Uncertain Refuge: Frontier Formation and the Origins of the Botocudo War in Late Colonial Brazil

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The major gold and diamond strikes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries produced an unprecedented economic expansion, a complex urban society, and a rich Baroque culture in the inland region of southeastern Brazil that came to be called Minas Gerais. The mining windfall transformed Portuguese America and the transatlantic commerce that linked it to Europe and Africa. By the time the Portuguese crown fully acknowledged these changes and transferred the colonial capital from Salvador da Bahia to Rio de Janeiro in 1763, however, the inevitable depletion of the mineral washings was well underway. The accompanying economic havoc, first felt on a large scale around the middle of the eighteenth century and intensifying as the decades passed,

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Abbreviations used in the notes are as follows: *Anais da Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro* (*ABNRJ*); Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon (AHU); Arquivo Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (ANRJ); Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia (APEB), Seção Colonial e Provincial (SCP); Arquivo Público Mineiro (APM), which houses a portion of the dispersed Arquivo Casa dos Contos (CC), and the Seção Colonial (SC); Arquivo do Tribunal de Contas, Lisbon (ATC), Erário Régio (ER); Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas (BLAC); Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon (BNL), Coleção Pombalina (CP); Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (BNRJ), Seção de Iconografia (SI), Seção de Manuscritos (SM), Arquivo Conde de Valadares (CV), Arquivo Morgado de Mateus (MM); *Documentos históricos* (*DH*); *Documentos interessantes para a história e costumes de São Paulo* (*DI*); *Revista do Arquivo Público Mineiro* (*RAPM*); *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfco Brasileiro* (*RIHGB*).

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resulted in severe social dislocation and political discontent.[1] Long after the search for gold purportedly ended and the concerns of colonists turned elsewhere, the inhabitants of the captaincy of Minas Gerais continued to scour outlying lands for new mineral deposits and, when these failed to materialize, for pastoral, agricultural, and commercial alternatives.

Between the 1760s and 1820s, local elites, slaves, impoverished settlers, and seminomadic indigenous peoples engaged in a violent contest for land and resources, radiating outward from the mining district's major towns. Throughout the vast hinterlands of Minas Gerais, this conflict sometimes smoldered, sometimes flared, accompanying the primary instance of frontier migration during Brazil's transition from colony to nation; yet, both this conflict and the migration itself have gone virtually unstudied, subject to the long-standing scholarly tendency to emphasize Brazil's coastal populations and export matrices. A slow-moving, often inconspicuous dispersion to the west, to the south, and, especially for the purposes of the present article, to the east, this internal colonization depended on the actions of both the powerful and the poor, the white and the nonwhite, the free and the enslaved, each with their own reasons for journeying to the frontier, each with their own claims on unsettled land, each seen as invaders by the indigenous groups who occupied this domain.

Although present in virtually every zone in which settlement occurred, indigenous resistance would peak in the rugged, mountainous zone, then still blanketed by the great Atlantic forest, wedged between the inland mining district and the Atlantic coast (see figure 1). Forging a local policy of frontier incorporation, captaincy officials, despite a profound ambivalence concerning

1. Points of entry to an extensive literature on eighteenth-century Minas Gerais include C. R. Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695–1750: Growing Pains of a Colonial Society* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, "Colonial Brazil: The Gold Cycle, c. 1690–1750," in *Cambridge History of Latin America*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984); Kenneth R. Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750–1808* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973); Júnia Ferreira Furtado, *O Livro da Capa Verde: O regimento diamantino de 1771 e a vida no Distrito Diamantino no período da real extração* (São Paulo: Annablume, 1996); Marco Antonio Silveira, *O universo do indistinto: Estado e sociedade nas Minas setecentistas (1735–1808)* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1997); Laura de Mello e Souza, *Desclassificados do ouro: A pobreza mineira no século XVIII*, 3d ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1990); idem, *Norma e conflito: Aspectos da história de Minas no século XVIII* (Belo Horizonte: Univ. Federal de Minas Gerais, 1999); and Kathleen J. Higgins, *"Licentious Liberty" in a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region: Slavery, Gender, and Social Control in Eighteenth-Century Sabará, Minas Gerais* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1999).

their own actions, challenged a crown policy that designated this area, along with other frontier zones, as "forbidden lands"—territory placed off-limits to settlers in an attempt to block the flow of contraband to coastal dwellers and seafarers. In the process, events on this remote colonial frontier impinged on metropolitan authority, eroded established territorial boundaries, undermined crown indigenous policy, and recast regional identity.

Penetration of the region and aggression against its native occupants took what appeared to be a dramatic turn in 1808. Following the arrival in Rio de Janeiro of the Portuguese royal court, in flight from Napoleon's armies, Prince Regent João declared open war on the Botocudo Indians, officially sanctioning their slaughter and enslavement, a policy that remained in place until 1831. Archival evidence reveals, however, that the militarization of this conflict began a full half-century earlier. Despite royal prohibitions, virtually every governor of Minas Gerais, from the 1760s on, pursued a policy of violent Indian conquest at one time or another, although none commanded the military resources and few possessed the unabashed anti-Indian candor of the prince. That the conflict commenced long before the crown declared war demands a rethinking of the basis of this official action. Far from a sudden reversal marking the ultimate deterioration of relations between the state and the remnant of the once numerous Indians of non-Amazonian Brazil, the crown's action in fact capped a long history of conflict caused by settler and state incursions into the Indian territory that local authorities called the Eastern *Sertão*.

The chronology and origin of the assault on the Indians are not the only formulations requiring reassessment. Crown and local indigenous policy must be reconsidered, as well as the very notions of geography and regional identity that gave rise to colonization. Local officials invoked a crown policy intended for Brazil's settled village Indians as the legislative basis for the conquest of this sprawling frontier. They did so in a fluid and contested context in which interdependent yet irreconcilable positions concerning the significance of Indian territory vied for predominance, and to whose opposing ends crown policy proved to be equally adaptable. Before conquest became legitimate, the policy that forbade activity by colonists in the region had to be challenged, as did prevailing indigenous policy. Geographic space itself had to be culturally reconstituted, the sertão transformed from a savage wilderness into a beckoning frontier, from a barrier blocking the passage of gold and diamond smugglers into a fertile, gold-laden cornucopia, an Eden or Eldorado, promising sustenance and riches to those who dared to seize them. This transformation, like the conquest it engendered, occurred gradually and unevenly, with the

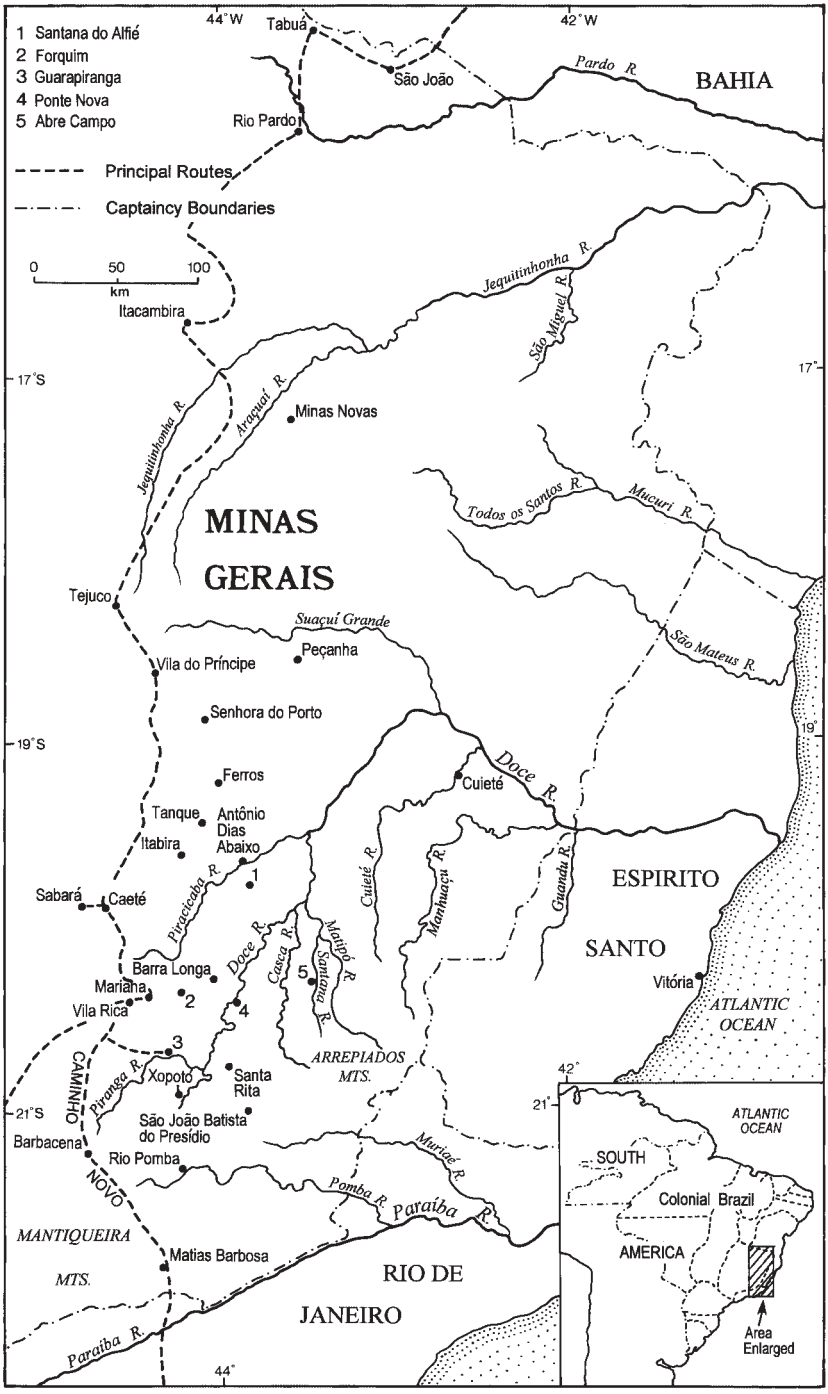

Figure 1. The Eastern Sertão, Minas Gerais, ca. 1800. (Captaincy boundaries are approximations and were disputed.)

notion of the fecund frontier present as early as the 1760s and that of the frontier as a geographic deterrent enduring into the 1810s.

Indian Persistence and the Formation of a Colonial Frontier

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Eastern Sertão became one of the many frontier zones that formed on the periphery of consolidating states and market economies throughout Latin America and the wider Atlantic world.[2] The history of this zone resists the kind of stage-by-stage analysis, whether as triumph or catastrophe, commonly favored by frontier historians. For decades, colonization led neither to the successful establishment of a sedentary settler society nor to the final subjugation of the region's indigenous peoples. As a result, historians have rarely recognized the zone as a frontier at all.[3] The advances and reversals of settlement characteristic of this and other

2. The pervasiveness of such zones in late colonial Latin America and the value of comparing their history have in recent years become increasingly clear to historians. Regions currently under scrutiny include, among others, northern Mexico, central and southern Argentina, southern Chile, central Brazil, and eastern Paraguay. See Donna J. Guy and Thomas E. Sheridan, eds., *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire* (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1998).

3. Important efforts to conceptualize the process of frontier incorporation in Brazil include Mary Lombardi, "The Frontier in Brazilian History: An Historiographic Essay," *Pacific Historical Review* 44 (1975); Leo H. Waibel, "As zonas pioneiras do Brasil," *Revista Brasileira de Geografia* 17 (1955); and Warren Dean, "Ecological and Economic Relationships in Frontier History: São Paulo, Brazil," in *Essays on Frontiers in World History*, ed. George Wolfskill and Stanley Palmer (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981). On the colonial period, see J. Capistrano de Abreu, *Caminhos antigos e povoamento do Brasil* (1930; reprint, Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1989); Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Caminhos e fronteiras* (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1957); James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), chap. 8; Alida C. Metcalf, *Family and Frontier in Colonial Brazil: Santana de Parnaíba, 1520–1822* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992); John M. Monteiro, *Negros da terra: Índios e bandeirantes nas origens de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994); and A. J. R. Russell-Wood, "Frontiers in Colonial Brazil: Reality, Myth and Metaphor," in *Society and Government in Colonial Brazil, 1500–1822* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1992). Specifically for Minas Gerais, see Percy Alvin Martin, "Minas Gerais and California: A Comparison of Certain Phases of Their Historical and Social Evolution," *RIHGB*, tomo especial, *Congresso Internacional de História da América* 1 (1922); Waldemar de Almeida Barbosa, *A decadência das minas e a fuga da mineração* (Belo Horizonte: Univ. Federal de Minas Gerais, 1971); Paulo Mercadante, *Os sertões do leste; estudo de uma região: A mata mineira* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores, 1973); Celso Falabella de Figueiredo Castro, *Os sertões de leste: Achegas para a história da Zona da Mata* (Belo Horizonte: Imp. Oficial, 1987);

such areas have even prompted some scholars to see the incorporation of the Brazilian interior as a negation of the usual frontier dynamic or, to use their terminology, as a "hollow frontier." One historian has gone so far as to posit that a Brazilian "pioneer frontier" did not even exist until the 1930s when industrialization prompted rapid expansion into the hinterlands.[4] The trouble with such views derives from a failure to understand territorial incorporation as a multidimensional, even multidirectional, process that involves both contestation and mediation. To confine frontier history only to those periods when colonists achieved their greatest triumphs is to write history from the perspective of the conquerors. A more comprehensive and historically precise approach conceptualizes frontiers not merely as the leading edge of European expansion but as zones of contact and interaction, albeit unequal interaction, between cultures. While the penetration of market capitalism into remote environments was central to the frontier dynamic, this expansion in many zones occurred in fits and starts, advanced and receded, and required a long period of gestation. The frontier was not a remote place where European-based capitalism achieved dominance; in fact, that was precisely where it failed to do so. That is why the eastern forests of Minas Gerais felt the pressures of frontier expansion well before the region experienced rapid economic growth and effective incorporation into either an export economy or a consolidated domestic market.[5]

Ricardo de Bastos Cambraia and Fábio Faria Mendes, "A colonização dos sertões do leste mineiro: Políticas de ocupação territorial num regime escravista (1780–1836)," *Revista do Departamento de História—FAFICH/UFMG* 6 (1988); Laura de Mello e Souza, "Violência e práticas culturais no cotidiano de uma expedição contra quilombolas, Minas Gerais, 1769," in *Liberdade por um fio: História dos quilombos no Brasil*, ed. João José Reis and Flávio dos Santos Gomes (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996); and Judy Bieber, *Power, Patronage, and Political Violence: State Building on a Brazilian Frontier, 1822–1889* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1999).

4. On the use of the "hollow frontier" concept to describe settlement of the Brazilian interior, see Warren Dean, "The Frontier in Brazil," in *Frontier in Comparative Perspectives*, Working Papers, no. 188 (Washington, D.C.: Latin American Program, The Woodrow Wilson Center, 1990), 23; and Richard M. Morse, introduction to *The Bandeirantes: The Historical Role of the Brazilian Pathfinders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 10. On the 1930s "pioneer frontier," see Joe Foweraker, introduction to *The Struggle for Land: A Political Economy of the Pioneer Frontier in Brazil from 1930 to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981).

5. Scholars instrumental in developing the notion of frontiers as zones of cultural contact include Patricia N. Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987), 26–7; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), esp. 1–11; David J.

Starting from the assumption, then, that the frontier constitutes that peripheral geographic area where economic and political incorporation is not yet assured, and where the outcome of cultural encounters remains in doubt, this article moves beyond a historiography that subordinates the subject of internal colonization to that of Brazil's export complexes—sugar, gold, coffee, cotton, cacao, rubber, and cattle—under the erroneous assumption that the frontier advanced only when growing international trade and, later, industrialization compelled inland movement. The evidence presented reveals the historical salience of internal colonization that falls precisely between two export booms—gold and coffee—a period commonly treated as one of stasis and decadence; it also demonstrates the enduring importance of native peoples in the face of an urban-based historiography in which they scarcely appear.

As in other regions south of the Amazon Basin, Brazilian Indians all but vanish from accounts of the history of Minas Gerais the moment they no longer serve as a narrative foil for the exploits of the *bandeirantes*, slave-raiders who hunted them mercilessly before the gold discoveries of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries restructured colonial society.[6] The ensu-

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Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), 11; David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch, eds., *Where Cultures Meet: Frontiers in Latin American History* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994); and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), esp. x, 52.

On the uneven advance of capitalism, see Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982), 308. Elsewhere, I have applied this analytical framework to the study of territorial incorporation and indigenous resistance and accommodation in the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso at the turn of the twentieth century. See Hal Langfur, "Myths of Pacification: Brazilian Frontier Settlement and the Subjugation of the Bororo Indians," *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 4 (1999).

6. The primary exceptions are two recent dissertations, namely, Maria Hilda Baquiero Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho: A conquista dos territórios indígenas nos sertões do leste" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. de São Paulo, 1998); and Hal Langfur, "The Forbidden Lands: Frontier Settlers, Slaves, and Indians in Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1760–1830" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Texas, 1999); and two works by the regional historian Oiliam José, *Marlière, o Civilizador* (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1958), and his *Indígenas de Minas Gerais* (Belo Horizonte: Imp. Oficial, 1965). For a brief discussion of scholarship on the Indians of Minas Gerais, see Oiliam José, *Historiografia mineira*, 2d ed. (Belo Horizonte: Imp. Oficial, 1987), 336–38. On the absence of Indians in the historiography of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Brazil, see B. J. Barickman, "'Tame Indians,' 'Wild Heathens,' and Settlers in Southern Bahia in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," *The Americas* 51, no. 3 (1995): 326–27.

Sources on the raiding by bandeirantes of native groups in Minas Gerais, as well as on

ing gold rush, which depended on the labor of Indians before African slaves replaced them, and which sealed the final destruction of many groups, unfolds in historical accounts virtually devoid of indigenous peoples.[7] By the third decade of the eighteenth century, as one historian puts it, articulating a central assumption responsible for this scholarly lacuna, gold seekers had "already penetrated practically all of the forests and sertões, expelling and/or decimating the great majority of the indigenous population" of Minas Gerais.[8] That assessment combines with scholarly biases for focusing on the opulent apex of the gold cycle, the export rather than the internal economy, urban rather than rural society. Add the overshadowing presence of the foiled 1789 nativist conspiracy known as the Inconfidência Mineira, and the absence of Indians from what we know about Minas Gerais in the eighteenth century and beyond becomes comprehensible if no less misleading.

The inhabitants of colonial Minas Gerais knew otherwise, especially those who migrated outward from the urban mining centers as the decline following the gold boom became pronounced. To their great consternation, they knew that Indians had, in fact, survived in the sertão, even if they were not fated to do so in later historical monographs. West of the São Francisco River, throughout the fertile region that would come to be known as the Triângulo Mineiro, the southern Kayapó formed a barrier to settlement well into the nineteenth century.[9] South and southeast of the mining district, along its border with the captaincies of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, lived the Coropó and Coroado.

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the early exploration and occupation of the region in general, include Augusto de Lima Júnior, *A capitania das Minas Gerais* (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1978); Afonso de Escragnolle Taunay, *História geral das bandeiras paulistas*, 11 vols. (São Paulo: Imp. Oficial, 1924–50), vols. 9–10; idem, *Relatos sertanistas* (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1981); and Diogo [Luís de Almeida Pereira] de Vasconcelos, *História antiga de Minas Gerais*, 4th ed. (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1974).

7. John M. Monteiro notes the lack of research on the role of native populations during the early years of the gold rush. See Monteiro, *Negros da terra*, 210 n. 3.

8. Carla Maria Junho Anastasia, introduction to *Breve descrição geográfica, física e política da capitania de Minas Gerais*, by Diogo Pereira Ribeiro de Vasconcelos (1807; reprint, Belo Horizonte: Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994), 15.

9. One official in 1807 described this border area between Minas Gerais and Goiás as comprising an unsettled expanse "inhabited solely by the Kayapó, wild heathens who cause great damage to travelers who pass through those lands." See Vasconcelos, *Breve descrição geográfica*, 51; Robert H. Lowie, "The Southern Cayapó," in *Handbook of South American Indians*, 7 vols., ed. Julian H. Steward (New York: Cooper Square, 1963), 1:519–20; Odair Giraldin, *Cayapó e Panará: Luta e sobrevivência de um povo Jê no Brasil Central* (Campinas: Ed. da Unicamp, 1997); and Mary C. Karasch, "Interethnic Conflict and Resistance on the Brazilian Frontier of Goiás, 1750–1890," in Guy and Sheridan, *Contested Ground*, 115–34.

They responded to settler incursions throughout the second half of the eighteenth century with a combination of resistance and accommodation.[10]

It was, however, especially in the Eastern Sertão that Indians continued to keep the territorial ambitions of colonial society in check. The Puri resolutely held the southern reaches of this tropical and subtropical forest separating Minas Gerais from the Atlantic coast. Their domain stretched from the Paraíba River to the low mountains of the Mantiqueira range and the upper reaches of the Doce River. Ranging roughly from north to south, the Kamakã, Pataxó, Kopoxó, Kutaxó, Monoxó, Kumanaxó, Panhame, Maxakali, Malali, and Makoni inhabited the forests dividing Minas Gerais from coastal Bahia and Espírito Santo, including portions of the Pardo, Jequitinhonha, Mucuri, São Mateus and Doce river valleys.[11] Vying for the territory of these groups, moving across a vast expanse of mountainous terrain extending from the Pomba River north to the Pardo River and beyond, the Aimoré or Botocudo, as they were increasingly called after the middle of the eighteenth century, blocked settlement and exploration for new gold and diamond deposits.[12]

The Portuguese applied the name Botocudo generically to a variety of groups believed, no doubt erroneously in certain cases, to be common descendants of the Aimoré, inland natives who for two centuries raided coastal settlements in Ilhéus, Porto Seguro, and Espírito Santo before seeking refuge from the Portuguese deeper in the interior. These groups generally spoke the same Macro-Gê language or one of its dialects.[13] At times, the Portuguese classified

10. Alfred Métraux, "The Purí-Coroado Linguistic Family," in Steward, *Handbook of South American Indians*, 1:523–30; and José Ribamar Bessa Freire and Márcia Fernanda Malheiros, *Aldeamentos indígenas do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Programa de Estudos dos Povos Indígenas, Univ. do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 1997), 21–5.

11. Alfred Métraux and Curt Nimuendajú, "The Mashacalí, Patashó, and Malalí Linguistic Families," in Steward, *Handbook of South American Indians*; Métraux, "The Purí-Coroado Linguistic Family"; and Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," 4–5.

12. Beyond Minas Gerais, to the east, the Puri and Botocudo controlled much of the interior of the captaincies of Espírito Santo and southern Bahia until well into the nineteenth century. In 1810 both groups still conducted raids in the vicinity of the city of Vitória, and effective colonization remained limited, according to Saint-Hilaire, to a coastal strip rarely extending inland more than four leagues (26 kilometers) from the seaboard. See Nara Saletto, *Transição para o trabalho livre e pequena propriedade no Espírito Santo* (Rio de Janeiro: Univ. Federal do Rio de Janeiro, 1991); Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, *Viagem ao Espírito Santo e Rio Doce*, trans. Milton Amado (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1974), 14; and on Bahia, Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 357–65.

13. Scholars now recognize dozens of distinct Macro-Gê languages and dialects. See Freire and Malheiros, *Aldeamentos indígenas do Rio de Janeiro*, 6–8.

groups like the Pataxó, Maxakali, and Makoni as Botocudo subgroups; at times they considered them distinct. To this day, no scholarly consensus has emerged.[14] That the name Botocudo had a questionable ethnological basis—although it is still employed, since colonial sources provide little alternative—should be clear from its origin: it derived from *botoque* or *batoque*, the Portuguese word for barrel lids that resembled the ornamental wooden disks that many, but not all, of these Indians inserted in their ear lobes and lower lips.[15] In practice, when colonists used the term Botocudo, they referred to nothing more specific than any one of the numerous indigenous groups of the Eastern Sertão who refused to submit to Portuguese subjugation. The primary exception occurred when colonists sought to focus attention on a particular group, singling them out as enemies, for instance, not only of the Portuguese but also of other indigenous communities. Thus in 1800, priest Francisco da Silva Campos petitioned the crown for greater aid in the struggle to christianize Indians,

14. For contrasting positions, see ibid.; and Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," 4–5.

15. See José, *Indígenas de Minas Gerais* , 13–37; Alfred Métraux, "The Botocudo," in Steward, *Handbook of South American Indians*, 1:531–40; Nelson de Senna, "Principaes povos selvagens que tiveram o seo 'habitat' em territorio das Minas Geraes," *RAPM* 25, no. 1 (1937); and Maximilian, Prinz von Wied, *Viagem ao Brasil*, trans. Edgar Süssekind de Mendonça and Flávio Poppe de Figueiredo (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1989), 283–84. See also Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, *Viagem pelas províncias do Rio de Janeiro e Minas Gerais*, trans. Vivaldi Moreira (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1975), 251–53; originally published as *Voyage dans les provinces de Rio de Janeiro et de Minas Geraes* (Paris: Grimbert et Dorez, 1830).

B. J. Barickman has recently revived a long-standing debate as to whether the Botocudo in fact descended from the Aimoré. The link, he notes, is based on slim linguistic evidence. See Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 335 n. 29. A more fundamental issue is that both names, Botocudo and Aimoré, were used interchangeably in Portuguese documents from the mid-eighteenth century onward, neither of them with any real precision. The latter designation, which also appears in sources as Aimboré, Amburé, and Imburé, was applied no less generically than Botocudo. Neither term was used, as scholars have long recognized, by the Indians to identify themselves. Instead, they used Gren, Krakmun, Naknenuk, and other names, referring to particular subgroups. I employ these more specific terms whenever they appear in the sources, which they seldom do before 1800, but am forced to settle in most cases for Botocudo, since the Portuguese rarely concerned themselves with native preference or, for that matter, with the differences, sometimes minor, sometimes considerable, between one subgroup and another. Vexed, despite his direct contact with them, by the difficulty of systematically distinguishing the various Botocudo "tribes" with their "diverse customs," Saint-Hilaire wrote, "in truth, there exists no bond among all those [groups] that constitute, as a whole, the [Botocudo] nation." See Auguste de Saint-Hilaire, *Viagem pelas províncias do Rio de Janeiro e Minas Gerais*, 251 n. 360.

Figure 2. Indians of the Eastern Sertão portrayed as savages in the early nineteenth century. Source: Jean Baptiste Debret, *Voyage pittoresque et historique au Brésil* (Paris: Didot Frères, 1834–39). Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

expressing horror that the Botocudo had "destroyed through warfare" the following "nations" in order to "eat them": "Mandali [Malali?], Maxakali, Pendi, Capoxi [Kopoxó], Panhame . . . Monoxó, [and] Pataxó."[16] The generic term Botocudo, in other words, was synonymous with enemy.

The persistence of this inadequate representation of the Botocudo in the subsequent historiography derives from a dearth of ethnographic studies, extending into the second half of the twentieth century, by which time the near extinction of the region's natives and their languages had occurred. Apart from the broadest of characteristics, such as their seminomadic hunting and foraging, their proclivity for fissuring into small bands, their determined territoriality, and their frequent conflicts with neighboring groups, frustratingly little is known about Botocudo conduct and cosmology. Mobility and fragmentation themselves help explain the nature of their resistance to colonization, which took the form of isolated ambushes and flight far more frequently than large-scale warfare. The impulse to resist itself, however, sprang from a

16. Petition of Padre Francisco da Silva Campos to king, [1800], *RAPM* 2, no. 4 (1897): 692.

still more fundamental need to retain an expanse of territory sufficient to ensure physical and social reproduction.[17]

Like indigenous nomads throughout the Americas, the Botocudo and their fellow occupants of the Eastern Sertão resorted to many other survival strategies, including cooperation and acculturation. An odd sort of cooperation reigned even when relations turned on enmity, as officials depended on natives to oppose incursions into the sertão in order to serve the interests of the state. Hostile Indians, in short, made policing the wilderness possible. More conventional forms of collaboration also arose. Captaincy governors supplied provisions to those natives who settled in state-supported, church-supervised villages or *aldeias*. These Indians often joined captaincy troops on expeditions attacking still unincorporated groups. Moreover, parishes on the eastern edge of the mining district were, as one official put it, "full of tame heathens" who had accepted baptism.[18] Such evidence points to an array of survival strategies, some of them reactive, some proactive, but all historical products of a prolonged process of contact and conquest.

At the points of contact between colonial and indigenous society, Catholic priests frequently functioned as intermediaries, facilitating the process of approximation. Such was the case in the forests along the lower Cuieté River. The church dispatched clerics to the area in order to convert Indians who settled in several aldeias there in the 1760s.[19] The largest of these aldeias,

17. In a rare but important exception to the usual ambush tactic, the Botocudo's largest, most sustained, and deadliest documented attack occurred during a five-day onslaught in 1794. A reported 2,000 Botocudo "destroyed and razed" houses, fazendas, and the main chapel in the town of Ferros, killing 48 settlers. Petition of João Damaceno dos Reis Vidal and other landholders with governor's reply, Vila Rica, 1 Nov. 1794, APM, SC, cod. 260, fls. 42v–43. On other Botocudo characteristics, see Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," 3–5; Robin M. Wright with Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, "Destruction, Resistance, and Transformation—Southern, Coastal, and Northern Brazil (1580–1890)," in *South America*, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), pt. 2, 340–45.

18. For a more extensive discussion of such adaptations to colonial expansion, see Langfur, "Forbidden Lands," 215–34. For quotation, see ruling (consulta) of Overseas Council, [ca. 1778, Lisbon], *RAPM* 15 (1910): 482. Throughout, I translate the Portuguese term *gentio* as heathen.

19. The first priest with orders to this effect was Manoel Vieyra Nunes, vicar of Cuieté, who arrived in the settlement no later than March 1769. The second, arriving in 1770, was Domingos da Silva Xavier, brother of Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, the famous Tiradentes, the sole conspirator executed in the aftermath of the 1789 Inconfidência Mineira. See [Manoel Vieyra Nunes] to Campelo, Cuieté, ca. 11 May 1769, BNRJ, SM,

Larangeiras, was home to Indians identified by the priest Manoel Vieyra Nunes as children, women, and men, some 40 "warriors" among them, belonging to a variety of separate "nations," apparently Maxakali subgroups. They received gifts for remaining in the aldeia and for their "obedience," including knives, machetes, hoes, and rosaries, as well as food.[20] They did not, however, fit neatly into colonial categories that sharply divided peaceable, settled Indians from nomadic adversaries. Some of the groups that took up residence at Larangeiras engaged in "good correspondence," according to Nunes, while others displayed "little correspondence," suggesting that each had its own objectives. With respect to the less genial natives, Nunes betrayed a deep ambivalence: "If they cannot be judged friends," he wrote the governor, "neither can they be called enemies, since they do not engage in hostilities against us."[21]

The spectrum of possible relations did not prevent the Botocudo from becoming the great nemesis of Minas settlers bent on discovering the new lands and sources of wealth that they hoped would restore their languishing personal fortunes or simply provide for their subsistence. Convinced that these lands would return the captaincy to its former prosperity and prominence, capitancy officials became equally determined to neutralize Botocudo resistance. As settlers both rich and poor pushed into zones bypassed by the gold rush, they invaded lands controlled by the Botocudo and other groups, provoking violent clashes and, finally, the prince regent's declared war. Unmentioned in standard histories of the era, however, the war against the Botocudo in Minas Gerais in fact began with the expansionist policies of Gov-

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CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 187; Manoel Vieyra Nunes et al., "Lembrança do Gentio que se acha na Aldeya das Laranjeiras em que entrão as nações segt.s, monoxos, cumunoxoes, maxacalins cujas nações se achão cazadas humas com outras," Barra das Larangeiras, 5 July 1769, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 190. On Xavier's departure for Cuieté, see Francisco Álvares Pereira to governor, Antônio Dias Abaixo, 18 Oct. 1770, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 177; and "Ordens sôbre arrecadação e despesas, 1768[–1771]," 3 July 1771, BNRJ, SM, CC, gaveta I–10–7, doc. 72.

20. Manoel Vieyra Nunes et al., "Lembrança do Gentio," Barra das Larangeiras, 5 July 1769, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 190; Manoel Vieyra Nunes et al., "Lista da Ferramenta, e Rozarioz que se repartirão pellos indios de paz chamados manaxois, e munuxois, e muxacalins todos moradores na Aldeya das Laranjeiras que se componham de corenta e dois homens da guerra pouco mais ou menos," Barra das Larangeiras, 5 July 1769, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 191.

21. Manoel Vieyra Nunes to Governor, Cuieté? 1769, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 321.

ernor Luís Diogo Lobo da Silva (1763–68), more than 50 years before the prince regent made it official.[22]

In the rugged, forested sertão separating the mining camps of Minas Gerais from the Atlantic coast, settlement had stalled and Indians, especially the Puri, Pataxó, and Botocudo, remained dominant throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. Their persistent presence was in part a result of crown policy. Soon after bandeirantes made the first discoveries of mineral wealth in the 1690s, the crown sealed off the Eastern Sertão. The aim was to prevent the smuggling of gold and diamonds to the coast by those seeking to evade heavy crown taxation. At least in theory, trade and other overland traffic between the captaincy and the coast were restricted to just three roads patrolled by soldiers: the first leading southwest to São Paulo and the port of Santos; the second, the Caminho Novo, south to Rio de Janeiro; and the third, northeast to Bahia and Pernambuco. Topography largely dictated the location of these routes. Attempts to penetrate the sertão at other points, particularly by way of the most direct route traversing the captaincy of Espírito Santo from the Atlantic coast, proved impracticable because of the inaccessibility of the mountains, the vastness of the forests, the lack of easily navigable rivers, and the absence—out of fear of hostile Indians—of settlers to provision expeditions. That, in any case, is how one contemporary described the problem of access to the mines at the turn of the eighteenth century.[23] But the determination of the crown to control smuggling, monitor the flow of gold out of the mines, reap its royal fifth on gold production, and tax imports (including slaves) and exports meant that natural barriers evolved quickly into legal prohibitions.[24]

Just as the discovery of gold determined which regions of the captaincy would become densely populated, the absence of discoveries left other areas all but untouched by colonists once initial exploration failed to uncover accessible mineral wealth. As the pattern of settlement took shape in the wake of the gold rush, the crown turned to a policy of prohibiting access to these unsettled

22. For the prince regent's declaration of war against the Botocudo, see "Carta régia ao governador e capitão general da capitania de Minas Gerais sobre a guerra aos Indios Botecudos," 13 May 1808, in *Legislação indigenista no século XIX: Uma compilação (1808–1889)*, ed. Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (São Paulo: Univ. de São Paulo, 1992), 57–60.

23. "Informação sobre as Minas do Brasil," [ca. 1700], *ABNRJ* 57 (1935): 167–68.

24. For statistics on gold production, crown revenues, the royal fifth, and other taxes and levies in Minas Gerais, see Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, 333–50; Mello e Souza, *Desclassificados do ouro*, 43–9; and Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies*, 245–54.

zones in order to halt unsupervised and thus untaxed prospecting and to stem the flow of contraband. The unsettled zones that ringed the mining district came to be known as the "forbidden lands," a designation used by eighteenth-century officials most frequently in reference to the southern and southeastern reaches of the captaincy, where the heavily traveled routes to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and constant pressure from settlers to open new lands made restrictions on movement imperative in the view of a crown bent on surveillance. But it was to the east and northeast, mountainous territory covered by dense forests, where the connection between the prohibition on travel and settlement, on the one hand, and the presence and resistance of Indians, on the other, was most tightly drawn. This "sertão of the eastern parts," explained Governor Luís da Cunha Meneses (1783–88), had been cordoned off and designated "forbidden lands in accordance with the theory that the said sertões serve as a natural barrier that protects this captaincy against smuggling."[25]

The susceptibility of this verdant sertão to any number of activities incompatible with the dictates of strict colonial supervision meant that the region was among the first to be set off-limits after the gold strikes. In 1700, as news of the discovery of gold rapidly spread, construction of a road linking the mines with the Espírito Santo coast was begun and then, two years later, abruptly halted on crown orders. From one point of view, the project made sense. Promising a direct route to the mines, traversing a distance from east to west of some 350 kilometers between the coast and Vila Rica, the road could have served as the sole access to and egress from the mines, all traffic being monitored as it passed through the fortified gateway port of Vila Nova do Espírito Santo (later Vitória). But the opposing view, which prevailed, was that opening yet one more access to the mines would make the supervision of all routes more difficult.[26] That the crown had some difficulty stopping what it

25. Quoted in Vasconcelos, *História média de Minas Gerais*, 275. A more literal translation of "áreas proibidas," the Portuguese phrase employed in sources throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, would be "prohibited areas"; however, "forbidden lands" better conveys the colonial connotation in English. Paraíso studies the portion of this area lying to the north of the Doce River, referring to it as the "zona tampão" or buffer zone. See, Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," esp. 2–4, 84–97.

26. João de Lencastre to crown, Salvador da Bahia, 12 Jan. 1701, in *Os manuscritos do Arquivo da Casa de Cadaval respeitantes ao Brasil*, ed. Virginia Rau and Maria Fernandes Gomes da Silva (Coimbra: Atlântica, 1955–58), 2:14–7; and Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil*, 43. Lencastre's letter indicates that authorities significantly underestimated—at 40 leagues (264 kilometers)—the distance between the coast and the central mining fields. A road of

had begun is clear: concerned by the unlawful flow of gold from Minas Gerais to the coast, the governor of Espírito Santo was forced in 1710 to reaffirm the suspension of all exploration or road building in the region.[27] It was not until a full century later that the crown changed positions and finally permitted the construction of a number of roads cutting through the Eastern Sertão to the coast, including a route descending the Doce River basin, passing from Vila Rica to Vitória through the heart of Indian territory.[28] Over the course of the century, similar prohibitions had been extended to the rest of the captaincy. A royal charter of 1733, reconfirmed in 1750, prohibited the opening of new roads to the mines from any direction, not just the east, punishing as smugglers those who ignored the order or traveled along unauthorized routes. Violators had their possessions seized as presumed contraband and divided equally among the royal treasury and any informants whose collaboration led to such an arrest.[29]

The perimeter of a territory as vast as the Eastern Sertão was impossible to patrol, but colonial authorities did what they could to enforce the prohibition. In 1761, for example, Minas Governor Gomes Freire de Andrada (1735–52, 1758–63), learned of the discovery of gold at Cuieté, 240 kilometers northeast of Vila Rica. The gold had been unearthed by explorer Domingos

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that length, even if direct, would have reached eastward from present day Vitória only to approximately Abre Campo, which at the time remained unsettled.

27. Maria Beatriz Nizza da Silva, ed., *Dicionário da história da colonização portuguesa no Brasil* (Lisboa: Verbo, 1994), 309.

28. Wilhelm Ludwig von Eschwege, *Pluto brasiliensis*, trans. Domício de Figueiredo Murta, 2 vols. (Belo Horizonte: Ed. Itatiaia, 1979), 1:117. The road down the Doce river valley appears first on "Mapa da capitania de Minas Geraes," 1810, BNRJ, SI, arc. 32, 4, 20. The year 1810 marked the beginning of a burst of road-building activity farther to the north, as well, including the construction of a route from the town of Ilheús inland along the Pardo River, a route between the towns of Belmonte in Porto Seguro and Minas Novas in Minas Gerais, and a route between the towns of Portalegre in Porto Seguro and Minas Novas. To the south, the situation was no different, as the crown approved additional road construction related to provisioning the court in Rio de Janeiro. For accounts of contacts between road builders, settlers, and the Botocudos, see *Idade de Ouro do Brasil* (Salvador), 17 Dec. 1811, 2–3; and 20 Dec. 1811, 3. Also see Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 355; Caio Prado Júnior, *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo*, 20th ed. (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987), 243–47; and Alcir Lenharo, *As tropas da moderação: O abastecimento da Corte na formação política do Brasil, 1808–1842* (São Paulo: Ed. Símbolo, 1979), chap. 2.

29. Alvará (royal charter), 27 Oct. 1733, in "Colecção sumaria das proprias Leis, Cartas Regias, Avisos e ordens . . . de Minas Geraes," *RAPM* 16 (1911): 447–48; and Alvará (royal charter), 3 Dec. 1750, AHU, cod. 610, fls. 103v–4v.

Jozé Soares and a dozen of his companions who had formed a bandeira (expedition) and descended the Doce River. Proceeding eastward to the coast, where they presented a quantity of gold dust to authorities in Vitória, Soares and part of his band were promptly imprisoned for venturing off established roads to prospect in prohibited zones. Five more associates arriving later learned of the arrest and fled north to the coastal settlement of São Mateus, a town described by their accuser as a bastion of fugitives, smugglers, and murderers among whom these men were to be included for daring to cross the Eastern Sertão.[30] Similar cases presumably occurred with some regularity. Another one that left documentary traces occurred in 1778, when Governor Antônio de Noronha (1775–80) learned that one of his regional military commanders had authorized a number of men to form and arm a bandeira to enter the forests occupied by Indians in a mountainous region between the Doce and Paraíba rivers. Implicated in the illegal action were the officer Captain Francisco Pires Farinho and his relation Manoel Pires Farinho[31] and perhaps the district commander himself, Jozé Leme da Silva. In charge of a group of settled Coropó and Coroado Indians at the newly established parish of São Manuel da Pomba (Rio Pomba), the Farinhos found their strength bolstered by an influx of settlers to an area until recently dominated both by these Indians and the Puri. Emboldened, they sought to explore outlying zones, including those set off-limits by official regulations. Noronha reacted after Manoel Farinho led a bandeira, probably manned by settled Indians, in search of "a great stretch of open country thought to be rich" in mineral wealth. The governor chastised his local commander and Captain Farinho alike for sanctioning the expedition and thereby risking opening a route for contraband. Only with Noronha's express permission were bandeiras to be allowed to "penetrate the forests of that sertão," which the governor reminded his commander, "serve as a wall" separating Minas Gerais from Rio de Janeiro and the coast. Anyone else who persisted in such activity should be considered a criminal, imprisoned, and severely punished.[32]

30. Francisco [de Sales] Ribeiro to Governor, n. p., 24 July 1761, AN, cod. 807, vol. 5, fls. 81, 85.

31. In one document, Governor Noronha identifies Manoel Pires Farinho as the captain's son; in another, Governor Meneses, refers to him as his brother. Governor to Jozé Leme da Silva, Vila Rica, 27 July 1778, and to Francisco Pires Farinho, Vila Rica, 27 July 1778, BNRJ, SM, cod. 2, 2, 24, fls. 164–5v; and Governor to Francisco Pires Farinho, Cachoeira, 13 Nov. 1781, APM, SC, cod. 227, fls. 13–13v.

32. Governor to Jozé Leme da Silva, Vila Rica, 27 July 1778, and to Francisco Pires Farinho, Vila Rica, 27 July 1778, BNRJ, SM, cod. 2, 2, 24, fls. 164–5v. Also see Waldemar

In this way, over time, the geographic basis of the mining district's access routes and settlement pattern merged with the exercise of colonial power to determine the boundaries of those lands occupied by colonists and, conversely, those where indigenous peoples found refuge and remained dominant. To the east, settlement over almost the entire distance between the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador was restricted to a narrow strip along the seaboard largely as a consequence of the Indian presence. The crown consciously sought to turn the zone between the coast and the inland mining district into a kind of forested no-man's-land, peopled by native antagonists, whose enmity, forged over the course of two centuries of conflict with coastal settlers, would prevent unauthorized access to and smuggling from the mines.[33]

Crown legislation and the zeal of local governors had to go only so far in constructing such a barrier. The best defense against smuggling was the untracked wilderness itself and its reputedly savage denizens. Although official concerns about illicit activity in the region would never disappear entirely, colonial authorities remained convinced that their prohibitions were by and large successful, certainly far more so than measures taken to stop contraband along authorized routes. Governor Noronha could declare that "through the [eastern] forests the smuggling of gold is impracticable given that the nature of the said forests, their breadth, and the wild Indians who inhabit them make impossible the criminal pretension of smugglers in those parts."[34]

Cartography and Conquest

Maps of the region provide another gauge of the effectiveness of this barrier and the status the Eastern Sertão acquired over time as Indian territory. More than this, they offer a glimpse of the conceptual framework officials and their informants projected onto distant forests, mountains, and river valleys—the changing way this unsettled space was culturally constructed, encoded, and represented, whether through valorization of its resources, demonization of its

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de Almeida Barbosa, *Dicionário histórico-geográfico de Minas Gerais* (Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia Limitada, 1995), 286–87; and Castro, *Os sertões de leste*, 11–5.

33. Maria Hilda Baquieiro Paraiso, "Os Botocudos e sua trajetória histórica," in *História dos índios do Brasil*, ed. Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, FAPESP/SMC, 1992), 415.

34. Governor, "Plano Secreto para a nova Conquista do Cuieté," [Vila Rica], [ca. Aug. 1779], BNRJ, SM, cod. 2, 2, 24, fl. 230v.

native inhabitants, or a combination of the two.[35] The hopes, expectations, fears, and ethnocentrism of colonists are more in evidence than topographical accuracy on these maps, as their creators sought to possess graphically a territory that remained beyond their grasp physically. With each added detail, each refinement in technique, moreover, map-makers documented and disseminated new knowledge that amounted to a challenge to the very royal injunctions that infused the space with special significance in the first place.

Drawn in the mid-seventeenth century, prior to the incorporation of geographic knowledge resulting from the gold boom, a map by the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu illustrated the Brazilian interior as virtually blank but divided into numerous regions identified by the indigenous groups dwelling in them. The zone separating the coastal captaincies of Ilhéus, Porto Seguro, Espírito Santo, and Rio de Janeiro from the region that would later evolve into the mining district—the zone that came to be known in Minas Gerais as the Eastern Sertão—bore the names of the following Indians from north to south: the Guaymure and the Aymure [Aimoré] (west of Bahia); the Apiapetang, Tapuia [a generic term for non-Tupí indigenous groups, including the Botocudo], and Margaia (west of Espírito Santo); and the Molopaque and Tououpinanbauti [Tupinambá] (west of Rio de Janeiro). A subsequent map by Blaeu represented interior river basins with slightly more detail and altered the names of some indigenous groups. The territory controlled by the Aymure, those Indians the Portuguese would later name Botocudo, extended far to the west of the São Francisco River, although there is no reason to believe that Blaeu based the size of this territory on anything but speculation.[36]

That exploration, despite prohibitions, persisted in the Doce river basin (and by inference in other watersheds of the Eastern Sertão) between Blaeu's

35. See, Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), xii–xiii; Raymond B. Craib, "Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain," *Latin American Research Review* 35, no. 1 (2000); J. B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 1:xvi; and John L. Allen, "Mapping the Plains and Prairies, 1800–1860," in *Mapping the North American Plains: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. Frederick C. Luebke, Frances W. Kaye, and Gary E. Moulton (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 41–62. For an overview of the mapping of North American frontier zones during the same period, see Seymour I. Schwartz and Ralph E. Ehrenberg, *The Mapping of America* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980), chaps. 7, 8.

36. Johannes [Joan] Blaeu, "Brasilia," 1657; and Ioanne Blaev [Joan Blaeu], "Nova et Accurata Brasiliae," [1670?], MSS, Rare Books Room, BLAC.

time and the mid-eighteenth century is evident from a map from the 1750s, by which time the major discoveries of the gold cycle were over and the region's alluvial deposits were increasingly exhausted. Even at this early stage of the economic crisis that would ensue, officials had focused their gaze on the Eastern Sertão. This map, whose author remains unknown, showed many of the Doce's numerous tributaries. Down river from Mariana a few towns and parishes marked the landscape, including those of Forquim, Piranga, and Antônio Dias Abaixo. To the north, the parish of Peçanha appeared along the Suaçui Grande, one of numerous tributaries of the Doce River. Curiously, however, the mapmaker left out all mention of Indians: the barrier they posed to settlement had not yet become the well defined problem it would present after the mid-1760s. This was the case, too, on a map illustrating an expedition Governor Silva led in 1764 through the sertão to the south and west of Vila Rica, a map which also included the Eastern Sertão, to which Silva would directly turn his attention in constructing his aggressive Indian policy.[37]

Despite these signs of increasing cartographic knowledge, large portions of the Eastern Sertão remained unmarked, literally and figuratively, labeled simply "terra incognita" on an undated map apparently drawn no later than the 1760s. At least in the mind of the anonymous map-maker, much of the region had been sealed off so well that it could be represented only by reference to the unknown, revealing its secrets no more than had been done on the earliest maps of Brazil. On another anonymous map of the captaincy completed in 1767, however, the otherwise vacant territory between the mining district and the coast now bore marks denoting Indian villages dotting the sertão. As interest turned to this prohibited zone, the presence and specific location of Indians there became an increasingly pertinent and irksome subject. Penned in the middle of a nearly featureless sertão, a note by the mapmaker described the Botocudo there as "wild heathen" who were impeding attempts to secure the settlement of Cuieté.[38]

37. "Mapa da região banhada pelo Rio Doce e seus afluentes, na Capitania de Minas Gerais," ca. 1758; and "Carta geographica que comprehende toda a Comarca do Rio das Mortes, Villa Rica, e parte da Cidade de Mariana do Governo de Minas Geraes," ca. 1764, in *Mapa: Imagens da formação territorial brasileira*, ed. Isa Adonias (Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Emílio Odebrecht, 1993), 223, pl. 152, and 224, pl. 153 respectively.

38. The first of these maps, untitled, BNRJ, SI, arc. 9, 2, 7A, is erroneously cataloged as a copy of José Joaquim da Rocha, "Mappa da Capitania de Minas Geraes," 1777, BNRJ, SI, arc. 1, 2, 28, from which it, in fact, differs. The second map is "Carta geographica da capitania de Minas Gerais e partes confinantes," 1767, BNRJ, SI, arc. 17, 5, 12.

Eleven years later the military engineer and cartographer José Joaquim da Rocha completed the most detailed map of Minas Gerais to that date, depicting again a near absence of settlement in the southeastern and eastern reaches of the captaincy, except for the towns, like so many beads on a string, along the road to Rio de Janeiro. Indian villages remained the primary features drawn in the unsettled territory, apart from schematically rendered forests, mountain ranges, and rivers. Similar villages appeared on the more detailed maps Rocha drafted of individual *comarcas* (judicial districts). In the eastern expanse of the comarca of Serro Frio, Rocha drew groups of red dots to indicate the existence of native villages, describing one of them as the dwelling place of the "heathen Panhame who eat other nations." On the map of the comarca of Vila Rica, roads now extended into the Doce River watershed to three settlements deep in the forest, São Manuel dos Coroados (Rio Pomba), Abre Campo, and Cuieté.

Rocha adorned his maps with cartouches depicting Indians in various suggestive poses. On the map of the comarca of Sabará (more commonly, Rio das Velhas), a naked warrior crouched and drew his bow, aiming a serrated arrow at a cartographer in military dress, evidently the sergeant-major Rocha himself, who was pictured preoccupied by the task of plotting compass points, unaware of the threat to his life. A drawing of a bejeweled Indian princess, breasts bared, sitting in a clearing at the edge of the forest, covered the upper half of the comarca of Vila Rica map. With one hand the young woman motioned freely to an opening in the trees, a gesture of welcome; with the other, she grasped a cornucopia overflowing with fruits of the sertão.[39] More

39. Rocha's 1778 maps include "Mapa da Capitania de Minas Geraes com a deviza de suas comarcas," "Mappa da Comarca do Serro Frio," "Mappa da Comarca da Villa Rica," "Mappa da Comarca do Rio das Mortes," and "Mappa da Comarca do Sabara." The Arquivo Histórico do Exército in Rio de Janeiro holds the originals, facsimiles of which have recently been published as flyleaf inserts in Rocha's text on historical geography, completed two years later. See Maria Efigênia Lage de Resende, ed., *Geografia histórica da Capitania de Minas Gerais: Descrição geográfica, topográfica, histórica e política da Capitania de Minas Gerais: Memória histórica da Capitania de Minas Gerais*, by José Joaquim da Rocha (1780; reprint, Belo Horizonte: Sistema Estadual de Planejamento, Fundação João Pinheiro, Centro de Estudos Históricos e Culturais, 1995). North American regional maps from this period display similar topographic markings, settlement notation, and Indian imagery. See, for example, John Mitchell, "A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America with the Roads, Distances, Limits, and Extent of the Settlements," 1755; Henry Timberlake, "A Draught of the Cherokee Country," 1765; and Thomas Hutchins, "A Topographical Plan of that part of the Indian-Country through which the Army under the Command of Colonel Bouquet marched in the Year of 1764," 1765, in Schwartz and Ehrenberg, *Mapping of America*, 164, 176–7, pls. 96, 106–7.

than the artifice of a solitary cartographer, Rocha's illustrations represented two sides of an image, dear to the Mineiro elite, of Indians as both savage sentinels and naive deliverers of nature's abundance. It is no coincidence that he represented the former as a male, the latter as a female.

The general preoccupation with the Indian presence grew still more explicit after the turn of the nineteenth century. A comparatively detailed map that included the sertão separating Minas Gerais from Ilhéus and Porto Seguro bore witness not only to the tenacious survival of Indians in the region sealed off against smugglers, and not only to the mounting pressure from settlers but also to the way in which the Indians were more unambiguously than ever portrayed as a barrier to such settlement. The map mentioned the plight of fazendas near Peçanha subject to the "invasion of numerous heathen of the Tocoió nation" (apparently a Botocudo subgroup). Elsewhere were zones in which "a multitude of heathen Botocudo and others roam," as well as those occupied by the "wild and heathen Pataxó" and those in which the "heathen Amburé customarily rob fazendas." Also depicted were villages of Tupinambá and Kamakã, both labeled as "fugitives," suggesting they had once occupied lands more proximate to Portuguese settlements but had now retreated to the heart of the sertão, seeking refuge in remote areas as relations with encroaching settlers hardened.[40] As late as 1810 another anonymous map-maker described the Eastern Sertão as a territory "in which the heathen Botocudo roam." South of this territory was a sertão "peopled by the wild Puri heathens" and "dominated by heathen Guarulho," who had similarly sought sanctuary in remote forests, ascending the Pomba and Muriaé Rivers from Rio de Janeiro into Minas Gerais, where they had become, according to the map-maker, the "sole adversary of the Botocudo."[41]

All of these maps revealed that no exact political boundary between Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo had been established, so unexplored and unknown was the intervening territory. In 1780, having completed his ambitious mapping project, Rocha wrote that "between the captaincy of Minas Gerais and that of Espírito Santo there is no known division other than the Ilha da Esperança," a small island along the Doce River. No other border had been established since these were "scarcely penetrated sertões peopled by heathens of

40. "Comarcas de Porto Seguro e de Ilhéus," ca. 1807, in Adonias, *Mapa*, 207, pl. 145.

41. "Mapa da Capitania de Minas Geraes," 1810, BNRJ, SI, arc. 32, 4, 20. The cartographer's assessment notwithstanding, we know that the Puri, Coroado, and Coropó also clashed with the Botocudo in the same zone. On Guarulho origins in Rio de Janeiro, see José, *Indígenas de Minas Gerais*, 28–29.

various nations."[42] Legislation meant to define the border between Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, authored in 1800 and confirmed by royal edict in 1816, failed to settle what would evolve into a full-fledged border dispute that remained in litigation until the twentieth century. Throughout this period, the disputed region retained its designation "Aimoré Territory."[43]

The connection between Indians and borders was no accident. The missing division between captaincies, the absence of a line drawn on maps to distinguish one colonial jurisdiction from another, testified both to a vacuum of colonial power and to the dominance of the Indian. The captaincy's western border, too, was not a well-defined dividing line but "unsettled sertões" kept vacant by the often hostile Kayapó. The same was true of portions of the southern border with São Paulo, where the Kayapó impeded exploration and colonization at least until the early 1770s.[44] Even the internal divisions between individual comarcas, especially where they coincided with the eastern wilderness, were "uncertain," lamented Governor Noronha in 1779, because they had been established at a time when these lands were "unsettled, unknown, and inhabited by savage Indians, just as part of them still remain."[45] But it was above all the lands between Minas Gerais and the captaincies to the east that constituted an uninhabited "desert," as one contemporary put it.[46] There, in place of a formal border, the crown and, when it suited them, captaincy officials had created another sort of jurisdictional authority—that of enforced absence. In the process they fashioned imaginary lines no less significant than

42. Rocha, *Geografia histórica*, 77–78.

43. *Dicionário geográfico brasileiro* (Pôrto Alegre: Ed. Globo, 1972), 192.

44. On indigenous resistance along the São Paulo border, see Jerônimo Dias Ribeiro to Morgado de Mateus, Registo de Itupeva, 11 Jan. 1766, 29 Nov. 1768, BNRJ, SM, MM, I–30, 16, 9 docs. 1, 9; "Ordem mandando municiar aos soldados que vão conquistar os Indios da Piedade," São Paulo, 6 June 1771; and "[Ordem] dando izenções aos que forem combater contra os Indios, nas divisas com Minas Geraes," São Paulo, 6 June 1771, *DI* 33 (1901): 10–11.

45. Governor, "Bando [decree] para a devizão das comarcas," Vila Rica, 5 Oct. 1779, BNRJ, cod. 2, 2, 24, fls. 223v–4v. In this decree, Noronha established new borders between what were then the captaincy's four *comarcas*: Vila Rica, Sabará, Rio das Mortes, and Serro Frio. The decree is published in Theophilo Feu de Carvalho, *Comarcas e termos: Creações, suppressões, restaurações, encorporações e desmembramentos de comarcas e termos em Minas Geraes (1709–1915)* (Belo Horizonte: Imp. Oficial, 1922), 64–66.

46. The quotation is taken from the title of the manuscript, by Manoel José Pires da Silva Pontes, "Extractos das viagens feitas no deserto, que separa as povoações da provincia de Minas Geraes, e as povoações do littoral nas provincias do Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo, e Bahia," n.d., BNRJ, SM, cod. 5, 3, 40.

political borders, lines which separated the established mining territory from Indian domain, and Indian domain from the settled coast. These lines divided and defined identities, both regional and colonial, in accordance with patterns as old as the Portuguese colonization of Brazil itself. The boundary between settled and nomadic societies, between capitalist and kinship-based economies, between, in terms used by colonists, the Christian and the heathen, the civilized and the savage, this division emerged from and then reinforced the oppositions central to the fluid dynamics of frontier containment and conquest on the periphery of the mining district. The territory long deemed terra incognita thus assumed a significance far beyond the geographic boundaries that gave rise to its sparse settlement pattern and to the concerns over smuggling and surveillance that prolonged its status as a frontier. The region came to embody the conflict between the colonial "self" and the indigenous "other," while restrictions on its settlement represented the contested limits of state power.

Unknown Lands, Hidden Riches

No matter how determined the policy of cordoning off the region, no matter how unequivocal the assertions by officials in sources documenting it, there is ample reason to question the supposed impenetrability of this imposing expanse of wilderness and Indians. One must guard against accepting as historical fact the geographic divisions colonial officials managed only with partial success to impose in practice. This is not to suggest the divide in question was entirely or even primarily imagined, a fictitious creation of map-makers or captaincy governors eager to reassure a crown preoccupied with preventing contraband. But in the Eastern Sertão, as in all frontier settings, geographic and especially cultural boundaries turned out to be extraordinarily difficult to consolidate and maintain. The lines separating colonist from Indian proved highly unstable, and the official ban on crossing into Indian territory had no small role in creating the conditions for its own violation. This was because both the ban and the cultural cleavages that were its counterpart accentuated, on the one hand, the most threatening depiction of the Indian and, on the other, the most enticing image of the land Indians occupied.

The more the Portuguese succeeded in creating a zone—even the perception of such a zone—off-limits to settled, "civilized" society, the more the Indians who lived there would be categorized as "uncivilized," no matter whether they resisted, fled, or accepted the presence of colonists. To the degree the Indians were identified with the impenetrable "interior of the sertões,"

they would be seen as a part of savage nature, as "wild" and "inhuman," as "irrational beasts" or even "more fearful than the beasts themselves."[47] It became increasingly difficult to differentiate the useful threat they posed to renegade smugglers from the intolerable impediment they represented to settlers. As a local priest put it, the Indians who occupied the Eastern Sertão were "perverse bandits," "enemies," and otherwise "malefactors" who "scandalously persist in being our executioners and the capital enemies of the civil and human contract."[48] He overlooked the fact, of course, that it was precisely these characteristics that were supposed to serve official purposes. But such purposes did not preclude a concomitant outrage at the Indian presence. On the contrary, officials themselves came to view the Indians as indomitable not because they were—after all, they had demonstrated a willingness to cooperate when conditions suited them—but precisely because of the prohibitions designed to cordon off their territory. The more the Indians seemed to exercise unchallenged control of the Eastern Sertão, the more they inspired terror in the minds of colonists, officials included. A policy designed to create a barrier to smuggling, created fear, racial hatred, and an irrepressible impetus for conquest.

Another consequence of the ban on entering the Eastern Sertão, and another way it undermined itself, was the status the region acquired, nothing short of mythical, of a place of unparalleled fecundity. As long as substantial portions of the region remained terra incognita, unexplored and unknown, and aggressively portrayed as such, colonists could sustain the same longings and fantasies that had driven the conquest of the Americas from the beginning, inscribing them on the still unconquered mountains, forests, and river

47. Governor to Jozé do Valle Vieira, Vila Rica, 4 Mar. 1777, BNRJ, SM, cod. 2, 2, 24, fl. 88; Governor to Commander, 3d Detachment (Divisão), Vila Rica, 7 Mar. 1812, BNRJ, SM, cod. 1, 4, 5, doc. 271; Paulo Mendes Ferreira Campelo to Governor, Cuieté, 4 Apr. 1770, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 237; and Pedro Afonso Galvão de São Martinho to count of Linhares, Vila Rica, 29 Jan. 1811, BNRJ, SM, I–33, 30, 22, doc. 1. The portrayal of Native Americans as bestial, inhuman, and naturally inferior to Europeans had a long history in Portuguese, Spanish, and English America that preceded and then competed with the enlightenment notion of the "noble savage." See Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750–1900*, rev. and trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1973), 63–67; and Laura de Mello e Souza, *O diabo e a Terra de Santa Cruz: Feitiçaria e religiosidade popular no Brasil colonial* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1986), 49–72.

48. [Manoel Vieyra Nunes,] "Termo de reunião de conselho," Barra das Larangeiras, 5 July 1769, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 192.

valleys separating the mining district from the sea. Colonists came to prize the region in direct proportion to the impenetrability of the barrier, both real and perceived, created by its indigenous occupants. The notion of terra incognita melded seamlessly with what the Portuguese referred to as *haveres incognitos*, unknown riches presumed concealed by Indians in their mysterious dwelling places.[49] On maps this preoccupation would take the form, for example, of a note indicating the presence in the Eastern Sertão of "emerald fields with many accumulations still to be discovered."[50] The sertão would be described as "salubrious" and laden with "hidden wealth," holding the promise of future settlement and abundance, and simultaneously as a place "infested by the Puri," as though they were so many ants or mosquitoes, or as a place corrupted by a pervasive "fear of the wild Indians of the Botocudo nation," and thus uninhabitable.[51]

Extolling the potential of the Eastern Sertão in 1798, Jozé Eloi Ottoni prophesied the discovery of riches surpassing all of the gold and diamonds previously extracted from Minas Gerais. "The greatest treasures are yet to be discovered," he wrote. The Indians themselves had transmitted news of this untapped wealth, not only mineral but agricultural, whose existence had been confirmed by backwoodsmen who had visited the Indians in their villages. "The fertility of the soil," continued Ottoni, "is such that the greater part of our crops grow spontaneously without cultivation, requiring only the provident effects of wise nature, which, perhaps anticipating the inertia of the Indians, conserves for the benefit of humanity the root and the seed." Left alone, the fruits of the earth came "at their proper time to produce in their own season. What incomparable wealth agriculture promises us in that land!" If the mere presence of Indians was enough to elicit outrage, the possibility that they were preventing the Portuguese from obtaining concealed riches went beyond all toleration. To rectify the unacceptable, Ottoni called on the crown to promote a new era of the bandeira, encouraging a new generation of explorers to enter the forests in search of gold: "I would be in favor of animating the bandeiristas [sic], stimulating the project of making new discoveries by means of

49. See, for example, "Ordens sôbre arrecadação e despesas, 1768[–1771]," 6 Aug. 1768, BNRJ, SM, CC, gaveta I–10–7, doc. 1.

50. "Mapa da região banhada pelo Rio Doce e seus afluentes, na Capitania de Minas Gerais," ca. 1758, in Adonias, *Mapa*, 223, pl. 152.

51. Pontes, "Extractos," BNRJ, SM, cod. 5, 3, 40, fls. 19v; "Ordens sôbre arrecadação e despesas, 1768[–1771]," 30 May 1770, BNRJ, SM, CC, gaveta I–10–7, doc. 55; and "Petição que fizerão e assignarão os moradores das freguesias ostilizadas," ca. May 1765, APM, CC, cod. 1156, fl. 9. See also Cambraia and Mendes, "A colonização."

favors, privileges, and grants conceded to those who, inflamed by Patriotic zeal, enter into the forests." The result would be the definitive Portuguese possession of the Eastern Sertão and the ushering in of an era of unprecedented prosperity in Minas Gerais.[52]

Economic hardship in the postboom mining district contributed considerably to proposals like Ottoni's which advocated the abandonment of what by his time was a century-old policy of sealing off the Eastern Sertão. That he identified the Indians who controlled the territory not as unwitting accomplices in the crown's efforts to control contraband but as backward savages blocking the discovery of new sources of wealth can be attributed to the pressing problem of counteracting the disintegration of the gold economy. The decadence of the mines made it increasingly difficult for colonists, whether they were individual settlers or captaincy authorities, to abide by the territorial restrictions established by the crown.[53] Drawn to the sertão by images of

52. Jozé Eloi Ottoni, "Memoria sobre o estado actual da Capitania de Minas Gerais" [Lisboa, 1798], *ABNRJ* 30 (1908): 313. Ottoni's image of the Eastern Sertão echoes a central myth that galvanized the European conquest of the New World: that of the existence of and consequent search for an earthly paradise, a lost Eden, especially one whose fecundity rendered human labor unnecessary. See Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Visão do paraíso: Os motivos edênicos no descobrimento e colonização do Brasil*, 4th ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Ed. Nacional, 1985); Mello e Souza, *O diabo e a Terra de Santa Cruz*, 32–49. For the myth's North American counterpart in which the western frontier was portrayed as the "garden of the world," see Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West in Symbol and Myth* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957). Pre-romantic notions of nature's abundance were expressed with increasing vigor by North American writers, painters, politicians, and propagandists in the final decades of the eighteenth century. See Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World*, 245–50.

53. For an analysis of the decline or *decadência* following the gold cycle during the second half of the eighteenth century, see Mello e Souza, *Desclassificados do ouro*, chap. 1. On the broader colonial economic crisis of which the decline in mining was but one part, see Fernando A. Novais, "Brazil in the Old Colonial System," trans. Richard Graham and Hank Phillips, in *Brazil and the World System*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1991), 11–55; idem, *Portugal e Brasil na crise do antigo sistema colonial (1777–1808)*, 2d ed. (São Paulo: Ed. HUCITEC, 1981); José Jobson de A. Arruda, *O Brasil no comércio colonial* (São Paulo: Ed. Ática, 1980), esp. 115–20, 317–18, 655–62. See also Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 131–36; and idem, *Conflicts and Conspiracies*, esp. chap. 2. Migration to the frontier must be understood in the context of the various economic activities—including ranching, agriculture, and small-scale commerce—that scholars have begun identify as strategies adopted to counter mining's decline. See Luciano Figueiredo, *O avesso da memória: Cotidiano e trabalho da mulher em Minas Gerais no século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1993); Furtado, *O Livro da Capa Verde*; Douglas C. Libby, "Reconsidering Textile

undiscovered wealth, many were also impelled there by precarious economic conditions.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, a growing consensus identified the opening of both the Doce and Jequitinhonha river valleys, not only to gold and diamond exploration but to all manner of commerce, as nothing less than a necessity for future prosperity.[54] The long-held notion that the wilderness barrier served the interests of the state was steadily giving way to the conviction that little had been attempted by way of territorial expansion, that Indian resistance had been largely responsible for frustrating moves to exploit the region's wealth, and that trade with the coastal population and the wider Atlantic world, not hidden gold, held the key to restoring the captaincy to its former prosperity. A revulsion of Indians, an Edenic vision of nature, and a sense of economic calamity all combined in the form of increasingly strident reports outlining how to reverse the captaincy's descent into decadence by focusing on lands still controlled by the Botocudo.[55] No previous governor had succeeded in securing and populating the region, wrote the high-ranking captaincy official Diogo Pereira Ribeiro de Vasconcelos, conveniently ignoring the history of crown prohibitions on settling the region. Travel along the Doce River remained blocked by the "hostilities of cannibals," which could be countered once and for all only with "sufficient military force." All peaceful methods were doomed to fail. "The Botocudo, devourers of animals of their same species, insensible to the voices of reason and humanity that invite them to participate in society, should be offensively hunted down and run through with knives, until such evils subject the remainder of them to their obligations," Vasconcelos concluded.[56]

Production in Late Colonial Brazil: New Evidence from Minas Gerais," *Latin American Research Review* 32, no. 1 (1997); and Mello e Souza, *Norma e conflito*, 159–60.

54. This consensus extended beyond Minas Gerais to crown ministers in Lisbon and to captaincy officials in Espírito Santo and Bahia. See Luís de Vasconcelos e Sousa to Junta da Fazenda of Minas Gerais, [Lisbon], 16 Jan. 1807, ATC, ER, cod. 4074; Governor of Espírito Santo to Governor of Minas Gerais, Quartel da Vitória, 23 April 1800, AHU, Espírito Santo, cx. 6, doc. 438; and "Memoria sobre a abertura do Rio Doce, e sua navegação . . . e Extração das Madras ao Longo delle," [1804?], APEB, SCP, maço 585.

55. For additional examples of such views, see Júnia Ferreira Furtado, ed., *Memória sobre a Capitania das Minas Gerais: Seu território, clima e produções metálicas*, by José Vieira Couto (1799; reprint, Belo Horizonte: Fundação João Pinheiro, 1994), 53, 80; and Basilio Teixeira Cardoso [de] Sá Vedra Freire, "Informação da capitania de Minas Gerais," Sabará, 30 Mar. 1805, BNRJ, SM, cod. 3, 1, 35, fls. 10–1. This manuscript was published under the same title in *RAPM* 2, no. 4 (1897).

56. Vasconcelos, *Breve descrição geográfica*, 144–49, 157.

Although such arguments contributed to a hardening of policy vis-à-vis the Indians during the final years leading up to the 1808 war, there exists a striking incongruity between these belated calls for conquest and the events that preceded them. The crown policy of maintaining the sertão as a barrier to contraband continued in force until the early nineteenth century; yet, the military conquest of the Eastern Sertão began in the mid-1760s. The long-standing prohibition did not stop local authorities from responding to the pressures of increasing numbers of impoverished miners, farmers, and ranchers by forging an incompatible policy of opening the territory to exploration and settlement. All activity in the region, every facet of relations among the state, settlers, and Indians, was informed by the inevitable tensions inherent in these opposing objectives.

The colonial ambivalence over opening and occupying the native lands of the Eastern Sertão resulted in a progression of conflicts among people working at cross-purposes, a process as entangled and forbidding as the forests themselves. Considered together in the broad context of the entire period under study, however, these contradictory impulses reveal a basic truth: beneath the continual delays, hesitations, and policy reversals of captaincy governors, a pattern of invading indigenous territory and subjugating its seminomadic occupants can be traced from one decade to the next beginning in the mid-1760s. This is not to suggest that crown prohibitions on activity in the region had no effect; their continued potency, in fact, tended to limit the range of possible relations between the Portuguese and Indians, elevating oppositional and violent interactions above all others. As an ironic result, recourse to force came to define the period, the region, and the nature of attempts initiated locally to explore and occupy the zone.

One should not be misled by the many official sources that gloss over the history of the resulting interethnic conflict. Jozé Eloi Ottoni's 1798 call for expansion into the Eastern Sertão referred to a few adventurers who had formed bandeiras to search for gold and precious stones in the region.[57] Between 1760 and 1808, however, numerous bandeiras set out for the Eastern Sertão (see table 1). A term employed here in accordance with its appearance in archival sources, and not to be confused with the renowned raids led by Paulista backwoodsmen primarily in the seventeenth century, the bandeira in Minas Gerais during the second half of the eighteenth century tended to be of more limited scope in numbers of participants, duration, and distance traveled. A mobile frontier institution with its origins in the sixteenth century—and

57. Jozé Eloi Ottoni, "Memoria," *ABNRJ* 30 (1908): 317.

Table 1 Expeditions to the Eastern Sertão, 1765–1804

Years	*Number*
1765–69	19
1770–74	6
1775–79	14
1780–84	12
1785–89	0
1790–94	5
1795–99	2
1800–4	6
Total	64

Sources: APM, CC, cod. 1156; APM, SC, cods. 60, 118, 183, 200, 214, 224, 227, 259, 260, 276, 277; "Ordens, 1768[–1771]," BNRJ, SM, CC, gaveta I-10-7; BNRJ, SM, cod. 2,2,24; BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6; *RAPM* 2, no. 2 (1897): 315; Vasconcelos, *Breve descrição*, 150–51; Vasconcelos, *História média*, 206–8, 252; Barbosa, *Dicionário histórico*, 83; and Castro, *Os sertões de leste*, 11–15.
Note: The 1775–79 quinquennial includes a series of expeditions that Governor Noronha dispatched in 1776 to the upper Doce River to "defend" against Indian attacks and track down runaway slaves. Without specifying an exact number, Noronha ordered "several expeditions," which I have counted as three.

before that in the reconquest of the Iberian peninsula—these military and paramilitary expeditions reappeared, long after their purported demise, to become the Minas elite's favored means of frontier expansion by force. Such bandeiras could be either state-sponsored and manned by soldiers or privately (and sometimes illegally) organized and financed. They were dispatched to search for new sources of wealth, to neutralize native resistance, to clear authorized trails, to reconnoiter rivers, to track down smugglers and runaway slaves, and for various combinations of these objectives.[58]

Like others, then, Ottoni overlooked the extent of what was by then a decades-long expansion into the Eastern Sertão by soldiers and settlers, and its devastating consequences for unincorporated natives. The advance persisted through virtually every governor's tenure until the end of the eighteenth century and then proceeded unchecked into the nineteenth. In some cases soldiers led the march; in others, settlers did, and then called on the military to defend with bandeiras newly colonized territory subject to Indian attack. By Ottoni's time, dozens of expeditions had already plunged into the eastern forests to do

58. Langfur, "Forbidden Lands," chap. 2.

battle with the Indians. They did so in contravention of all measures to keep the region off-limits, but also as an unintended consequence of those very measures.

The same incongruity writ large characterized the prince regent's 1808 declaration of war, announced with all the rhetorical trappings of a momentous change in state policy. To accept the thrust of the crown's pronouncement is to see the armed assault as the moment at which relations irrevocably hardened between the state and the Indians, when tensions presumably long-since forgotten suddenly, almost unaccountably re-ignited and provoked the ire of the colony's highest authority, the prince regent himself. He reacted by invoking the principle of "just war." Dating, like the bandeira, from the reconquest era and applied to Native Americans from the onset of colonization, the principle of "just war" invested the crown with legal and theological authority to conquer and enslave Indians deemed hostile—and often anthropophagous. According to the most comprehensive compendium of indigenous legislation available, the crown had not claimed this right in Brazil since the 1730s, and never at all in Minas Gerais.[59] Crown and captaincy were two different entities, however, and the war against the Botocudo—extended officially in November 1808 to the Kaingang of São Paulo and unofficially to the neighboring Puri in Minas Gerais, as well as to other groups in Goiás, Piauí, and Maranhão—was anything but an anomalous eruption of violence.[60] Instead, it marked

59. On the historical origin and frequent invocation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of "just wars" against the Indians of Portuguese America, see Beatriz Perrone-Moisés, "Índios livres e índios escravos: Os princípios da legislação indigenista do período colonial (séculos XVI a XVIII)," and "Inventário da legislação indigenista, 1500–1800," in Cunha, *História dos índios do Brasil*, 115–32, 529–66. According to the latter, the penultimate instance of such a war declared by the crown occurred in 1739, against the Guegué and Akroá Indians of Maranhão, Ordem Régia (royal order), 16 Apr. 1739, summarized in "Inventário da legislação," 556. For an analysis of English and Spanish notions of just war, see Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 106–13.

The extent to which cannibalism in Brazil and the Americas, in general, constituted a reality or a myth, propagated to justify conquest and enslavement, continues to divide anthropologists. Notable contributions to this debate include W. Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology & Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979); Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, eds., *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998); and Laurence R. Goldman, ed., *The Anthropology of Cannibalism* (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1999).

60. On the war's extension to these other groups, see Oliveira Lima, *Dom João VI no Brasil*, 3d ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1996), 487; John Hemming, *Amazon Frontier: The*

the royal endorsement and legitimization of a policy that had a long history in Minas Gerais.

From Paternalism to War: Crown and Captaincy Indian Policy

To legitimize the occupation of the Eastern Sertão, captaincy officials had long found in crown indigenous policy a pliant corpus of legislation to support their moves. In the 1760s Governor Luís Diogo Lobo da Silva interpreted these laws and edicts as comprising part of what he had called his "royal orders" to march into the untracked forests. The indigenous policy in vigor at the time had been formulated during the previous decade, beginning in April 1755, with a royal edict designed, in the contradictory spirit of Portuguese enlightened despotism, to end racial persecution of the native peoples of the Amazon Basin while speeding their assimilation. Emblematic of a long tradition of paternalistic legislation benevolent in word but repressive in deed, the edict forbade the use of the derogatory term *caboclo* (half-breed), encouraged miscegenation between Indians and whites, and sought to eliminate the stigma attached to children of such mixed-race marriages, promising them preferential treatment in the allocation of royal favors and social equality in their eligibility for "any employment, honor or dignity."[61] On 6 June 1755, King José I promulgated a second law, the so-called Law of Liberty, which restored to the Indians, specifically those living in Jesuit-controlled aldeias, "the liberty of their persons, possessions, and commerce."[62] The law swept aside, at least on paper, what the crown alleged to be the abusive practices, including forced labor and enslavement, to which these Indians had been subjected for two centuries. Granted political autonomy and ownership of their village land, they could now, theoretically, choose to work for whomever they wished and at fair

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Defeat of the Brazilian Indians (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987), 93, 112–13. For the royal declaration of war against the Kaingang, see Carta Régia, 5 Nov. 1808, in Cunha, *Legislação indigenista no século XIX*, 62–4. A long history set the pattern for Portuguese military actions that were first directed against one indigenous enemy and then expanded to encompass neighboring groups. See, for example, Mathias C. Kiemen, *The Indian Policy of Portugal in the Amazon Region, 1614–1693* (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), 22.

61. Alvará (royal charter), 4 Apr. 1755, quoted in Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 1–2.

62. "Ley porque V. Magestade ha por bem restituir aos Indios do Grão Pará, e Maranhão a liberdade das suas pessoas, bens, e commercio na forma que nella se declara," Lisbon, 6 June 1755, facsimile reprint in Carlos de Araújo Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia: De maioria a minoria (1750–1850)* (Petrópolis: Ed. Vozes, 1988), 152–63.

wages. Then on 7 June the reform's hidden agenda became clear, as the king stripped the Jesuits of all temporal powers they exercised over Indian villages, restricting them to ecclesiastical activities alone, and throwing open the villages to trade with the outside world.[63] For the Indians, as one historian of the Amazon has observed, this "emancipation" represented little more than a legal device to speed their "forced integration" into colonial society.[64]

As legislation advanced by the king's minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (future marquis of Pombal), Indian liberation was designed to check the power and wealth of the Jesuits, to bolster the ailing economy of northern Brazil, and to secure geopolitical advantage against the Spanish in the strategic Amazon Basin in the wake of the Treaty of Madrid (1750). But Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, governor of Grão Pará and Maranhão and Carvalho e Melo's brother, also wished to guarantee colonists access to Indian labor. In May 1757, he issued his own lengthy set of policies known as the *Diretório dos índios* or Indian Directory, effectively nullifying Indian autonomy by placing outside lay "directors" in charge of village life instead of the Jesuits, whom he accused of making themselves "masters of the sertão." Deemed to lack the "necessary aptitude required to govern themselves," the Indians would now be subject to the rule of directors named by the governor himself. The directors would "christianize and civilize these hitherto unhappy and wretched peoples," teaching them the essential skills of trade and agriculture that would hasten the transition to secular government and allow them to shed the "ignorance and rusticity to which they find themselves reduced." In the end, the Indians would become "useful to themselves, to the colonists, and to the state." Under the guise of humanitarian action, Furtado sought in the Directory to eradicate the isolation of the Amazon's village Indians and to exploit them as rapidly as possible as a workforce. The system ushered in an even more repressive system than these Indians had confronted under the rule of the Jesuits, who were ultimately expelled from Brazil on 3 September 1759.[65]

63. Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 1–2.

64. Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia*, 164.

65. For the full text of the Diretório, see "Directorio que se deve observar nas Povoaçoens dos Indios do Pará, e Maranhão em quanto Sua Magestade não mandar o contrario," (Pará, 1757), facsimile reprint in Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia*, 165–203, quotations 166–68. Furtado's accusation is quoted in Colin MacLachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700–1800," in *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil*, ed. Dauril Alden (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1973), 209. Additional scholarship on the Directory includes Rita Heloísa de Almeida, *O Diretório dos Índios: Um projeto de "civilização" no Brasil do século XVIII* (Brasília: Univ. de Brasília, 1997); Ângela Domingues, *Quando os índios eram vassalos: Colonização e relações de poder no norte do Brasil na segunda*

Little has been written about the implications of this legislation for non-Amazonian Brazil.[66] Formally enacted by the crown and extended to the remainder of Portuguese America by charter in August 1758 and in the *Direção* legislation of May 1759, the Directory remained the backbone of indigenous policy until it was abolished in 1798. In many regions of Brazil its precepts continued in force until well into the nineteenth century.[67] Yet, historians have not pursued its effects, subject perhaps to the misconception, as articulated by such influential scholars as Capistrano de Abreu, that "in the rest of Brazil, Indian affairs were no longer a matter of concern, and the violence against them was not as great as farther north."[68]

In Minas Gerais the Law of Liberty, the Directory, and the *Direção* had profound consequences, providing the legal framework for unremitting violence. Nowhere were the implications of such legislation—drafted with settled village Indians in mind—for the subjugation of still nomadic Indians more evident than on the eastern periphery of the mining district. At the time of the legislation's extension to the rest of Brazil, Silva, who would assume his post as governor of Minas Gerais five years later in 1763, was still serving as governor of Pernambuco, where he received the *Direção* and supervised the conversion to the Directory system of 54 Indian villages, themselves home to the descendants of natives forcibly resettled by the Portuguese in the sixteenth and sev-

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metade do século XVIII (Lisbon: Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses, 2000); Barbara A. Sommer, "Negotiated Settlements: Native Amazonians and Portuguese Policy in Pará, Brazil, 1758–1798" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of New Mexico, 2000); Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 4–7, 11–16, chap. 3; Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 337–51; Perrone-Moisés, "Índios livres"; Colin MacLachlan, "The Indian Directorate: Forced Acculturation in Portuguese America (1757–1799)," *The Americas* 28, no. 4 (1972); and João Capistrano de Abreu, *Chapters of Brazil's Colonial History, 1500–1800*, trans. Arthur Brakel (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 155–65. On Indian emancipation and the expulsion of the Jesuits, also see Maxwell, *Conflicts and Conspiracies*, 17, 30. For a useful index by year, subject, and ethnic group of legislation pertaining to Brazilian Indians, see Perrone-Moisés, "Inventário da legislação." On the nineteenth century, see Cunha, *Legislação indigenista*.

66. Recent exceptions include Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 337–51; and Mary C. Karasch, "Catequese e cativeiro: Política indigenista em Goiás, 1780–1889," in Cunha, *História dos índios do Brasil*, 397–412; and Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," 104–22.

67. The first of these documents is Alvará, 17 Aug. 1758, facsimile reprint in Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia*, 165–203, quotations 166–68. For the full text of the Direção, see "Direção com que interinamente se devem regular os indios das novas villas e lugares erectos nas aldeias da Capitania de Pernambuco e suas annexas," *RIHGB* 46, no. 1 (1883).

68. Abreu, *Chapters of Brazil's Colonial History*, 156.

enteenth centuries.[69] In Minas Gerais, however, where the primary problem he would face involved not village Indians but seminomads occupying the unsettled sertão, he resolutely adapted crown policy to local conditions.

In the official register of his government outlining the basis for his actions, Silva established legitimacy for a policy of military conquest by citing three documents. The first was the order he received as governor of Pernambuco in 1758 in which the crown instructed him to take steps, in accordance with its earlier decrees, to restore liberty to the Indians in Pernambuco's aldeias while placing them under the civil authority of white directors. Officials were to give settled Indians "all of the support and protection they needed until they were entirely established in the tame and peaceful possession of these liberties." Village land was to be protected in the form of a royal grant (*sesmaria*) to which the Indians would be given tenure for the benefit of farming and trade. Aldeias were to be converted into official townships with Portuguese names instead of the "barbarous names" assigned by natives. Secular rather than religious authority would govern these settlements. The second document reaffirmed the end of missionary rule in all Indian villages on the eve of the Jesuits' expulsion from Brazil in 1759. The third was a letter from Furtado, now in Portugal, dated 12 February 1765, two years after Silva had assumed leadership of Minas Gerais. The letter communicated the monarch's permission to proceed with an attempt begun the previous year to distribute goods among certain Indians of the Eastern Sertão in order to "establish some trade" along its rivers, specifically the Doce and Piracicaba. Furtado told Silva that the king would pay for expenses incurred in the effort. He also urged the governor to "work to whatever extent possible to establish among the same Indians civil townships, applying all means judged necessary." The king, he averred, was convinced that in addition to possible profits accruing from trade in the region there were other benefits "still more important, both temporal as well as spiritual, that will follow from our becoming familiar with and associating with these heretofore unfortunate peoples who, because of the tyranny with which they have always been treated, find themselves in the ignorance in which they were born." Condemned to this fate, these Indians had degenerated into the Portuguese's "capital enemies, lost souls, depriving the state of the great advantages it could derive from them."[70] Even the crown itself, it

69. The villages are listed in ibid., 164–65. On the conquest of Pernambuco's native population, see, for example, Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians, 1500–1760* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), chap. 8, 302–11, 351–61.

70. In order, these three documents are two Cartas Régias (royal decrees), both dated 14 Sept. 1758, and Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado to Governor, Salvaterra de

seems, was prone to contradictions on the subject of whether Indians in the Eastern Sertão should be left alone and whether activity there was entirely forbidden.

Furtado did not elaborate on what he meant by "all means judged necessary." Based on his accompanying phrases, however, it is clear he meant something short of military confrontation. His injunction to concentrate on "becoming familiar with and associating with these heretofore unfortunate peoples" suggests he had more moderate methods in mind. This is supported, too, by the tenor of crown indigenous policy in other regions of the colony. A recent compilation of pertinent legislation lists orders relating only to settled Indians during the 1760s: payment of Indian salaries by those contracting their labor services in Pernambuco and Paraíba do Norte; restrictions on their movement along trade routes in São Paulo; and allotment of land in their aldeias and the transformation of these aldeias into civil townships, also in São Paulo. As in Minas Gerais, local officials in other capitaincies, not the crown, signed off on orders sanctioning violent conquest.[71] The most immediate royal legislative

Magos, 12 Feb. 1765. They occupy the first pages of a MS codex the remainder of which contains documents related to Governor Silva's attempted conquest of the Indians of the Eastern Sertão. See "Providencias tomadas para a catechese dos Indios no Rio Doce e Piracicaba, Vila Rica, 1764–1767," APM, CC, cod. 1156, fls. 2–3v.

71. For the specific legislation pertaining to Pernambuco and Paraíba do Norte, see ruling of Overseas Council, Lisbon, 11 Oct. 1764, *DH* 92 (1951): 75–76. For São Paulo, see "Portaria para que nenhú Soldado q' estiver de Guarda nos Reg.os desta Cap.nia deixe passar Indio algum com cargas," São Paulo, 15 Jan. 1767; "Ordem p.a o Director da Aldea dos Pinhr.os mandar medir as terras pertencentes á d.a Aldea," São Paulo, 17 July 1767; "Ordem p.a se medirem as terras pertencentes á Aldea de S. Miguel," São Paulo, 29 July 1767; and "Ordem para se formar Villa da Aldea de Nossa Snr.a da Escada," São Paulo, 14 Aug. 1767, *DI* 65 (1940): 148, 172, 172, 175–76. Orders sanctioning new conquests also originated in São Paulo, where in 1771 Governor Luís Antônio de Sousa Botelho, the morgado de Mateus, armed 60 soldiers mobilized to subdue Indians along the border between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and in a separate action granted special exemptions to members of an expedition ordered to combat Indians along the border between São Paulo and Minas Gerais. See "Ordem mandando municiar aos Soldados que vão conquistar os Indios da Piedade," São Paulo, 6 June 1771, and "[Ordem] dando izenções aos que forem combater contra os Indios, nas divisas com Minas Geraes," São Paulo, 6 June 1771, *DI* 33 (1901): 10–11. Also see Perrone-Moisés, "Inventário da legislação," 558. In the Amazon region, too, locally formulated policies that were tantamount to offensive action and couched in the language of "just war" governed relations between mutually hostile Portuguese settlers and Indian groups such as the Mura and Xavante during the second half of the century. See Marta Rosa Amoroso, "Corsários no caminho fluvial: Os Mura do rio Madeira"; and Aracy Lopes da Silva, "Dois séculos e meio de história Xavante," in Cunha, *História dos índios do Brasil*, 303–9, 363.

precedent for such action was the 1755 Law of Liberty itself, which, while focused on settled Indians, contained provisions for incorporating natives "living in the darkness of ignorance" in the "interior of the Sertões" far removed from the Jesuit missions and civil townships of the Amazon. The law called for these Indians to be settled in aldeias, christianized by missionaries, and encouraged to engage in agriculture and trade. But it also stipulated that authorities guarantee that these natives, like those already settled, "maintain the liberty of their persons, possessions, and commerce," rights that were not to be "interrupted or usurped under any policy or pretext." Any individual perpetrating an act of violence against newly settled Indians was to receive prompt punishment.[72]

Silva did not hesitate to ignore such subtleties. Basing his actions on the three documents cited, taking full advantage of Furtado's vague instructions, imagining that the task at hand differed little from the orders he had previously imposed on village Indians, the governor resolved to "proceed with the execution of [royal] orders," repeating what he "had done in Pernambuco," to secure the "reduction of the wild Indians who infest" Minas Gerais. As such, he pursued what he construed to be the wishes of a Portuguese monarchy that sought to "convey the Law of God to the barbarous nations, reducing them to the Catholic faith and to the true knowledge of His Holy Name."[73] Since the prevailing policy of the Indian Directory had been crafted for settled Indians, the roving bands of Minas Gerais, Silva reasoned, would first have to be settled in order to implement that policy. They would have to be gathered in villages, forcibly if necessary, submitting to what the governor and his contemporaries freely called "conquest," so that their liberty might then, in accordance with the 1755 law, be restored. But in explicit defiance of that law, he ordered captaincy troops to "block the liberty" exercised by the forest Indians, countering their resistance with military force.[74] Although invoking royal orders, Silva revealed his willingness to act in circumvention of the stated intent of crown indigenous policy and to exceed the apparent reach of Furtado's direct instruc-

72. "Ley porque V. Magestade ha por bem restituir aos Indios do Grão Pará, e Maranhão a liberdade das suas pessoas, bens, e commercio na forma que nella se declara," Lisboa, 6 June 1755, in Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia*, 161–62.

73. "Providencias tomadas para a catechese dos Indios no Rio Doce e Piracicaba, Vila Rica, 1764–1767," APM, CC, cod. 1156, fls. 1–2, 4.

74. Governor, "Orden para a entrada dos corpos de gente para a civilização dos gentios silvestres Purîs e Buticudos," Vila Rica, 21 Apr. 1766, APM, SC, cod. 118, fls. 148–50v; and Governor to Antônio Pereira da Silva, Vila Rica, 28 June 1766, APM, SC, cod. 118, fls. 171v–2.

tions. The Indians of the Eastern Sertão, the governor believed, had demonstrated themselves to be utterly intractable. Their liberty, he made clear, was not to be construed as the freedom to maintain a traditional, itinerant existence but simply the right—or, more accurately, the obligation—to contribute to colonial society as loyal, sedentary, industrious Christian vassals. Such was the basis of the policy of violent conquest that, in one form or another, remained in effect throughout the second half of eighteenth century, up to and including the declaration of war in 1808.

Prince Regent João declared war against the Botocudo Indians on 13 May 1808, just three months after arriving in Rio de Janeiro from Lisbon. Addressing the declaration to Governor Pedro Maria Xavier Ataide e Mello (1803–10), the monarch wrote that his determination to act sprang from "grave complaints" that had reached the throne about native atrocities throughout the eastern forests of Minas Gerais. He condemned the "invasions that the cannibal Botocudos are practicing daily," especially along the banks of the Doce River and its tributaries. Not only had Indians managed to "devastate all of the fazendas located in those areas," and not only had they "forced many landowners to abandon them at great loss to themselves and to my royal crown," they had also dared to perpetrate "the most horrible and atrocious scenes of the most barbarous cannibalism." They had "assassinated" Portuguese and "tame Indians" alike. They had opened wounds in their victims and drunk their blood; they had dismembered them and consumed their "sad remains." Such conduct had demonstrated, once and for all, "the uselessness of all human efforts" to civilize the Botocudo, to settle them in villages, and to persuade them "to take pleasure in the permanent advantages of a peaceful and gentle society." As a consequence, the monarch now declared the end of what he termed his policy of "defensive war." He replaced it with one of "just" and "offensive war," a war that would "have no end," until settlers returned to their habitations and the Indians, "moved by just terror," submitted to the rule of law, accepting settled life as "useful vassals," just as other Indians before them had done.[75]

75. "Carta Régia ao Governador e Capitão General da capitania de Minas Gerais sobre a guerra aos Indios Botecudos," 13 May 1808, in Cunha, *Legislação indigenista no século XIX*, 57–60. For the manuscript version, see "Carta Régia do principe regente D. João VI [sic], dirigida a Pedro Maria Xavier de Ataide e Mello, governador de Minas Gerais ordenando que forme um corpo de soldados pedestres para lutar contra os índios Botecudos," Rio de Janeiro, 13 May 1808, BNRJ, SM, doc. I–28, 31, 20. An identical copy sent to the governor of Minas Gerais is published as "Sobre os Botocudos," *RAPM* 4, nos. 3–4 (1899).

For the history of indigenous attacks on settlers who established fazendas in the

To prosecute the war, the governor of Minas Gerais was to deploy six detachments of foot soldiers, each responsible for a particular sector of those lands "infested by the Botocudo Indians." Selecting soldiers fit for such "hard and rugged" duty, the commanders of these detachments would form "diverse bandeiras," with which they would "constantly, every year during the dry season, enter into the forests," until they had effected the "total reduction of [this] . . . cruel cannibal race." Armed Indians captured in these actions would be considered prisoners of war and subject to a ten-year period of enslavement.[76]

Another section of the royal edict dealt with the related matters of exploration, settlement, and development. The monarch ordered the Minas government to secure—again, once and for all—the uninterrupted navigation of the Doce River. Exploration efforts were to be redoubled, with reconnaissance parties sent out every three months to examine different segments of the river. The state would now move to "favor those who wish to go to settle those precious gold-bearing lands, abandoned today because of the fear that the Botocudo Indians cause."[77]

It should by now be evident how deeply this declaration drew on the past half-century. The language of the edict can be tied to a report by the prince's emissary, Luís Tomás Navarro de Campos. Campos traveled the overland route from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro in April 1808 and conveyed to the monarch the opinion of the militia commander Francisco Alves Tourinho, whose 22 years of experience with the Botocudo and other indigenous groups in southern Bahia had led him to conclude that "violence is the most appropriate means of rendering these lands tranquil and fit for settlement."[78] Given the fact that the prince regent issued his edict to the governor of Minas Gerais, however, the influence of increasingly vituperative Mineiro officials must be

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Eastern Sertão despite royal restrictions, see Langfur, "Forbidden Lands," 252–62, 276–98. Unfortunately, no reliable demographic data exist to measure the extent of this settlement, since regional censuses did not track it in sufficient detail. See, Laird W. Bergad, *Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais, Brazil, 1720–1888* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 81–100.

76. "Carta Régia ao Governador e Capitão General da capitania de Minas Gerais sobre a guerra aos Indios Botecudos," 13 May 1808, in Cunha, *Legislação indigenista no século XIX*, 57–60.

77. Ibid.

78. Quoted in Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 91–2, and Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 359. For Campos's published report, see Luiz Thomas Navarro de Campos, "Itinerario da viagem que fez por terra da Bahia ao Rio de Janeiro por ordem do principe regente, em 1808," *RIHGB* 7, no. 28 (1846): 449.

given primary weight. Jozé Eloi Ottoni, as noted, had called on the crown as early as 1798 to sponsor a new era of bandeira-led conquest in the Eastern Sertão. In 1807 Diogo Pereira Ribeiro de Vasconcelos had stressed the need to open the Doce River to navigation and to secure the region for settlement. To do so, the "hostilities of [the] cannibals" would have to be countered with "sufficient military force," since all previous peaceful overtures had failed. At the turn of the century, local officials already referred to state actions in the region as a "war," just as they had nearly half a century earlier.[79] It was not only such rhetoric that could be traced back in a direct line to the intensification of conflict between settlers and Indians in Minas Gerais beginning in the 1760s but also the willingness to move offensively.

The prince regent's condemnation of native nomadism, of their failure to settle in villages, of their occupation of gold-laden lands, of their uselessness to the crown and society—all of these perspectives similarly resonated with the past, as did his decision to deploy armed bandeiras to bring a quick resolution to the problem. The 1808 declaration of war was not merely modeled on policies that had been applied over and over again in the Eastern Sertão; it adhered steadfastly to a resilient colonial vision of the past that looked to the conquest of native domain as the proper function of government and the means to future prosperity. At the same time, however, the declaration no longer recognized the opposing impulse to keep such lands off-limits in an attempt to monitor crown subjects more closely. A vision of Indians as potential laborers, whether enslaved or free, in a territory now definitively opened to settlement eclipsed concerns about contraband from a mining economy showing no sign of recovery.[80] In this departure from past ambivalence lay the essential innovation that freed the government to act with unencumbered vigor in securing the unincorporated lands that separated the mining district from the sea.

Conclusion

The kind of local nuance that emerges from extant documentation, the malleable nature of crown policy with respect to the Eastern Sertão and its native

79. Governor of Espírito Santo to Governor of Minas Gerais, Vitória, 7 June 1801, BNL, CP, cod. 643, fls. 587–v; [Manoel Vieyra Nunes], "Termo de reunião de conselho," Barra das Larangeiras, 5 July 1769, BNRJ, SM, CV, cod. 18, 2, 6, doc. 192.

80. An initially desultory effort to exploit Botocudo labor intensified after 1830 as increasing numbers of settlers secured land in the region. Wright with Cunha, "Destruction," 344; and Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," chaps. 5–6.

occupants, and, more fundamentally, the startlingly pervasive presence of Indians in archival sources during a period in which they were supposed to have been a long-forgotten concern—these phenomena demand a far more thoroughgoing analysis than they have received in the meager historiography on relations between the colonial state and the Indians of interior zones bypassed by the gold rush. A number of assertions in particular require revision. First, given the official preoccupation with native resistance, one must reject the notion that Indians disappeared as active agents in the region's history. The act of "expelling and/or decimating"[81] the indigenous population before and during the gold rush should direct us not to ignore Indians but to turn our attention to the isolated forests and river valleys where they took refuge.

Furthermore, given an intensification of overt violent conflict between the captaincy government and Indians beginning in the 1760s, we must discard the undue emphasis placed on 1808 as the pivotal year in relations between the state and the remnant of the once populous Indians of southeastern Brazil.[82] The declaration of war in that year is significant for a number of reasons—one of the most important being its role in the final demise of the colonial impulse to contain frontier settlement. But it did not mark the advent of a radically new kind of official violence against Indians. Conflict between the Portuguese and the Botocudo, a perennial feature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, did not then vanish until it reemerged *ex nihilo* in 1808; rather, it began to gather force a half-century earlier as a consequence both of resurgent internal colonization tied to the decline of the central mining district and of the decidedly flexible character of crown policy in the hands of local administrators. In declaring war against the Botocudo the prince regent assumed royal responsibility for an ad hoc policy of violent conquest already in effect on the regional level.

There was also something still more fundamental at stake. The declaration of war points to the struggle to establish centralized power over regional

81. Anastasia, introduction to Vasconcelos, *Breve descrição geográfica*, 15.

82. Moreira Neto, for instance, attributes to the 1808 arrival of the Portuguese Court in Brazil the consolidation, epitomized by the declaration of war against the Botocudo, of a "new policy of oppression" that reverted to the sixteenth and seventeenth century treatment of Indians. See Moreira Neto, *Índios da Amazônia*, 32. This perspective persists in the recent study by Paraíso, who considers 1808 a year of "radical changes" in state indigenous policy. See Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," 191. Other examples of scholars' treatment of the decree and the war that followed include Barickman, "'Tame Indians,'" 359–62; Lima, *Dom João VI no Brasil*, 487–93; Hemming, *Amazon Frontier*, 91–3, 99–100; and Paraíso, "O tempo da dor e do trabalho," 211–51.

authority characteristic of the formation of the Brazilian state in the early nineteenth century.[83] As with other administrative tasks in the distant colony, the responsibility of interpreting, implementing, and even forging state policy on both indigenous relations and internal territorial matters had devolved largely to the governors of individual captaincies rather than to the viceroy in Rio de Janeiro or the crown in Lisbon before it transferred residence to Brazil. Only well into the nineteenth century would these largely autonomous regions submit in any unified manner to central authority, and even then local governments continued to set the course for indigenous policy. If we remain fixed on the legislative machinations of the royal court, failing to look beyond the laws, decrees, and official ideology articulated and promulgated by the crown and its highest ministers, we miss this local origin of Indian and frontier policy. We miss the forging of cultural and regional identities that such policy embodies. We miss the central importance of frontier conquest and native resistance to the history of a region that heretofore has been treated almost exclusively as an urban milieu. In Minas Gerais, where Indians all but disappear from the historiography after the seventeenth century, it is only by crossing into the "forbidden lands" of the sertão that we come face to face with the quotidian persistence of interethnic frontier violence.

83. On the belated rise of centralized authority in Rio de Janeiro during the transition from colony to nation, see esp. Roderick J. Barman, *Brazil: The Forging of a Nation, 1798–1852* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1988).