris.

Linde's goals in the state of Pará early on. Von Linde benefitted from a cycle in the twentieth century whereby economic interest translated into knowledge production, beginning the cycle again by bolstering the confidence of potential investors.<sup>56</sup> The illicit partnerships used by Brazilians such as Silvio and José Pedro Ribeiro to gain access to the mineral wealth extracted by quilombolas had given way to more sophisticated methods of wealth accumulation.

### **Gold and Terror**

Determined to realize profits through gold extraction, Von Linde oversaw a brutal campaign of domination in an attempt to secure gold-rich territory. As a partner in a British company relatively flush with capital, Von Linde wasted no time in continuing his expansion through gold mining territories on both sides of the border. Naturally, this generated conflict with indigenous groups in western Maranhão. Within a year of his return from London, one reader indignantly wrote to the newspaper *Pacotilha* asking that, instead of focusing on the “atrocities” committed by the Ka’apor, they should address “as minas de dynamite e morticínios do sr. Guilherme Linde, em Montes Aúreos.”<sup>57</sup> One telegram from Pedro Dantas, an agent of the Serviço de Protecção aos Índios (SPI) implies that conflict between Timbiras and Ka’apor increased with the participation of the Timbiras in Von Linde’s mining exploration on the Maranhão-Pará border.<sup>58</sup> Schwennhagen affirms later that the so-called “rei do Ouro do Gurupy” was “a man without scruples, who killed or had killed a certain number of indigenous people during the night through acts of arson, like a coward.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Paiva et. al 12. There is mention of a major “rush” in western Maranhão in 1912 and 1913 as Clissold obtained his concession, during this brief period other geologists such as Bower and Huler published works on the region’s mining prospects.

<sup>57</sup> Leandro Cunha. “A protecção aos índios.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 15 Jan. 1912.

<sup>58</sup> “Protecção aos índios.” *O Paiz* (São Luís), 1 June 1911.

<sup>59</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. “O Ouro do Maranhão e seu esquadrinhamento.” *Pacotilha* (São

By 1913, Von Linde was bringing imported equipment to the Maracaçumé River along with a team of workers in order to establish a *fábrica*.<sup>60</sup> He set up a base of operations on the island of Chatão, which sits approximately in the middle of the Gurupí River south of Itamoari and north of Itapeua where he had previously begun mining operations under his contract with the state of Maranhão. His *barração* was attacked by a group of Ka'apor in 1913, who absconded with various items and killed "o preto Domingos Souza."<sup>61</sup> Given the location of the attack, one might assume that Souza was probably a resident of Itamoari.

This was not the only incident. In 1919, Von Linde telegraphed *O Estado do Pará* with news of a Ka'apor attack on the town of Mariana, just north of Camiranga. The newspaper lamented the ineffectiveness of the national government to protect Brazilians in those areas yet to be touched by the "light of civilization."<sup>62</sup> This presupposes, of course, that communities such as Camiranga and Itamaoari did not constitute civilized areas without the presence of a Von Linde or a similar figure. Paiva recounts that, until the date of the so-called "pacification" of the Urubú-Kaapor in 1928, Von Linde "lived in Camiranga with rifle in hand with armed guards posted in the town during the night. The miners only went in groups, running serious risks and being subject to constants ambushes on the Road."<sup>63</sup> In other words, Von Linde's success correlated with the displacement of both quilombolas and the native inhabitants of the region.

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Luís), 21 April 1927.

<sup>60</sup> "Telegramas." *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 17 Apr. 1913.

<sup>61</sup> "Telegramas." *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 26 Dec. 1913.

<sup>62</sup> "Os índios do Gurupy assaltam uma povoação." *O Estado do Pará* (Belém), 19 Nov. 1919.

<sup>63</sup> Paiva, et. al 63.

Though this chapter has taken up the transformation of the political economy along the Maranhão-Pará border and the conditions which created powerful mining barons like Von Linde, residents of the region were hardly submissive during this period. In 1914, the Ministry of Agriculture advised the Governor of Pará “to take into consideration, the representation of *various* residents of Camiranga, district of Vizeu, in this State, asking for intervention against the violence attributed to the engineer Guilherme Von Linde.”<sup>64</sup> Seeking a remedy through the intervention of the national government is not in and of itself a revolutionary measure, but indicates that numerous residents of Camiranga were demanding the vindication of their rights and dignity in the face of Von Linde’s domination even as he was expanding his reach. It is also quite amazing that the Ministry of Agriculture saw fit to entertain such requests.

Perhaps such actions did not happen in a vacuum, but were part of a growing economic nationalism. In December 1914, Rio’s *Diário de Notícias* weighed a greater role for the national government in regulating the mining economy, “no interesse de proteger os garimpeiros e compradores, que trabalham em benefício de estrangeiros....”<sup>65</sup> In fact, they invoked the support of a high-ranking employee of the Banco do Brasil in proposing such measures, which were also a reaction to the widespread gold smuggling (*evasão*) in northern Brazil practiced by individuals like Von Linde. Some of the policies proposed by Banco do Brasil representative Gilberto Mendes de Azevedo were incredibly progressive for the existing political climate in Brazil: the formation of miners’ cooperatives, establishment of health programs in areas of concentrated mining activity, creation of roads and paths to facilitate transportation, more schools, greater

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<sup>64</sup> “Varias noticias.” *Jornal do Commercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 28 Oct. 1914. Italics added. The original quote is as follows: “tomar na consideração que merecer, a representação de varios habitantes de Camiranga, districto de Vizeu, nesse Estado, pedindo providencias contra violencias que attribuem ao engenheiro Guilherme Von Linde.”

<sup>65</sup> “A Organização da economia mineral.” *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro), 7 Dec. 1914.

enforcement against smuggling, the use of laboratories to perfect mining practices, and the organization of agricultural work to supplement the mining economy.<sup>66</sup> The stories of violence, exploitation, and resistance circulating with ever greater reach and frequency from the Gurupí played a role in fueling such proposals. But Von Linde still represented the dominant narrative of progress and development.

A 1918 interview with Von Linde in *O Estado do Pará*, is a rare instance of Von Linde speaking on his own behalf. He is introduced as coming from a prominent family in Uruguaiana, perhaps even related to the king of Sweden!<sup>67</sup> In referring to his own findings, he cites previous explorers whom he knew mostly by reputation. For example, he mentions Carlos Meerkatz—a former employee of the *Repartição Geral dos Telégrafos*—who met with Von Linde on behalf of José Pedro Ribeiro. He also mentions an “Oliwer or Webber,” who dug a tunnel to exploit a rich gold deposit.<sup>68</sup> The tunnel collapsed, causing the deaths of three black workers who were buried alive. As an aside, he mentions that those black workers were former slaves of José Gonçalves Teixeira.<sup>69</sup> Teixeira was, in fact, one of the early concession holders for mineral rights in northwestern Maranhão, having received a thirty-year concession in 1879 to explore for gold and other minerals around Turiaçu.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* (A Organização da Economia Mineral.” *Diário de Notícias*)

<sup>67</sup> “As minas de ouro do Tury-assú, no Maranhão.” *Estado do Pará* (Belém), 19 April 1918.

<sup>68</sup> According to Almeida 10-11, the Belgian explorer George Olivier (“Oliwer”) and the English explorer William Webster (“Webber”) both explored claims in Maranhão with little success during the 1880s.

<sup>69</sup> “As minas de ouro do Tury-assú, no Maranhão.” *Estado do Pará* (Belém), 19 April 1918.

<sup>70</sup> Império do Brasil. Decreto 7310, 7 June 1879.



Von Linde paints of picture of a population frightened away from the mines by the collapse: “[the] vein abandoned in consequence of this disaster, continues to this day, through the fear of the descendants of those people, still exploited; there is even a superstitious legend that prevents the pretos from accepting work, even though the vein is very rich.”<sup>71</sup> Von Linde was well aware that most of the mining workforce was black, as there is only mention of the hesitancy of black workers to return to the mine for allegedly superstitious reasons.

He very explicitly promotes a thorough economic exploitation of the region stretching from Turiaçu to the Gurupi in saying that “Whoever wants to go there will find the means of making a fortune in the various branches of industry whose raw materials are superabundant. Among them one might note copahyba that has an advantage over the others because it requires less capital but promises greater profits.”<sup>72</sup> Perhaps the most ludicrous portion of the interview was the engineer claiming that his activities have yielded results that were only of an exploratory nature “with no pecuniary gain, even to the contrary, I’ve converted the beginning of a wealthy life into exploration without a second thought advanced this to the point where me and my partners are currently spending around 400000 reais.”<sup>73</sup> This is in spite of the subtitle to the article drawing the reader’s attention to Von Linde successfully raising GBP 240000 in London for the formation of a company to explore mineral and other natural resources in Pará!<sup>74</sup> Von Linde claims to have explored some 400 kilometers, and as of the time of the interview he had already imprinted his name on one of his properties: Monte Linde.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> “A minas de ouro do Tury-assú, no Maranhão.” *Estado do Pará* (Belém), 19 April 1918.

<sup>73</sup> The denoted figure is 400 mil-reís

<sup>74</sup> For reference, that amount would be over 100,000,000 million current British pounds

<sup>75</sup> Moura 1935 includes a map indicating a “Monte Linde” between the

The article reprinted the telegram from London announcing the deal. The terms of the deal mostly refer to the extraction of wood for the paper industry, capitalized to the tune of the abovementioned amount and with a guarantee of a 7% rate of return. One of the things Von Linde did to seal the deal was producing a flask containing nearly a kilogram of gold taken from the “Tury” (possibly territory along the Turiaçu River).<sup>76</sup> Such news was indicative that the conflict between Von Linde and the quilombolas gradually skewed in his favor, and his control over resources in the Gurupí and Turiaçu regions, as well as his control over land, provided a sufficient guarantee to secure the entry of international capital into the region on a larger scale. Before long, the Gurupí became a potential El Dorado or California.

Selling a narrative of the Gurupí as a land of untapped riches meant emphasizing it as a “barbarous region” filled with abandoned works and uncultivated lands. Such rhetoric is emblematic of the epistemic violence that allowed for the further marginalization of quilombo descendants and smaller landowners in favor of explorers backed by international capital with plans for large-scale extraction of gold and other raw materials. Rhetoric presenting the region as a blank canvas was a necessary precondition for primitive accumulation to occur. Not only was the Gurupí the new California, but the quality of the gold was superior and three times greater in value.<sup>77</sup> A Maranhão newspaper excitedly reprinted an interview with Dr. José Witzler, one of the many engineers with designs for the mineral wealth of the Gurupí.<sup>78</sup> One observer stated the potential fortune thusly: “I know the silver mines of Bolivia, mines that have been explored for

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Gurupí and Piriá rivers.

<sup>76</sup> “A minas de ouro do Tury-assú, no Maranhão.” *Estado do Pará* (Belém), 19 April 1918.

<sup>77</sup> “Maranhão, California do norte do Brazil.” *O Jornal* (São Luís), 9 October 1922.”

<sup>78</sup> “Maranhão, California do norte do Brazil.” *O Jornal* (São Luís), 9 October 1922.

many years, but nothing, nothing, is comparable to the grandiosity, to the wonder of gold in the hills of Maranhão.<sup>79</sup>

Such wealth—“fabulous riches...sleeping, intact, in the virgin breast of maranhense land...”—and could not be entrusted to just anyone. The lack of thorough exploration such as what may have been found in other states such as Goiás or Minas Gerais reflected a “painful symptom of the sluggish inertia of the *Jéco-Tatú*.”<sup>80</sup> The latter phrase is seemingly an appropriation of Monteiro Lobato’s *Jeca Tatu*, a literary archetype representing the backwardness and ignorance of rural dwellers. What is particularly interesting is that the *Jeca Tatu* was associated with rural dwellers of Paraíba and São Paulo and mostly interchangeable with the figure of the *caipira caboclo*. In this way, the *Correio da Manhã* is assigning both racial and social class characteristics to the supposed atavism of the Gurupi region while at the same time expunging the contemporary population of quilombolas.<sup>81</sup>

The notion of the Gurupi region as untapped virgin land, a literal and figurative gold mine, was reified by the press. The territory worked and inhabited by quilombolas invited numerous comparisons to California at the height of the gold rush, “a legendary modern paradise or huge transplanted California from the American far west to the virgin sky of Brazil.”<sup>82</sup> The article cites that 1500 families were working in the mines, over a territory of 1500 léguas

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<sup>79</sup> Angas “Riquezas do Maranhão.” *Diario de São Luiz*, 7 April 1923.

<sup>80</sup> “Uma nova California no norte do Brasil.” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 7 October 1922.

<sup>81</sup> José Domingues da Silva uses similar terminology, describing rural dwellers and laborers in northwestern Maranhão as “jecas,” albeit with the rejection of the negative aspects attributed to them by Euclides da Cunha and others.

<sup>82</sup> “Uma nova California no norte do Brasil.” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 7 October 1922.

extracting 200 kilograms of gold per day. The enterprise of industrialized mining was said to be beneficial to private industry and the state, an “work of pure and holy patriotism.”

The article in question closes with a giddily optimistic evaluation of the region: “Perhaps in a short time, it will be the most advanced region of Brazil, its new California, with a dizzying vertigo of civilization and progress.” The author concedes that much of the expertise is concentrated in the hands of foreigners, but “who know how to love Brazil and work for its future aggrandizement.”<sup>83</sup> One might ask: To whom did that future *truly* belong? Social forces along the Gurupí fought over this question with ever greater frequency in the period before 1930.

### **“Em busca de melhores dias”**

During Von Linde’s ascent in the 1910s, the actions of the Brazilian government mostly aided Von Linde in his enterprises, one example being that his company had been given permission to operate in Brazil after being formed in London with English capital. On the other hand, the Ministry of Agriculture seemed to respond to complaints by residents of Camiranga in 1914 by asking the Governor of Pará to look into their situation. Furthermore, individuals such as Gilberto Mendes de Azevedo advocated for stronger state oversight of mining combined with greater access to social services for miners. The state governments of Maranhão and Pará, however, hardly embraced such ambitious proposals. But during the 1920s, expeditions launched in Pará within the purview of state-level programs would draw attention to the plight of quilombolas along the Gurupí. This led to an increasing series of challenges to Von Linde’s domination over the land.

One such program was the so-called Profilaxia Rural, a public health campaign undertaken by the state of Pará. The program enabled medical professionals to witness the

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

deeply rooted poverty of rural areas of Pará, particularly those unofficially being dominated by Guilherme Von Linde, as they traveled through Viseu and the Alto Gurupí. Though their express purpose was to examine members of indigenous groups such as the Timbíras and Tembé, they also passed briefly through territory inhabited by quilombolas. The expedition, led by physician Heráclides de Souza Araújo, passed through the towns of Viseu, Gurupí, and Mariana, before arriving at Bela Aurora. Nearly two decades after Von Linde's arrival there, Souza Araújo describes it as the "property of the sul-riograndense engineer Guilherme Linde, who has lived in this region for more than 20 years, exploring gold and diamond mines." Von Linde had invited them to spend the night at his residence before they examined health conditions in the locale.<sup>84</sup>

Von Linde essentially occupied a fortress on the most elevated point on the landscape overlooking the river and surrounding land, with a mansion surrounded by wire "to defend it from an indian attack." Like a feudal baron, his house was surrounded by twenty shacks housing about one hundred inhabitants. This group was likely a mix of quilombolas and nordestinos, the latter of which we already know Von Linde employed in significant numbers in Bela Aurora. They saw fit to point out that Linde claimed that his tenure was backed by documents "da antiga metropole." Furthermore, Linde possessed the rights to produce hydro-electric power for his mining operations in both Maranhão and Pará.<sup>85</sup> His exploitation of mining resources allowed him to achieve some measure of capitalist diversification into railroads, paper production, and energy. Von Linde requested a concession that would have allowed him to construct a railway crossing through the Gurupí into centers of mineral production in western Maranhão such as

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<sup>84</sup> Araújo 1919, 300-301.

<sup>85</sup> Araújo 1919, 301.

Codó.<sup>86</sup> Von Linde demonstrated mineral samples to the author, proof of the area being “one of the richest and most forward-looking of the State of Pará.”<sup>87</sup>

Out of all the residences in Bela Aurora, it was only Von Linde’s which had a working toilet, “inacceptable for lack of a faucet.”<sup>88</sup> Souza Araújo met with dozens of residents, and gathered them in order to administer general advice on hygiene and health. He remarked: “Dr. Linde having promised to build faucets in the workers’ housing. I noted with pleasure the facility I encountered in examining the populations of the interior, who seemed satisfied and who have received us with care and consideration.”<sup>89</sup> From a historical perspective, Von Linde’s promise seems less than convincing.

Souza Araújo had less to say about Camiranga, which he described as a “colony of negros... who came from Maranhão a long time ago and who are employed in gold extraction, but that doesn’t prevent them from living in plain misery.” Though the expedition spent less than a day in Camiranga, they came to learn that malaria was also common among the residents he encountered.<sup>90</sup> Upon arriving to Itamaoari, Souza Araújo found what he refers to as an “abandoned aldeia” with a population of about 100 residents, “negros na sua grande maioria.” The houses were mostly composed of mud walls and dirt floors. Much like their neighbors in Camiranga, residents of Itamaoari were mostly employed in the gold trade.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> “Do Ministério da Viação.” *O Jornal* (Rio de Janeiro), 2 Apr. 1921. A later article published in the 26 July edition of that same newspaper suggested that officials had soured on the idea.

<sup>87</sup> Araújo 1919, 301. On 315, Araújo encounters Von Linde again upon his return from “properties” in Maranhão.

<sup>88</sup> Araújo 1919, 301.

<sup>89</sup> Araújo 1919, 302.

<sup>90</sup> Araújo 1919, 302. Araújo cites 50 *negros* from Maranhão, which is either an error or could mean that the part of the population born in Camiranga exceeds those born before 1888.

<sup>91</sup> Araújo 1919, 304.

Souza Araújo lacks a certain ethnographic sensibility, interpreting the lack of basic commodities for sale such as sugar, kerosene, salt, eggs, and other items as being a sign of an unproductive people “in the middle of abundant nature, on extremely fertile land.”<sup>92</sup> Among the residents he noted at least one “white” Cearense family, that had been twisted and impoverished by their life there to the point that their sixteen year old daughter was practicing prostitution (*meretrício*) in their own home, with her thirteen year old sister following the same route.<sup>93</sup> This was taken as a sign of the corrupting nature of the region itself.

It is important to quantify this observation in terms of the author’s chagrin at the “nonchalance with which negros mix with whites, men respected or feared by other inhabitants.”<sup>94</sup> Araújo was seemingly shocked that black residents and quilombolas did not demonstrate due social deference to their white neighbors, evoking Otilie Coudreau’s interactions with quilombolas elsewhere in Pará who gleefully refused to treat her as their superior.<sup>95</sup>

Souza Araújo’s observations of the people and their way of life led him to the conclusion that they were inherently amoral: “Far from centers of civilization, lacking communication, lack of respect for authority, the ignorance and penury in which the populations of the interior live are the main factors of this situation of social misery.”<sup>96</sup> Araújo does not take into account that

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Araújo 1919, 305.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> This is particularly evident in *Voyage au Rio Trombetas* and *Voyage au Rio Curuá*. Both works were based on expeditions to large rivers in western Pará with significant populations of quilombolas.

<sup>96</sup> Araújo 1919, 305.

residents of Itamoari and Camiranga had ample connections to so-called “civilization” through economic activity and migration. While the *Profiláxia Rural* only provided the barest ethnographic details about the region’s quilombolas, it revealed damning details regarding Von Linde’s tenure as a mining baron. This would eventually provide ammunition to a public figure who would become an unlikely ally in the quilombolas’ struggle against Von Linde.

When the state government of Pará appointed man of letters and member of the Instituto Histórico e Geográfico do Pará, Jorge Hurley, with investigating attacks by indigenous groups in the border region between Pará and Maranhão in 1919, his travels eventually brought him to both Itamoari and Camiranga.<sup>97</sup> The increasingly attention given to the “pacification” of indigenous groups along the Gurupí meant that quilombolas would come into greater focus, being that the latter adopted numerous indigenous customs but had also experienced conflict with groups such as the Ka’apor. For example, the 29 January edition of *Pacotilha* carries news of “true *outlaws* who came out of the old quilombos and chains here and in Belém, who adopted a savage life, getting together with the índios and finding refuge from the massacre of Alto-Alegre.”<sup>98</sup> Such a view suggests that quilombolas adopted a savage state and remained at a distance from civilization. Hurley’s evaluation is quite different, and he recommends that the state commit small detachments of troops to protect Camiranga and Itamoari from Ka’apor incursions.<sup>99</sup>

He goes on to describe a cheerful (*risonho*) town of 300 residents, far from the sparsely populated abandoned *aldeia* described by Souza Araújo. Of this population, Hurley notes a

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<sup>97</sup> Though his name frequently appears in print as “Hurly,” the author—son of a Philadelphia-born engineer—publicly opted for the traditional spelling of his surname: “Hurley.” (See the 3 Jan. 1929 edition of Rio’s *O Paiz*.) I have opted to use that spelling universally to indicate the author.

<sup>98</sup> R.L. “Selvagens e bandidos.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 29 Jan. 1920. The massacre in question might refer to that suffered by quilombolas on the Maranhão-Pará border in 1882 before they met Jules Blanc.

<sup>99</sup> Hurley 1928, 30.



“majority [of] blacks that emigrate from Maranhão and work in agriculture and gold extraction.”<sup>100</sup> It was a town of about eighty houses—“some covered in straw”—and a church dedicated to the figure of São Benedito, revered by many Afro-Brazilians.<sup>101</sup> We also get a sense of relations between quilombo descendants and certain surrounding indigenous groups: “I saw some tembé women cohabitating with pretos, while noting that, outside of their indigenous customs, they were excellent heads of household.”<sup>102</sup> In some small measure, this demonstrates the multiethnic nature of Itamoari.

In a later published work incorporating material which did not appear in Hurley’s *Nos sertões do Gurupy*, he provides some additional historical and ethnographic detail. In the case of Ilha Taquipéteua, a small island in the middle of the Gurupi River north of Itamoari, Hurley notes the presence of “plots of mandioca belonging to the preto Justiniano da Costa Ferreira, small merchant from the town of Itamaury.”<sup>103</sup> Coming upon the former site of the Colônia Militar, Hurley spent the night at the residence of José Antonio de Almeida, “agricultor e commerciante cearense.”<sup>104</sup> He recalls Almeida’s story, having been essentially forced to leave Itamoari with his family and those who stayed with them “by the imposition of sr. Guilherme Linde, who made himself the lord of the gold mines discovered by the pretos.”<sup>105</sup> It seems that Almeida was his competition, because according to Hurley’s account Almeida himself had done

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Hurley 1928, 30-31. I translated “donas de casa” as “heads of household” here.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.* As mentioned in Chapter 2, it seems that Ferreira and Agostinho de Sá Caldas were on the same steamship as mentioned in the 30 August 1892 edition of *Pacotilha*.

<sup>104</sup> Hurley 1932, 31.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

business with residents of Itamoari, likely buying gold.<sup>106</sup> Hurley praised his gentle spirit and disposition to leave rather than enter into conflict with Von Linde, “The intrusive little despot of that unhappy zone, so rich in gold and so poor in men of action.”<sup>107</sup>

Camiranga is described as a “town with more the 60 houses” with many of its older residents having come from Maranhão as quilombolas.<sup>108</sup> He provides more details on Camiranga’s agriculture, observing “coffee and cocoa fields and good plots for fruit trees,” a subtle trace of quilombola territoriality for decades.<sup>109</sup> Other observations, however, almost mirror those of Itamoari such as the presence of Tembê women in the community as well a church established in honor of São Benedito. With mining having been well established in Camiranga by that point, Hurley also notes that many residents in Camiranga worked in the mines at São Pedro, “a day’s distance traveling to the center.”<sup>110</sup> Hurley also implies, however, that residents know of mines that were not public knowledge—secrets kept between Camiranga residents, perhaps a form of subterfuge with so many outside individuals eager to exploit the mineral wealth under their feet.

Just as Souza Araújo referred to Von Linde’s operations at length, Hurley did the same in his report, but from a strongly critical perspective. Drawing on a theme that would become more pronounced over the next decade, Hurley describes Von Linde as a man of “enigmatic nationality and patriotism, who through his “high” initiative is depopulating the left bank of the

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.* The author uses the term “despota-miry,” with the suffix being the tupí word for “small.”

<sup>108</sup> Hurley 1932, 15.

<sup>109</sup> Hurley 1932, 16.

<sup>110</sup> Hurley 1932, 16. As revealed elsewhere in the chapter, São Pedro was occupied by a group opposed to Von Linde.

Gurupy and the gold-rich lands and veins of Pará, appropriating them violently and criminally...”<sup>111</sup> In 1923, Hurley would return to investigate the question of whether the gold mines claimed by Von Linde were under his legal ownership. This was already a political issue in that Hurley was intervening in an ongoing investigation by Viseu’s police. Hurley was acting in his capacity as a *Promotor Público* in an inquiry into Von Linde’s mining activity.<sup>112</sup> Hurley refers to testimony given by twenty-four individuals over the course of the investigation, a parallel with the Blanc affair from nearly forty years earlier where numerous quilombolas provided testimony while engaging in the illegal activity of *quilombagem*.<sup>113</sup>

While Von Linde claims to have purchased land rights directly from *seismeiros*, Hurley simply argues that this claim is completely invalid because neither his name or the name of the company he represented (Miranda Silva & Cia.) appear in tax records.<sup>114</sup> Nonetheless, he wrote to the judge in Viseu in May 1920 asking that he be recognized as a legitimate property owner of mining territories between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers on the basis of his previous expeditions. He then went on to list dozens of mines he claimed as his property, and Hurley astutely points out that many of these, such as Olho d’agua, Anel (Anélio), and others were either discovered or primarily worked by Agostinho de Sá Caldas and his quilombola comrades.<sup>115</sup> Two years prior, Von Linde confidently claimed that his work was only for exploratory purposes rather than pecuniary ones, but by 1920 he turned this claim on its head with a bold demonstration of

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<sup>111</sup> Hurley 1928, 35.

<sup>112</sup> Hurley, Jorge. ““Nos Sertões do Gurupy,” As Jazidas Auríferas do Pará.”” *O Paiz* (Rio de Janeiro), 5 January 1929.

<sup>113</sup> Hurley 1928, 50.

<sup>114</sup> Hurley 1928, 50-51.

<sup>115</sup> Hurley 1928, 52-53.

hypocrisy. The exact size of Von Linde's claims was estimated to be about 20000 hectares or 200 square kilometers—30% larger than the city of Miami.<sup>116</sup>

This time, however, individuals such as Hurley were willing to forcefully denounce such acts. Interestingly, part of Hurley's case rests on the fact that, beyond the testimony given by “antigos moradores de Camiranga e Itamauari”, mines such as Alegre, Anélio, and São Pedro were surrounded by “plots of mangos, coffee, cocoa, oranges and other fruit trees that, from a legal standpoint, would eloquently and unmistakably attest to the fact that because of their age they would show the years when they were planted and consequently when the mines were discovered.” In their silence, argues Hurley, these fruit trees “bear witness against the brazenness of sr. Guilherme Linde of claiming to have discovered the mines of the Gurupy in 1920!”<sup>117</sup> The use of fruit trees, identified by numerous sources as something indicative of quilombola territoriality, came to serve as part of their defense against Von Linde's false claims.

Such elegant arguments aside, the apparatus of the law did everything to facilitate Von Linde's domination. Von Linde personally ensured that residents of Camiranga received notices threatening them with legal action if they continued to extract gold independently, said to be an act of theft (*furto*).<sup>118</sup> He went so far as to affix a notice to this effect on the door of Camiranga's main church. When a resident of Camiranga discovered a new mine, Flexal, Von Linde successfully convinced his friend Abel Chaves, a judge in Viseu, to issue an injunction on the

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<sup>116</sup> G. “As Nossa Riquezas.” *O Jornal* (Rio de Janeiro), 4 May 1923. Von Linde is indirectly mentioned as an English engineer residing in Belém.

<sup>117</sup> Hurley 1928, 54-55. The original quote is as follows: “plantações de mangueiras, café, cacao, laranjeiras e outras árvores fructíferas que, numa vistoria judicial, si se fizer mister, atterterão, eloquente e inequivocamente, pela sua velhice, os annos em que foram plantadas e, conseguintemente, descobertas essas jazidas.”

<sup>118</sup> Hurley 1928, 57.

basis of the mine being Von Linde's property.<sup>119</sup> The resident, Arcellino Ribeiro do Nascimento, and his comrades protested vociferously but continued to seek a legal remedy in Viseu.<sup>120</sup>

According to Hurley's account, Chaves was not inclined to give the *garimpeiros* a fair hearing, which prompted them to go directly to the mine and continue to extract gold anyway. In response, Von Linde arrived to Flexal with Chaves and armed guards in tow to stop their activities. But this was not the end of the matter. Hurley provides evidence that Von Linde attempted to use the possibility of financial compensation to convince the head of the local Brigada Militar to intervene on his behalf.<sup>121</sup> Here Hurley cites the original testimony of the abovementioned, Themistocles Bogéa Filho, who says that Von Linde proposed that they confiscate gold from residents of Camiranga and divide it, with Bogéa and his father, head of Viseu's local government, receiving a cut of the proceeds.<sup>122</sup>

Hurley's moral outrage is accompanied by solid legal arguments. Revisiting the matter of taxes, he cites Araújo's then recently-published *A Prophylaxia Rural no Estado do Pará* to emphasize that Von Linde personally admitted to exporting gold without paying the necessary taxes.<sup>123</sup> A concrete case of such contraband was reported in the *Jornal do Commercio*. According to the newspaper, police were involved in an ongoing investigation against smugglers trafficking in gold originating in Von Linde's mines which was exported through Belém at the

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<sup>119</sup> Hurley 1928, 58.

<sup>120</sup> Hurley 1928, 58.

<sup>121</sup> Hurley 1928, 59.

<sup>122</sup> Hurley 1928, 60.

<sup>123</sup> Hurley 1928, 62. The original quote on appears on p. 317 of Souza Araújo: "O dr. G. Linde, Segundo elle mesmo me informou, exporta para os Estados Unidos todo o ouro e pedras preciosas que obtem, sem pagar os devidos impostos."

behest of Viseu merchants.<sup>124</sup> This was a very common complaint at the time on both sides of the Gurupí, with the press in Maranhão also complaining about contraband gold being exported through Pará by “syrios e yankees.”<sup>125</sup>

According to Hurley’s argument, Von Linde’s tax evasion should have invalidated any legal actions he took against residents of Camiranga. Though the author proffered this case in the interests of the state of Pará, this also translated into potential legal action that could hinder Von Linde’s activities and benefit residents of Camiranga and Itamoari. At the time of Hurley’s investigation, quilombolas had already been engaged in struggle with Von Linde outside of the legal realm. Just as the relationship between the quilombolas and the land was part of the legal argument against Von Linde’s claims, the political relationships cultivated by quilombolas during the 1880s in Pará would also be crucial in the resistance offered by residents of Camiranga and Itamoari against the expropriation of their land and labour after abolition.

In 1921, Guilherme Von Linde filed a complaint with Viseu’s police against ‘Pedro Oliveira’ and ‘Lázaro dos Santos’.<sup>126</sup> The former was Antonio Pedro de Oliveira, the former Viseu police official who played a crucial role in the expulsion of Jules Blanc in the 1880s. The latter was Lázaro José dos Santos, Agostinho’s nephew and a resident of Camiranga after abolition. The article, summarizing the complaint against the two, noted that they ‘various times [they] have invaded the lands of the complainant, accompanied by a numerous group of *negros* from Maranhão.’<sup>127</sup> This *banda*, in addition to destroying mining infrastructure, had apparently

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<sup>124</sup> “Os Estados.” *Jornal do Comercio* (Manaus), 9 May 1923.

<sup>125</sup> “Pelos municípios.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 11 Oct. 1928.

<sup>126</sup> ‘Pela polícia’. *Estado do Pará* (Belém), 1 Jul. 1921.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

gone as far as to make an assassination attempt against Von Linde in 1915.<sup>128</sup> The alliances forged by Agostinho de Sá Caldas and his comrades during the 1880s provided the necessary context for such activity, to the point that one of Agostinho's family members was active in these later efforts.

The combination of actions being taken by quilombolas and shifting attitudes about the Von Linde, and figures like him, produced a sea change in terms of public opinion that became especially pronounced during the 1920s. Public figures took issue not only with the brutality visited upon the miners of the Gurupí at Von Linde's behest, but also with his mineral smuggling operations and his perceived foreignness. Writing in Rio's *A Noite Ilustrada*, author Elias Mallman identified Von Linde ("Guilherme Lind") as an influential figure in the capital of Belém who took part in a Swiss Roundtable that included the city mayor and the mayor's main secretary.<sup>129</sup> His ties with U.S. consul George Pickerell were such that the author misidentified Von Linde as a North American.<sup>130</sup> If Ludovico Schwennhagen is to be believed, Consul Pickerell was a stalwart ally of Von Linde to the point of lobbying the governor of Maranhão in Von Linde's favor.<sup>131</sup> While Von Linde was certainly not North American by birth, he did have demonstrable ties to U.S. diplomats during the earliest days of his mining operations.

No less scandalous than Von Linde's U.S. backing was his treatment of the people working in the mines he dubiously claimed as his own. There is no better evidence of this than the fact that Rio's *Correio da Manhã* republished a story from Belém *Folha do Norte* under the

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<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Elias Mallman. "Uma Aventura nas Selvas Amazônicas." *A Noite Ilustrada* (Rio de Janeiro), 15 January 1935.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. "O Ouro do Maranhão." *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 11 May 1927.

title “Um caso gravíssimo está occorendo no Pará, com as minas do Gurupy.”<sup>132</sup> This article mentions many of the mines discovered by Agostinho de Sá Caldas (and claimed by Von Linde) by name, including the highly-contested mines of Anélio and São Pedro. All of these mines were “constantly visited” by *pretos maranhenses*, a term more likely than not indicating quilombolas.<sup>133</sup>

Anélio in particular was crisscrossed by “pretos, some mocambeiros who still live with the tembé indians and recover from their mining fatigue in Tiracouro, on the riverbank of the Gurupy, where they work on the land, therefore possessing magnificent plots.”<sup>134</sup> Another mine, Alegre, was the site of activity for “thirty or so men, pretos from Maranhão, who band together there, braving the danger of the Urubú under the orders of Sr. Linde.” However, these workers also had “a beautiful plot, *where everyone works and takes part.*”<sup>135</sup> Beyond speaking to the presence of quilombolas, to the point of using the term *mocambeiro*, the author specifically mentions the presence of agriculture and the fact that quilombolas working at Alegre cultivated a common plot.

São Pedro, a mining territory claimed by Von Linde invaded by a group connected to one of Agostinho de Sá Caldas’s nephews, was still very much contested in 1923. Those who extracted gold there were said to be “the miners who didn’t subject themselves to the orders of

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<sup>132</sup> “Um caso gravíssimo está occorendo no Pará, com as minas do Gurupy.” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 18 May 1923. This article was either reprinted or extensively mentioned in various other newspapers such as Rio’s *O Paiz* and Recife’s *Jornal do Recife*.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.* The original quote is as follows: “pretos, alguns mocambeiros ainda que vivem em companhia de índias tembés e descansam da fadiga mineira em Tiracouro, á margem do Gurupy, onde se empregam na lavoura, possuindo portanto, magnifico roçado.”

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*



the pseudo owner, for which they were persecuted wherever he would find them.” They were escaping Von Linde and the excessive demands that he placed on his miners.<sup>136</sup> These *rebeldes*, implied the *Correio da Manhã*, had discovered the mines of Anél, Alegre, and São Pedro. This statement essentially recognizes that these *rebeldes* were quilombolas, given the well documented fact of quilombolas having discovered the mines in question.<sup>137</sup> These rebellious elements at the mines were under attack by “the power of the despot, though he was not able to get ride of them.”<sup>138</sup>

Von Linde certainly had multiple methods at his disposal for displacing rebellious quilombolas—namely, the use of legal authority to exercise dominion over the mines. Of course, Von Linde also employed extralegal force. He installed loyal lieutenants at each of “his” mines, who in turn imposed a “work tax” on each miner. According to “old miners,” Von Linde punished disobedience among workers by tying the offending party to a tree, “blowing it up with dynamite afterwards, to terrorize their comrades.”<sup>139</sup> Others who failed to extract enough gold to satisfy Von Linde and his lieutenants resorted to fleeing into the woods, “scared of constant rifle shots...in search of better days.”<sup>140</sup>

David Cleary expressed some skepticism that Von Linde could have exercised this kind of authority in the region when military force had previously failed to discipline quilombolas and

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<sup>136</sup> *ibid.* The open use of the term *pseudo-proprietario* is an example of the discursive shift evident in certain corners of public opinion. The original quote is as follows: “be “os mineiros que não se sujeitam ás ordens do *pseudo proprietário* e os quaes são por esse perseguidos, onde quer que se encontrem.”

<sup>137</sup> This is less clear in the case of São Pedro, but is the case for Anélio/Anél and Alegre.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

indigenous groups, leading the author to infer that Von Linde “must have come to some form of accommodation with the mocambeiros and the Urubú, the exact nature of which remains to be clarified.”<sup>141</sup> It should also be stressed that Von Linde employed a number of *nordestinos* as demonstrated by the 1903 homicide case. Even accepting the assertion repeated in various accounts such as those of Hurley, Almeida, and others that Von Linde had an accommodation with quilombola communities when he entered the gold mining business in earnest, the *gaúcho* mining baron also counted on support from various layers of the elite ranging from foreign capitalists to local judges. Quilombolas, however, presented an ever more visible challenge to Von Linde over an area extending from the Gurupí River to the Piriá River close to the contested mines of Alegre, Anél, São Pedro, Flexal, and others. This conflict very clearly reflected both the legacy of quilombos in the immediate region and the racialized class divide that survived abolition which was reproduced in Von Linde’s mining operations.

The article originally printed in *Folha da Norte* continued to circulate during the summer of 1923 when Ludovico Schwennhagen, a geologist residing in Maranhão, weighed in on what he referred to as “the kingdom sr. Guilherme Linden,” where he had “300 inhabitants digging for gold on both sides of the Gurupy.”<sup>142</sup> During a time when quilombolas, and likely other miners, were in active conflict with Von Linde, Schwennhagen refers to “revolts of pretos, who have 10 and 15 kilometers up there and two colonies (Gamiranda and Itamanary).”<sup>143</sup> These acts of rebellion reduced the labor power and land at Von Linde’s disposal. This clearly suggests that

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<sup>141</sup> Cleary 46.

<sup>142</sup> “O Ouro do Maranhão.” *Diário de São Luiz* (São Luís), 17 August 1923.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.* Schwennhagen’s use of the term *colônia* is certainly strange, but serves as an indicator of quilombola territoriality, as does his use of the term *aldeia* to describe towns such as Camiranga and Itamoari.

these rebellions on the part of Von Linde's workers included territories with the largest presence of runaway slave descendants: Camiranga and Itamoari.

The immediate cause for this revolt, presumably in addition to the brutal labor practices mentioned elsewhere, was attributed to the fact that workers were forced to sell their gold to Von Linde at below-market prices with a gram of gold ore fetching a *mil-reís*, far less than the hourly wage of many urban workers. It also seems that competing merchants helped the participants of this "black revolt" gain their independence from Von Linde in some unspecified manner. In June 1923, the state government in Belém seemingly rebuked Von Linde's claims despite his objections. It was only with the intervention of Von Linde's North American *socios* that the state government changed course, prohibiting the black communities and workers under Von Linde's economic control from mining for gold at their own behest. Though much ink was spilled in exposing Von Linde, his operations continued.

As late as 1926, "American engineers" began plans to build a laboratory to analyze mineral samples as well as dig large tunnels at São Pedro.<sup>144</sup> There were further plans to build roads, allowing for easier access to gold-producing lands in the Gurupí region. This suggests that Von Linde had regained a measure of control over São Pedro, previously occupied by quilombolas and others hostile to his reign. Schwennhagen began to refer to Camiranga and Itamoari as "conquered aldeias of pretos."<sup>145</sup> But with the publication of *Nos sertões do Gurupy* in 1928, reflecting Hurley's travels and investigation into the mining-related conflicts in the Gurupí region, criticism of Von Linde proliferated once again.

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<sup>144</sup> "Interior." *Jornal do Comercio* (Rio de Janeiro), 6 Apr. 1926. Souza et. al (95) note that two Americans attempted to dig large holes and tunnels but they did not last (*desmoronou*).

<sup>145</sup> Ludovico Schwennhagen. "O Ouro do Maranhão." *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 11 May 1927.

Newspapers in Rio and elsewhere reprinted extracts and additional commentary from Hurley, laying bare the long history of gold mines along the Gurupí with mentions of Agostinho de Sá Caldas as well as Von Linde. Hurley complained openly that little progress had been made on the legal front: “even today, they ignore the effects of the investigation and my report... where I demonstrate the innumerable thefts and incommensurate damage suffered by Pará in the mines of Gurupy.”<sup>146</sup> Underlying Hurley’s concern for residents of Camiranga and Itamoari is his suspicion Von Linde’s foreignness, noting his technical training in Germany and how his Portuguese betrayed the influence of both English and German.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, one of Cleary’s informants vaguely recalls that Von Linde was a German when he was, in fact, a Brazilian of Swedish descent from Rio Grande do Sul.<sup>148</sup> A 1930 article by Carlos Reis about Von Linde’s mining activities in Maranhão emphasizes this as well: “um inocente e ingenuo cavaleiro de aspecto estrangeiro, mas que se dizia filho dos pampas gauchos.”<sup>149</sup>

As Hurley threw down the gauntlet in his pursuit of justice, he could point to one concrete act from the government of Pará at the end of 1928. The Governor of that state, Dionysio Bentes, “hearing the complaints of the people of the Gurupy, authorizes, to the people and older residents of Itamaury and Caamirangas, majority descendants of fugitive slaves from Maranhão and the true founders of those mines, the freedom to work them, inspiring legislative,

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<sup>146</sup> Jorge Hurley. “Nos Sertões do Gurupy.” *O Paiz* (Rio de Janeiro), 5 January 1929. The original quote is as follows: “E como, até hoje, ignore os efeitos deste inquerito e o paradeiro do meu relatório... em que mostrei os incontáveis esbulhos e incommensuráveis danos sofridos pelo Pará nas suas minas do Gurupy.”

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> Cleary 46.

<sup>149</sup> Carlos Reis. “A Trauhya.” *O Combate* (São Luís), 22 March 1930.

federal and state rules around this issue.”<sup>150</sup> This suggested the possibility of terras devolutas being opened up to all miners willing to dig and pan for gold. With the Revolution of 1930 just one year away, it seemed that multiple sectors of society were aligned and ready to curb the power of aventureiros.

## Conclusion

By focusing on the trajectory of Guilherme Von Linde, a *sulista* who came to exercise extraordinary influence in northern Brazil, we can understand the panoply of political and social dynamics that allowed for his rise. The wealth and influence which Von Linde accumulated led to a change in such dynamics as quilombolas renewed their push to challenge his domination over the mining territory of the Gurupí and gained a certain amount of visibility as political actors and segments of the press fielded criticism of figures such as Von Linde.

Von Linde’s training and knowledge set him on an advantageous trajectory in Brazilian society. The son of Swedish immigrants, he obtained his credentials in engineering from various European cities. This clearly helped him escape any serious consequences for his involvement in the *Revolta da Armada*. Once he arrived to the state of Pará, he secured political and economic connections. Finding employment as a fazenda manager and an administrator of the Benjamin Constant colony mostly populated by immigrants, he also had a steadfast ally in the person of Republican partisan and Pará Governor José País de Carvalho. This allowed Von Linde to accumulate wealth through means such as securing a contract to build a railroad in Pará—a task which he did not complete but received payment for services rendered. Coming to know the

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<sup>150</sup> Jorge Hurley. “As minas do Gurupy no Estado do Pará.” *O Paiz* (Rio de Janeiro), 18 Jan. 1929. The original quote is as follows: ““ouvindo as queixas do povo do Gurupy, facultou, ao povo e aos antigos moradores de Itamaury e Caamirangas, em sua maioria descendentes de escravos fugidos do Maranhão e que são os verdadeiros descobridores dessas minas, a liberdade de garimpal-as, inspirando nos preceitos legislativos federaes e estaduaes, à respeito.”

interior of Pará, he eventually located various sources of mineral wealth near the Piria, Gurupí, and Turiaçu rivers. This allowed him to leverage his existing resources to begin extraction on a greater scale.

Contrary to what a number of published works have stated, Von Linde was already engaged in gold extraction as early as 1902. It is possible that he conceived of this enterprise even earlier.<sup>151</sup> Local officials in Viseu and São José do Gurupí certainly knew of his activities. He essentially succeeded a previous group of concession holders such as Guilherme Capanema and the Ribeiro brothers—individuals who discovered and worked gold deposits with the direct help and labor of quilombolas. Von Linde, however, developed a deeper series of connections to foreign capital and key diplomatic figures. He partnered with American prospectors and diplomats who were interested in profiting from gold extraction in Pará. The fact that his correspondence with the U.S. Consul in Pará, Kavanaugh K. Kenneday, took place at all and was also reprinted at length in published consular reports were early indications that Von Linde could count on such officials as allies who could smooth over legal and political difficulties. This is certainly borne out by the help he supposedly received from U.S. Consul George Pickerell during the 1920s.

Of equal importance was Von Linde's role in making the Gurupí region "legible" to a diplomatic-financial complex. In providing detailed information on his mining activities in his letter to Kenneday, he presented a narrative that minimized the role of quilombolas and maximized the potential for a return on investment. Naturally, Von Linde wanted a piece of the pie for himself, but others profited from such knowledge creation as well. U.S. citizen Rudolf Seyler, an engineer whose studies also informed Kenneday's consular reports on gold mining in

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<sup>151</sup> Bureau of Foreign Commerce 1902, 640.

Pará, likely worked directly with Von Linde and went on to raise millions of dollars in capital for the purpose of developing a controversially large land concession in the state of Maranhão. As demonstrated in this chapter, a number of diplomats and foreign nationals mostly of U.S. and British origin could count on significant land concessions for mining and other extractive activities. Von Linde was one of the earliest representatives of this cycle of knowledge production leading to a dizzying injection of capital on both sides of the Gurupí after abolition.

The political economy of northern Brazil in the early twentieth century allowed Von Linde to increase his profile. Even as he failed to fulfill the terms of an early mining concession in western Maranhão, he returned from London in 1912 armed with financial and physical capital dedicated to continuing his mining exploits. Moreover, the London-based company which furnished this capital was granted authorization by the national government to conduct its business. In many ways, this was not an extraordinary scenario for the period. However, Von Linde's methods antagonized various sectors of the region's population and eventually, influential sectors of officialdom.

The first indication of this backlash against Von Linde was the public reaction to his treatment of the indigenous inhabitants of the Gurupí. Among other things, Von Linde was accused of burning, killing, and carrying out dynamite attacks against indigenous communities over the course of his "expeditions." The second factor in the shift of public opinion against Von Linde was his propensity to clandestinely export gold from his mines without paying the required taxes. He admitted as much to Souza Araújo. In addition to this, Jorge Hurley waged a very public campaign challenging Von Linde's property claims over mining territory in Pará and Maranhão. Hurley's argument held that Von Linde falsified his claims to various mining territories long inhabited and worked by quilombolas, and then counted on corrupt political allies

to enforce these bogus claims. Despite being born in Brazil, he came to symbolize the most despised elements of the foreign *aventureiro*. This, in turn, spurred demands for greater political control over the nation's resources—something which will be explored in greater length in the following chapter.

The third, and perhaps most important, factor in the backlash against Von Linde was an ever-growing series of stories and accounts of the brutal conditions he imposed at the mines he controlled. Newspapers around the country printed and reprinted accounts of the “revolting barbarities” visited upon the *garimpeiros*, correctly identified in these sources as quilombolas or mocambeiros. Workers at the mines could expect to submit to the authority of one of Von Linde's lesser lieutenants, receiving little for the gold they found in their *bateias*, and paying confiscatory “work taxes” for the privilege of working deposits discovered by their ancestors who fled from slavery. This is to say nothing about the blatant violence used by Von Linde to enforce his rule.

Facing difficult conditions, residents of Camiranga and Itamoari reaffirmed their existence and identity through their struggles. Though it did evidently did not result in any tangible improvements, residents of Camiranga were able to pressure the Ministry of Agriculture to communicate their grievances to the state government of Pará in 1914—no small feat. Though outside observers hardly spoke of the quilombolas favorably, with Souza Araújo being one example, authors and journalists who wrote about the Gurupí frequently included historical details about Agostinho de Sá Caldas and the quilombos which populated the region. Living black residents of the Gurupí, working in various mines, were referred to as *mocambeiros*.

When the illustrious Paraense Jorge Hurley first happened upon Camiranga and Itamoari, he affably recorded traces of a quilombola culture and cohabitation with Tembé women. Later,



he became a steadfast ally of these communities against Von Linde. Hurley crafted a history of mining along the Gurupí based, among other things, on a reading of Arrojado Lisboa and the 1901 *Diário do Maranhão* article “Minas de Ouro” which celebrated the legacy of Agostinho de Sá Caldas.<sup>152</sup> He compiled this history in his capacity as a public prosecutor, while investigating legal complaints against Guilherme Von Linde in 1923. Longstanding elements of quilombola territoriality, particularly the planting of fruit trees, offered silent testimony against Von Linde’s claim to twenty-one distinct mining territories which were mostly discovered by quilombolas.<sup>153</sup> Other accounts of *garimpeiros* along the Gurupí specifically mention agricultural plots worked on a common basis.

In addition to challenges advanced through the legal system, residents of Camiranga and Itamoari also took more decisive actions. Principal among these was what can best be described as a campaign of low-intensity warfare which Lazaro dos Santos and Antonio Pedro de Oliveira waged against Von Linde over a period of many years beginning in 1904—fairly early in Von Linde’s mining career along the Gurupí. Both men were connected to quilombolas. Lazaro dos Santos was, in fact, the nephew of Agostinho de Sá Caldas. Antonio Pedro de Oliveira was the former *Delegado de Polícia* of Viseu who advanced an investigation into French merchant Jules Blanc, scrutinized in the 1880s for allegedly extorting quilombolas who had recently settled in Itamoari. With the help of unspecified “negros vindos do Maranhão,” Santos and Oliveira organized the invasion of one of the mines claimed by Von Linde (São Pedro), destroyed tunnels and shafts used in mining, and even made an assassination attempt on the latter. An earlier period of quilombagem made these campaigns possible in the sense that the individuals fighting Von

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<sup>152</sup> Hurley 1928, 45; 48.

<sup>153</sup> Hurley 1928, 52.

Linde could trace their relationships to the pre-abolition period. Furthermore, the fact that quilombolas exercised significant autonomy along the Gurupí before Von Linde's consolidation of power made it that much more likely that later generations would rebel against the imposition of legal and extralegal terror and expropriation at the mines.

The 1910s and 1920s demonstrate a confluence of factors which carried the potential to check or dislodge the notorious Von Linde. The next chapter will discuss how the regional and national political shift of the Revolution of 1930 would portend both radical change and reactionary retrenchment along the Gurupí.

## **Chapter 6: Quilombolas and the 1930 Revolution—“sublevar contra uma tyrannia realmente inqualificável”**

Action by the quilombolas against Von Linde indisputably captured the attention of the post-1930 state government in an unprecedented way. The process of struggle in the Gurupí informed some of the grievances serving as the basis for Pará’s revolutionary government. This presented a major opening for quilombolas unrivaled in the region’s post-abolition history in terms of the services provided by the state. But there were divergent motivations for the state and for quilombolas. The state aimed to rationalize the mining process in Pará and curtail gold smuggling that had diverted potential revenue from the state. In fact, this aim folded neatly into the general rhetoric of the immediate post-1930 period of harnessing Brazilian resources for the benefit of the Brazilian nation. Quilombolas still faced dire conditions at the hand of mine operators, while also contending with an influx of migrants and foreign workers who arrived to take advantage of a sustained mining boom.

From the 1889 to the Revolution of 1930, these state governments and the national government were unfazed by multiple accounts of horrific exploitation and dispossession experienced by inhabitants of the Gurupi region. Residents of Camiranga and Itamaoari were at the center of many of these conflicts. Though Glycon de Paiva wrote that the end of slavery meant the “desaparecimento do negro mocambeiro,” the conflicts and communities borne of the struggle against slavery carried over well into the next century.<sup>1</sup>

The fervor of revolution engulfed much of the border region between Pará and Maranhão during the final months of 1930, culminating in new national and state leadership. The 26th

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<sup>1</sup> Paiva, et. al 20.

Batalhão dos Caçadores, leading the military portion of the Revolution in Pará, sought refuge in Viseu before traversing the Gurupi River and consolidating its forces. According to an account published in *O Imparcial*, the revolutionaries were present in the towns of Candido Mendes and Turiaçu—both very important mining centers in the western border region of Maranhão.<sup>2</sup> In Pará, Joaquim de Magalhães Cardoso Barata emerged as a key figure. Barata was born in Belém but pursued a military career during the 1920s, during which time he aligned himself with the Tenentista movement. This development led him to participate in numerous abortive attempts to foment revolution in Paraná, Amazonas, and western Pará before his participation in the Revolution of 1930.

Shortly after his return to Pará he was imprisoned in his capacity as “ex-chief of the subversive movement” in September 1930.<sup>3</sup> In an interview with *O Combate* that same week, Barata insisted: “I’m not a communist: I’m a revolutionary...my communism is just a fiction of the people in power”<sup>4</sup> By 11 November, Colonel Barata made his triumphant return to his home state and hometown to assume to the post of Interventor Federal. He arrived amid popular acclaim in the company of General Juarez Távora, who years before had also been a tenentista and a member of the famous Prestes Column before leading revolutionary forces in the north.<sup>5</sup> A few months after assuming the post, Barata outlined his political philosophy in an interview with *O Jornal*, focusing in particular on the social question, which “can be reduced to two unique

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<sup>2</sup> “Os Acontecimentos da Zona do Maracassumé.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 12 December 1930.

<sup>3</sup> “A prisão de dois rebeldes.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 5 Sep. 1930.

<sup>4</sup> “O tenente Barata não é comunista.” *O Combate* (São Luís), 9 Sep. 1930.

<sup>5</sup> “A Viagem do General Távora ao Pará.” *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 12 Nov. 1930.

factors: a better possibility of finding work and social assistance, including health, education, and insurance for accidents, disability and death, as well as housing.”<sup>6</sup>

Barata pursued a course of action in keeping with the state-driven populism resurgent at the national level. Barely weeks into his term, he signed a decree mandating a 25% reduction in rent prices between 150\$000 and 300\$000.<sup>7</sup> His early acts involved the seizure of property belonging to individuals intimately linked to the defunct political class of the old republic, with notable targets being his gubernatorial predecessors.<sup>8</sup> This was generally carried out by decree, under the premise such acts targeted politicians who had enriched themselves and their allies through the inappropriate use of the Verba de Propaganda, a nebulous program that directed state funds to artists, periodicals, newspapers, and various other entities.<sup>9</sup> He had reversed many of the land concessions signed by his predecessors and tasked the state’s Chief of Police with combatting unemployment by finding jobs for those without work.<sup>10</sup> One popular song composed in his honor revered the “Bravo Liberal” who would provide “comfort and bread” to each home in the state.<sup>11</sup> In light of this radical and unprecedented direction, it is easy to understand why Guilherme Von Linde’s position as a mining baron was such an obvious political target for the new Interventor.

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<sup>6</sup> “O Capitão Joaquim Barata, em longa entrevista a “O Jornal”, expõe as suas idéas de governo.” *O Jornal* (Rio de Janeiro), 8 Feb. 1931. The original quote is as follows: “se reduz a dois unicos factores: maior possibilidade de trabalho e assistencia social, compreendendo saude, educação e seguro contra accidents, invalidez e morte, como tambem habitação.”

<sup>7</sup> Coimbra 281; of course this was followed by a threatened 25% decrease in wages among businesses in Belém, which elicited promises from Barata to heed the demands of the business class (Coimbra 287).

<sup>8</sup> Coimbra 288-292.

<sup>9</sup> Coimbra 288.

<sup>10</sup> Coimbra 296.

<sup>11</sup> J.B. Dos Santos. “Redenção do Pará,” 1933, Governo, Gabinete do Interventor, Cartas, Caixa 08, APEP, Belém.

In April 1931—mere months after taking office—Barata signed a state decree ordering the expropriation of all of the properties belonging to Guilherme Von Linde, returning them to state ownership.<sup>12</sup> Such acts of expropriation were facilitated by the shift in government, evidenced by the fact that the decree referenced Decreto 19398, which authorized the national government to appoint an *interventor federal* in each state.<sup>13</sup> Interventores like Barata were granted sweeping powers compared to the governors of the *República Velha*, though the language of Decreto 263 makes it clear that the old political system in Pará had left the state's *patrimônio* “despoiled.”<sup>14</sup> [Barata specifically mentions that the mines in question stretch from Camiranga to Itamoari. Indeed, the governments of 1920 Pará carried out an accelerated schedule of granting concessions of land to foreign companies and politically connected individuals, such that it became a causal factor for the Revolution of 1930 in the state.<sup>15</sup> Under the four-year gubernatorial term of predecessor Dionysio Bentes alone, land concessions totaled about 86000 km<sup>2</sup>—larger than sovereign nations such as Austria or Panamá, and certainly larger than a number of Brazilian states.<sup>16</sup> The idea that such policies weakened the sovereignty of the Brazilian state, with similar concerns appearing at a rapid pace leading up to the Revolution of 1930, contributed greatly to Barata's economic policies.

But the precedents underlying Decreto 263 were not *only* based on the laws of the new regime. In the justification for Barata's decree, the Interventor cites the work of both Souza

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<sup>12</sup> Estado do Pará. Decreto 263, 1 Apr. 1931.

<sup>13</sup> Governo Provisório. Decreto 19398, 11 Nov. 1930.

<sup>14</sup> Decreto 263.

<sup>15</sup> Coimbra 125.

<sup>16</sup> Coimbra 126.

Araújo and Jorge Hurley.<sup>17</sup> Going back to the beginning of Von Linde’s time in Pará, the text of Decreto 263 cites his failure to complete the railway he was contracted to build in 1902, abuses against the Ka’apor, and the tax evasion and gold smuggling activities which he bragged about to Souza Araújo.<sup>18</sup> The language of the decree focuses criticism on Von Linde’s business relationship with U.S. Consul George Pickerell and cites a 1907 *ofício* from former Pará Governor Augusto Montenegro predicting that the people “won’t wait too long to rise up against unqualified tyranny.”<sup>19</sup> The text of the Decreto claims that after the Revolution, they were able to recover documents pertaining to the legal complaint against Von Linde pursued in Viseu. Though these previous events had not been enough to curb Von Linde’s ambitions, they provided ample evidence for the 1931 decree.

As part of the act’s sweeping repudiation of Von Linde’s stewardship, there is also a calculation of the economic damage his activities caused to the state—a careful argument meant to act as a solid legal justification. Assuming that Von Linde extracted at least 10 kilograms of gold from the mines he claimed over a period of twenty years—though as I argue in the previous chapter, he had mining operations in the Gurupí as early as 1903—and received 1 milréis per gram, that would have meant a total of 800 mil-réis in revenue.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hurley was still an active figure in state government, and would go on to serve in a number of capacities, including as the founder of the Instituto Historico Geografico do Pará IHGP, and would later be tapped to contribute to a new state constitution. According to the 16 Nov. 1932 edition of Florianópolis newspaper *O Estado*, Hurley (whose name is misspelled) personally intervened in discovering a gold smuggling operation based out of a jewelry store.

<sup>18</sup> Decreto 263.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.* The original quote is as follows: “não demorarão muito em se sublevar contra uma tyrannia realmente inqualificável.”

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

Legal reasoning aside, Barata clearly intended for Decreto 263 to encapsulate the normative values of the Revolution of 1930, and as such it ended with the promise that the “Governo Revolucionario,” in the service of the revolutionary program, would not fail to act “in the high service of the reconstitution of law and order in Pará.”<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the Decreto never seems to make a specific reference to quilombolas currently living along the Gurupí.

Moving beyond the legal and normative principles of Decreto 263, the articles specifying the execution of the decree provide concrete measures for expropriation, which would be the responsibility of the state *Secretário de Estado do Interior e Justiça*. Article 2 mandates that all tools and properties formerly belonging to Von Linde in Bela Aurora be moved to Camiranga, providing for a state-appointed administrator to manage the expropriated property. As for which lands would be expropriated, Article 3 forms a commission composed of Viseu’s tax collector (*collector estadual*), public prosecutor (*promotor público*), and the newly-appointed mining administrator to carry out the state takeover of parcels of land that had been under Von Linde’s possession along the Gurupí River, including mining territories closer to the Piriá River such as Macaco.

Article 5 further undermines Von Linde’s claims by declaring once and for all that the claims he registered for mining territories were false: “not just because of the falsity of having discovered them, when the true discoverers 40 years ago *were the pretos from the mocambos of the Gurupy, but because they were registered improperly.*”<sup>22</sup> As we have seen, this was not the first time that the state government took notice of the land tenure long exercised by quilombolas,

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* The original quote is as follows: ““a falsidade de havel-as descoberto, quando os descobridores, ha 40 annos, foram os pretos dos mocambos do Gurupy, como porque fundamentou registro em lei imprópria.”



but this was perhaps the most explicit example since the formation of the Republic. As I stated earlier, such historical recognition did not translate to any particular measures pertaining to current quilombolas communities.

Having been suddenly and decisively routed by Barata's administration, multiple versions of Von Linde's fate emerged in the press in the following years. In one telling, Von Linde disappeared from Belém and ended up in New York, where we are told that two young men from Belém had spotted him and returned with the news that he was a millionaire.<sup>23</sup> One of Cleary's informants recalled a few basic details about Von Linde—that he was an important figure in gold mining and lived on Chatão—while also surmising “there's no record that he left, so it seems that he fled, taking the gold with him.”<sup>24</sup> During his travels in 1949 and 1950, Darcy Ribeiro learns of yet another version where Von Linde was essentially pushed out of the region due to armed violence—which the author does not contextualize further—but has an element of truth to it. None of these versions is quite correct.

It has been established that Von Linde was forced to leave due to his property being expropriated, but as late as 1945, the publication *Mineração e Metalurgia* mentions Von Linde as “one of the older living Brazilian geologists, born in Uruguaiana, Rio Grande do Sul, in 1870, child of Swedish parents.” The brief entry lists him as still living, residing in the town of Granja in northwestern Ceará.<sup>25</sup> Ruben Almeida's account in 1932 confirms that Von Linde did, in fact, settle in Sobral shortly after leaving Pará.<sup>26</sup> This is corroborated by Ceará newspaper *A Ordem*,

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Cleary 46.

<sup>25</sup> Instituto Brasileiro Mineração e Metalurgia 228.

<sup>26</sup> Almeida 42.

which in its 15 June 1932 edition featured Von Linde prominently in its social column as a partner “of the opulent industrial firm Guinle, of Rio, mineral engineer of great knowledge.”<sup>27</sup> The column further noted that Von Linde had already been in Granja for a number of months “preoccupation with the important problems of mining in our State...his stay in our land captures the same objective as his delicate economic mission.”<sup>28</sup> It seems that the publication’s wish for Von Linde to have a long stay in Ceará came to fruition, something further evidenced by the prominence of the surname Von Linde in northwestern Ceará and the state capital of Fortaleza.<sup>29</sup> Much like Jules Blanc before him, Von Linde’s political comeuppance lacked a certain finality.

Barata’s administration had much more ambitious plans for the Gurupí than simply negating Von Linde’s false land claims and clearing the deck, as it were, for existing garimpeiros to continue their work. In 1931, Viseu ceased to have a local government and was instead administered by a Territorial Delegate—Lourival Pereira Lima. This was the result of Decreto 570, issued by Barata at the end of 1931. This was also true of other former *municípios* and territories such as Amapá, another far-flung center of mining wealth. By 1932, many influential Viseuenses signed a letter strongly criticizing Delegate Lima and what they considered to be his lack of competence as an administrator, citing a failure to make any infrastructure improvements in Camiranga. However, there are some indications that Lima did implement reforms during his tenure. According to the records of the Territorial Delegate, about 3,500 contos de réis were spent on electrification and cleaning of the various villages and towns within Viseu’s expansive borders, while the introduction of import taxes (likely falling on gold production) yielded 19,000

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<sup>27</sup> “Vida social.” *A Ordem* (Sobral), 15 June 1932.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> A contemporary internet search reveals a number of individuals living in Ceará with the surname Von Linde.

contos de réis in 1932.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps it was expected that a tax on gold-production in state-administered areas such as that of Viseu would offset some of these costs.<sup>31</sup>

This new territorial entity also imposed new conditions on *casa comerciais* and property owners within Viseu's borders—businesses that did not have at least 2/3rds Brazilian employees would be subject to a financial penalty, and mandated that a company store could not sell medications or other pharmaceutical products if the nearest town sold such items. It is unclear in the immediate sense whether such measures altered the balance of power in the region, but such reforms were unprecedented for the region's history. Long established communities of quilombolas stood to benefit from these changes.

A July 18 1932 letter sent to Barata signed by twelve residents of Viseu accuses Lima of being a poor administrator, for example visiting the mines at Camiranga only in anticipation of a forthcoming visit by Barata himself.<sup>32</sup> Rather, in the time since the success of the Revolution of 1930, “não teve melhoramento algum inclusive a propria luz que lá não existia.”<sup>33</sup> Responding to these claims, Lima wrote in his own defense:

As far as Camiranga is concerned, the government of v. exc. has installed an agency for regulating the gold mines in the Gurupy and Piriá, and I have done everything possible in line with request by cel. Claudino de Barros, director of the agency in question; and if I have only gone there a few times it is just because it is not necessary, by virtue of that same senhor [Barros] staying in the locality, that has already received so many benefits from the State. However, as I mentioned in my previous report, I took measures on electrification and clearing roads in response to local desires and conveniences.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Delegacia Territorial de Vizeu. Decreto 2, 14 Jan. 1932, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 423, Relatórios 1932, APEP, Belém.

<sup>31</sup> Estado do Pará. Decreto 755, 14 Sept. 1932.

<sup>32</sup> João Antonio da Silva, et. al to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 423, Relatórios 1932, APEP, Belém.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Lourival Pereira Lima to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 423, Relatórios

Even if he was simply deflecting local criticism, Lima's defensive tone suggests that there was at least the *expectation* that he would follow through on the revolutionary promises made by Barata early on his term. This program was expected to include public works such as maintaining roads, draining swamps, and clearing mangroves. In carrying out this work he contracted workers and coordinated with "Hussen Mamed," a long-established local merchant described as "Sírío."<sup>35</sup>

Barata established political priorities that forced other levels of officialdom to at least commit to improvements for the populations that lived and worked in mining territories. In 1943 the *prefeito* of Viseu sent a report to Barata via telegram recounting his visit to various mines that were historically worked by quilombolas and which still had significant black populations of their descendents: Manoel Raimundo, Frechal, Alegre, Cachoeira, Cachoerinha, Macacos, Igarape Germano, and Cedro. The *prefeito* in question, Nehemias Borges, asserted that workers from the Aurijecas mine had high hopes for Barata's visit and high hopes "for future justice under the fecund government [of Barata]," whose name was "celebrated" in every area visited by Borges.<sup>36</sup> Though it is hard to dispute the evident flattery of the message, Barata was also invoked by protesting garimpeiros at Macacos in a series of events which will be detailed later in this chapter.

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1932, APEP, Belém. The original quote is as follows: "Quanto á Camiranga, tendo o governo de v. exc. installado do ali uma repartição para a fiscalização das minas de ouro do Gurupy o Piriá, tudo tenho feito, que me é possível, de accordo com as solicitações do cel. Claudino de Barros, director da mesma repartição; e se poucas vezes ali tenho ido é justamente porque não se faz necessario, em virtude da estadia daquelle senhor na localidade, que já é grandemente beneficiada pelo Estado. Entretanto, como mencionei no meu ultimo relatorio, providencei sobre luz e abatição de ruas e capoeiras contiguas ás mesmas, na medida dos seus desejos e conveniencias locais."

<sup>35</sup> João Antonio da Silva, et. al to Joaquim Magalhães Barata.

<sup>36</sup> Telegram from Nehemias Borges to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 593, Telegramas 1943, APEP, Belém.

Though these efforts would not be long lasting, the state of Pará was willing to commit resources to the effective policing of mines and provision of services. It is clear that Barata's period as Interventor enabled muscular action on behalf of the state. For example, a letter from the acting Diretor Geral of the Diretoria Geral da Fazenda authorized a budget increase of 1500 mil-reis to fund the activities of the state appointed mine administrator, Raimundo Pantoja de Miranda, who was based in Viseu.<sup>37</sup>

This state-driven activism provided a striking contrast to what seemed like an utter lack of attention under the various governors who served under the *República Velha*. A letter from the Abrahão Abifaçal, operator of a passenger line between Viseu and Bragança, makes this clear when, responding to a request from the Interventoria of Pará codified in Ofício 95, the author writes that it would be impossible to reduce fares by 50% due to the difficulty of the route as well as the price of fuel. Beyond that, he writes that he has already absorbed losses due to not charging “any freight” on physical materials sent to the state personnel in charge of administering the gold mines along the Gurupí River.<sup>38</sup> Because Abifaçal refers to the average price of a journey between Bragança and Camiranga—about 45 contos de reis—it can be reasonably inferred that state functionaries were making this journey more often, to the point where it inconvenienced Abifaçal's commercial interests.<sup>39</sup> On the other side of the border, Pedro de Moura points out that, even though the Maranhão government set up a post (*um fiscal*) in 1933 to enforce the necessary taxes on exports of gold, contraband increased significantly

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<sup>37</sup> Estado do Pará, Diretoria Geral da Fazenda. Ofício 682, 10 May 1934, Governo, Gabinete do Interventor, Caixa 10, Cartas 1934, APEP, Belém.

<sup>38</sup> Petition from Abrahão Abifaçal to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 27 Mar. 1931, Governo, Gabinete do Interventor, Caixa 51, Petições 1931, APEP, Belém.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

during the period.<sup>40</sup> One indicator of this was that from November to December 1933, the estimated volume of gold produced and likely exported through contraband was nearly double that of the amount produced legally.<sup>41</sup>

In Ruben de Almeida's 1932 report to the Interventoria of Maranhão, he went to far as to recommend the cessation of all mining concessions on the grounds that many of the concession holders had simply failed to adhere to the terms of their agreements, which required regularly taxed gold production.<sup>42</sup> It is worth noting, however, that another of Almeida's recommendations for the government was to parcelize all of the land along the Gurupi into lots of about five hundred square meters, ideally for migrant families still arriving from Ceará. Almeida, though admiring of the qualities of rural black communities along the Gurupi, did not advance any notion of providing them with individual or collective titles, though perhaps this was because of the greater volume of such towns on the other side of the river under the jurisdiction of the state of Pará.<sup>43</sup>

The presence of contraband was a motivating factor for the Maranhense government to issue a decree in December 1932 denouncing such activities and nominating Ruben Almeida to undertake the trip that served as the basis of his report, while also reaffirming the goal of populating the region with "people arriving everyday from the states of the northeast."<sup>44</sup> Of

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<sup>40</sup> Moura 1936 30.

<sup>41</sup> Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Maranhão 30. the amount was roughly 12997.70 Grams

<sup>42</sup> Almeida 75.

<sup>43</sup> Almeida 77.

<sup>44</sup> Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Maranhão 25.

course, this regulation of activity among miners and mining companies had as its goal the modernization (read: proletarianization) of mining under the aegis of a vigorous national state. Despite such lofty goals, the long-established workforce had not been completely supplanted by migrant workers. A letter from a resident of Carutapéra published in *O Imparcial*, for example, claims that the mines at Montes Aureos were once again being worked after a dormant period, with most of the *garimpeiros* coming from “Camiranga e Tamanhary, old mocambos of pretos, whose profession is to work with gold.” In other mining territories, however, “people from everywhere are arriving.”<sup>45</sup>

Migrants from “all parts” were establishing a more visible presence during the 1930s. Abreu notes that on a trip through mines in western Maranhão in 1935: “If you were to sit at the hotel table immigrants from various nations converse in six different languages: (Portuguese, French, English, Castilian, and Arabic,” to which he added the presence of Jews, Chileans, Afro-Antilleans from Barbados, and “guianenses” (also presumably black).<sup>46</sup> Almeida observed first-hand how a mix of factors, ranging from the discovery of new gold deposits to seasonal weather patterns and the prevalence of certain tropical diseases could cause the population of a mining center such as Inglês to fluctuate from as much as three thousand or more workers to a few hundred in the space of a few months.<sup>47</sup> To be sure, quilombolas were still a significant part of the *garimpeiro* population, Souza notes: “A large part of the mining population is constituted by the children and grandchildren of mocambeiros, nordestinos, and men from Guyana Paraense,” an interesting statement suggesting that immigrant labor was concentrated in western Maranhão

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<sup>45</sup> “O ouro do noroeste.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 15 Dec. 1932.

<sup>46</sup> Abreu 1939 48.

<sup>47</sup> Almeida 60.

rather than eastern Pará.<sup>48</sup> Fluctuating populations combined with adverse labor conditions created structural conditions that occasionally resulted in acts of spontaneous radicalism.

This looming revolutionary tendency is described by Cordelier, who recounts that “armed individuals try to attack Inglês, with the undisguised intention of sacking local business. These individuals have offered discourses on the necessity of a general redistribution of goods, without hiding their intention of starting with Inglês, top commercial center of the region.”<sup>49</sup> Banco do Brasil employee Gilberto Mendes de Azevedo spoke of armed assaults aimed at Inglês in broad daylight, lamenting the lack of action being taken to prevent further incidents.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps these were mostly external threats not supported by the *garimpeiros*, but the latter undoubtedly faced stark conditions at the mines.

Gilberto Mendes de Azevedo—a Banco do Brasil employee who traveled through western Maranhão the region and was interviewed about mining conditions in 1935. Of the region, Azevedo said that “Everything is lacking there. Medical assistance, education, justice...”<sup>51</sup> He went so far as to insist that a lack of any social assistance and “dishonest commerce” had reduced the 9000 or so workers to mere “*farrapos*,” ragged and wretched beggars. This was despite attempts by the national government to regulate mining by requiring *garimpeiros* to be registered, their gold weighed and verified by the Banco do Brasil on an

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<sup>48</sup> Souza et. al 71.

<sup>49</sup> Louis Cordelier. “Ouro ao norte.” *A Noite Ilustrada* (Rio de Janeiro), 10 May 1935.

<sup>50</sup> “No grande deposito de riquezas mineraes...” *Correspondente* (Rio de Janeiro), 28 September 1935.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*



official “note” containing the name of the purchaser.<sup>52</sup> In the meantime, observers took note of Barata’s economic policies.

In 1931, the Rio newspaper *Correio da Manhã* reported how Barata “organized the mining service in the gold region of the Gurupi, that could be considered quasi virgin.”<sup>53</sup> The Maranhense newspaper *Noticias* remarked that in contrast to the state of Maranhão, Barata “has taken severe measures, rigorous measures, even putting violators in prison, and, creating enforcement that has given a way to take on those who divert gold through illicit commerce.”<sup>54</sup> Moura, who would be inclined to praise Barata’s previous actions as an employee of a government agency, noted that “one of the beneficial factors for the mining centers that came with the enforcement of the extinct Inspectoria de Minas do Pará was a formal prohibition of aguardente sales in mining towns, and this measure had a magnificent result.”<sup>55</sup>

A report to the Ministry of Agriculture described Barata’s agenda in favorable terms, noting how “The Interventor [do Pará] normalized the miners’ situation who dig for gold on the terras devolutas of the Gurupi River.”<sup>56</sup> Publications in the capital praised Barata’s background and hailed the Interventor as defending the “legitimate interests of the nation” against aventureiros and speculators who were presumably responsible for the high quantity of gold being smuggled abroad.<sup>57</sup> More amazing still: having expelled Von Linde via decree and carried

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<sup>52</sup> “A zona aurifera do Maranhão.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 27 November 1934.

<sup>53</sup> “A indústria do ouro no nosso paiz: As expedições levadas a effeito ao Gurupi e Amapá, - no Pará –.” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 18 October 1931.

<sup>54</sup> “O Ouro do Maranhão.” *Noticias* (São Luís), 3 March 1934.

<sup>55</sup> Moura 1936 11.

<sup>56</sup> Ministério da Agricultura 1933 30-31.

<sup>57</sup> “Defendendo a riqueza do Pará.” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 23 January 1931.

out a state-level ownership of gold extraction by turning Viseu into a territory, August 1931 saw the new state agency which had been placed in charge of the mines declare a monopoly on the purchase of gold.<sup>58</sup> This predated abovementioned efforts by the national government to the same end through the use of the Banco do Brasil.<sup>59</sup>

Such development served as inspiration for publications such as *O Imparcial* to call for similarly energetic state measures in Maranhão, albeit for the purpose of clearing forest and populating the mineral-rich territory on the eastern side of the state's border with Pará.<sup>60</sup> And as Espírito Santo's *Diário da Manhã* reported in 1932, the state of Pará had hired a small number of consultants to implement the use of mercury in order to capture a greater amount of gold that would otherwise be lost in the traditional panning method.<sup>61</sup> This underscores the extent to which measures that promised to improve conditions for quilombolas extracting gold along the Gurupí were primarily meant to rationalize and modernize gold production, increase the volume of gold extracted, and empower domestic capital to participate in and benefit from the extraction of mineral wealth. Such methods were already being used in Amapá, then under direct administration by the state.<sup>62</sup>

Moura mentions elsewhere that the Inspetoria attempted, with relatively little success, to improve the condition of the trails and roads leading to the mines. It was not uncommon for

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<sup>58</sup> “A compra de todo o ouro das minas do Gurupy.” *A Federação* (Porto Alegre), 10 Aug. 1931.

<sup>59</sup> The Mar. 2 edition of Rio's *Diário da Noite* notes that the Banco do Brasil set up operations along the Gurupí in addition to Amapá; Souza et.al 123.

<sup>60</sup> “O ouro e o nordeste.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 13 Oct. 1931.

<sup>61</sup> “Extração do ouro no rio Gurupi.” *Diário da Manhã* (Vitória), 3 Jan. 1932.

<sup>62</sup> “As minas de ouro no Pará.” *A Federação* (Porto Alegre), 4 Jan. 1932.

worker to have to move through semi-flooded trails while carrying the product of their toil on their backs.<sup>63</sup> Where the Inspetoria did make improvements, particularly in the case of roads leading from Camiranga to mines further west, they were based on trails made by Silvio Ribeiro and Guilherme Capanema before 1900.<sup>64</sup>

Quilombolas were essentially subordinate to the state's designs for the territory in terms of ownership and production. In 1932, the *Diário da União* noted that Dr. Miguel Sylvio Ribeiro filed a formal complaint (*protesto*) against the sale of lands in Camiranga. This was, in fact, the son of Silvio Ribeiro. More than three decades earlier, Miguel had traveled through the region with his father and Agostinho de Sá Caldas. Ribeiro submitted documents, but the official decision apparently determined these to be insufficient to support his protest.<sup>65</sup>

A 1934 article in *Jornal do Brasil* demonstrated this shift at the national level in reprinting a strongly worded telegram to the Ministério de Fazenda by Barata publicly protesting the Vargas government's decision to shut down the state Inspetoria de Minas e Castanhaes charged with overseeing and regulating mining operations.<sup>66</sup> Paiva describes the organization as having carried out "commercial functions (purchase of gold), tax collection, police functions, and also maintaining some rural health posts."<sup>67</sup> In Barata's words "this service envisioned the defense of the terras devolutas belonging to the State that assisted the miners and their families with health and education services." The use of the term "terras devolutas" is especially

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<sup>63</sup> Moura 1936, 13-14

<sup>64</sup> Souza et. al 74.

<sup>65</sup> "Secretárias de Estado." *Diário Oficial* (Rio de Janeiro), 23 March 1932.

<sup>66</sup> "A Evasão do Ouro: Extintos os serviços da Administração Estadual das Minas de Ouro." *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 16 August 1934.

<sup>67</sup> Paiva, et. al 16

interesting because it demonstrates that, while the state could be a paternal protector of the miners and their families, it still did not recognize the ethnic territoriality that had long been a feature of the Gurupí region.

Barata warned President Vargas that in closing down these services, the garimpeiros would once again become “given up to the foreigner Guilherme Linde who has been enslaving them, amid the indifference of the governments of the State and the Velha Republica.”<sup>68</sup> It is highly revealing that Barata specifically invokes Von Linde by name, indicating how much the conflict between Guilherme Von Linde and various groups in the region, including quilombolas, served as an influential factor in Barata’s policy towards gold mining territories.

But Barata was not always seen as a champion of garimpeiros. Once Barata was well into his term, he was a frequent target of press criticism. A number of publications claimed that Barata had overseen the sale of gold mined from the Gurupí to fund a gift to Getúlio Vargas in 1933—a gold key weighing about 200 grams.<sup>69</sup> A more serious accusation came after Barata’s long critical telegram to the Ministério da Fazenda. Various media outlets reprinted a story from *Folha da Noite* claiming that Barata had reserved some of the most valuable land around the Gurupí for his political allies, and had sold some land to a North American syndicate. Ironically, there were also lamentations that such a move came at a time when nationalization of the mines was part of the national discussion.<sup>70</sup> Of course, this was not a likely possibility given the new

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<sup>68</sup> “A evasão do ouro: Extintos os Serviços da Administração Estadual das Minas de Ouro.” *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 16 August 1934.

<sup>69</sup> “Uma chave de ouro, pesando 200 grammas, para o dictador.” *A Nação* (Rio de Janeiro), 28 Sep. 1933.

<sup>70</sup> “Jornaes do Rio via Panair.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 1 July 1935.

mining code and the retreat of both Barata *and* Vargas from a radical interpretation of the use of state power.

In July 1934, the *Código de Minas* (Decreto 24.262) gave the national government subsoil rights, and thus unquestionably elevated the national government above the states in the process of granting and extending mining concessions.<sup>71</sup> Article Ten required that any would be owner of a mining property would have to submit a legal justification to the Federal government, which had to include a brief history of the mine, the value of the resources contained therein, a description of any installations to be used in the extractive process, and any available technical reports or photographs pertaining to the territory, among other requirements.<sup>72</sup> The Departamento Nacional da Produção Mineral, a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture, would also be responsible for granting prospecting rights (“direito de pesquisar substâncias minerais”). Article 3 limited all concessions to Brazilians and businesses incorporated in Brazil. Articles 79 and 80 established strict technical requirements for states to be able to independently grant concessions for mining exploration, but reserved such rights for the federal government in the case of fossil fuels and “noble metals” such as gold and silver.

This was presumably meant to curb the regional potentates that dominated Brazil before the Revolution of 1930, it also isolated decision makers from the protests of the Afro-Brazilians who occupied the mineral-rich territories along the Gurupi River just as their ancestors had. While Article 85 identified nationalization as a priority in the case of mines deemed important to the economic or military defense of the nation, it was also a highly centralizing act. Articles 88 and 90 guaranteed subsidized transportation costs for mining companies that employed at least

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<sup>71</sup> Paiva, et. al 16.

<sup>72</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 24642, 10 Jul. 1934.

two-thirds Brazilian engineers, three-fourths Brazilian workers (*operários*), and maintained schools and hospitals for these workers. While the 1934 Mining Code was meant to institutionalize popular control over national resources, the framework it established would only be effective so long as the national government was willing to enforce it.



Figure 2. “Redenção do Pará”

### State Action and Quilombola Visibility

Even immediately before the Revolution of 1930, there were looming expectations that a mining boom could raise the profile of Maranhão and Pará by attracting capital as well as large migrant populations to provide labor. Because of such expectations, a multiplication in knowledge production led primarily by the Brazilian state resulted in historical and living quilombolas gaining a certain visibility in the growing number of printed materials about the Gurupí. This was essentially the continuation of a process featured in previous chapters, specifically in the writings of Arrojado Lisboa and Jorge Hurley. The increase in literature about mining along the Gurupí River gives us a further understanding of the politics and territoriality of quilombolas during the 1930s in addition to reinforcing historical details of quilombos in the region.

A 1930 article published by Lucas Galheiro in *O Imparcial* months before the 1930 Revolution provides additional information about Agostinho.<sup>73</sup> Galheiro specifically mentions hearing information about a valuable mine—“Mina do Sacco”—from a friend, Colonel Lereno Nunes, who had in turn been informed by Agostinho himself during a 1916 trip to Itamoari, referred to here as “um preto velho de nome Agostinho de tal, no lugar (disse elle) Itamoary...”<sup>74</sup> According to Galheiro’s third hand retelling of Agostinho’s lesson (*palestra*) to Lereno Nunes, the quilombola reveals that by that point his involvement with gold mining in Montes Aureos was assisting foreign mining concerns “como auxiliares do serviço, dentre outros, eu e um irmão meu.” As foreign capital was penetrating the mines of the border region between Pará and Maranhão, Agostinho was still penetrating wooded areas in search of new veins to be exploited

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<sup>73</sup> Galheiro, Lucas. “Riqueza maranhense.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 20 July 1930.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

for mineral resources. Describing one expedition, Galheiro narrates how Agostinho and his brother came upon a small creek (*córrego*) and struck gold. Using their pickaxes to remove the stone containing the gold:

They emptied the bags in which they carried necessities and filled them with gold and the adequate instruments. And, *so their wealth wouldn't be taken by the engineers their bosses*, people who were the only ones able to go, such was the ferocity of the immeasurable forest, Agostinho and his brother dug up a large amount of dirt from the hill, covering their findings so that it would be sealed away from the eyes of other explorers. Afterwards, they took the sacks close to where they left the engineers and left them hidden, telling their bosses that they hadn't found anything.<sup>75</sup>

This story, bordering on a legend, is said to be the explanation for why the site retained the name “Mina do Sacco.” More than this, the story paints a very complex picture of two brothers, both quilombolas before 1888, collaborating with the mining interests that have compromised the positions of their communities while employing a certain form of resistance. As James C. Scott writes:

paying close attention to political acts that are disguised or offstage helps us to map a realm of possible dissent. Here, I believe, we will typically find the social and normative basis for practical forms of resistance (for example, what masters called shirking, theft, and flight by slaves) as well as the values that might, if conditions permitted, sustain more dramatic forms of rebellion.<sup>76</sup>

Agostinho and his brother employed what Brazilians might call *malandragem* – undermining their employers without offering straightforward resistance. Given Agostinho's personal history and that of the region in general, the “realm of possible dissent” was as expansive and diverse as the lands bordering the Gurupi itself. What makes this episode distinct,

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* Italics are my own

<sup>76</sup> Scott 1990 20.



however, is how much the brothers utilized their knowledge of the land to facilitate their act of resistance (concealing gold for their own use or the benefit of their friends and kin).

Drawing from the story offered by Galheiro, Agostinho and his brother accepted and even collaborated with individuals who obtained mining concessions on lands inhabited by fugitive slave descendents, indigenous groups, and even a small number of landowners who inherited their lands and might trace their title to the earliest *sesmarias*. Nonetheless, they could also undermine the administration of such territory because they possessed intimate knowledge of the land that could not be boasted by many concession holders. The disbursement of this knowledge benefitted mining interests in the long term, but was passed down in the manner of folklore through a community line. As Ruben de Almeida writes:

The pretos, descendents of the old calhambolas, inhabitants of the mocambos Camiranga and Itamauari, whom we heard from, are in agreement about the incredible quantity of gold, mined by foreign companies. It is they [quilombolas] who today are the true keepers of that secret and, verifying who discovered the mines, you always discover the name of a mocambeiro. The famous Agostinho Mafra was said to possess the lighthouse of gold. Estevam, his successor transmitted it to Tito, Valério, Alexandre, Tibério, Pedro, and in this way it came to the current ones: Amancio, Daniel, Raimunda, from Camiranga; Pompeu Alves, Feliciano Primo da Silva, Honorato and Salustiano Antonio Cardoso, Dionísio and Amancio do Carmo, Domingas Mendes, Maria do Carmo, Dominguinha e Rosa Leite, from Itamauari; Joaquim Antonio de Almeida (Caribé), from Pirocaua; and many others, from Turiaçu, S. Helena, Viana, Pinheiro, and Carutapera.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Almeida 38. The original quote is as follows: “Os pretos, descendentes dos antigos calhambolas, habitantes dos mocambos Camiranga e Itamauari, a quem ouvimos, são concordes em afirmar a incrível quantidade de ouro, retirado pelas companhias estrangeiras. São eles, aliás, hoje em dia os verdadeiros detentores desse segredo e, procurando-se a averiguar a quem se deve o descobrimento das minas, sempre se encontra o nome de um mocambeiro. O celebre Agostinho Mafra possuía, como dizem, o faro do ouro. Estevam, seu sucessor transmitiu-o a Tito, Valério, Alexandre, Tibério, Pedro, e assim chegou aos atuais: Amancio, Daniel, Raimunda, de Camiranga; Pompeu Alves, Feliciano Primo da Silva, Honorato e Salustiano Antonio Cardoso, Dionísio e Amancio do Carmo, Domingas Mendes, Maria do Carmo, Dominguinha e Rose Leite, do Itamauari; Joaquim Antonio de Almeida (Caribé), do Pirocaua; e outros muitos, do Turiaçu, S. Helena, Viana, Pinheiro e Carutapera.”

Such transmission of knowledge and experience from generation to generation is the closest a cautious scholar might come to asserting “African survivals” as an independent factor in determining the social and political composition of the quilombos in western Maranhão that eventually led to the founding of Camiranga and Itamoari. Outsiders such as Lisboa, Souza, and Ribeiro (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6) identified various African influences in Camiranga and Itamoari to a greater or lesser extent, though these should not be taken as conclusive. What is more conclusive, however, is that quilombolas in the Gurupí region engaged in resistance based on their defense of a collective social arrangement increasingly under attacked by the forces of extractive capital as the twentieth century unfolded. Almeida’s quote makes it clear that quilombola influence was part of a cultural network that included the territories involved in quilombo formation in the 1860s and 1870s such as Santa Helena and Viana.

Of course, such resistance can be sporadic or incomplete. Agostinho and his brother, having stashed away gold that technically did not belong to them according to Galheiro’s story, probably sold it to merchants in Carutapera and Viseu, or the *regatões* who crisscrossed the Gurupí buying and selling commodities. This resistance was still qualified by an external market that served to enrich a different set of commercial actors than those for whom they labored. In addition, Galheiro writes that Agostinho did not return to the site because it was in the middle of an area populated by “índios bravios.”<sup>78</sup> In addition, we are told that Agostinho suggested that Colonel Nunes raise a force of “well armed and equipped men to combat the indians” in order to access the gold of Mina do Sacco.<sup>79</sup> Aside from the implication of mutual hostility between quilombolas and the region’s native inhabitants, it also provides a pretext for Galheiro to make

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<sup>78</sup> Galheiro, Lucas. “Riqueza maranhense.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 10 July 1930.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

an impassioned plea for the state to support an effort “to gather the most representative elements of *our high commerce* and would organize a business...to explore the mines...”<sup>80</sup>

Galheiro then provides the text of a letter sent by Carutapéra resident José Falcão da Silva, with the express intention of promoting the region’s mineral resources. Apart from the early explorations by the Companhia Maranhense, Falcão presents the region as long abandoned before the arrival of Von Linde, with the “fury” of the Urubú acting as an obstacle to the successful establishment of mining. He refers to the “preto Agostinho” as a resident of “Camerança” (Camiranga), “where he was a species of Governor whom the others obeyed. Tamauary is also a mocambo of pretos and the “Governor” there was Theofilo.” Aside from repeating known facts such as the fugitive slave origin of Agostinho and his comrades, he notes that they are both rather large towns.<sup>81</sup> After establishing the region as a source of untapped (*inculta*) wealth beset by Urubú Indians in need of pacification, Galheiro looks ahead to the day when “a concession holder from Maranhão or Pará, who, with good equipment and technical personnel, would try to explore the mines...” Galheiro ends by asking: “who would be capable of guaranteeing that he would have a less laughable result?”<sup>82</sup>

The experiences of quilombolas were not only disseminated as history—as in the case of Galheiro’s tale about Agostinho—but were also integral to contemporary political struggles in the Gurupí during the 1930s. Geological experts employed by the Brazilian government were key to recording and disseminating both the history of quilombolas and the privations they continued to suffer during the Vargas-Barata era. Employees of the Serviço de Fomento da

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<sup>80</sup> Galheiro, Lucas. “Riqueza maranhense.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 20 September 1930.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

Produção Mineral (SFPM)—part of the DNPM—traveled extensively throughout Maranhão and Pará. Much like their scientific forebears, the works they produced betrayed their secondary role as amateur historians and anthropologists of the living populations of the Gurupí region. Their findings, admiring of quilombola communities while also providing information that would be used in mineral extraction, entered the popular consciousness through publications such as newspapers and magazines.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, there was an ever-increasing call for stronger state-level and national exploration and protection of Brazilian resources from aventureiros. This economic nationalism was a form of mediating class conflict, with both garimpeiros and domestic capitalists pitted against the most avaricious class of foreign capitalists and speculators. Thus, it was not contradictory that both the Barata and Vargas administrations enacted policies with an eye for increasing mineral production, and thus the wealth generated by, the Gurupí region. Even in 1909, the need for additional staff for the national mining and geological service was explicitly connected to the necessity of exploring other parts of the country such as the Gurupí region.<sup>83</sup> That the region could be mentioned in the same breath as Minas Gerais, a producer of gold, diamonds, and other forms of mineral wealth since its settlement at the end of the seventeenth century is a telling sign of the importance attributed to gold resources in the Gurupí. An address made by Vargas before a joint session of Brazil's legislature in 1937 specifically mentions the Gurupí as one of the most promising regions for gold production.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> “Legislação de minas.” *Diário Oficial* (Rio de Janeiro), 6 May 1909.

<sup>84</sup> “A mensagem do Presidente da República apresentada ao Poder Legislativo em 3 de Maio de 1937.” *O Radical* (Rio de Janeiro), 4 May 1937.

During the reign of Getulismo during the 1930, the Brazilian state made considerable strides in rendering the region legible in terms of its available resources—a nationalist reappropriation of a region long-coveted by foreign capital. The SFPM boasted a patriotic and economic-minded program of advancing mineral production in order to add to the national wealth, but another part of their mission was to prevent “unsuitable aventureiros who create mining pseudo-companies to exploit the good faith of people who are less informed.”<sup>85</sup> This is to say that the SFPM articulated a nationalist mission that involved the exploitation of natural resources, but claimed to protect communities such as Camiranga from “adventurers,” and protect them from their own ignorance.<sup>86</sup> It is highly likely that such language was drafted precisely with individuals like the recently expropriated Guilherme Von Linde in mind.

With the national state taking additional action to protect valuable primary commodities from the machinations of “foreigners” and “adventurers,” those employed by federal agencies made the Gurupi legible to the federal government and its interests. Perhaps a paternal sense of protection motivated the stronger hand, but it is undeniable that more Brazilians than ever before knew the wealth of the region. The 1930s became a turning point in this regard. For one thing, previous works on the Gurupi region from the proceeding decades such as Arrojado Lisboa’s *A Bacia do Gurupy e as Suas Minas de Ouro* from 1897 and *Guilherme Dodt’s Descrição dos Rios Parnahyba e Gurupy* from 1874 were published again in 1935 and 1939, respectively. 1935 was also an important year because SFPM experts began to validate and quantify the claims of wealth in the Gurupi.

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<sup>85</sup> Moraes, Jacques Luciano de. “Mineraes e seus productos: A industria extractiva de ouro.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 25 February 1936.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

The *Correio da Manhã* had covered the brutality of Von Linde in the mines he claimed as his own, but in 1935 an article carried the subtitle “Uma pepita de Ouro Avaliada em 26 Contos de Réis e as Minas do Pará e Maranhão.”<sup>87</sup> The study conducted by Glycon de Paiva Teixeira, Assistant Chief of the SFPM was the basis for the article, which claimed that most of the gold veins in the large Gurupi region were located on “terras devolutas.” At this point, the discourse of these lands being abandoned despite the fact of an iron-clad (or gold-clad as it were) history of quilombola development of gold mining. The preoccupation of the national government was to “exercise rigorous technical control, to avoid the inactivity of mines currently worked through barbarous processes.”<sup>88</sup> This article was reprinted almost verbatim in other newspapers circulating in the capital such as the *Diário Carioca*, which ran the piece on 15 October 1935, and the *Diário de Notícias*, which also reprinted the piece verbatim 27 January of that year.

The concerted efforts of the national government through the SFPM resulted in a sophisticated geological exploration of the much-heralded frontier for gold exploration since the end of slavery. For this reason, there was a palpable excitement expressed in the media. Rio de Janeiro’s *Diário de Notícias*, for example, gave notice of the SFPM’s work in the region under the title “Ouro!”<sup>89</sup> It was not uncommon that individuals involved in such geological studies brought samples with them. In the middle of an interview conducted in the state of Piauí, Paiva Teixeira left only to return with two large gold nuggets to show off to his interlocutors.<sup>90</sup> Now

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<sup>87</sup> “As nossas riquezas minerais.” *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 16 January 1935. To compare the abovementioned amount in terms of today’s currency, 26 contos de réis would probably amount to \$1600—for a *nugget* of gold.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> “Ouro!” *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro), 27 January 1935.

<sup>90</sup> “Jazidas de carvão no Piauí.” *Pacotilha* (São Luís), 12 February 1935.

that there was tangible and, indeed, sparkling evidence of gold, questions surrounding mining production took on even greater importance.

The three main experts heading up SFPM efforts in the Gurupí were Glycon de Paiva, Henrique Capper Alves de Souza, and Silvio Fróes de Abreu. Individually, they published a wealth of material in newspaper articles and books distilling their scientific and cultural findings during their years studying mineral deposits in the Gurupí region. As a group, the three geologists published *Ouro e bauxita na região do Gurupy* in 1937. Though it was mostly intended as a scientific work, the historical synthesis and cultural observations contained therein offer a glimpse into the situation of quilombolas during the 1930s, albeit from an outsider perspective.

The first part of *Ouro e bauxita* consists of a timeline of mining along the Gurupí River going back to the seventeenth century. This is mostly synthetic, leaning heavily on previously published works from Arrojado Lisboa, Gustavo Dodt, and Ruben de Almeida. Due to the specialized nature of the literature pertaining to the Gurupí, many of the later works published in the 30s drew from these previous works, which as I demonstrate in other chapters, frequently make mention of quilombolas, their role in gold mining, and their relationship with the territory.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, the historical chapter of *Ouro e bauxita* mentions Agostinho de Sá Caldas by name as well as the various quilombos that proliferated in western Maranhão beginning in the 1850s. Parallel to this, there is also a strain of thought typical of the period which assumes the generic nature of the population following the end of slavery. 1887 is said to be the year of “desaparecimento do negro mocambeiro.”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Elsewhere I have highlighted inconsistencies and errors, such as the erroneous periodization of Guilherme Von Linde’s tenure in the Gurupí region.

<sup>92</sup> Paiva et. al 20.

The foreword to the volume, written by SFPM Director Djalma Guimarães, demonstrates a commitment to economic nationalism and modernity: “não existem, em rigor, alluviões pobres e ricos, — todos podem ser explorados quando conscienciosamente encaradas todas as faces do problema. Função de volume, de teôr, de machinaria, de cambio.”<sup>93</sup> In other words, the mission of the engineers was to figure out how to extract resources from all corners of the nation with the judicious application of science and economy. Furthermore, the Director asserts the mission of the SFPM to also be “to bring complete assistance to the man of the interior, so that he can become an economic unit...thereby *strengthening the Central Power*, in the certainty that this action extends to all regions of the Country, – the expeditionaries of this Service lend technical assistance to regional miners, beyond free medical assistance for the populations.”<sup>94</sup>

The actions of the SFPM were to provide expertise and assistance in order to turn the Gurupí and its residents into productive citizens—an “economic unit.” Doing so would be an act of strengthening the center, represented by government of Getúlio Vargas. Indeed, as Cleary notes, it is understandable that the increasingly economic interest in the region during the 1930s had as its side effect “a marked improvement in both written and oral records” on quilombolas in Camiranga and Itamoari.<sup>95</sup> This is acknowledged by the authors of *Ouro e Bauxita*, who cite “testimonies collected locally by the author.”<sup>96</sup> It is interesting that the local residents of the Gurupí who informed SFPM research were not individually cited but instead acknowledged as a generic group, unlike the other authors in their bibliography.

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<sup>93</sup> Paiva, et. al x.

<sup>94</sup> Paiva, et al. xi. Italics added.

<sup>95</sup> Cleary 45.

<sup>96</sup> Souza et. al 28.



One of the most illustrative examples is a story on the two communities printed by Rio de Janeiro newspaper *A Noite*, presenting them as “[u]ndervalued by civilization, a refuge of black fugitives, of gold prospectors and the Urubú indians...and sons of old Maranhense slaves.”<sup>97</sup> It speaks to the endurance of this identity that outsiders would make such observations so long after the end of slavery, and over a half century after the invasion of the quilombo Limoeiro in 1878. The feature, written by Souza, points out how “[they] still breathe (respiram-se) African customs in this village....”<sup>98</sup> Elsewhere that same author noted: “passing through these places like Itamaoari or Anélio, also part of the Gurupí region, the complete predominance of the black element...who escaped from slaveowners in Turi-Assú.”<sup>99</sup> This is in spite of his SFPM colleague Sylvio Froes de Abreu attributing the increase in gold exploration to the “great affluence of mines coming from the North, Northeast and even French Guiana.”<sup>100</sup>

Describing Anélio further elsewhere, Souza finds “the same town from the turn of the century formed by huts, zigzagging up the fill, accompanied by flowerings of mining...and its population, mostly constituted by blacks, live in long houses and right next to one another, built side by side, forming a single street, as if, remembering the times of slavery, would find in a mutual warmth the moral strength that only exists in this impressive forest if we forget distance and solitude.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Henrique Capper Alves de Souza. “Na Região do Gurupy [sic].” *A Noite Ilustrada* (Rio de Janeiro) 29 May 1935.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Souza 31-32. The original quote is as follows: “passando de tais localidades para Itamaoari ou para o Anélio, também região do Gurupí, impressiona a predominância completa do elemento negro...fugidos do senhores de Turi-Assú.”

<sup>100</sup> Abreu 1939, 48.

<sup>101</sup> Souza 32. The original quote is as follows: “a mesma povoação de fins do século passado formado por palhoças, serpenteia sobre o alto do morro, acompanhado os afloramentos de minério...E a sua população, na maioria constituída por negros, vive em casas estreitas e comprimidas umas às outras,

As for Alegre, practically adjacent to Anélio, Alves de Souza described what appeared to be a rooted village, with “a lively desire of its population to improve its environment, including the construction of a church. The age of this mining center explains how, by force of circumstance, it created small local agriculture.”<sup>102</sup> Like Anélio, Alegre was already a well-established community and a source of mining activity long before the gold rush set in. In addition to brief descriptions of select locations, Alves de Souza also provided photographs which featured in the publication itself. Though of poor quality, one photo represents residents of Itamoari, “antigo quilombo,” with three dark-skinned residents posing between a thatched roof hut and what appears to be a larger gathering space reminiscent of the open meeting area described in 1895 Arrojado Lisboa as the site of meetings and legal proceedings by quilombolas.<sup>103</sup>

Though we must be skeptical of interpreting the experiences of quilombolas through Souza’s gaze, his observations betray traces of an alternative spatial order based on mutuality and solidarity that contrasted noticeably with the other mining boom towns that engulfed many parts of the border region during the 1930s. Of the latter, the author writes: “One week after gold was discovered, dozens and sometimes hundreds of men camped out. The population expanded in a linear fashion along the creek [where gold was found] or in a circle around the waterfront

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construídas lado a lado, formando uma única rua, como se, lembrados ainda dos tempos da escravidão, procurassem, num mútuo aconchego, a força moral que só existe, nesta mata impressionante, se esquecermos a distância e a solidão.”

<sup>102</sup> Souza 30. The original quote is as follows: “um vivo desejo da população de melhorar o seu ambiente, incluindo a construção de uma igreja. Explica-se pela maior antiguidade deste centro mineiro onde começa, por força das circunstâncias, a criar-se uma pequena agricultura local.”

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

[where gold was found].”<sup>104</sup> Examples of the former would be mining boomtowns such as Inglês in Maranhão.<sup>105</sup>

Though Alves de Souza says little more, taken with observations by Jorge Hurley and others in the previous chapter, Alegre and particularly Anélio seemed to demonstrate the demographic, cultural, and geographical traits attributed to these settlements such as the character of the architecture, with narrow houses grouped closely together, the existence of agriculture (in Alegre) in which many residents took part, and of course the demographic character, notable enough to make an impression. Settlements elsewhere had taken on a cosmopolitan character more typical of boomtowns, perhaps owing to the fact that most known gold deposits were on the Maranhão side of the border.<sup>106</sup> These were traces of African survivals in a region where the organization of space was strongly determined by the presence of quilombolas.

The historical continuity between the quilombo and community life in Camiranga is thrown into sharp relief by an April 1936 feature in *A Noite*. Author Louis Cordelier explored much of the mining territory on the Pará-Maranhão border as a special correspondent.<sup>107</sup> Traveling with Cordelier were two travelers with experience on the Gurupi: geologist Henrique Capper Alves de Souza and H.C. de Souza Araújo. Encountering an elderly ex-slave during his travels in Camiranga, Cordelier reports:

Once again in Camiranga I found...the black man Amâncio, old slave, survivor of times gone by. Nearly a centenarian, it had been 75 years since he was a

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<sup>104</sup> Souza 29.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Souza et. al 89.

<sup>107</sup> Louis Cordelier. “Na corrente aurea do Gurupy”. *A Noite Illustrada* (Rio de Janeiro), April 1936

mocambeiro [another word for quilombola], an “out law” [sic] that suffered with his brothers a destiny of inexorable repression by the state governments...having been a prospector for 50 years, he lives in the greatest of miseries...[Amâncio said] “you can’t get rich with gold. I’ve moved a world [of gold] and I’m still here as you can see.”<sup>108</sup>

Amâncio Cardoso’s testimony establishes a past rooted in resistance to slavery, but also highlights the misery and marginalization that he and his neighbors encountered at the hands of the state government. Perhaps the above quote also reflected a degree of journalistic license, but Amâncio’s words communicate a sense of dispossession, placing a human face on the various manipulations leveled against his community. More importantly, this is very clear evidence that individuals who participated in quilombos continued to influence community life after abolition.

For his part, Amâncio had endured under the circumstances he described for decades. Ruben de Almeida spoke of Amâncio as one of the elders of gold mining knowledge who provided the link between past and present among quilombolas.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, Amâncio had engaged in politics in his own right, writing a letter to Interventor Barata in November 1934.<sup>110</sup> Amâncio presented himself as a humble *servente* from the mines of Gurupí. In both November and December of the previous year, Amâncio had not received his pay for the labor he provided. He had even brought up the issue to the *prefeito* of Viseu, Anibal Freire, but without resolution. Amâncio appealed to Barata’s “courage” and “greatness of character” in order to invoke state intervention in the matter.

Amâncio also historicized his presence in the Gurupí, dating his tenure in the mines back to the ownership of the Miranda brothers of property in Montes Auros just before the arrival of

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Almeida 38.

<sup>110</sup> Amâncio Cardoso to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 6 Nov. 1934, Governo, Gabinete do Interventor, Caixa 12, Cartas 1934, APEP, Belém.

the English. Amâncio's recollections about having been a quilombola many decades prior and later a guide to Miguel Arrojado Lisboa as told to Cordelier, Almeida's placement of Amâncio in a quilombola lineage of mining knowledge, and Amâncio's own testimony of his experience in the mines and "advanced age" provide us with a sense that one fairly marginal person actually served an extremely important role in presenting community struggles. He explicitly appealed to his age and tenure on the land in order to claim a certain moral authority. But more importantly, he carefully crafted his letter using the language of the state-driven paternalism that proliferated in petitions and letters to the Barata and Vargas governments.<sup>111</sup>

Amâncio verbally prostrated himself before Barata as his humble servant (*serve*), perhaps with a dose of artifice and some knowledge that Barata demonstrated a willingness to intervene on those terms. What is less clear is whether the government in Belém acceded to Amâncio's request. The letter itself is written in a neat hand—also rare in that such letters and telegrams sent to the state capital rarely originated from Camiranga, Itamoari, or other rural areas in Pará characterized by black and quilombola populations. It is uncertain whether Amâncio wrote it himself, but a representative of the Interventoria did read the letter—indicated by margin notes in blue pencil. Agostinho was not the only one in his community to apply this strategy in order to guarantee material survival.

Another mine worker from Camiranga, Manoel Egidio da Silva, was the recipient of 100 mil-reis after his wife wrote a letter to the Interventor asking for assistance to see their family through the planting season as they cultivated a new field.<sup>112</sup> The letter contains many of the

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<sup>111</sup> After 1930, APEP folders collecting materials from the Gabinete do Interventor grew substantially in terms of the number of letters and petitions of which only a small sample is represented here.

<sup>112</sup> Manoel Egidio da Silva to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 22 Jan. 1933, Governo, Gabinete do Interventor, Caixa 08, Cartas 1933, APEP, Belém.

rhetorical devices commonly found in letters appealing to the Interventoria for social assistance, such as Manoel stressing his four children and state of being “sem recursos neste lugar deserto,” an interesting if unsubstantiated allegation. Through his wife, who transcribed the letter, Manoel Egidio emphasizes that he is the head of a large family, and that such help would be an “acto humanitario,” and remains confident that “V.Ex.a won’t leave us abandoned and exposed to hunger.”<sup>113</sup> Another interesting detail is how Manoel was exposed because he had made the effort, with the help of “strange people,” to clear farmland. However, he did not possess the seeds to plant and did not have enough to buy them. Indeed, he didn’t have so much as a hammock. The letter, dated 22 January 1933, was received and acted upon by Barata office on 15 February, with a handwritten note to the state Ministério de Agricultura to resolve (*providenciar*) the situation.<sup>114</sup>

After the end of the letter is a neatly typed paragraph explaining that monetary aid would be directed to Manoel Egidio’s family and distributed by the state-appointed mine administrator, Ignacio Freire. Individuals from Camiranga had unprecedented access to the head of the state government, but the remedies offered therein were strictly filtered through corporatist ideology. The style of the letter certainly hews very closely to the humble style more likely than not to elicit a response from higher levels of authority. Supervisor Ignacio Freire was also asked “to inform [his superiors] about the prepared tasks, planting of crops and species of seeds that he would need.”<sup>115</sup> As we will see later, corporatist avenues of alleviating poverty and improving material conditions were a precarious and reversible situation.

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*

If Amâncio himself served as an informal representative of the community, his memory also informed community identity long after his passing. Based on joint fieldwork by historian Rosa Marin and sociologist Edna Castro, many older residents of Camiranga “have strong memories and remember the characters, the men of gold, like Sr. Amâncio Cardoso, this is a fragment of the history of the past century. Those first residents left a familial legacy. The heirs of the Cardoso and Mendes [families] are in the origin of the gold town, and come to indicate the places where the metal was found and where the [old] equipment still exists.”<sup>116</sup>

Much like Agostinho, Amâncio serves as a type of mythical patriarch, organically becoming known as a *homem de ouro* much like his contemporary Agostinho. But as the letter cited above demonstrates, his role was not merely a symbolic tale for reproducing social cohesion: he participated in Camiranga’s serious and ongoing struggles with labor exploitation at the hands of those who claimed quilombola lands as their own. Given the opportunity to talk to a journalist for a newspaper published in the distant capital, Amâncio did not hesitate to outline the misery resident had endured. More importantly, his laments generated an appeal for political action, even if it was only for his immediate qualms and not necessarily for a collective remedy.

In David Cleary’s 1990 study of gold mining practices in Amazonia, he comes across garimpeiros who had interacted in some way with quilombolas in earlier decades though the latter constituted a small minority at that point. He attributes this low number to demographics: in-migration from other parts of Brazil (and French Guiana) had “buried” the long-established population of fugitive slave descendents.<sup>117</sup> Of the three he encountered, one had been born in

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<sup>116</sup> Marin and Castro 1999, 89. The original quote is as follows: “têm fortes lembranças e conhecem as personagens, os homens de ouro, como o Sr. Amâncio Cardoso, este é um fragmento da história do século passado. Desses primeiros moradores herdaram a ascendência familiar. Os herdeiros dos Cardoso, dos Mendes estão na origem de um povoado do ouro, e chegam a indicar os lugares onde se fundia o metal e onde ainda existem os apetrechos.”

<sup>117</sup> Cleary 40.

the region and “had been told these oral histories since early childhood by family and friends.” The other two individuals were not from the region, but themselves had encountered garimpeiros who had been in the Montes Aureos region of northwestern Maranhão during the 1940s.<sup>118</sup>

The legacy of quilombolas is (or was) partially written into the toponymy of the region. This can be seen in the excellent map produced by Pedro de Moura and included in his 1935 work *Rio Gurupy*. Around Camiranga, for example, there are various igarapés, *Igarapé Carambola* (note the phonetic similarity to “quilombola” and “calhambola”) and *Igarapé dos Pretos*, landmarks bearing the names of individuals likely associated with historical quilombolas, and cultural markers such as the *Alto do Marimba* and *casa do Marimba* that demonstrate the continued influence of fugitive slave descendants. To illustrate further, an Igarapé near Itamoari bears the name of Valério, another quilombola whose name appears in Ruben de Almeida’s genealogy of quilombola gold mining knowledge cited above, and there are various sites along the Gurupí-Mirim River to the southwest named for individuals, including *Outeiro do Amâncio*. (See Figure 3)

A few months before visiting Camiranga in 1936, Cordelier viewed the Flechal mine, a few kilometers northwest of Itamoari. The author was unimpressed with what he saw—perhaps one hundred workers extracted gold “using rudimentary processes for the last fifty years.” Principal among them was the use of aboveground gold panning. In most of northwestern Maranhão and northeastern Pará, “the bateia is only used in preliminary exploration, but here it is the only instrument used by thousands of garimpeiros of both sexes. No “sluice” exists in this region, where the use of mercury is still unknown.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Louis Cordelier. “Ouro ao norte!” *A Noite Ilustrada*, 10 May 1935.



According to Moura, such undercapitalized methods meant that much of the valuable gold ore was lost in the process. It wasn't until the 1940s that more strides were made towards "modernization." Writing in *O Imparcial*, Ademar Benna expresses optimism over a network of roads being built to connect the mines to the Gurupi River. As for the workers in Montes Aureos: "they don't just work with mixers, but special machines to wash the gravel and gold-bearing sand."<sup>120</sup>

At an earlier time, Guilherme Von Linde attempted to divert water to the mine by building a dam—a familiar practice in many mining regions that has an adverse effect on communities and agriculture. At some unspecified point during the Revolution of 1930, workers in territories claimed by Von Linde destroyed the dam. The implication is that the workers staged an uprising loosely related to the broader Revolution taking place.<sup>121</sup> Though Cordelier provides no further information, we can reasonably assume that the workers at Flechal used the political upheaval of 1930 as an opening to violent strike back at their landgrabbing employer as political authorities were convulsed by events unfolding in the capital. Cordelier explains the destruction of the dam as being the result of "the man of the forest's eternal struggle against culture and civilization that would impose on their primitive prejudices."<sup>122</sup> This mischaracterization fails to grasp another possibility: The Revolution of 1930 was a nexus point between a history of quilombola resistance based on territoriality and autonomy and a class-based contestation of

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<sup>120</sup> A. Benna. "Ouro." *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 24 June 1944.

<sup>121</sup> Louis Cordelier. "Na corrente aurea do Gurupy". *A Noite Ilustrada* (Rio de Janeiro), April 1936.

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.* The original quote uses the phrase "homem da floresta."

exploitative price-gouging and extortion. Cordelier himself estimates that “the cost of living in Flechal is 4 times higher than in the mines of Inglez.”<sup>123</sup>

An example of such practices could be found in abundance at the mines of São Pedro, site of rebellious activity against Guilherme Von Linde during the 1920s. The cost of flour (*farinha*) was incredibly high at 44 milréis. An article published in *O Jornal* only a few years earlier highlighted the other side of the mining economy: the pittance paid to miners. A writer going under the pseudonym “R” reflected on their experience in the mines at Redondo on the Maracaçumé River in Maranhão.<sup>124</sup> In the final analysis, R says “I couldn’t even tell you how much bitterness this job has caused,” his most impactful memory “of the time I wasted and the malaria I contracted.”<sup>125</sup> R elaborates on the mathematics of gold mining: 53 or so kilograms of gold extracted by 800 or so workers in 1922 was purchased by three houses of commerce, purchased for 3:600\$000/kg and sold in Pará for 4:500\$000/kg, leaving these houses a profit of 37:000\$000. The workers, on the other hand, received about 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the value of each kilogram of gold they unearthed.<sup>126</sup>

To get a sense of how the gold boom affected the region, consider that José Domingues, detailing the growth of Cândido Mendes, counts fourteen commercial establishments in the town purchasing gold from workers for less than the government rate for the purchase of gold set by the *Caixa de Conversão*.<sup>127</sup> Souza estimated that by 1937, there were between four thousand and six thousand workers involved in mining activities.

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<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> R. “Vale a pena extrair oiro?” *O Jornal* (São Luís), 7 February 1923.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> José Domingues. “Uma Visita á zona aurifera do Turyassú.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 29

Souza estimates that, on average, a miner could expect to unearth about .2 grams of gold per day. This left about 4 mil-réis in the pocket of the average miner, not quite enough to afford even simple necessities such as flour.<sup>128</sup> Speaking of the mines, he states further: “nelas, tudo é instável e precário, tudo é acaso e jôgo.”<sup>129</sup> Basic foodstuffs like farinha might be subject to 1000% mark-ups in mines such as Flexal and Alegre.<sup>130</sup> Garimpeiros continuously challenged wealthy mining bosses previously in the 1920s and 1930s, and the return of powerful concession holders mixed with an impossible cost of living contributed to a more combative climate in certain mining territories towards the end of the 1930s.

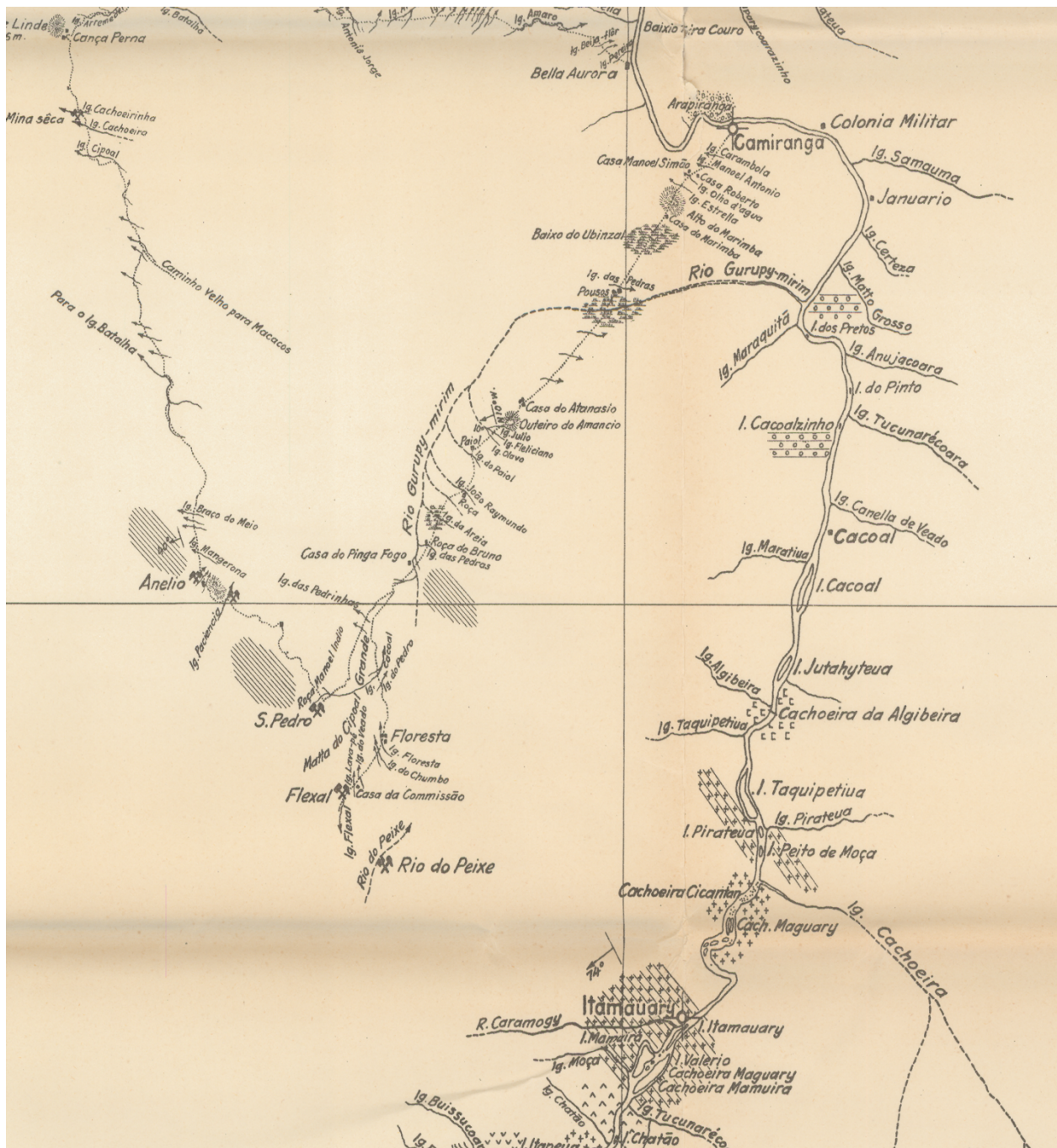
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September 1928.

<sup>128</sup> Souza 23.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*



**Figure 3. Portion of a Map of the Gurupí Region Produced by Pedro in 1935 in featuring key locations such as Itamaoari, Camiranga, Anélio, Flexal, and Bela Aurora**

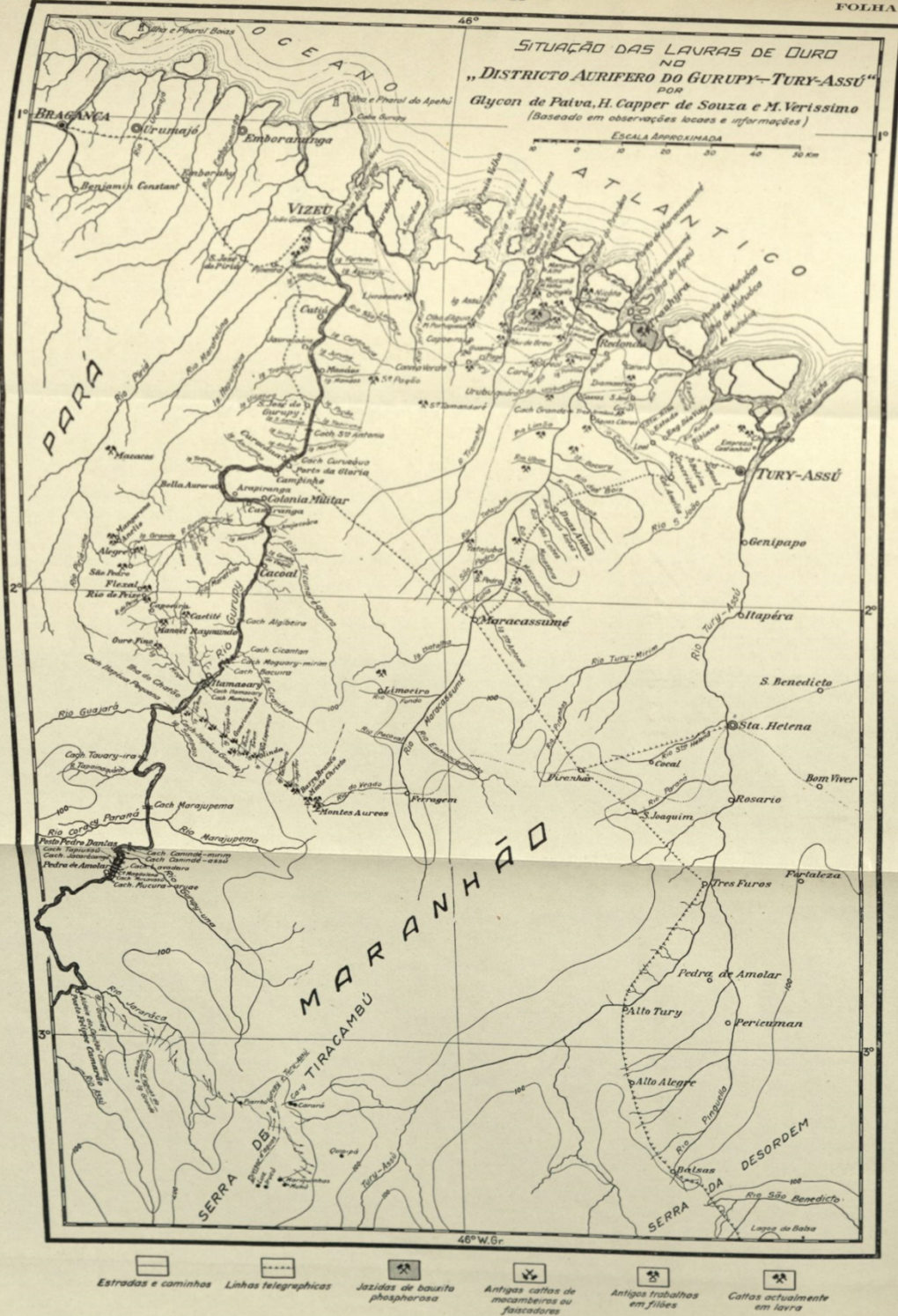


Figure 4. Map of the Broader Gurupí Region Produced by Henrique Capper Alves de Souza and M. Verissimo.

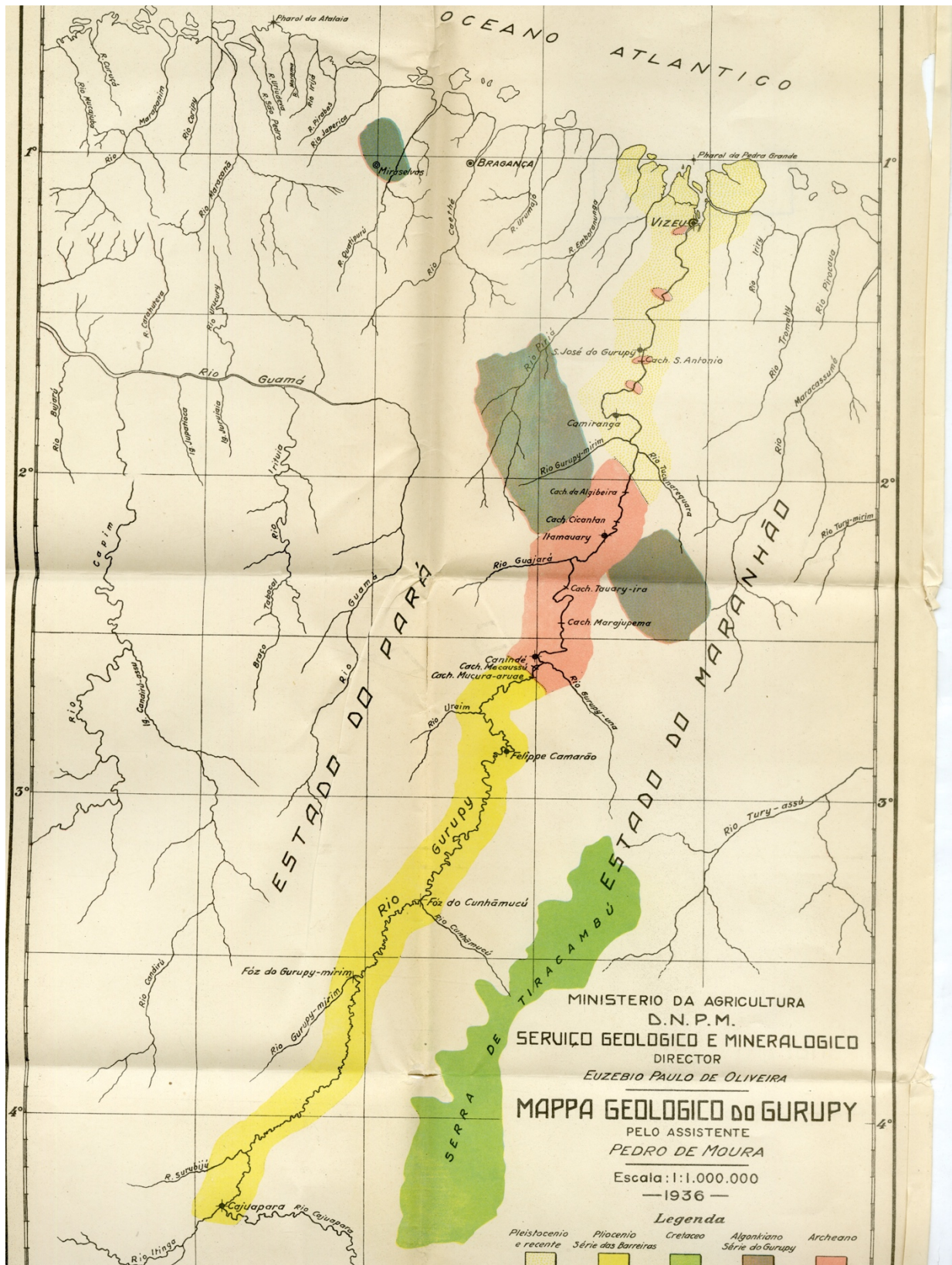


Figure 5. Geological Map of the Gurupí River Region Produced by Pedro de Moura in 1936

### **Class War in Quilombola Territories, 1937-1943**

In terms of the working conditions of garimpeiros, which necessarily involved the living and working conditions of quilombolas who continued to live around the Gurupí River, the developments outlined above suggest brief advances followed by retrenchment and retrocession. Notwithstanding the laws that nominally secured better conditions for garimpeiros, mining concession holders along the Gurupí continued to exercise domination over workers with minimal interference from state and federal authorities by the late 1930s. What about the laborers who extracted the gold?

By most accounts, garimpeiros in Pará did not take their exploitation lightly, using legal and extralegal means to express their discontent on a growing scale during the early 1940s. One Rio de Janeiro newspaper reported that miners in Pará organized a violent armed rebellion against merchants who overcharged them for equipment and goods.<sup>131</sup> The newspaper's response is equally as interesting: "We confess that we didn't know about the existence of miners in the faraway Municipality of Vizeu on that Paraense river. However we are in solidarity in them in their movement. Perhaps this will be some consolation to them. We still know a story similar to theirs and know that our support will be useless."<sup>132</sup>

The article compares the struggle to the Emboaba War of the early eighteenth century, concluding that then and now, things will not change and "we" will always be defeated. The rebellion at Macaco demonstrates an element of class warfare that was much more straightforward than previous methods of struggle employed by quilombolas before 1930: "A

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<sup>131</sup> "A historia se repete." *Revista da Semana* (Rio de Janeiro), 5 April 1941.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.* The original quote is as follows: "Confessamos que não sabemos da existencia de garimpeiros no longinquo Municipio de Vizeu naquele rio paraense. Entretanto estamos solidarios com eles no seu movimento. Pode ser que isso lhes seja um consolo. Todavia conhecemos já uma historia parecida com a sua e sabemos que nosso apoio sera inutil."

group came armed with serrated knives and firearms, closing down the locality of Macacos...”<sup>133</sup> Assailants targeted a military attachment and various commercial houses, including that of then mining concession holders Lima Brito & Co. In an intriguing reversal of the dynamic of the quilombos of old, it was a partner in the company—João Brito—who escaped into the woods. The dramatic attack was a watershed moment in a years-long process involving legal recriminations against the Britos by aggrieved *garimpeiros*. Though this process of contestation did not conclude to the benefit of the workers, it serves as an important addendum to quilombola resistance within the same geographical spaces.

The attackers at Macaco took a quantity of cash as well as gold and, according to the newspaper, intended to escape through the Gurupi River. According to an accounting of Manoel Gonçalves de Brito’s estate, this amounted to 180 contos de réis.<sup>134</sup> This was the result of the *garimpeiros*’ long-simmering dissatisfaction at their exploitation (*explorações*) at the hands of the mining company. Here it would be useful to establish why the mines of Macaco to the west of the Gurupí are relevant to a history of quilombolas in the region. In 1901, Veritas writes that Agostinho had discovered various mines west of the Gurupi “to which he never gave any name, but are situated on the waters of the Piriá River.”<sup>135</sup> Alves de Souza provides further support for this idea, writing that during the period in which Agostinho uncovered new sources of gold new quilombos were established along the Piriá River that became the mining nuclei of Alegre,

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<sup>133</sup> “O assalto da mina aurifera de Macacos.” *O Imparcial* (São Luís), 28 October 1941.

<sup>134</sup> Balanço do estabelecimento commercial Gonçalves Brito & Companhia, Limitada, 16 Mar. 1942, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém. Payments from Brito’s estate were also made to various authorities for the apprehension of the assailants and to the families of a Sargent and another unnamed soldier who were killed in the attack.

<sup>135</sup> Veritas. “As minas de ouro.” *O Diário do Maranhão* (São Luís), 8 April 1901.



Anélio and Flechal.<sup>136</sup> Therefore it is certain that quilombolas could have worked the mines at Macaco just a few kilometers to the south of the abovementioned mines.

Macaco also appears in many previously mentioned sources as one of the gold producing areas under the control of Guilherme Von Linde and his lieutenant Germano Richter as early as 1923 and an example of the brutality of his labor practices.<sup>137</sup> Given the difficulties of settlement, including the fact that the Ka'apor had attacked the mine only a few years before Souza Araujo's visit to the region in 1918, it is certain that any labor force at Macaco would have consisted of fugitive slaves, even accounting for an influx of migrants to the region during the gold boom of the 1930s.

Garimpeiros in mines such as Macaco worked directly under a merchant, who would exchange "merchandise of necessity for the results of a fortnight's work in the mud of the mine. This business, naturally, is disadvantageous to the extractor, anchoring him to a certain person."<sup>138</sup> It is understandable that miners would react forcefully against this relationship, particularly quilombolas who had previously enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy in their relationship to the gold mining economy. Further illustrate the specific economic grievances of garimpeiros, Moura uses the example of *farinha* (flour). Between the banks of the Gurupi River and inland mining centers such as Alegre, the price of flour might rise by up to 500%.<sup>139</sup>

It seemed that, after a brief interregnum represented by Barata's populist and corporatist intervention, garimpeiros in key mining territories around the Gurupí and Piriá rivers once again

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<sup>136</sup> Souza 30-31.

<sup>137</sup> Um caso gravíssimo está occorendo no Pará, com as minas do Gurupy." *Correio da Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 18 May 1923.

<sup>138</sup> Moura 1936, 11.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

worked under a strict regime of control. Actions were rarely taken to meaningfully curb the exploitation of miners, but the actions that were taken give us an idea of the scope of such activities in the region. In 1942 a number of newspapers reported that the state police of Pará had charged mining concession holders—Manoel Gonçalves de Brito, his brother João, and Nestor Marques de Souza—with “usurping” 1500 informal miners (*garimpeiros*) working to the west of the Gurupi close to the Piriá River, specifically the tributary waterways of Cachoeira and Macaco.<sup>140</sup>

According to the summary of the charges, the Britos “took hold of a very extensive area of land in that municipality, aided by administrative advocacy using, later on, their monopoly on the mines to prohibit *garimpeiros*, who bought foodstuffs, buying anything outside of the stores next to the mines. Furthermore...they exact heavy fines...to pay off the accused Nestor Marques de Souza.” The Britos were also denounced as foreigners, demonstrating the lingering link between nationalism and social justice forged by Getulismo.<sup>141</sup> Souza was apparently acting simultaneously in his capacity as Viseu’s Tenente Delegado de Polícia in the area. He oversaw the pilfering of the individual pits used by the workers in their activities (*barrações*), stealing various tools, guns, and knives, only to sell them back “a terceiros.”<sup>142</sup>

Joseph Gordon, a *garimpeiro* at Macaco who had also worked at Cachoeira, testified that he had to pay a fee of 80 cruzeiros a month directly to Souza.<sup>143</sup> Brito, on the other hand,

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<sup>140</sup> “Panorama jurídico.” *A Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro). 21 October 1943.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.* The original quote is as follows: “apossaram-se de uma área de terras extenssissima naquele municipio, ajudados por uma advocacia administrativa usando, desde logo, do monopólio de probir aos *garimpeiros*, compradores de gêneros alimentícios, que adquirissem qualquer quantidade nos armazens vizinhos. Alem disso...exigiram pesadas multas...para os bolsos do acusado Nestor Marques de Souza.”

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> Testimony of Joseph Gordon, 2 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

managed to purchase gold from the workers far below the rates set by the Banco do Brasil, effectively embezzling 300000 cruzeiros a month at the expense of national coffers.<sup>144</sup> Stemming from a criminal complaint against Manoel Brito, the case was brought before the Tribunal de Segurança Nacional (TSN) and prosecuted by the national government with the reasoning that the actions of Brito and Souza violated a national security law passed in 1935 which had been used primarily to antagonize political dissent.<sup>145</sup>

After more than a year, the three defendants were found guilty before the TSN judge. Nestor Marques de Souza was stripped of his position as Delegado, and all three defendants were sentenced to one year and three months in prison for their actions. Manoel Gonçalves de Brito, killed in the attack on Macaco in 1941, died long before he could serve his sentence.<sup>146</sup> Only weeks later, the decision was overturned on appeal, demonstrating the ephemeral nature of justice as it applied to the region's extractive bourgeoisie.<sup>147</sup>

In addition to Gordon, many other garimpeiros similarly testified as part of the legal complaint filed against the surviving João Brito. During the Summer of 1943, authorities took testimony from various workers. These testimonies provide us with a better idea of the labor conditions experienced by garimpeiros and contain some details about the late 1941 attack resulting in the death of Manoel Brito.

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<sup>144</sup> By way of counterargument, Souza reasons that the main players in gold smuggling as of 1935, largely represented as foreigners (especially Jews, Turks, and Russians), bought their gold directly from the garimpeiros and undercut authorized agents by purchasing at a higher price in order to avoid the various taxes paid by authorized buyers (Souza et. al 128).

<sup>145</sup> "Tribunal de Segurança Nacional." *A Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 23 July 1942.

<sup>146</sup> "Panorama jurídico." *A Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro). 21 October 1943.

<sup>147</sup> "No Tribunal de Segurança Nacional." *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 10 November 1943. João is mentioned by name in addition to "outro," likely his co-defendant Nestor Marques de Souza.

A large part of the opposition to the Britos stemmed from the fact that the Britos evidently claimed lands that also covered mines such as Anélio, Alegre, Doutor, and São Pedro. Manoel Patrocínio Velho recounted some details about the 1941 attack, including that of Manoel being bifurcated, but went on to concede that things had improved somewhat since then, especially the abolition of the hated “barranco tax” imposed on the miners and collected by Viseu policeman Nestor Marques de Souza. Though the attack did not reflect a conscious organization of garimpeiros, it essentially succeeded in improving labor conditions at Macaco, albeit temporarily.<sup>148</sup>

On the other hand Maranhense garimpeiro Mariano Antonio Silva recalled working at Macaco “with complete liberty while there were no set owners for the mine of Macacos; the witness heard that the product of the mines belonged to a senhor of the name Guilherme Linde” This implies that Mariano was there between Von Linde’s tenure and that of the Britos, whom he describes as having arrived from France around 1937 claiming various mines such as Sitio Velho, Cédro, and Macacos as their property.<sup>149</sup> The interregnum presented improved conditions (“toda a liberdade) at Macaco, traditionally associated with quilombolas.

With the increasing predominance of the Britos, even individuals not working on their contested concession lands experienced certain economic pressures. One example is Manoel Alves Pires, who maintained a *roçado* but pigs from Brito’s concession roamed on these lands without any preventative measure being taken on the part of the Britos.<sup>150</sup> In some ways the Brito clan were rural bosses out of the pages of Steinbeck. Eufrazino Sodré went so far as to claim that

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<sup>148</sup> Testimony of Manoel Patrocínio Velho, 6 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>149</sup> Testimony of Mariano Antonio Silva, 5 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém. In Souza et. al 96, they note that the Britos, or “Britto and Steiner,” began gold extraction in 1932.

<sup>150</sup> Testimony of Eufrazinho Sodré, 5 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

João Brito actually used a Brazilian flag as a carpet to wipe his soiled boots while recalling the exploitative practices used to shortchange workers of the full value of the gold they extracted and the draconian measures used to prevent “theft” of goods.<sup>151</sup> An adjacent figure in this respect was Romano, a *polonês* who actually ran the store and the scale for a time, earning ire in many of the workers testimonies such as that of José Batista Ferreira who accused Romano of taking the bread out of his family’s mouths.<sup>152</sup>

These testimonies were complemented by the perspicacity of Antonio Barbosa, who performed various services for the Britos such as providing transportation for workers, and building housing, though he referred to himself as a *garimpeiro* elsewhere. In April 1943 Barbosa sent a letter to Barata detailing how upon the death of Manoel in 1941, João Brito made a verbal agreement with Antonio Barbosa to share equally in the business, though Brito apparently did not honor the deal and failed to provide Barbosa with the necessary supplies and materials for his mining activity. Brito was also alleged to have cut Barbosa’s credit and prohibit merchants from buying the gold extracted by Barbosa and the *garimpeiros* who worked with him.<sup>153</sup> Manoel Pedro Coelho, a contractor hired to provide transportation for workers between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers, wrote a letter to Barata claiming that João Brito had not provided him with sufficient resources for his employees, leaving Coelho to pay out of pocket to keep his employees fed.<sup>154</sup> Coelho used the class-based yet humble language of the Vargas era, appealing for justice as “um pobre.”

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<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Testimony of José Batista Ferreira, 7 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Crime, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>153</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata (copy), 18 April 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>154</sup> Manoel Pedro Coelho to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 9 July 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

João Brito for his part claimed that he didn't know about any particular deals Manoel had with Antonio Barbosa. Contrary to the testimony of various garimpeiros, Brito claimed never to have expelled any garimpeiros or take any of their belongings not procured through the company store, except of course for a few troublemakers who were "known smugglers" [contrabandistas]. Instead he accused Antonio Barbosa of maintaining a "friendship with Noël Ubiraton da Rocha who caused a disorder in the Cachoeira mine" and stirring up the garimpeiros.<sup>155</sup> Barbosa wanted to go into business with the Britos by importing a mechanical battery to be used in mining operations, a proposal interrupted by the 1941 assault on the Britos and never carried out thereafter.<sup>156</sup>

Barbosa, specifying the illegal nature of the Britos' use of Macaco, Barbosa asserts that the Britos acquired land without "determined limits, concessions and tranferences authorized by Guilherme von Linder and others, without documentation verifying the succession...[and] transformed into a feudal lord and absolute merchant of such a vast zone, preventing others from establishing or exercising activity, so as to better exploit, without the presence of strangers, the garimpeiros and make illicit profits from their defenseless victims..." Barbosa is tailoring his argument to the legal critique expressed in Decreto 263, namely that the Britos acquired land without being able to demonstrate documentation from Guilherme Von Linde, who himself had acquired land based on false titles. He harshly criticizes the authorities "sleeping" on the process ("o respectivo processo a "dormir" ha mais de oito (8) meses...")<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Testimony of João Gonçalves Brito, 15 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>156</sup> João Rodrigues de Sousa Filho 16 July 1943 (summary of the autos)

<sup>157</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 12 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém. The original quote is as follows: "sem pontos certos ou limites determinados, cessões e transferencias outorgadas por Guilherme von Linder e outros, sem documento que comprovassem a sucessão ... [e] transformou-se em senhor feudal e comerciante absolute de tão vasta zona, impedindo que outros ali se

Ironically, this lack of support from João Brito caused Barbosa and the other garimpeiros at Macaco to return to subsistence agriculture, and according to one of these workers “the field is in complete development.” providing goods such as manioc, rice, bananas, corn, beans, and sugarcane.<sup>158</sup> According the testimony of Francisco Antunes Sousa, he paid João Brito 55 cruzeiros for permission to plant a roçado, only for Brito to reverse himself and leave Sousa 55 cruzeiros poorer.<sup>159</sup> As one can imagine, João Brito did not support independent agricultural activity in the area surrounding Macaco since it would threaten the monopoly on comestibles enjoyed by the company store.<sup>160</sup> This use of space was the traditional mode of quilombolas, but was at odds with the Britos’ single-purpose use of the land, meant to maximize gold production and keep garimpeiros impoverished and without independent means of survival.

Barbosa outlined a whole host of abuses against garimpeiros: being forced to buy basic goods at exorbitant prices, paying arbitrary fees much as they had under Guilherme Von Linde and his lieutenants, having to weigh their gold on a presumably rigged company scale, and generally being subject to expulsion from their individual pits (barrancos) for any reason. And even after the political opening represented by the Revolution of 1930, the firm simply bought off police and substituted them for ever more compliant officials when convenient.<sup>161</sup>

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estabelecessem a excercessem atividade, para melhor explorar, sem a presença de extranhos, os garimpeiros e auferir lucros illicitos de suas indefesas vítimas....”

<sup>158</sup> Testimony of Lucas Evangelista do Rosario, 2 July 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>159</sup> Francisco Antunes Sousa, 6 Jul. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>160</sup> Testimony of Joseph Gordon

<sup>161</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata (copy), 18 April 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

Police were regularly recruited to screen the miners for stolen goods, confiscating even minor goods such as small amounts of tobacco from them.<sup>162</sup> Around the time of the workers uprising, João Brito had been taking extreme measures against workers smuggling gold from “his” lands without paying the necessary taxes. Cearense worker Marcos Evangelista de Souza recounts extreme measures such as searching houses and confiscating goods to claim the 10% flat tax on all gold production by workers, which was only one problem facing the workers in addition to exorbitant prices for basic necessities and tampering on the scale of the company store. The hated operator of the company scale, Romano, was alleged to not regard the *garimpeiros* or their entreaties when it came time to weigh the gold, remaining in silence during the act.<sup>163</sup>

These complaints had been registered through testimony in a legal investigation, but workers had also taken action independently. By early April 1943, there is evidence that a multitude of workers signed their names to a petition specifically listing their collective grievances against the Brito clan. Though the petition begins with the deference typical of the era (“vem respeitosamente,” “Vossa Excelencia,” etc.) the letter begins with the signatories identifying themselves as *garimpeiros* and *lavradores* representing Cachoeira, Cachoeirinha, Alegre, São Pedro, and other mining territories in the Gurupí.<sup>164</sup> There was clearly a sense of class consciousness at work and it is not clear the extent to which this intersected, or simply existed separately from, the *quilombola* solidarity that was evident in numerous accounts published only years earlier. It is interesting and indicative, however, that mines traditionally

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<sup>162</sup> Testimony of Joseph Gordon

<sup>163</sup> Testimony José Estevão de Sousa, 2 July 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>164</sup> Luiz Bispo de Souza, et. al to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 3 Apr. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.



worked by quilombolas and centers of resentment against Von Linde were represented in the letter. The letter containing the petition, for example, was sent from Alegre.

The petition points to “violencia e extorsões” visited upon the garimpeiros, something which even they knew had passed into the realm of public knowledge (*domínio público*). They explicitly challenged the fact that the firm was surreptitiously expanding its geographical reach “with great prejudice against the signatories.” They also claimed that the Britos’ claims exceeded the territory they had been given in their most recent concession.

The drafters of the petition make ample use of historical memory, not only in the claim that the undersigned were the “true discoverers” of the mines, exploited by Guilherme Von Linde, “because he remained in debt to the Brito family who started the firm for a large sum of money.”<sup>165</sup> There is a certain legalism to their demands, however. For instance, they invoke the fact they are working on terras devolutas that belong to the state and do not fall under the Britos’ property claims. They also ask for the state to send “a professional of recognized confidence, in order to move the verification along.”<sup>166</sup>

Barbosa addressed a long personal letter to Barata in August 1943 detailing his grievances against João Gonçalves de Brito. Barbosa essentially tried to buy out the exploration rights enjoyed by the Brito family, offering 200,000 Cruzeiros for land and goods at the mines of Cachoeira and Germano. As a counter, Brito petitioned Viseu’s police for an injunction on Barbosa’s mining activities until this agreement was finalized, which came to the shock and surprise of the latter.<sup>167</sup> Barbosa was astonished at the continued opportunities offered to Brito,

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<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.* The original quote is as follows: “um profissional de reconhecida idoneidade, afim de proceder a respectiva verificação.”

<sup>167</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 13 August 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

“a barbarous killer, as affirmed in the report of the Superior Tribunal de Justiça... and attacker of the product of defenseless workers, and something that one would never conceive of under the government of Coronel Magalhães Barata!!”<sup>168</sup> In addition to appeal to Barata’s populist sentiments, Barbosa also expressed indignation at Brito’s claims in light of the fact that the land ultimately belonged to the state as per Decreto 263—the very same which expropriated Guilherme Von Linde and led him to leave the state.

In December of 1943, Barbosa had sent a telegram to Barata intimating that previous appeals to the chief of police had not been effective, and that this could mean violence against his property. Again, it is not clear whether he is a titled property owner or simply someone with a long history in the mines who considered certain lands to be his property. He appeals for justice on behalf of the *garimpeiros* who work with him.<sup>169</sup> It is clear, though, that Barbosa had access to capital such that he could make an offer to the Brito family, and had the means to write and send letters and telegrams to various political figures in order to air his grievances—an extremely rare privilege exercised by few individuals who lived in the Gurupí-Piriá region.

The distinctly class-based discontent along the Piriá River continued through the Summer and Fall of 1943. Barbosa actively solicited state and federal authorities, dashing off numerous letters and telegrams. One telegram to Manoel Barata, once again Inteventor of Pará, laments the “ill will” towards workers and “infinite ill will” of Viseu authorities. Barbosa points out that the *fiscal* had never even visited the mines and calls on Barata to visit personally. The language of

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<sup>168</sup> *ibid.* Original quote is as follows: “assassino barbaro, como afirmou em relatório ao Superior Tribunal de Justiça ... e assaltador do produto de indefesos trabalhadores, e *cousa que ninguém pode conceber no governo do Coronel Magalhães Barata!!..*”

<sup>169</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 13 December 1943, Governo, Secretária do Governo, Caixa 593, Telegramas 1944, APEP, Belém.

the telegram, which invokes the ideas of “labor” and “capital,” demonstrates the increasingly class-based understanding of the conflict, perhaps owing to the politics of the early Vargas-era.<sup>170</sup>

These complaints continue through the month of September, with Barbosa claiming the right of himself and other garimpeiros to work lands that were rightfully public and did not belong to the Brito family. Crucially, Barbosa praises and invokes Barata’s Decreto 263 for freeing an area of 25 x 80 km from the “guante de audacioso estrangeiro, Guilherme von Linde.” Thus, Barbosa calls for state action on behalf of labor while also implicitly recognizing the previous wave of struggles prefiguring Decreto 263, ones explicitly involving quilombolas in Camiranga and Itamoari. One September letter to Barata includes various attachments including the full text of Decreto 263, creating an echo in the historical record.<sup>171</sup>

Naturally, Barbosa draws the most attention to Macaco and Germano close to the Piriá River, but his defense of these mining territories as open to the public and not the property of the Britos seems to necessarily include a retroactive defense of embattled history of the territory as the site of quilombos, favorably pointing to the expropriation of Guilherme Von Linde as well as the fact of Agostinho de Sá Caldas and his comrades discovering most of these mines. Twenty years after Jorge Hurley’s early expeditions along the Gurupí, this latest conflagration renewed the memories of this struggle.

Though the promise of the 1930 Revolution receded by the early 1940s, certain individuals within the state still betrayed a certain suspicion of powerful landholders like the

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<sup>170</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 13 September 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém. “Maldade contra homem trabalhador vg domine suborno contra quem possui somente como capital trabalho e a maldade infinita de autoridades de vizeu...”

<sup>171</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 16 October 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

Britos. Secretária Geral do Estado: João Brito is emblazoned with the insolence acquired from easy victories, when the previous government bolstered him through shameful administrative advocacy, he prided himself on his nefarious power over the zone of “CACHOEIRA” where he called himself a concession holder over a certain area of land, for gold exploration, something he never bothered with.”<sup>172</sup>

Nonetheless, such activity did not derail the final decision in favor of the Britos on the basis of being in line with the terms of the concession. Land records mentioned here indicate that the Britos purchased land from Guilherme Von Linde and also purchased land *with* Von Linde and Joaquim Vieira de Miranda. There is even mention of land purchases from the American explorer Rudolf Seyler, who had done much to inflate Von Linde’s claims to lands along the Gurupí early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>173</sup> In terms of community antagonists, there was a strong continuity in terms of the small circle of individuals who held legal rights over lands such as Macaco and other mining territories.

The last official word on the long running investigation was issued in a report presented to a representative of the National Treasury in Belém by two *agentes fiscais*, and unequivocally shot down the claims of the garimpeiros.<sup>174</sup> They viewed the garimpeiros as crude opportunists—“The complainants, a majority of whom are rude people, knowing nothing of technical services,

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<sup>172</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 18 April 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém. The original quote is as follows: “João Brito ainda traz estampado a insolencia adquirida no habito de vitorias faceis, quando no governo passado patrocinado por uma vergonhosa advocacia administrativa, orgulhava-se de seu nefasto poderio na zona de “CACHOEIRA” onde se diz o concessionario de uma certa area de terra, para pesquizas de ouro, cousa com que jamais se preocupou.”

<sup>173</sup> José Justino de Almeida Simões and Frederico da Costa Rodrigues, “Relatório,” Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém: 7-10.

<sup>174</sup> José Justino de Almeida Simões and Frederico da Costa Rodrigues, “Relatório.”

weigh in on a subject of which they are ignorant, without a basis to affirm their assertions”—and didn’t recognize their right to work on those land without the permission of Britos.<sup>175</sup>

The conclusion of the investigation was that Antonio Barbosa was, in fact, the one engaged in illegal activity. The decision stating that the “complaints made against the firm of Gonçalves de Brito & Cia. Ltda., made by elements who claim to have been harmed in their interests, in our view this does not rest on a solid base. As one would not expect of the signatories, the facts, documents, and other factors are in the benefit of the concession holding firm.”<sup>176</sup> Essentially, they found that the garimpeiros had no legal standing according to the then-current Código de Minas of 1940, even though many garimpeiros had testified that Brito had charged them double the legally permissible percentage on the value of their gold production (10%).<sup>177</sup> They defend a strict notion of property rights, hesitating “to tread in areas alien to our obligations.” Indeed, they accuse the claimants of “robbing the rights of the firm and of innumerable harm to mineral extraction.”<sup>178</sup> This bolsters the idea that Getulismo, in its Paraense variation, succeeded in raising the standards and expectations of garimpeiros only to the extent that this conformed to the interests of developing and modernizing extractive industry.<sup>179</sup>

In spite of the TSN’s decision in 1943, the DNPM once again renewed the concession—totaling about 24 hectares—the next year, with the only difference being that the named

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<sup>175</sup> José Justino de Almeida Simões and Frederico da Costa Rodrigues, “Relatório,” 18.

<sup>176</sup> José Justino de Almeida Simões and Frederico da Costa Rodrigues, “Relatório,” 26-27.

<sup>177</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto-lei 1985, 29 Jan. 1940.

<sup>178</sup> José Justino de Almeida Simões and Frederico da Costa Rodrigues. “Relatório.” CMA (Belém). Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém: 27.

<sup>179</sup> José Justino de Almeida Simões and Frederico da Costa Rodrigues. “Relatório.” CMA (Belém). Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

concession holders did not include the deceased Manoel Gonçalves Brito.<sup>180</sup> It seemed that the series of events preceding the renewal—workers’ protests, police investigation, the TSN trial of João Brito and Nestor Marques de Souza—did not deter the government’s decision to continue granting them concessions.

Barbosa did not end his resistance, though. He went on to send telegrams to the seat of the national government in the Palácio do Catete in Rio. Having emphasized the illegal practices (“falta cumprimentos disposições legais”) of the Gonçalves Brito family, Barbosa also added to his case by casting doubt on the quality of the technical studies that the concession holders would have submitted to the DNPM and repeatedly demanded that authorities thoroughly inspect their holdings.<sup>181</sup> Invoking the “high interests of the Nation,” Barbosa railed further against “extortion practiced against the garimpeiros of the region” and the continued illicit gold trade practiced by third parties who did business with the Brito firm.<sup>182</sup>

Naturally, Barbosa was not volunteering this information for altruistic reasons. His telegrams to the Vargas government, begin with a direct appeal for an authorization to explore for gold in the areas around Viseu. It is hard to glean many details about Barbosa’s exact social position, though he clearly was not exclusively a garimpeiro. He employs language very commonly used in subaltern communications with the Vargas government during the period, framing himself as a “chefe [de uma] numerosa familia,” who lives “honestamente seu trabalho sem nunca ter sido processado como foram membros [da] familia Brito.”<sup>183</sup> Barbosa writes that

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<sup>180</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 17238, 23 November 1944. See Figure 7 for a map of Brito land claims.

<sup>181</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Getúlio Vargas, 5 Jul. 1944, BR RJANRIO 35, Gabinete civil da presidência da república, 1920-1965, Processo 23165, Arquivo Nacional (AN), Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Getúlio Vargas, 5 Jul. 1944, BR RJANRIO 35, Gabinete civil da presidência da república, 1920-1965, Processo 20310, Arquivo Nacional (AN), Rio de Janeiro.

he occupied gold producing territory along Igarapé Germano (likely named for Von Linde's lieutenant at the mines), an offshoot of the Piriá River.<sup>184</sup> He complains that he has recently found himself a target of harassment by unspecified "aventureiros Norte Americanos" that caused him some hardship.<sup>185</sup> This "North American" is accused of claiming rights over his "exclusive property" through the use of false documents.<sup>186</sup>

In 1944, an article in *Diário Carioca* named "Otavio Barbosa" as the main figure in ordering the 1941 attack and advancing the legal complaints against the Britos before the TSN in 1943—"persecuting" the Brito clan.<sup>187</sup> As the article specifically mentions the offer of 200,000 cruzeiros to buy the territory of the Britos, we can conclude that "Otavio" in, in fact, Antonio.

The hitherto failed approach of appealing to legal authorities was supplemented in 1945 by the use of protest tactics. Barbosa himself actually led a protest (*passeata*) consisting of "diversos individuos" to the mines of Macaco. The protestors, furthermore, had come with effigies representing the villains of the mines such as João Brito. The sender of the telegram, Raimundo Sodré, appealed to Barata on behalf of his brother Antonio Sodré, the subject of one of the effigies in question and the owner of a commercial house near the mines. These actions, Sodré claimed, scared the "população trabalhadora ordeira" though he clearly identified garimpeiros as the main actors in this protest. Apparently, Barbosa invoked Barata, "arrojando se

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<sup>184</sup> Antonio Barbosa to Getúlio Vargas, 15 June 1945, BR RJANRIO 35, Gabinete civil da presidência da república, 1920-1965, Processo 21292, Arquivo Nacional (AN), Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.* It is hard to determine who the "North American" in question could be, at least based on concession records. It could have been a potential buyer or third party.

<sup>187</sup> "Para acabar com a exploração dos trabalhadores nos garimpos." *Diário Carioca* (Rio de Janeiro), 11 June 1943.

prestigiado vossencia subleva parte garimpeiros dizendo ter ganho questão junto vossencia....”<sup>188</sup>

A telegram sent the same day from Pedro Elias Filho to João Brito mentions that Barbosa and the other protestors were shooting off rockets (*foguetes*), making unspecified threats against the company and Sodré, and striking at the effigies of the same.<sup>189</sup> A summary of events as composed by Delegado Interino de Polícia Manuel Martins also mentions that police had to intervene to prevent Barbosa from staging another protest the following day (5 August), though the threat of another confrontation was enough that Sodré had been ready to abandon his firm.<sup>190</sup> The consolidation of economic power and increasing inaction of the state caused the workers to assume a more combative, if not explicitly revolutionary, posture.

In the interim, the Vargas government continued to grant concessions in the most sought-after mining territories along the Gurupí. In November 1943, Lourival Pinheiro Ferreira received such a concession comprising about 5000 km<sup>2</sup> of land immediately east of Itamoari.<sup>191</sup> In October 1944, Rio-based patrician Sivert Francisco Bartholdy was given a concession comprising about 450 ha of land along the Piriá River which include Macaco.<sup>192</sup> Interestingly, this is contradicted by two separate decrees issued a month later which named Joana Gonçalves de Brito, Cecilia Gonçalves de Brito, and João Brito as the legal concession holders over some of the same territory.<sup>193</sup> Decrees dated April 1945 and February 1947 name Bartholdy as the

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<sup>188</sup> Raimundo Sodré to Joaquim Magalhães Barata, 4 Aug. 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>189</sup> Pedro Elias Filho to João Brito, 4 August 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>190</sup> Manuel Martins to Antonio Teixeira Gueiros, 6 August 1943, Comarcas, Viseu, Cível, Caixa A, CMA, Belém.

<sup>191</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 13981, 10 Nov. 1943.

<sup>192</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 16898, 19 Oct. 1944.

<sup>193</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 17237/17238, 23 Nov. 1944



concession holder.<sup>194</sup> In 1948, concession rights shifted to the company Mineração Brasil-Canadá and would not be rendered void until 1969.<sup>195</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In some ways, the Revolution of 1930 marked an unprecedented opportunity for quilombolas along the Gurupí River to politically and economically check the aventureiros who so ruthlessly exploited their labor power for at least three decades. Though evidence is scant, there is some indication that quilombolas did engage in violence against the mining infrastructure of Guilherme Von Linde during the brief period of revolutionary struggle preceding the Vargas regime. In Pará, the Revolution meant a change in state government resulting in the Interventoria of career military man Joaquim Barata. Reflecting a state-driven approach to social and economic reform similar to Cardenismo or Peronismo, Barata quickly implemented a number of reforms that bolstered the role of the state while auguring economic relief for the masses.<sup>196</sup> Equally as important, a number of individuals who had been granted enormous land concessions by previous governors had their property expropriated.

In what might be considered the most radical step initiated by the Pará government during this time, Barata issued Decreto 263 mere months into his tenure as Interventor. The decree unilaterally stripped Guilherme Von Linde of possession of mining territories between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers which he had claimed for decades. Notably, the language of the decree

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<sup>194</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 18307, 6 Apr. 1945; Decreto 22597, 21 Feb. 1947.

<sup>195</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 24708, 29 Mar. 1948; Decreto 24845, 20 Apr. 1948; Decreto 64614, 30 May 1969. Furthermore, according to Decreto 67759 (9 Dec. 1970) Bartholdy had transferred the rights to the company.

<sup>196</sup> The three leaders—Vargas, Cardenas, and Perón—are widely referenced by scholars as the main figures of historical populist movements in Latin America. See Weyland 1996, Jansen 2011, and Peruzotti 2017 for some discussion on populism as it related to Latin American politics.

explicitly references historical information furnished by quilombolas and previous works critiquing Von Linde's illegal claim to the mines and tax evasion.

In this sense Decreto 263 should be considered not only as a product of state autonomy counteracting aventureiros, but as something informed by decades of struggle from below on the part of quilombolas against Jules Blanc and Guilherme Von Linde. Part of the reason Von Linde attracted so much attention across the country was due to the brutal measures he enacted upon garimpeiros, many of which were specifically described as mocambeiros or pretos well into the 1930s. One of the most important sources invoked by Decreto 263, *Nos sertões do gurupy*, was informed heavily by legal complaints and challenges made by residents of Camiranga against Von Linde. This was followed by a series of measures placing the mines under state administration, including the health and education programs for the garimpeiros and a nominal commitment to building infrastructure.

From 1930 to 1935, quilombolas saw measures that could improve their material conditions implemented as part of a political framework that also demanded their loyalty and deference. This can be seen in scant letters from individuals in Camiranga, especially Amâncio Cardoso, using meek language to appeal to the Pará government for material assistance. Thus, the possibilities of empowerment and autonomy that came from the expropriation of Von Linde were tempered with a lack of an independent basis for exercising political power and autonomy. Instead, state and federal policies sought to achieve three goals: the empowerment of domestic capitalists, the regulation and modernization of extractive economies such as that of mining, and the entry into the Gurupí region of a migrant workforce as part of a broader "colonization" effort.

This combination of goals had a profound impact on political struggles over land specifically identified in terms of its population of fugitive slave descendants. The increased

attention of the federal government had the secondary effect of publicizing the history of quilombolas in the region to the point of creating maps such as that of Pedro de Moura indicating specific gold mines discovered by quilombolas.

The most pronounced example of this was the SFPM, whose technical experts used official publications and journalistic pieces to highlight the history and continued presence of quilombolas in the Gurupí region. Pedro de Moura, Henrique Capper Alves de Souza, Silvio Fróes de Abreu produced valuable historical documents demonstrating the social and economic position of quilombolas in the 1930s and 1940s even as their broader knowledge production served a political agenda related to the further exploitation of natural resources. This period also saw the publication or reprinting of previous works related to the Gurupí River written by Gustavo Dodt and Miguel Arrojado Lisboa. Other authors such as Ruben Almeida conducted studies along similar lines in Maranhão.

Another consequence of the policies outlined above was an influx of migrant laborers, both Brazilian and non-Brazilian, to the mines of western Maranhão and eastern Pará. The governments of Maranhão and Pará increased access to the mines. Residents of Camiranga and Itamoari made up a large part of the garimpeiros working the gold-rich territories between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers before 1930. As a workforce, quilombolas exercised a certain territoriality to the extent that they were able to engage in subsistence agriculture and were not proletarianized as such. Many of the legal and political challenges they made to figures such as Von Linde were centered on access to lands they had traditionally occupied, including the right to extract gold without being subject to the labor abuses or extortive taxes levied by Von Linde and his lieutenants. With the workforce reflecting a growing migrant population after 1930, the grievances expressed by garimpeiros centered on opposition to particular practices such as the

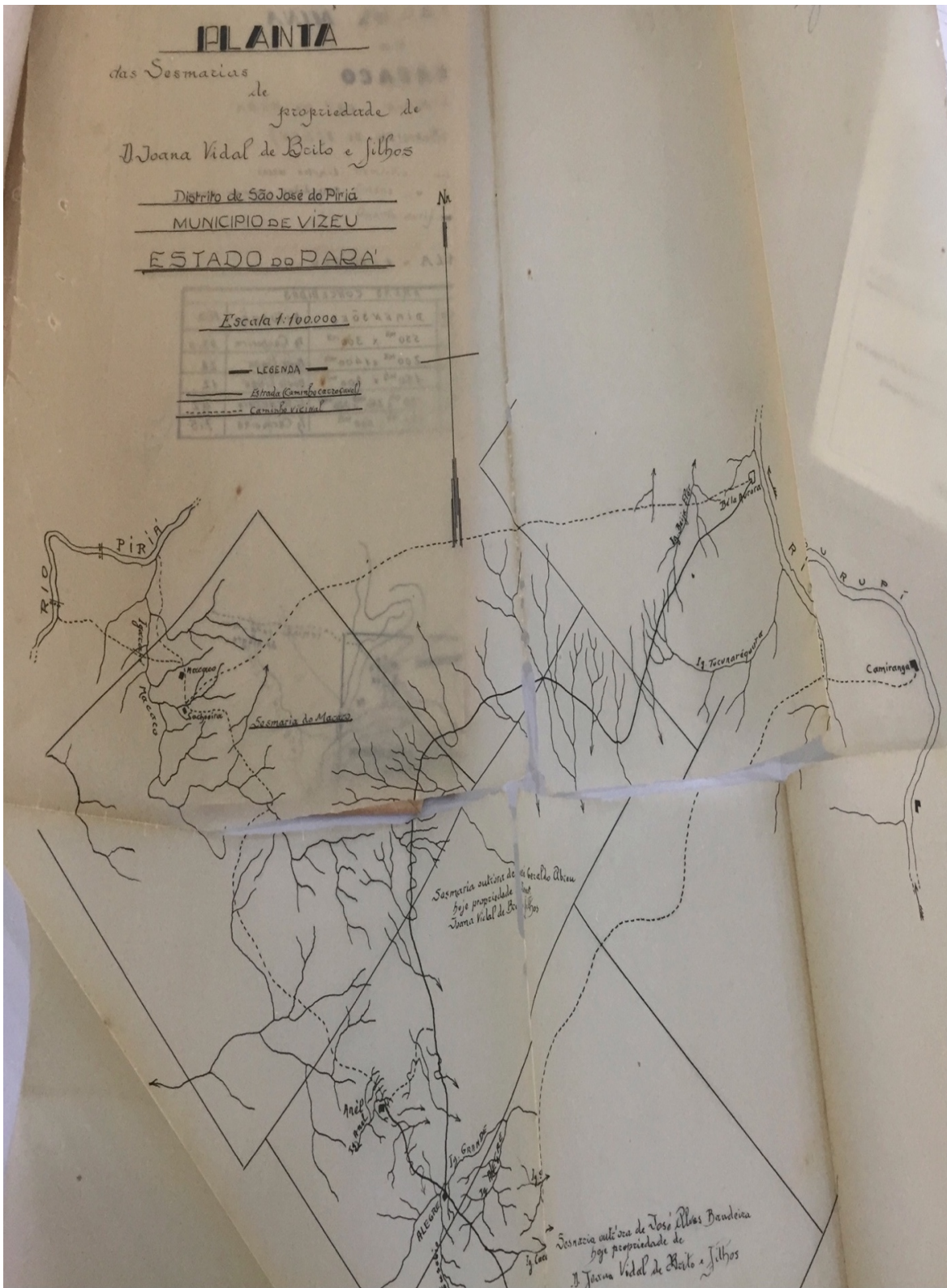
barranco tax, the high price of basic goods at the company store, and the insufficient compensation received for the gold they extracted. I would argue that these were typically proletarian demands as they related to extractive or rural capitalism.

Such demands came to a head in the Gurupí-Piriá gold region as the federal government resumed granting large mining concessions to domestic capitalists. In this chapter, I use the example of the Brito clan to demonstrate how the grievance listed above exploded in violent action and protest. The Britos had numerous business ties to previous mining figures such as Von Linde himself, and returned to claim a concession around the Macaco mine close to the Piriá River in 1937. In 1941, a group of workers staged an assault resulting in the death of Manoel Gonçalves Brito and the theft of a large sum of money, gold, and other goods. Subsequent testimony by workers at Macaco suggests that the attack had at least chastened João Brito to the point where certain odious features of *garimpeiro* labor were softened (such as the barranco tax) in order to lure workers back to the mine.

A prolonged trial before the Tribunal de Segurança Nacional resulted members of the family, along with their trusted enforcer police officer Nestor Marques de Souza, being found guilty of exploiting up to 1500 workers. Subsequent investigations of the Britos by state authorities uncovered a multitude of injustices visited upon the *garimpeiros* at Macaco. The associated documentation reveals the use of legal instruments such as petitions, as well as numerous letters and formal complaints made to both state and national authorities. Antonio Barbosa stands out in this regard, continuously challenging the legality of the land claims exercised by the Britos, long accused of encroaching on lands not part of their concession. As Barbosa and the *garimpeiros* reached the limits of the potential offered by legal protest,

particularly as state authorities validated the Britos, the former gradually shifted to more confrontational displays of dissent.

In August 1943 Barbosa led a procession of protesting garimpeiros to Macaco, shooting off rockets and tearing up effigies representing Brito and other economic exploiters. Though it is unclear what happened in the months after the protest, it certainly provoked fear of a more generalized unrest. It also further illustrates the shift towards class-based protest, with Raimundo Sodré observing that Barbosa acted with the belief that Barata would support the garimpeiros. As demonstrated in the previous and present chapters, the 1920s and 1930s saw numerous sources ranging from Decreto 263 to the various works and newspapers articles published by SFPM employees and others affirm the connections between fugitive slaves descendants—variously described as pretos, quilombolas, or mocambeiros—and the gold mines of the Gurupí. By the 1940s, however, many of the documents pertaining to the abovementioned investigations into the Britos make little reference to race or ethnic identity. In the concluding chapter, I will outline how Camiranga and Itamoari weathered the subsequent decades of post-Vargas modernization, military dictatorship, and legal recognition of quilombola land rights.



**Figure 6. Map of Sesmarias Claimed by the Brito Family between the Gurupí River and Piriá River**

## Chapter 7: Conclusions

Characteristic dwelling of the primitive culture of the peoples from whom the name is derived and whose gatherings take the *name of quilombo*, mostly referring to the colonies of escaped blacks, the shack imposes itself as the most economical and accessible formula to the poor populations of the Northeast. The economic and social cause of the mocambo stand out even more when we consider *their geographical impropriety*.<sup>1</sup>

- João Milanez de Cunha Lima

As Brazil emerged from Estado Novo, the Brazilian government continued to make conscious strides towards economic modernity and modernism with ambitious projects such as the construction of a new capital in the interior of the country. This modernizing gaze once again discovered the economic resources of the Gurupí region. In fact, a 1945 article published in *O Observador* argued that Viséu, because of its geographic position and proximity to natural resources, should naturally have commerce and infrastructure connecting it to the Planalto Central where Brasília would be constructed like a mirage in the desert.<sup>2</sup> Tellingly, however, Vargas's conservative successor Eurico Dutra canceled his visit to the Gurupí due to poor conditions that would have impeded the presidential plane.<sup>3</sup> Still, gold exploration continued apace, with “thousands” of people along the Gurupí employed in mining. There was “*franca exploração de ouro por nacionais e estrangeiros atraídos pela riqueza*” around Chatão, “Taurar” (Itamoari) as of the late 1940s.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lima 1947 139. Perhaps this epigraph is more of an aside, but it is fascinating how the 1930s saw a proliferation of the usage of the term “mocambo” to describe undesirable shacks—certainly an act of discursive and cultural warfare at a time when the idea of racial democracy had numerous proponents among intellectual elites.

<sup>2</sup> Armando Mendel. “Do Pará ao planalto central.” *O Observador* (Rio de Janeiro), Dec. 1945: 103.

<sup>3</sup> “O presidente não visitará as minas de Gurupi.” *A Manhã* (Rio de Janeiro), 3 September 1947.

<sup>4</sup> Raimundo Mendes. “O ouro do noroeste Maranhense.” *Diário de São Luiz* (São Luís), 5 Aug. 1948.

In 1952 a Rio de Janeiro newspaper featured an article touting the potential for hydroelectric power in the region, but also lamenting its undeveloped potential for developing mineral wealth. I include this not to highlight potential schemes of displacement such as the still-contested hydroelectric dams, but to connect these imaginaries of ‘modern’ economic development to previous patterns of black displacements resulting from the pursuit of such schemes. The “Urubus” and “pretos” are posed as obstacles to economic growth, and the author laments how the black and indigenous inhabitants of the region sold gold pieces at a “ridiculous price” to any passing adventurers.<sup>5</sup> Following a boom in folklore studies and ethnography in the 1940s, scholars arrived to the Gurupí region to study indigenous populations. Though these often ignored afro-descendant populations, the work of Darcy Ribeiro provides a basis for speaking to the reemergence of quilombolas as an ethnically distinct group after an intense period of proletarianization and integration into Brazil’s national economy.

Darcy Ribeiro’s most substantive record of observations and impressions of black communities in the Gurupi can be found in his *Diários Índios*. Though this is perhaps the most extensive ethnographic work on such communities to see publication, it shares a common thread with earlier ethnographies such as those of Arrojado Lisboa, Hurley, and Alves de Souza in that it was an afterthought within a broader project occupying scant pages in an otherwise weighty tome.

Previous scholars had also devoted significant attention to the indigenous populations of the Gurupí. The periodical *Vida Domestica* printed an ongoing series of reports filed by Ruben de Almeida, running the short updates with photographs. The January 1934 edition of that publication included a series of photographs taken in the Alto-Gurupí region at the border

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<sup>5</sup> Oscar Ramos. “O Rio Gurupi.” *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 3 October 1952.



between Maranhão and Pará, with photos purporting to show the descendants of fugitive slaves living with Tembê. In the middle of a series of four photographs the caption reads: “Pretos descendentes dos antigos “calhamboflas” e índios Tembês vivem em perfeita harmonia... Habitam uma pequenina ilha do Gurupy.”<sup>6</sup>

Though Tembês had the most pacific relationship with quilombolas among various indigenous groups, the Ka’apor also showed some signs of fraternization at the behest of personnel from the SPI post set up on the Gurupí River. Once relations between SPI employees and the Ka’apor improved—bolstered by various offerings of tools, clothing and other goods—some members of the group agreed to travel with SPI functionary Soeira Mesquita as a show of good faith that their group was no longer hostile to others who lived in the region.<sup>7</sup> Two actually died of a respiratory ailment while in Itamoari.<sup>8</sup> This was repeated when a larger group of about twenty five Ka’apor visited Itamoari as a “spontaneous gesture of confraternization,” though this also resulted in the spread of a contagious respiratory disease (cited by Ribeiro as simply *gripe*) that later spread to other Ka’apor.<sup>9</sup> Though the outcome was tragic, perhaps the fact that there was a visit signaled a better relationship between quilombolas and the Ka’apor than that of the late nineteenth-century.

Darcy Ribeiro’s informants in Viseu, Camiranga, and Itamoari allowed him to reproduce a historical sketch of quilombolas in the area. First, he informs his readers that fugitive slaves in

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<sup>6</sup> Ruben de Almeida. “Descobrimos o “Hinterland” do Estado do Maranhão.” *Vida Domestica* (Rio de Janeiro), January 1934. It is likely that the island referred to in the caption is Chatão.

<sup>7</sup> Ribeiro 1970, 182.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Ribeiro 1970, 182-183.

Limoeiro assembled a well-organized community ruled by a single chief (*chefe*) with powers of “life and death” over his people.<sup>10</sup> Said chefe “would go around charged with ardor, like a saint in procession.” Certain details in Ribeiro’s account are unfamiliar—for example, that Itamoari was lead by someone called “Tibério.”<sup>11</sup> He also mentions the cultivation of tobacco as a lucrative endeavor for the two communities “until 1900,” which is rarely referenced in many primary documents from the period.<sup>12</sup>

When he finally arrives to Camiranga, he finds a racially mixed population “that mixes with enthusiasm. The Caboclo here is the recognized local population that is neither indigenous nor black.”<sup>13</sup> Ribeiro shares the racial ideology of the time that wealth determines social position rather than skin color. Those who are considered white overlap with other social categories: “synonym of boss and rich man.” Even the mixed children of a local Lebanese merchant Ajajé José Rachid are considered “white” in spite of having Arab and “Caboclo” parents. This does not preclude such figures from making disparaging comments about blacks (“adagios depreciativos dos pretos”).<sup>14</sup> Such observations implicitly challenge the idea that Camiranga represents a black territoriality on the Gurupí. Ribeiro instead describes a mixed population that, as we will see, has substituted Von Linde’s tyranny for that of another regional potentate.

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<sup>10</sup> Ribeiro 1996, 46.

<sup>11</sup> A “Tibério” is also mentioned in Almeida as one of the individuals who transmitting gold mining techniques and knowledge from Estevão.

<sup>12</sup> Ribeiro 1996 47.

<sup>13</sup> Ribeiro 1996 51. The original quote is as follows: “que vão se misturando com entusiasmo. Caboclo aqui é a gente local reconhecidamente não indígena, nem negra.”

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

The value of Ribeiro's work is not necessarily its accuracy based on documents, but his interaction with the social spectrum of the region and ability to relay contemporary happenings in Camiranga. Ribeiro's guide, "Nhozinho," was a local notable who had lived in Camiranga but later relocated to Viseu. When Nhozinho first arrived, Von Linde was apparently still the principal mining figure. Ribeiro's summary of Von Linde's activities should sound very familiar; he took possession "das terras e das minas e dos negros, subjugara-os como cativos," and Nhozinho:

He was the first to oppose him [Von Linde], made political allies in his struggle and, at the vanguard of the blacks, initiated the war against Von Linde and his thugs. [He] recounts years of difficulty, sleeping suspended on a hammock close to the top of the house, with rifles and ammunition cartridges in every nook, waiting for the attack. *But he conquered the land and the blacks.* Really, he seems to be beloved by everyone here, perhaps because he provided a paternal substitute to Linde's rule. It might also be fear that inspires this respect and deference.<sup>15</sup>

Nhozinho was Ribeiro's ambassador to the community, with 28 years working in the region "muitos deles prósperos, de quando o ouro saía da terras aos quilos."<sup>16</sup> Ribeiro, who was hoping to record syncretic cultural expressions such as *macumba* was disappointed to find that his association with Nhozinho worked against this goal as "tudo que é tipicamente negro é proibido e o próprio Nhozinho representa aqui a autoridade repressiva, que manda prender pajés e macumbeiros e até matá-los quando perturbam a comunidade."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* Italics added. The original quote is as follows: foi o primeiro a se opor a ele [Von Linde], conseguiu aliados políticos para sua luta e, à frente dos negros, iniciou a Guerra contra Linde e seus capangas. Conta que foram anos de dureza, dormindo sobressaltado numa rede pendurada perto da cumeeira da casa, com rifles e caixas de balas em cada canto, à espera de um ataque. Mas conquistou as terras e os negros. Realmente, ele parece querido de todos aqui, deve ter substituído um pouco mais paternalmente o domínio de Linde. Também pode ser o medo que inspira esse respeito e acatamento.

<sup>16</sup> Ribeiro 1996, 52.

<sup>17</sup> Ribeiro 1996, 53.

Though Nhozinho is only treated as a minor figure in Ribeiro's narrative, it seems odd that the reader is left with so little information on such an important local figure. Who is Nhozinho? Though none of the primary documents that inform this work make mention of a "Nhozinho" as such, I would speculate that this was simply a nickname for Antonio Barbosa. Though the nickname *Paulista* was generally attributed to Barbosa, Nhozinho is also a fairly common nickname for people with the given name Antonio. The timeline given by Ribeiro—whereby Nhozinho occupied the region for over two decades—also roughly fits. If the accusation that Barbosa had something to do with the 1941 attack is true, it would fit with the idea that he was willing to employ violence against the perceived exploiters of the *garimpeiros*. More importantly, this claim would indicate that the types of vertical alliances with individuals such as Antonio Pedro de Oliveira and Silvio Ribeiro that had proved so valuable to quilombolas in previous decades proved to be less so after 1930.

While Ribeiro only spent a few days in Camiranga, he considers how interesting it would be to conduct further research measuring “o quanto pesam na alma dessa gente a África, a Índia e a Europa.”<sup>18</sup> This notion of a racial balance, typical of racial democracy, was his guiding assumption. Despite any former prosperity, Ribeiro imparted an image of Camiranga as “a decaying poor place” mostly dotted with shacks apart from Nhozinho's mansion.<sup>19</sup> Ribeiro noticed a steep drop in available work and wages due to a decline in mining exploration. Their only recourse was traditional subsistence agriculture, while other forms of productive resource extraction (such as wood or products requiring fertile soil) were ignored in favor of gold.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ribeiro 1996, 55.

<sup>19</sup> Ribeiro 1996, 68.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

He also visited Itamoari (“Itamoary”). His first impressions were of the impoverished nature of the community, which he comments to be a few inhabited houses and others who live in the open air, with the only product of any economic value being marijuana (*maconha*).<sup>21</sup> He also acknowledges its status as “remanescente de quilombo,” an interesting turn of phrase that decades later would constitute a formal legal category denoting access to land rights and social assistance. Ribeiro’s observations here and in select other works demonstrate how quilombola territoriality was denied and reinterpreted with the retreat of the *trabalhismo* which had characterized certain aspects of Barata’s policies towards garimpeiros. In these denials, however, one can see traces of syncretic practices and community life in Camiranga and Itamoari as they were described in much earlier works.

In 1953 another Rio-based newspaper published an article on the establishment of an “Indian Museum,” including some observations about Camiranga ostensibly based on Darcy Ribeiro’s travels through the Gurupí. The author stressed their primitive and impoverished nature—how they survived by adopting “indigenous” habits. Asserting that “there was no landed property,” the article went on to describe how fruits and trees were the only things residents would sell to each other since they did not feel the land was theirs to sell.<sup>22</sup> Not only were locals in Camiranga practicing a communitarian form of agriculture, but were also presented as an indigenous group.

Though the article from the *Diário de Notícias* informs us of the ecologically progressive and non-capitalist notion of property in Camiranga, works authored by Ribeiro himself tell us little to this effect. Instead, he emphasizes the poverty and backwardness of black communities in

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<sup>21</sup> Ribeiro 1996, 76.

<sup>22</sup> “Vamos ter o Museu do Índio” *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro), 9 January 1953.

the Gurupi, only taking interest in the capture of “traditional” cultural expressions to the near exclusion of observations on class and social organization. He does acknowledge that communities such as Camiranga and Itamaury have a shared past in quilombos, but the “intenso convivio comunal” that he describes is attributed mostly to the influence of surrounding indigenous groups: “in the Gurupi we find a syncretism to which the indigenous contributes more than the Catholic...only in music do the blacks of the Gurupi conserve their African cultural heritage; but even here, the maraca has a rhythm and independence that is very indigenous.”<sup>23</sup> While SFPM scholars observed what they believe to be African and/or quilombola traits among black residents of the Gurupí, Ribeiro observed a caboclo population with a culture mostly imitative of the regions indigenous groups.

As for gold mining along the Gurupí, it seems that nature placed hard limitations on the capacity for mechanization as of the late 1940s.<sup>24</sup> Though gold continued to receive attention during the postwar era in Brazil, efforts were being made to relieve social tensions in Brazil’s northeast by providing encouragement and financial incentives for companies and individuals to push ever further into the Amazon. Along these lines Flávio Vieira, member of the Conselho Nacional de Geografia, wrote of plans for a rail line that would also push through into Brazilian Amazonia in addition to cutting through the Gurupi region. The author heavily cites the work of engineer Xavier Pacheco, whose projections for a railroad would have cut through Camiranga, and the mining sites of São Pedro and Flechal.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ribeiro 1997, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Abreu 1945, 21.

<sup>25</sup> Vieira 160.

To Pacheco's eye, the area was still underexploited, with the area around the Alegre mine being classified as "complete virgin forest in very rough territory..." He sees the areas once again as a mostly blank canvas with "a fluctuating population, mostly aventureiros and elements avoiding civilization."<sup>26</sup> The author cites the strong presence of gold smuggling through both Belém and the Maranhense capital of São Luís. Referring to the area between the Maracaçumé River and the island of Chatão in the middle of the Gurupi River, the author notes "just a few huts, inhabited by a miserable population, devastated by malaria and other endemic diseases. There are also groups of fishermen and hunters, with few working in agriculture, or even for their own maintenance, though they supply other areas, through the skins of animals that they slaughter."<sup>27</sup> As late as 1966, one Brasília newspaper referred to the Gurupí Valley as "o vale esquecido," pointing to the promise offered by hydroelectric dams and potential mineral wealth.<sup>28</sup> The periodic renewal of this forgetfulness preceded periods of intense interest by outside capital. Back to back periods of modernization and dictatorship constituted the backdrop of this cycle of historical forgetting followed by a capital offensive.

In 1968, the town faced land incursions by the Farming, Industrial, and Mineral Company of the State of Pará (CIDAPAR), which in turn illegally sold parcels to other companies in the following decades. This is the perspective offered by Community resident and leader Pascoa Alves de Macedo in a 2005 interview.<sup>29</sup> It is important not to view 1968 as a starting point for

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<sup>26</sup> Vieira 161. Gold was still easy to find in Alegre, "painting" the bateas that were still being used there.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> "O vale esquecido." *Correio Braziliense* (Brasília), 14 Sep. 1966.

<sup>29</sup> "Comunidades Quilombolas do Estado do Pará: Dona Páscoa Fala Sobre Camiranga," Comissão Pró-Índio de São Paulo, accessed 4 April 2014, [http://www.cpis.org.br/comunidades/html/brasil/pa/pa\\_comunidades\\_nordeste\\_camiranga.html](http://www.cpis.org.br/comunidades/html/brasil/pa/pa_comunidades_nordeste_camiranga.html)

land conflict, but rather a flashpoint. The basis of CIDAPAR was land to which the company's founder, Moacyr Pinheiro Ferreira, had mineral exploration rights.<sup>30</sup> Both Moacyr and his brother, Lourival, won a series of mining concessions along the Gurupí River extending from the island of Chatão in the middle of the river to various parcels of land on the western border of Maranhão during the 1940s.<sup>31</sup>

The longstanding pattern of withholding any kind of recognition for the lands worked and occupied by quilombolas had continued in spite of the opening represented by the Revolution of 1930. Ferreira, who shored up mining concessions during the 1940s, later received significant funds from the Superintendência do Plano de Valorização Econômica da Amazônia (SPVEA)—a project meant to further open the Amazon to colonization.<sup>32</sup> Such efforts in the Gurupí were hardly developmentalist works on a blank canvas. CIDAPAR consolidated its control of territory and labor by terrorizing black communities along the Gurupí River, but also landless peasants of northeastern origin, miners, indigenous groups such as the Xingú by amassing unchallenged control over a huge portion of the state of Pará with the blessing of the military dictatorship.

The opening of the Amazon brought hundreds of thousands of landless peasants into Amazonian territory only to see land become further concentrated by absentee owners and fazendeiros who enjoyed superior access to the official channels required to secure legal recognition of ownership.<sup>33</sup> It was in this light that in 1972, Sgt. Irineu Saraiva Rodrigues of the

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<sup>30</sup> Treccani 2006, 241-242.

<sup>31</sup> República Federativa do Brasil. Decreto 6934, 6 Mar. 1941; Decreto 9160, 1 Apr. 1941; Decreto 8948, 4 Mar. 1942.

<sup>32</sup> *Observador* (Rio de Janeiro), Dec. 1960.

<sup>33</sup> Foweraker 2002.



Polícia Militar do Estado personally visited Viséu “to resolve possible irregularities that might exist there”<sup>34</sup>

At the time CIDAPAR claimed rights over dozens of kilometers of territory along the main road between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers, and Saraiva did not fail to note “dozens of families that claiming harm from the occupation of the area claimed by the business and the colonos living there.”<sup>35</sup> Saraiva learned that only months before his visit, CIDAPAR sent a team to dig mining shafts “with the end of exploring grounds in proximity to the town of Mina Alegre...” One resident tried to hinder the work on land that he claimed belonged to him.<sup>36</sup> In July 1972, the company moved to prohibit residents of Mina Alegre from knocking down trees for any purpose, and hired a team of *fiscais* headed by one Bill Cot to enforce the order.<sup>37</sup> This is a pattern that can be found during stages of intensifying conflict between landholding industrial concerns and communities of quilombo descendents.

Many colonos had expressed their grievances to a union in the nearby town of Capanema, the Sindicato dos Trabalhadores Rurais, “where many of them are associated, asking for assistance because they feel harmed by CIDAPAR...”<sup>38</sup> To complicate matters further, an official purporting to represent the Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agraria (INCRA), had included the colonos in a survey and charged fees, presumably for purposes of

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<sup>34</sup> Irineu Saraiva Rodrigues, Relatório de Informações, 10 Sep. 1972, BR RJANRIO TT.0, Divisão de Segurança e Informações do Ministério da Justiça, 1946-1986, Questões Fundiárias, Avulsos 002, Conflito de Terras: 94, AN, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

legal recognition even though they occupied land technically ceded to CIDAPAR. Saraiva was suspicious of the president of the Sindicato and her husband, but conceded that no proof of “subversion” could be found.<sup>39</sup>

Residents of the Gurupí did eventually offer a response, however. By the mid-1980s, the same lands that sheltered quilombos and provided subsistence for their descendents also gave rise to the resistance of landless peasants against the same forces of dispossession heralded by the increasing power of CIDAPAR over eastern and southeastern Pará, with legal landholdings totaling 333,813 hectares<sup>40</sup> In 1984, a letter from the Federação da Agricultura do Estado do Pará, “Representative Organ of the Rural Business Class,” to the Ministry of Justice denounced what they saw as an “organized movement of banditism covering unpatriotic and subversive work of forces interested in disrupting the country, many with the help of elements claiming to be from the government.”<sup>41</sup>

Of these groups of so-called “bandoleiros,” that said to be most audacious was the group led by none other than Armando Oliveira da Silva, also known as “Quintino.” Quintino achieved a legendary status as a gunman who used violence to terrorize latifundiários in northeastern Pará. His area of activity encompassed many of the territories along the Gurupí River that included communities of quilombo descendents. Naturally the letter expressed outrage at his public

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<sup>39</sup> Relatório de Informações 95

<sup>40</sup> “Áreas de tensão social,” 20 Jun. 1984, BR RJANRIO TT.0, Divisão de Segurança e Informações do Ministério da Justiça, 1946-1986, Questões Fundiárias, Avulsos 45, Áreas de Tensão Social: 42, AN, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>41</sup> Clodomir de Lima Begot to Ibrahim Abi-Ackel (Ministro da Justiça), 26 Nov. 1984, BR RJANRIO TT.0, Divisão de Segurança e Informações do Ministério da Justiça, 1946-1986, Questões Fundiárias, Avulsos 009, Federação de Agricultura do Pará, AN, Rio de Janeiro.

pronouncements, citing the presence in Belém of various judging from the interior of the state who fled due to supposed threats of violence by Quintino.<sup>42</sup>

According to the letter, members of the judiciary in Viseu (among other cities) actually sought refuge in Belém for fear of retribution by Quintino and “threatened by all types of *gatilheiros* and *pistoleiros*.”<sup>43</sup> Another letter from November 1984 addressed to Pará governor Jader Barbalho outlined behavior by so-called *invasores* that resembled strategies utilized by quilombolas: appropriating the resources of landed property owners and selling these resources, such as wood or meat, on the open market.<sup>44</sup>

It is intriguing that during the most intense period of political repression, Paraense landowners found the authorities unwilling to respond to their claims as they “knocked at the doors of Justice.”<sup>45</sup>

By 1985, the number of killings related to agrarian conflict were mostly concentrated in the state of Pará. With 83 deaths, the state outpaced its nearest competitor, the state of Maranhão by 240%.<sup>46</sup> Of the regions singled out for higher incidences of such violence, Viseu and Bragantina come in for a mention.<sup>47</sup> Though quilombolas are rarely mentioned as a specific target for retribution by the CIDAPAR and its corporate successors, it is likely that they also

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<sup>42</sup> Clodomir de Lima Begot to Ibrahim Abi-Ackel (Ministro da Justiça), 26 Nov. 1984.

<sup>43</sup> Clodomir de Lima Begot to Ibrahim Abi-Ackel (Ministro da Justiça), 26 Nov. 1984.

<sup>44</sup> Clodomir de Lima Begot and Fernando Acatauassú Nunes to Jader Fontanelle Barbalho, 14 Nov. 1984, BR RJANRIO TT.0, Divisão de Segurança e Informações do Ministério da Justiça, 1946-1986, Questões Fundiárias, Avulsos 009, Federação de Agricultura do Pará, AN, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>45</sup> Clodomir de Lima Begot and Fernando Acatauassú Nunes to Jader Fontanelle Barbalho, 14 Nov. 1984.

<sup>46</sup> MIRAD/INCRA, Coordenadoria de Conflitos Agrários, 21 Nov. 1985, BR RJANRIO TT.0, Divisão de Segurança e Informações do Ministério da Justiça, 1946-1986, Questões Fundiárias, Avulsos 10, Coordenadoria de Conflitos Agrários: 3, AN, Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>47</sup> Coordenadoria de Conflitos Agrários 4

suffered the wave of violence committed against garimpeiros and residents in general during the 1980s.<sup>48</sup> The roughly 5000 families, broken up into seven distinct towns within the limits of CIDAPAR territory, faced increasing tensions as the Grupo DENASA, legally recognized owners of the land, moved personnel into the area.<sup>49</sup> In 1985, a year of democratic transition in Brazil, Quintino was killed by a group of 19 Military Police, none of whom faced any legal repercussions.<sup>50</sup>

The regime of mining concessions in Pará continued well into the 1990s. The National Institute for Colonization and Land Reform (INCRA), provided a title for Itamaoari in 1998 covering over 5000 ha—a result of ADCT 68. The language of the title noted that the land previously was a “part of the CIDAPAR plot” (“integrante do gleba Cidapar”), implicitly endorsing CIDAPAR’s erstwhile presence even as they provided a land title to the town.<sup>51</sup> It was not until 2002 that the state-level Land Institute of Pará (ITERPA) awarded a collective and inalienable land title to the Camiranga, recognizing its status as a comunidade remanescente de quilombo.<sup>52</sup> The total area of the title is about 320 Hectares—much smaller than many of the previous mining concessions.

Though such titles are hardly a salve for rural black communities, many of which still face landgrabbing practices, the fact that Camiranga and Itamaoari could claim such titles at all is

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<sup>48</sup> Treccani 2006, 242.

<sup>49</sup> Áreas de tensão social 43

<sup>50</sup> Treccani 2006, 294.

<sup>51</sup> Gabinete do Ministro Extraordinário de Política Fundiária—Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA). Titulo de Reconhecimento de Dominio/INCRA no. 001/98, 7 Sep. 1998.

<sup>52</sup> Instituto de Terras do Pará. Titulo de Reconhecimento de Dominio Colectivo, 16 January 2002.

the fruit of a long history of struggle written irrevocably in the historical record and the land itself.

This was true from the earliest cycles of quilombagem in western Maranhão that resulted in Camiranga and Itamoari becoming quilombola towns. The vast forests of Montes Aureos were a fertile ground for bonds of solidarity and territoriality among enslaved Afro-Brazilians fleeing the town of Turiaçu. These quilombolas formed supply networks based on the cultivation of fruit trees and subsistence crops, creation of trails and paths for hunting, and most important, the extraction of gold using rudimentary but effective methods such as gold panning.

These proved to be crucial developments in weathering state repression, and as seen in the case of the Viana Rebellion of 1867, they enabled the enslaved to directly confront the slave society and outmaneuver authorities. Even with the fall of the quilombo Limoeiro in 1878, the knowledge of the land among the fleeing quilombolas allowed a new cycle of community formation across the border in Pará. Thus, geographical coincidence and the purposeful cultivation and reproduction of knowledge as part of a territoriality shared by quilombolas allowed them to both escape and undermine slavery as a hegemonic economic and political structure in the borderlands between Maranhão and Pará.

In the waning decade of African slavery in Brazil, quilombolas created their own independent path to abolition. Access to gold deposits and unrivaled knowledge of gold extraction formed the basis of quilombola political strategies. Upon crossing the Gurupí River, they became locked in conflict with French merchant Jules Blanc, who abused his mining concession and used false property claims and promises of manumission to extort gold from quilombolas. Quilombolas, led by Agostinho de Sá Caldas, employed a strategy of selective engagement with authorities in Viséu and Maranhão in order to put pressure on Blanc.

Police officials in Viseu investigated and even arrested Blanc based on testimony provided by individuals representing a formation (quilombos) that was plainly illegal in the context of a slave society. The relative weakness of Viseu's police in the waning years of the Brazilian Empire was also arguably a boon for quilombolas. Illness, lack of supplies and personnel, and back pay hobbled the town's police force.

At the same time, politicians expressed concern that telegraph projects provided cover for quilombagem in Maranhão and Pará. The intersection of these two points is demonstrated by local uprising by residents of Viseu in August 1885 staged at the police barracks, bolstered in part by laborers employed by the Repartição. Though it isn't clear that quilombolas were involved in the uprising, a lack of state capacity and the opportunities provided by telegraph construction were clearly structural factors that allowed quilombolas in Camiranga and Itamoari to enjoy a certain amount of autonomy. Even non-state institutions such as the Catholic Church are relatively absent from the region according to the historical record, something which was not necessarily true of other quilombola territories in Pará.<sup>53</sup>

Such autonomy is further evidenced by Arrojado Lisboa's interactions with quilombolas during his surveying expedition through the Gurupí in the 1890s, where he observes a decision-making process not connected to that of the formal political structure of Viseu even though abolition had already taken place. Agostinho's role in a homicide investigation which took place around the same time reveals that political authority in Camiranga, to the extent which it existed at all, was exercised informally by Agostinho in the relative absence of state and local officials.

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<sup>53</sup> See Torre 149. The author discusses the social and cultural hegemony of the Church as something exercised by the slaveowning class and representatives of the Church, but later reified as part of a syncretic Afro-descendant peasant culture in western Pará.

Agostinho and his comrades had been particularly invaluable as guides and laborers in the construction of telegraph lines in the Gurupí region during the 1880s, a fulcrum for building a partnership with Silvio Ribeiro, an Inspector employed by the Repartição dos Telégrafos. Agostinho and Ribeiro forged a partnership that was crucial in expelling Blanc from the region and likely shielded Agostinho's comrades from repression. This partnership also resulted in knowledge of the gold deposits between the Gurupí River and Piriá River spreading beyond quilombola communities. Ribeiro and other Repartição employees secured mineral exploration concessions for themselves or family members, with Ribeiro's own brother, José Pedro Ribeiro, securing such exploration rights. Though Agostinho had participated in such exploration, it became clear that individuals such as the Ribeiro were eager to use the gold deposits located in territory inhabited by quilombolas and indigenous groups such as the Tembê and Ka'apor to attract foreign capital. The actions of Agostinho and his comrades had their contradictions from a liberatory perspective, but such actions resulted in Camiranga and Itamoari achieving abolition without succumbing to the forces of social disarticulation and proletarianization that rural communities in much of hemisphere contended with at the height of the neo-colonial era in Latin America.

Nonetheless, British and U.S. capital would be crucial to landgrabbing processes in the Gurupí region that would last many decades thereafter and which have arguably never concluded. Such landgrabbing was realized in the person of Guilherme Von Linde, a Swedish-Brazilian engineer who ingratiated himself with the political class of Pará before establishing a nascent mining operation along the Gurupí River at Bela Aurora. His close relationship with the U.S. Consulate in Belém as well as state and local officials conferred legitimacy on his claims to nearly two dozen separate gold mines between the Gurupí and Piriá rivers.

This, in turn, allowed Von Linde to raise more capital and expand his operations. Many quilombolas who had previously extracted gold on an independent basis were forced to work for Von Linde, who inflicted abused on garimpeiros to such an extent that media outlets across the country gradually took notice during the 1920s. Furthermore, the fact that Von Linde built a small mining empire based on tax evasion and illegal gold exports inspired a nascent economic nationalism aimed at aventureiros such as himself.

Such sentiments were bolstered by the work of Souza Araújo and Hurley, who separately produced works based on their travels through the region on behalf of the Pará government. They each produced ample evidence of the poverty and mistreatment of garimpeiros working under Von Linde, as well as Von Linde's unscrupulousness. To a certain extent, their works bolstered the presence of quilombolas in the historical record. More importantly, in the immediate sense Hurley and Souza Araújo provided legal arguments that were later used to expropriate Von Linde's lands, with the infamous mining baron ending up in Ceará.

Preceding the Revolution of 1930, there were many voices eager to exploit the mineral riches of the Gurupí Valley, but in a manner more consistent with the nationalist and populist currents expressed among various sectors of Brazilian society. Accounts critical of Von Linde or which otherwise detailed the history and natural wealth of the Gurupí region invariably included at least cursory mentions of historical or living quilombola populations.

Following the Revolution of 1930, the new Pará government headed by Barata moved swiftly to enact popular measures. Among them were a series of land expropriations targeting crony capitalists who had enriched themselves with lucrative land and mining concessions. Decreto 263, signed a mere six months into Barata's term, instantly negated Von Linde's claims over mining properties in the Gurupí. The language of the Decreto betrays a sense of



revolutionary idealism, but also contains language informed by histories of struggle on the part of quilombolas. Until 1934, the state's *Inspetória de Minas e Castanhais* provided public services to *garimpeiros* along the Gurupí and elsewhere and Barata had also appointed a mining inspector to be posted in Camiranga. Such measures held the promise of infrastructure, health, and education. In a few brief instances, it also seemed to facilitate residents of Camiranga such as Amâncio Cardoso communicating their grievances and receiving at least some material redress.

The surge of political sentiment that led to Von Linde's downfall was anchored by the struggles of quilombolas, whose historical trajectory of struggle against economic exploitation prefigured formal legal and political challenges to the *aventureiro* class in the years preceding the Revolution of 1930. Following the Revolution of 1930, such struggles gained even more visibility during a brief but potentially transformative period wherein the states of Pará and Maranhão as well as the national government deployed experts to the region to more thoroughly catalog the mineral wealth of the area.

Whatever the *potential* of such changes, they were cut short to a certain extent by the 1934 *Código de Minas*. While the new code was progressive in language, it restricted state-level services like the *Inspetoria* and centralized implementation in the hands of the Federal government. The result was a gradual return to mining concession holders who operated with little interference, imposing company store-like conditions on the many *garimpeiros* who had migrated to the region, some from outside of Brazil. Conditions deteriorated in mining areas such as Macaco to the point where class struggle expressed itself through recourse to legal means of protest as well as extralegal violence.

The opposition offered by workers to their conditions resembled class-based movements elsewhere in the Americas. Though the role of quilombolas in such movements is unclear, they

had themselves opposed exploitation in some of the same mining territories as recently as the late 1920s. The influx of migrants to the region in the subsequent decades generated new social and economic pressures in the Gurupí region. However, later events such as Darcy Ribeiro's visits to Camiranga and Itamoari and the struggle for recognition as *comunidades remanescentes de quilombo* demonstrate the continuation of a society created when hundreds of the enslaved traded the repressive bonds of slavery for the liberatory bonds of solidarity. They created historical memory written on the land itself, passing this knowledge down to later generations whose freedom and autonomy was closely related to a sense of territoriality. Such territoriality had allowed a small group of quilombolas to achieve freedom on their own terms that implied something greater than the freedom to be divided and exploited by extractive capitalism: *frontiers beyond abolition*.

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