

The relationship between communication routes and Pombalino Urban Planning in the city of Cáceres – MT

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A relação entre as vias de comunicação e o Planejamento Urbano Pombalino na cidade de Cáceres – MT

RESUMO

Este artigo investiga a influência das vias fluviais no desenvolvimento urbano de Cáceres-MT, durante o período Pombalino, analisando o rio como elemento central no planejamento territorial promovido pela coroa Portuguesa. Com enfoque no papel estratégico do Rio Paraguay, analisamos como essa via de comunicação influenciou o traçado urbano da então Vila Maria do Paraguay, delineado segundo os princípios de planejamento urbano do Marquês de Pombal. O objetivo central é investigar a relação entre o Rio Paraguay e a organização espacial de Cáceres, contextualizando o urbanismo Pombalino e seu impacto na formação da cidade. A metodologia fundamenta-se em revisão bibliográfica e análise documental, incluindo mapas históricos e registros arquitetônicos, o que possibilita uma comparação entre os princípios teóricos do urbanismo e sua aplicação prática em Cáceres. Conclui-se que o planejamento urbano de Cáceres foi estruturado em torno das vias fluviais, refletindo interesses políticos e econômicos da Coroa Portuguesa e consolidando a cidade como um ponto estratégico na fronteira oeste do Brasil colonial.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Urbanismo Pombalino, Infraestrutura Colonial, História Urbana de Cáceres.

The relationship between communication routes and Pombalino Urban Planning in the city of Cáceres – MT

ABSTRACT

This article investigates the influence of waterways on the urban development of Cáceres-MT, during the Pombalino period, analyzing the river as a central element in the territorial planning promoted by the Portuguese crown. Focusing on the strategic role of the Paraguay River, we analyzed how this communication route influenced the urban layout of the then Vila Maria do Paraguay, outlined according to the urban planning principles of Marquês de Pombal. The central objective is to investigate the relationship between the Paraguay River and the spatial organization of Cáceres, contextualizing Pombalino urbanism and its impact on the formation of the city. The methodology is based on bibliographical review and documentary analysis, including historical maps and architectural records, which allows a comparison between the theoretical principles of urbanism and their practical application in Cáceres. It is concluded that the urban planning of Cáceres was structured around the waterways, reflecting the political and economic interests of the Portuguese Crown and consolidating the city as a strategic point on the western border of colonial Brazil.

KEYWORDS: Pombalino Urbanism, Colonial Infrastructure, Urban History of Cáceres.

La relación entre las vías de comunicación y el Planeamiento Urbanístico Pombalino en la ciudad de Cáceres – MT

RESUMEN

Este artículo investiga la influencia de los cursos de agua en el desarrollo urbano de Cáceres-MT, durante la época pombalina, analizando el río como elemento central en la ordenación territorial impulsada por la corona portuguesa. Centrándonos en el papel estratégico del río Paraguay, analizamos cómo esta vía de comunicación influyó en el trazado urbano de la entonces Vila Maria do Paraguay, delineado según los principios urbanísticos del Marquês de Pombal. El objetivo central es investigar la relación entre el río Paraguay y la organización espacial de Cáceres, contextualizando el urbanismo pombalino y su impacto en la formación de la ciudad. La metodología se basa en la revisión bibliográfica y el análisis documental, incluyendo mapas históricos y registros arquitectónicos, que permite una comparación entre los principios teóricos del urbanismo y su aplicación práctica en Cáceres. Se concluye que el urbanismo de Cáceres se estructuró en torno a las vías fluviales, reflejando los intereses políticos y económicos de la Corona portuguesa y consolidando la ciudad como un punto estratégico en la frontera occidental del Brasil colonial.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Urbanismo Pombalino, Infraestructura Colonial, Historia Urbana de Cáceres.

1 CONTEXTUALIZATION

The urban and territorial development of the region of Cáceres, Mato Grosso, is intrinsically linked to the complex historical, political, and geographical processes that marked Portuguese and Spanish colonization in South America. To understand the formation of the urban territory of Cáceres, it is essential to examine the geopolitical scenario of the time, where territorial disputes between Portugal and Spain significantly shaped the planning and occupation of space.

The process of delimiting Brazil's borders and fortifying the territories to the west of the colony were strategies for consolidating colonial power, driven by both the Spanish Jesuit missions and the expeditions of the São Paulo bandeirantes. This context of rivalry and territorial expansion culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Madrid in 1750, which redefined the borders and promoted an intense settlement policy, culminating in the creation of urban centers on the right bank of the Paraguay River, which was consolidated in 1778 with the creation of Vila Maria do Paraguay, today known as Cáceres, 220 km from the capital Cuiabá.

The formation of this urban center was based on the planning promoted by the Marquis of Pombal in the 18th century. Pombal, influenced by Enlightenment ideas, introduced wide streets, rectangular blocks, and large squares into the urban plan, which gave the cities a geometric structure, facilitating traffic and promoting the aesthetics of monumentality and order (CHAVES; ARRUDA, 2011, p. 16).

The strategic importance of the rivers, especially the Paraguay River, as communication and transportation routes, played a crucial role in the occupation and economic development of the region and revealed how urban planning and geopolitics behaved in this historical period and how they influenced the formation and growth of cities on Brazil's western frontier.

2 PROBLEMATIZATION

The problem of this study is to clarify how rivers, especially the Paraguay River, influenced the formation of colonial cities in the state of Mato Grosso, with a focus on the city of Cáceres. The aim is to understand the urban planning model adopted during the 18th century for the foundation of new urban centers and how these structuring elements reflected the political, economic, and territorial priorities of the time.

3 BACKGROUNDS

Considering the role played by the Paraguay River as a strategic and structuring element in the development of the city of Cáceres, its importance transcends its function as an essential transportation and communication route. The river had a direct influence on both the urban layout and spatial organization, reflecting the economic, political, and territorial priorities of the Portuguese Crown during the colonial period. Analyzing this relationship allows us to deepen our understanding of strategic urbanism in colonial contexts, as well as providing information for interpreting the socio-economic and territorial transformations that took place in the region.

In addition, this approach contributes to a more detailed reading of the impact of water infrastructure on the urbanization process in Brazil.

4 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

This study aims to investigate how river communication routes, especially the Paraguay River, influenced the urban configuration of Cáceres-MT in the Pombaline period, analyzing their economic, geopolitical, and urban impacts.

4.1 Specific objectives

- Investigate the formation of the urban territory of Cáceres in the 18th century.
- Address the urban planning of the Marquis of Pombal and identify how the methodology was applied to the urban layout of Cáceres in the 18th century.
- Relate the influence of the Paraguay River on the formation of Cáceres' urban space.

5 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted sought, through scientific research, to study the relationship between water communication routes, specifically the Paraguay River and its permeating streams, juxtaposing them with the urban planning of the city of Cáceres MT, in the Pombaline period, detailing the methods used. To meet this objective, was adopted a method of bibliographical and documentary review, which are fundamental for a historical and urbanistic understanding of the context under analysis.

The bibliographic review was conducted with the aim of gathering and analyzing academic works, books, articles and other relevant materials that address both urban planning and the characteristics of communication routes in the Pombaline period, in a type of survey that allows the construction of a solid theoretical base and provides the necessary foundation for understanding the urban planning guidelines of the time, the political and economic influences that influenced spatial organization and the impact of communication routes on urban development.

In addition, primary sources were researched, which are essential tools for gathering historical information, such as official documents, old maps, architectural and urban planning records, government reports and other records that could provide direct evidence of Cáceres' urban planning during the period in question. This stage was essential for identifying the intentions and guidelines that shaped the organization of the city, as it allowed for a comparison between the theoretical principles of Pombaline urbanism and their practical application in Cáceres.

The combination of these two approaches - bibliographical review and documentary search - allowed for an in-depth analysis of the process of urban formation in Cáceres, contributing to an understanding of the influence of communication routes on its development.

Thus, the research was built on a solid documentary base, which dialogues with theory and offers a comprehensive view of the interactions between urban planning and communication infrastructures in the Pombaline period.

6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

6.1. The demarcation of Brazil's Western Frontier and the formation of the territory of Cáceres.

To better understand the formation of the urban territory of Cáceres, it is first necessary to understand the geopolitical scenario in which the captaincy of Mato Grosso found itself. From this, it was possible to highlight the need to delimit and fortify the border between the Spanish neighbors, who were at a time of territorial expansion spearheaded by the Jesuit missions. In contrast, the Portuguese acted in the same way, sending the São Paulo bandeirantes into the backlands.

For the Spanish authorities, the presence of the Jesuits in the Province of Chiquitos was seen in a positive light because, as well as offering security to their settlements against Indian attacks, it also encouraged the idea of reaching new lands, while at the same time serving the interests of defending the territory. In this sense, the establishment of the Jesuit missions in the Province of Chiquitos, in addition to expanding and consolidating this territory, also served as barriers to contain the advance of the Portuguese, since that area had a notable strategic importance, considered a key point for the domination of the Paraguay basin and the means of communication of Mato Grosso with upper Peru and the Amazon (GARCIA; MICELI, 2014, p. 48-50).

The Portuguese administrative experience in Overseas Portugal between the 16th and 18th centuries certainly played a role in the establishment of the political and administrative apparatus on the South American continent. In this way, the creation of a network of settlements from the coast to the more inland areas, allowed the Portuguese Crown to boost colonial expansion, thus maintaining relative control of economic production, seeking to establish urban centers and “civilize” the populations of the hinterlands of the territory of Portuguese America (ALMEIDA, 1997).

It was from the 18th century onwards that the Portuguese metropolis progressed in its most important possession of the colonial domain, resisting the armed conflicts that sought to legitimize the spaces theoretically belonging to the Spanish crown according to the old Treaty of Tordesillas of 1492. According to Santos (1999), it was during this period that the Portuguese crown sought to encourage the creation of urban centers and, “supported by the return of the exclusive privilege of founding new towns to the hands of the king, reaffirmed provisions regarding the regular layout of the settlements” (CHAVES; ARRUDA, 2011, p. 16).

The creation of settlements in various parts of Portuguese America was the result of the promulgation of a set of laws instituted by the Crown, which aimed to effectively control land ownership in the interior of the South American continent. By issuing these laws, the Crown intended to maintain the supervision and taxation of auriferous production, as well as, through the creation of urban centers, to guarantee the security of the border areas conquered to the west and south from the Spanish (DELSON, 1990).

The key to establishing diplomacy between Portugal and Spain, and thus extending to the creation of new settlements further west in Portuguese American territory, was the consolidation of the Treaty of Madrid. According to Chaves and Arruda (2011), the letters written by the diplomat Alexandre de Gusmão to King João V expressed a keen vision that considered the advantages that the Portuguese could obtain by signing the new treaty and thus making the old Treaties of Tordesillas of 1494 and Utrecht of 1713 null and void.

Among these advantages, another important point considered when signing the new agreement was related to the control of the rivers in the general captaincy of Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, in the Guaporé valley. This region was strategic, as it provided access to the Amazon rivers, as well as to the state of Grão-Pará and the state of Maranhão (COELHO, 2007).

In 1750, the signing of the Treaty of Madrid sparked an intense and highly developed settlement policy, the method of which was to establish the Portuguese crown and fortify the frontier regions, creating urban centers for population settlement. In this sense, in 1754, to the west of the general captaincy of Cuiabá de Mato Grosso, parallel to the advent of the third demarcation, a tangible representation of the period of border disputes between the Portuguese and Spanish crowns was set up near the mouth of the Jauru River. In this historical context, the Jauru Landmark (Figure 1) is seen as a document that reports on the territorial demarcation activities supported by the Treaty and not as a monument (GARCIA; MICELI, 2014 p. 99).

Figure 1- Marco do Jauru



Source: Collection Adilson Reis

More than two decades separate the moment when the Jauru landmark was fixed from the founding of Vila Maria do Paraguay. Cáceres was founded on October 6, 1778 by Lieutenant of Dragons Antônio Pinto Rego e Carvalho by order of the fourth governor and captain-general of the captaincy of Mato Grosso, Luís de Albuquerque de Melo Pereira e Cáceres. At first, it was called “Vila Maria do Paraguay”, in honor of the queen of Portugal (FERREIRA, 2017).

Mendes (2010) states that the governor, Captain-General Luiz Albuquerque, who took office on December 13, 1722, soon realized that the advanced distance from the capital, Vila

Bela da Santíssima Trindade, posed many risks and that it was necessary to take some security measures, and as a way of mitigating the problem, he made it possible to build new towns that brought the city closer and made it easier to access.

Luiz de Albuquerque tried to prevent the unexpected by means of an audacious plan. The plan consisted of advancing the Portuguese occupation beyond the Jauru and Paraguay rivers, into Castilian territory. In order to guarantee this reckless occupation, which was flagrantly contrary to the letters of the Treaties, he ordered the founding of the Coimbra Fort (Corumbá) on the west bank of the Paraguay and Vila Maria (Cáceres) on the east bank of the river, above the Jauru, on the way to Cuiabá, both on high and fertile land (MELLO, n.d.).

Documents published by the Núcleo de Documentação e Informação Histórica de Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso - NDIHR/UFMT prove, through a copy of the original document of the settlement map of the captaincy of Mato Grosso, the original of which is in the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino in Lisbon (Figure 2), that before the foundation of Vila Maria, there were already fifty settlements or families in the area, totaling 650 people. The document also informs us that at least three quarters of these people were black, mulatto or originated from the many ethnic groups that existed in the country, a large proportion of whom were slaves.

Figure 2 - Map of the Settlement of the Captaincy of Mato Grosso - 1777



Source: NDIHR/UFMT – Edited by the author

Documents from the same NDIHR/UFMT, report that in the letters sent by Albuquerque to the Minister of the Kingdom, Martinho de Mello e Castro, on November 20, 1778, there is the Term of Foundation of Vila Maria (Figure 3), informing that this settlement was inhabited by a population of more than 60 Castilian Indians of both sexes, deserted from the Mission of San José de Chiquitos.

with solid wooden markers. In addition, an architectural standard was imposed on the houses, specifying fixed heights of 14 palms for the ceiling height and 24 palms for the ridge, showing an effort to control and standardize the formation of the urban nucleus.

6.2. Urban Planning of Marquês de Pombal in the city of Cáceres – MT

In the mid-18th century, the choice of territories for the formation of new towns began with the adoption of elevated sites, as had happened in the early days of colonization, for a genuinely military reason. Now, the settlements that were starting up often chose flat land near beaches and rivers, conditions that provided greater ease of access and the formation of towns. Urbanization required a more complex composition than a simple agglomeration and was consolidated with industrialization (REIS FILHO, 2000, p. 127 - 131).

During this period, there was a tendency among the smaller centers to apply relatively regular forms of layout, because of taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the choice of flat sites. In this context, “a constant in the organization of these spaces was the valorization of the points considered most important to the communities by means of squares, where Town Halls, Churches or Convents” were preserved as free spaces for the population to gather (REIS FILHO, 2000, p. 127 - 131).

Other important elements that make up the urban layout are the streets and squares, in terms of basic references within the urban environment, as they are the most apparent and commonly used spaces. Squares, which were always more important than streets, were seen as places where the seat of power was located. As a result, one of the biggest concerns was the architectural composition of these places, where care for appearance led to the formation of spaces with dimensions that allowed for greater visibility, using aesthetic appeal to configure these places into emblematic locations. However, by the end of the 17th century, it was already possible to recognize the progress of the large urban landowners by the appearance of their houses (REIS FILHO, 2000, p. 132-133).

The procedures used to occupy the territory consisted of transferring and subjugating the indigenous villages, remodeling, and rearranging the existing settlements and building projects for new settlements and forts. The implementation of these projects led to two types of settlements: irregular settlements, which were later completely remodeled, such as the city of Cuiabá, and planned settlements that strictly obeyed the urban directives of the time, an emblematic example of which is the city of Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade (DELSON, 1997).

This context immediately leads to the hypodynamic urban layout idealized for Vila Maria do Paraguay, obtained in projects with streets and blocks geometrically laid out like a chessboard, with the church facing west, not far from the banks of the Paraguay river (CHAVES; ARRUDA, 2011, p. 16).

The streets and urban layout were described in the Founding Agreement as follows:

The widths of 60 palms of streets that have been signed by him, Lieutenant, and which are currently demarcated and marked out, will have the following names, namely the first counting from the north = Rua de Mello; both of which will end in the square and each of which faces it from the north and south; as well as the 30-meter long crosswalks that divide the barracks from the aforementioned streets, and these crosswalks will be called, the first

counting from west to east = Travessa de Pinto, and the one that follows also counting to the east = Travessa do Prego, and at the top of the square, on the same side of the east whose front is crossed between the streets and crosswalks, with 360 palms whose number the other blocks also have, the residents will be able to erect their church because its main door faces west as the rituals determine, and the rest of the land in front of the square will not be occupied by houses for the time being, leaving it free for the council and jail, when they should be built (NDIHR/UFMT, n.d, p. 29).

The different records of the formation of urban space in the town of Vila Maria, dating from the end of the 18th century, expressed the application of an urban planning policy in the development of its layout, which were characteristic parameters of the new Lusitanian cities built at that time. When discussing the morphological diversity of the cities of the Portuguese empire of that period, Araújo, Carta and Rossa (2002, p. 13) state that:

[...] all the urban centers differ greatly from one another. They do, however, have common characteristics: the overvaluation of public space, the perspective relationships of urban and territorial scale, the topographical diversity of the sites, the unified formal/architectural language, the relationship with the water landscape, concentrated in the large urban interface that was the port etc (ARAÚJO; CARTA; ROSSA, 2002, p. 13).

The urban plan of Vila Maria (Figure 4) certifies that the small town had in its spatiality, the already planned forms of spatial organization present in the other urban centers of the Portuguese empire, considering that they were basically composed of a large square, whose surroundings are articulated in two rows of houses on opposite sides, with the part located to the east of the square destined for a small church and the part to the west open to the left bank of the Paraguay River (GARCIA; MICELI, 2014, p. 71).

Figura 4 - Planta de Vila Maria do Paraguay (1784)



Souce: História e Fronteira, 2014.

Figure 5 shows an illustration of the perspective of Vila Maria's urban space, whose drawings were made by members of the Philosophical Journey of Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, who visited the region between 1783 and 1792. The expedition was of great strategic value, organized by the Portuguese crown to expand its knowledge of the territory situated to the north of the western border of the American colony. The journey lasted nine years and during this time many records were made of the flora, fauna, minerals, ethnic groups, daily life and architecture of the various settlements through which they traveled (GARCIA; MICELI, 2014, p. 71; COSTA, 200, p. 993-1.014).

Figure 5 - Vila Maria (1790) - Expedition Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira.



Source: História e Fronteira, 2014

The organization of the urban space of the new settlement was incorporated into the new perspectives that the reformism of the Pombaline period opened for Portugal in its vast colonial empire in the second half of the 18th century. The methods always sought to reinforce the rationalization of space, expressed in the alignment of roads and buildings and in orderly layouts (GARCIA; MICELI, 2014, p. 73).

Within this plan, the squares were first demarcated with the church planned to be located, and from there, the town hall, jail and other public buildings were laid out, and then the individual plots that were granted for the construction of residences were ordered (SCHÜRMAN, 1999, p. 51-53).

Years later, with Brazil undergoing its process of independence, many travelers, mostly from Europe, began to visit the interior of the country.

The draughtsman Hercules Florence, a member of one of the scientific expeditions, described Vila Maria as follows:

Like the other settlements in Mato Grosso, this one doesn't deserve to be called a village. A cluster of dilapidated houses on either side of a large square, a small church under the invocation of São Luiz de França, separation walls behind the houses - that's about it. But the great river is there, surrounding the O. The square and the town, six or seven white men, three hundred Caburés, descendants of Indians who were settled in the time of D. Maria I, mulattoes, and blacks - that's the whole population of the town. Many of the men and women are naked from the waist up. Vila Maria, situated on the banks of the Paraguay river and on the road from Cuiabá to Vila Bela, is destined to become an important point for trade (GARCIA; MICELI, 2014, p. 73; FLORENCE, 1977, p. 199-200).

6.3. The influence of the Paraguay River in the formation of the urban space of Cáceres.

In the history of civilizations, watercourses in general were part of the construction of the landscape of attractive sites for the settlement of settlements in each place, as they had an important territorial landmark character. For ancient generations, these natural courses were endowed with properties that were fundamental for their subsistence since, in addition to serving as tangible elements for territorial demarcation, they also enjoyed the advantage of being rich producers of food, of providing the circulation of people, commercial and industrial products, of acting as corridors for abundant fauna and flora, potential generators of energy, free spaces for contemplation, among others (GOSKI, 2010).

In this sense, the presence of a watercourse in the territory was synonymous with wealth and power, but on the other hand, at certain times it represented the fury and force of nature, due to its destructive and catastrophic potential. However, establishing their villages or towns near the waters was the guiding logic, given reasons of a functional, strategic, cultural and, consequently, patrimonial nature (GOSKI, 2010).

Brazil's historical context presents a form of occupation like this scenario, due to its natural characteristics, such as being home to one of the most extensive and richest networks of perennial rivers in the world. In this condition, one of the most important roles of rivers was to enable the possession of territories, acting as a crucial route for exploration towards the interior, officially incorporating the Brazilian backlands (CORRÊA, 2006).

The conquest and occupation of Mato Grosso lands occurred through the riverways, when the bandeirantes entered the region, taken in their boats along the waterways to the interior of the backlands. Among the various rivers that participated in this historical process are the São Lourenço, Cuiabá and Paraguay rivers, the latter being the backbone of one of the main hydrographic basins in South America and bordering the Río de la Plata, where the Paraná River flows, formed by the junction of the Grande and Paranaíba rivers (SILVA, 2004, p. 53).

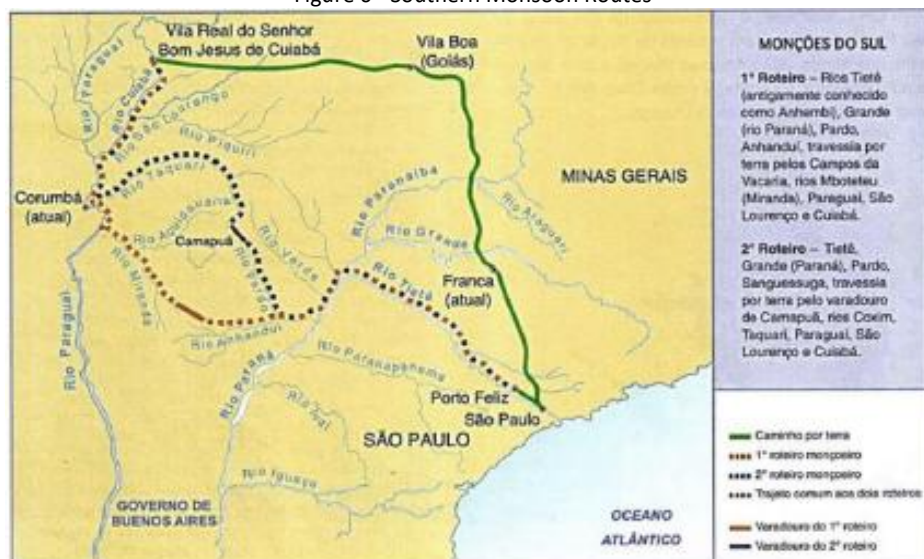
To gain a deeper understanding of the geographic context of the Paraguay River, it is first necessary to understand that within this ecological system, this river is the main drainage channel of the region. It is also considered one of the most important lowland rivers in the country and, together with its tributaries, forms an immense basin for receiving water and sediment. Its primary sources are found on the edges of the Parecis plateau that run through the depression of the Paraguay River, where they receive the waters of some of its tributaries. Thus, from its source it flows freely towards the Paraná River, until it joins the Prata River and from there to the Atlantic Ocean. The main river and its tributaries run for large stretches in the plains of Mato Grosso, where they contribute to maintaining the local characteristics of the Pantanal (SOUZA, et al, p. 13. 2012; BRASIL, 1997).

From this, it is possible to understand why waterways assumed a fundamental role in facilitating access and building new urban centers. In the case of Mato Grosso, waterways were the means that enabled exploration initiated by the two Iberian crowns. When the bandeirantes reached the Coxipó River, they used small boats to travel the immense waterway network that drains the center of the continent. From then on, they began to establish settlements, where houses, churches and small businesses were built, which made it necessary to regulate the commercial supply (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p.34).

Even though necessities such as rice, beans, cassava, flour, corn, sugar, and cachaça were supplied in two nearby locations, Rio Abaixo (Santo Antônio do Leverger) and Serra Acima (Chapada dos Guimarães), the other products that meet the needs of the villages arrived through the larger trade existing in the captaincy of São Paulo, of which the mines of the Central-West were part (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p.34).

The system responsible for supplying medicines, clothing, drinks, work tools and various foods was called the Southern Monsoons, implemented exclusively by the river (Figure 6). The river supply was done twice a year, with variations of 4 to 6 months considering the volume of water in the rivers. During these times, the pilots and crew were forced to go over waterfalls and cross large stretches of land between the rivers. In addition, the monsoons overcame unexpected setbacks, such as damage to the vessels, storms, lack of food and, above all, attacks by the Indians who inhabited the regions bordering the route (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p.34).

Figure 6 - Southern Monsoon Routes



Source: História e Fronteira, 2014

The monsoon system, which was created during the colonial period, established a connection between Mato Grosso and São Paulo and Belém. It was partially deactivated shortly after the slowdown in gold mining. This caused the region's growth rate to slow, causing the once-rich urban centers to decline, and the slow transition from gold mining to other profitable activities. As a result, communications began to be made via precarious dirt roads that connected Mato Grosso to Goiás, which reached the Triângulo Mineiro and then continued to São Paulo (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p.94).

Given the high cost of the trips made by the drovers, the value of the goods became more expensive, and this made their realization unfeasible. It was at this time, in the second half of the 19th century, that the province of Mato Grosso developed a new transport system to mitigate the problem of access to inputs, and the solution found was to use the route via the Southern Cone, that is, to sail along the Paraguay River until reaching São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro via the Atlantic Ocean (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p.94 e SILVA (2004) claim that:

A river route along the Paraguay River, which did not have accidents along its course, began to be seen as an easier and safer route to establish faster communication between Mato Grosso and the coast, and from there with the rest of the world (SILVA, 2004, p. 56).

However, the issue of opening navigation on the Paraguay River and free access to the province of Mato Grosso was hampered by more complex issues, identified by the diplomatic relations between the Brazilian Empire and the Republic of Paraguay, which were only regularized in the mid-19th century, with the opening of navigation on the Paraguay River, granted on the basis of the signing of a Treaty of Friendship, Navigation and Commerce. However, with the War of the Triple Alliance, this river route was interrupted, and was resumed in 1870, after the end of the conflict (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p.21-22).

Thus, the remodeling of the border in the post-war period, because of the territorial expansion of the Brazilian area in the southwest direction of the province of Mato Grosso, entered the history of the state as a watershed, by imposing the internationalization of the Paraguay River, which enabled commercial development and connections with the ports of the Southern Cone: Asunción, Buenos Aires, and Montevideo (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p.21-22).

The rivers were transformed into paths that provided the coming and going of all those who, in search of riches or even to build a home, for many years used this communication route between this province and the capital of the Empire (SILVA, 2004, p. 58).

With navigation on the Paraguay River now open, the province of Mato Grosso benefited from river communication with other commercial ports, making communication with the countries of the Southern Cone, the Brazilian coast and even Europe easier. Thus, from 1870 to 1930, this navigation was uninterrupted and enabled not only the access of many goods, but also of new residents, foreigners, and new ideas, who entered the territory of Mato Grosso. In this way, the vessels traveled the following route: Rio de Janeiro, Southern Cone, Corumbá, Cuiabá and Cáceres (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p.100).

For Mato Grosso, the opening of this route represented the redefinition of its economy, since regional production could be exported through this waterway and, in return, it would be possible to import foreign products from Europe, North America, Argentina, Uruguay and coastal cities, supported by the articulation of maritime and river navigation. In this economic scenario, the most important ports for the province were: Corumbá, a medium-sized port capable of receiving medium-draft ships, and the ports of Cuiabá and Cáceres, smaller ports, with the capacity to receive shallow-draft vessels, such as barges, speedboats, and steamers (SIQUEIRA, 2002, p. 95).

The vessels that made the journeys between Rio de Janeiro and Cuiabá and Rio de Janeiro and Cáceres had different designs and sizes, varying according to the depth of the waters they crossed and the width of the rivers. They were packet boats, steamboats, launches, barges, scum boats, straw boats, and schooners. Not to mention the canoes, barges, and creeks of indigenous origin. The steam-powered vessels used wood collected on the riverbanks to feed

their furnaces as fuel, since forests could be found at any point along the Paraguay River to supply them (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p.21-22).

The boats belonged to commercial companies that soon sought to explore this route of communication. In 1872, two steam navigation companies shared the trips through the province. The Alto Paraguay Navigation Company, headquartered in Montevideo, used seven steamers to travel the Montevideo/Cuiabá route, and Leocádia, headquartered in Cuiabá and using only one steamer to travel from Cuiabá to Corumbá (SILVA, 2004, p. 64).

Table 1 shows the movement of vessels in the ports of Corumbá, Cuiabá and Cáceres at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, a period of intense commercial activity and urbanization of the cities (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p.21-22).

Table 1 – Table of navigations from Corumbá, Cuiabá and Cáceres.

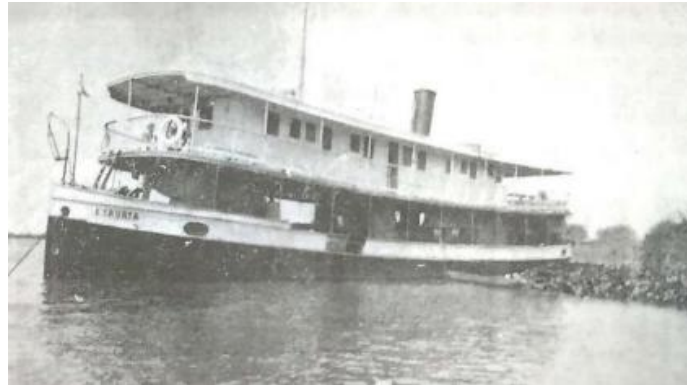
Companies	Year	Line
Cia. Nacional de Navegação a Vapor	1870	Cuiabá – Corumbá – Montevideú – Rio de Janeiro
Cia. Nacional de Navegação a Vapor	1880	Cáceres – Corumbá - Assunção
Casa Firmo de Mattos & Cia	1880	Cáceres – Corumbá
Antônio Joaquim Malheiros	1880	Cáceres – Corumbá
Cia União Vila Maria	1880	Cáceres – Corumbá
Cavassa Filhos & Cia	1911	Linha Regional
Lloyd Brasileiro	(?)	Corumbá – Assunção – B. Aires - Montevideú
Lloyd Brasileiro	1906	Cuiabá – Corumbá
Artur Fialho (Hermann Krabb & Cia)	(?)	Corumbá – Montevideú
Vierci Hnos	(?)	Assunção – Corumbá
Empresa Fluvial Brasil - Uruguai	(?)	Corumbá – Montevideú
Cia Argentina de Navegação Mihanovich	1913	Buenos Aires – Corumbá
Wanderley Bais & Cia	(?)	Cuiabá – Corumbá – Aquidauana
Wanderley Bais & Cia	(?)	Corumbá – Montevideú
Stofen, Schnack, Muller & Cia	(?)	Linha Regional
José Dulce & Cia	1890 (?)	Cáceres - Corumbá

Source: Vitor Oliveira (2005).

According to Silva (2004), historian Gabriel Pinto de Arruda describes in detail the Etruria Steamship (Figure 7), whose history is closely linked to the population of Cáceres, since its arrivals and departures were special events during the more than fifty years it sailed the waters of the Paraguay River, when its dockings at the port of Cáceres were received as very important events for the local community.

This steamship was considered by the people of Mato Grosso to be the most luxurious, sophisticated, elegant, fast, and comfortable means of transport in the region. It measured 24.70 meters in length, 4.70 meters in beam and 1.60 meters in depth. It had two cabins with four beds and five with two beds, a spacious cabin for meals and wide corridors. On the first floor were the kitchen, the space for the officers on board and the sanitary appliances. The boat was acquired in Genoa, Italy, by Gicazone Rebuá, in 1890, however, it came to belong to Dulce e Cia in 1898, acquired by José Dulce, owner of the company and a businessman who actively participated in the social and political life of Cáceres and the Stat (SILVA, 2004, p. 66).

Figure 7 - Steamship Etrúria - 1920



Source: Edil P. Silva, 2004.

In the 19th century, given the depletion of the gold cycle in the north of the province, changes in the direction of capital investment were already being planned. From then on, the economic activities that spread throughout the territory of Mato Grosso were extractive livestock farming, rubber exploitation, salad bars, yerba mate and poaia for extraction. In this restructuring of the economy, commercial houses played a prominent role, favoring urbanization, since these activities were concentrated in towns or cities (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p.23).

Navigation via Prata brought greater development to Mato Grosso. Several commercial houses began to appear in the cities, intensifying trade and developing the city, expanding the ports, and thus creating a link for development throughout the state. Thus, Cáceres, a city through which the Paraguay River passes, had all its economic, political, social, and cultural development linked to navigation, which enabled contact with people, ideas and products from the most diverse origins (SILVA, 2004, p. 81).

The trade resulting from this exchange modified and transformed the port cities of the region. In Corumbá, Cuiabá and Cáceres, commercial houses responsible for imports and exports emerged. New and modern streets were laid out and squares were opened to give these cities a more cosmopolitan profile (SILVA, 2004, p. 81).

The increase in port trade in Mato Grosso, as seen in the activities of commercial houses, such as that which occurred in Cáceres, concomitant with urban growth, can only be understood if one considers, in parallel, the importance of the Paraguay River as a route of transport and communication for the region, as well as the technical transformations of navigation and the insertion of the state in the international and regional division of labor (OLIVEIRA, 2005, p.35).

In summary, it is possible to understand from this study that rivers played a central role in the process of occupation and territorial development in Brazil, especially in Mato Grosso, due to their strategic and economic function. The Paraguay River stood out as an axis of transport, communication, and exploration, connecting the province of Mato Grosso to national and international markets, in addition to facilitating urbanization and trade in the port cities of Cáceres, Corumbá and Cuiabá. River navigation was essential for the supply of goods, economic integration, and cultural contact. Even facing challenges, such as diplomatic conflicts and

logistical limitations, waterways shaped the state's economy, society, and urban landscape, consolidating its historical and strategic relevance.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this study on the relationship between river communication routes and urban planning during the Pombaline period in the city of Cáceres, Mato Grosso, based on a bibliographic review and documentary research, allows us to point out some relevant reflections on the impact of these structures on local urban development. The historical and theoretical survey showed that Pombaline urban planning, with its markedly rational and centralizing characteristics, exerted a strong influence on the spatial organization of Cáceres, establishing guidelines that reflected the economic and strategic priorities of the Portuguese Crown.

River communication routes played an essential role in this process, serving as articulating axes of urban space and facilitating the integration of the city with the rest of the captaincy. The documentary analysis allowed us to identify how these routes structured the growth of the city, directing the flow of people and goods, in addition to having contributed to the formation of an urban layout that aimed not only at functionality, but also at the reaffirmation of political and territorial control. It is concluded, therefore, that the study of urban planning in Cáceres during the Pombaline period, linked to river communication routes, reveals an urbanism with strategic purposes, reflecting both the economic demands of the time and the intentions of expansion and colonial rule. The contributions of this work broaden the understanding of the historical roots of urban development in colonial cities in the Brazilian interior, highlighting the importance of integrating analyses of planning and infrastructure to better understand the urbanization process. This study also reinforces the relevance of new research that can deepen the relationship between urban infrastructure and socioeconomic transformations in other regions of Brazil.

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