Journal of Geography and Cartography 2024, 7(1), 5964.
https://doi.org/10.24294/jgc.v7i1.5964

Article

The French discourse on the delineations of the Spanish colonies in the early 19th century: The memoirs of Rigobert Bonne and Eustache Hérisson

Bárbara Polo-Martín[1,2]

[1] Departament de Geografia, Història i Història de l'Art, Universitat de Lleida, Pl. Víctor Siurana, 1., 25003 Lleida, Spain; barbarapolomartin@gmail.com
[2] EconomiX, Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, 92000 Nanterre, France

CITATION

Polo-Martín B. The French discourse on the delineations of the Spanish colonies in the early 19th century: The memoirs of Rigobert Bonne and Eustache Hérisson. Journal of Geography and Cartography. 2024; 7(1): 5964. https://doi.org/10.24294/jgc.v7i1.5964

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 22 April 2024
Accepted: 13 May 2024
Available online: 27 May 2024

Abstract: The 19th century proved to be one of the most complicated periods in Spanish history for the Spanish Crown, as it faced both internal conflicts—the French War of Independence—and external conflict—the independence of what were its territories in most of America. France did not remain indifferent to this and always had a clear idea of where to draw the boundaries of what "belonged" to it. Thus, amid the wave of independence movements in the Spanish colonies, the French continued to produce rich cartography to establish these boundaries and settle their power over the new nations that were arising after the period of revolutions. The cartography of Rigobert Bonne, the last cartographer of the French king and the Revolution Era, and one of its disciples, Eustache Hérisson, represent the perfect witness to the changes over the borders of the Spanish colonies during the change of the century. This study aims to analyze such cartography, examine the rich toponyms it offers, and examine the changes in the boundaries created over time between both empires. The main cartography we will rely on will be that of Bonne, one of the most important cartographers of the 18th century, and his disciple Hérisson, a geographer engineer, who lived through the onset of the conflicts and always prioritized the French perspective and the interests of their nation.

Keywords: limits; historical cartography; French cartography; geographers; independencies

1. Introduction

The 19th century posed one of the most complicated periods in the history of the Spanish Crown, as it faced both a conflict within its own country, the French War of Independence, and an external conflict, the independence of what were its territories—or colonies—in most of South America. The territorial disputes that followed this era of independence for various territories are a complex and multifaceted aspect of the geopolitical landscape of South America. In the establishment of new border boundaries, historical legacies, colonial-era treaties, and conflicting territorial claims were involved, some of which persist to this day.

France, like other countries, did not remain unaffected by this and always had a very clear idea of where to draw the boundaries of what "belonged to it". Some countries, like Portugal, decided not to wait and see how events unfolded. The so-called Luso-Brazilian Invasion (1816–1820) resulted in the annexation of what is now Uruguay, the southern region of Brazil, and the Argentine Mesopotamia to the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves, and upon its independence in 1824, to the Kingdom of Brazil. This area was the origin of the subsequent conflict, the War of Brazil (1825–1828), in which Brazil lost the Eastern Bank, or Cisplatina, which would become a new country: Uruguay). Thus, amidst the wave of

independence movements in the Spanish colonies, the French nation continued to produce rich cartography to establish the disputed boundaries. This cartography, from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, bears witness to the settling of borders and even to the names attributed to those regions, some of which differ from one map to another and, moreover, differ from those coined by the Spanish Crown.

This study aims to analyze this cartography, explore the rich toponyms it offers, as well as the delineations created over time between both empires. The primary cartography we will rely on will be that of Bonne and Hérisson, masters and disciples of the Enlightenment era. The former was the official geographer of the king before the Spanish conflict in the American colonies and was so renowned for his work that his ideas were widely utilized. The latter was a geographer and engineer who lived through both conflicts and whose cartography continued to be reproduced posthumously. Most notably, they always prioritized the French perspective, which sometimes gave a different sense of the cartographic reality seen in the atlases.

In this research, we aim to showcase the toponyms and borders of the new nations created from the conflict, such as Uruguay, from this perspective. The cartography we will utilize is available in libraries such as the National Library of France but has not been studied or valorized until now. The ultimate goal is to shed light on the French view of the political situation in Latin America during its most tumultuous period.

2. The cartographic challenges of the new political spaces

The establishment of borders in South America, that is, the creation of geopolitical, cultural, and often natural delineations that shape the current political landscape of the region, was not an easy task when revolutions began across the various territories. These borders are not mere lines on a map, but rather they represent complex historical, economic, and social factors that subsequently influenced relationships between countries and the development of regional identities. On a canvas that had become blurred, the cartographic configuration depended on factors such as:

- Colonial legacy: Much of the current borders in South America ultimately followed patterns established earlier. These boundaries were set during the colonial period, when European powers, primarily Spain and Portugal, divided the continent between themselves through treaties such as the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). Other countries, like the Netherlands and France, also joined in. These colonial borders often did not consider the ethnic or cultural composition of the indigenous peoples of the region, leading to conflicts and tensions that persist to this day.
- Geographic characteristics: The diverse geography of South America, which includes mountain ranges like the Andes, vast river systems like the Amazon, and extensive plains like the Pampas, influenced the establishment of borders. Natural barriers have both facilitated and hindered interactions between countries, shaping trade routes, migratory patterns, and political alliances.
- Territorial disputes: Some of the established borders in South America are still

subject to ongoing territorial disputes. For example, the long-standing border dispute between Chile and Bolivia over access to the Pacific Ocean has deep historical roots and remains unresolved, affecting diplomatic relations in the region.

- Cultural and linguistic diversity: South America is characterized by a rich cultural and linguistic diversity, with indigenous communities, Afro-descendants, and immigrant populations contributing to the vibrant tapestry of identities in the region. The established borders often intersect with cultural and linguistic boundaries, influencing social dynamics and political loyalties.

In this context, the key factor was territorial sentiment, which would later evolve into a national one. The concept of nation, in this case newly born, is intrinsic to the possession of established boundaries that allow coexistence. Up to that point, the only established boundaries were those set by the Spanish nation itself, but when these are broken, the process of territorial formation and the construction of different national identities goes through the new, yet fragile, governments. The differences shown in the maps of Bonne and Hérisson regarding territorial identity reflect the framework of problems that the acquisition of a proper political map, as well as a name and identity, posed for these new nations [1].

The issue of identity and cartography was not something that emerged as a result of the dismantling of the Spanish empire, but rather a topic that has been extensively discussed in different eras [2–8].

The examination of political cartography from a historical and cultural perspective allows for addressing these political-territorial tensions, issues of identity, agreements, and disagreements before and after the revolutionary outbreak, and the practices of demarcation commissions. Political cartography, which inherently establishes boundaries and creates the concept of a nation, reveals in its preliminary stage and just at its inception the instability or non-existence of a common identity that gathers that territory rebelling against the predecessor government and leaves the imagined community contained in the map without an identity to cling to [9].

Unlike other countries, which were dismantled and included in new empires during the 19th century, the dismembered territories of South America did not have their own identity per se as a country but had only been conceived as territories of different empires (Mayan, Aztec, or later Spanish, Portuguese, French, or Dutch). In this context, each territory carried out a claim of belonging [10,11].

The liberators at that time faced the sentiment of belonging to a people, culture, or territory and the establishment of boundaries [12–14].

All of that was supported and registered by different countries, but especially France. The political ideas introduced during the Revolutions were fed over decades by French literature and cartographic representations. Some of the most important writers of the 19th and 20th centuries constantly cited and justified the American Revolutions and the establishment of new nations following the revolutionary French ideas that allowed the creation of a bond between France and the new countries. Just a glimpse,

> "Spain would be represented as a rosary to represent its fanaticism, a chain to express its servility, and a bag to demonstrate the greed of a tax collector."—

José María Samper [15].

"Spain lost on all fronts the rich countries where it had until recently ruled tirelessly; that shameful defeat was the just expression of its conduct towards the peoples it cruelly tyrannized."—Alfred Deberle [16].

"It was necessary to offer the enlightenment of the great Latin people."—Manuel María Buenaventura [17].

In this context, geographic atlases came into play as disseminators of the factors that influenced the establishment of boundaries. For example, the maps—part of atlases—that we will see below display territorial disputes. The different territories claimed, such as Argentina [18,19]—territory that was not even reflected before the dismantling of the empire, Brazil, Uruguay, or Paraguay and their boundaries appear in different atlases of the time in various ways. For this reason, it was not until the development of local cartography that the new names and boundaries could be fully established. French cartography, following the discourse of the literature of that time, offers and confirms a different perspective from the promoted atlases.

2.1. The French perspective on the conflict: The master and the disciple

Rigobert Bonne was born in Raucourt, in the Ardennes, on 6 October 1727, and is considered the most important cartographer of the late 18th century. He learned mathematics without a teacher and became an engineer at the age of eighteen. He served in this capacity in the War of Flanders, where he participated in the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom in 1747. He dedicated himself to physics, mathematics, and geography, with such success that for fifteen years he was one of the most sought-after professors in Paris, during which time he met Hérisson. Among his roles within society, his membership in the lodge of the Neuf Soeurs, or Nine Sisters, stands out. This Masonic lodge was founded in 1776 by the astronomer Jérôme de Lalande and is known for its influence in organizing French support for the American Revolution. Among its ranks were other reputable men, such as Voltaire or Benjamin Franklin, who was elected Worshipful Master. Due to his membership, during the French Revolution, Rigobert Bonne served in the Jacobin ranks as a political advisor.

On a scientific level, all his experience led him to succeed Giovanni Rizzi-Zannoni in 1775 as the cartographer of the King of France in the Hydrographic Service of the Navy—the Navy's map and plan depository was created by order of King Louis XV in 1720, making him the second generation to lead such an institution. However, that same year, he suffered a stroke that left him ill for the rest of his life. Nonetheless, he remained active as a cartographer, and five years later, he precisely defined the projection that would later bear his name: the Bonne projection. This projection became famous because it was used by César-François and Jean-Dominique Cassini in the surveying of the National Map of France, the first topographic and geometric map of the French kingdom.

Among his works, in addition to the official state cartography, he produced maps for the works of Abbé Raynal and for Nicolas Desmarest's Encyclopedia Méthodique. In mid-1795, he suffered from dropsy, from which he passed away on November 2 of that year. His son Charles-Marie Rigobert, known as Chevalier Bonne (25 June 1771 to 23 November 1839), continued his work along with other

disciples.

Among them, Eustache Hérisson (Paris 1759 to Paris 1832) stood out at the beginning of the century. He was one of the most prolific cartographers of his time, particularly during the 1810s and 1820s, that is, in the post-Napoleonic era and amidst the instability of European countries, including Spain. In contrast, France was experiencing a period of resurgence and economic improvement. This fostered the cultural development of centers such as the University of the Sorbonne, where Hérisson was known. His works have been repeatedly reissued for their quality, especially posthumously, by Jean at the Rue Jean de Beauvais publishing house in Paris, near the Sorbonne, or by the Basset family, founders of the publishing house of the same name [20].

2.2. Cartographic production in France during the era of revolutions

During the decline of the consulate, the geographer engineers, such as Eustache Hérisson, under the authority of the War Depot, amounted to only 100 engineers. Thanks to them, gradually, they carried out the rules established by the 1802 commission, leading to the standardization of maps during the territories conquered by the French armies. Ultimately, under the empire, map production, especially during the Napoleonic era, flourished thanks to topographic offices, but overall cartographic production relied on old maps due to limited available capital, albeit with a reputation for reliability.

The production of new maps allowed their use and knowledge of the situation in each country during the wars fought by Napoleon and other European powers. The reliability of this cartographic production was never in doubt, as during the French Revolution, maps were considered a national treasure and essential for territorial defense. For this reason, geographical knowledge became exhaustive. This resulted in both the first consul and later Emperor Napoleon I demonstrating their taste and knowledge of geography during the consulate and empire periods. The maps of this era were extensively studied with the assistance of the chief of the topographic cabinet of the first consul and the emperor, Bacler d'Albe.

Spain, a neighboring country of France and one of the main powers that made the geographical expansion of the Napoleonic Empire difficult, was of great interest in cartographic terms. The arrival of the French and their knowledge led to the development of the first maps of Spanish territory, both national and colonial, until their last days.

Napoleon I's invasion and the establishment of his brother Joseph as king of Spain profoundly affected the overseas territories. They were able to create a French discourse in the Spanish colonies, and that discourse was translated into maps. The power vacuum resulting from the French invasion of the Peninsula was a key cause of the beginning of the independence process in Spanish America.

The French discourse in the Latin American independence war had several significant aspects. France, as a European power, was interested in the events unfolding in Latin America due to its rivalry with Spain and Portugal. For this reason, and for years prior, France took it upon itself to ideologically inspire what would become new nations. The French Revolution and its ideals of liberty, equality,

and fraternity had a significant impact on the Latin American independence leaders. Many of them were inspired by the principles of the French Revolution and sought to replicate them in their struggle for independence.

Likewise, France provided logistical and military support to some of the independence movements in Latin America. For example, Simón Bolívar received financial and military support from France in his struggle for the independence of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. This support allowed for alliances that benefited him, as France also had economic interests in Latin America, especially in the Spanish colonies rich in natural resources. French trade was hindered by the commercial monopoly imposed by Spain, and the independence of the Spanish colonies represented an opportunity to expand French trade in the region.

Therefore, France was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the newly formed Latin American nations. This contributed to legitimizing the independence movements and establishing diplomatic relations between France and the new Latin American states.

One of the achievements of French authors in the 19th century was to institutionalize and formalize the name "Latin America" for the former Ibero-Portuguese and French colonies—including Brazil, Haiti, and other territories. This triumph brought France into the cultural formation of the peoples, countries, nations, and states known as Latin America.

However, despite the fact that the Napoleonic army was expelled from Spain, the situation overseas never returned to the previous situation, and the "Juntas" that had been created in the different viceroyalties over the years decided not to continue being part of Spanish territory and fight for independence.

2.3. Characteristics of French cartography in maps of South America

The French cartography of the 18th and early 19th centuries was characterized by a combination of scientific rigor, artistic sophistication, and exploratory spirit, as evident in the atlases we see in this article. Maps produced during this period not only served practical purposes but also reflected the intellectual and cultural achievements of the French Enlightenment, as demonstrated by the works of Bonne and Hérisson [21]. During this period, French cartographers made substantial contributions to the field, both in terms of mapping France itself and exploring and mapping other regions of the world.

As seen in the presented maps, French cartographers of the 18th century placed a strong emphasis on accuracy and precision. They incorporated the latest advancements in mathematics, trigonometry, and topographic techniques to ensure the precision of their drawings. This scientific rigor contributed to France's reputation as a leading center of cartographic excellence during this period, which was extrapolated to other powers.

Likewise, many of the atlases produced during this time were sponsored by the state, as is the case with Bonne's cartographic production. The French government recognized the strategic importance of accurate maps for military, administrative, and economic purposes. As a result, large-scale cartographic projects were initiated

to study and map various regions of France, such as the topographic survey of France conducted by the Cassini family, to which Bonne partly contributed, and other areas of the world.

These maps often included features such as terrain contours, rivers, forests, roads, and settlements, as well as nomenclature, providing valuable information for military planning, territorial management, and navigation. However, cartographers were not only concerned with scientific accuracy but also with aesthetic presentation. Many maps from this period were elaborately decorated with ornate title cartouches, wind roses, and illustrations of prominent landmarks or historical events. These artistic embellishments increased the attractiveness of the maps and reflected the cultural and artistic sensibility of the time [22].

All these cartographic achievements of Enlightenment France had a profound influence on European cartography as a whole. French cartographic techniques, standards, and conventions were widely adopted and emulated throughout Europe, contributing to the development of modern cartography.

A clear example of this precision in mapmaking, as well as all the knowledge of the terrain to be displayed, is **Figure 1**, which shows a map by Hérisson representing the Iberian Peninsula and the Balearic Islands, with an emphasis on depicting roads, paths, routes, etc., as they were arranged during the first third of the 19th century. It is printed in black and white with color demarcations, following the techniques of the time.

Figure 1. Map of Kingdom of Spain and Portugal (Source: Bibliothèque National de France).

3. The borders of the Spanish colonies in French cartography

The situation before and after the Napoleonic Empire was portrayed by Bonne

and Hérisson. Both authors depicted the world map with its borders, and thanks to them, we can distinguish the French perception of the conflict that the neighboring country was going through with its colonies in South America. There are very remarkable elements such as Bonne's maps, which do not make a distinction of borders and place Paraguay and Uruguay together, while Hérisson closely follows the changes and discoveries, but simply names this part of the globe Southern America and establishes the limits of some cities, such as Buenos Aires, or a region like "Desert" without going into details.

The approach of both cartographers is framed in the general dynamics carried out in Europe to reflect a situation in various territories that was not clear since the rupture with the homeland—as happened previously with the United States after its separation from the United Kingdom. Since the beginning of the century, and after the passage of the French empire through Spain and the subsequent loss of the territories of South America, cartography has reflected doubts about the new configuration of the borders. The old administrative boundaries ceased to exist in cartography to give way to different situations: either continue using the borders given until then—the Viceroyalties—until the new political situation became clear, or draw new state administrative boundaries, or give way to new political units that wanted their own identity, or follow the case of Africa, and opt for geometric state boundaries.

In this case, the focus is not on evaluating how the identity of each new state was formed or how administrative or political boundaries were established, but on how French cartography reflected this moment. Both Bonne and Hérisson gave rise to two of these cartographic models: the use of old administrative boundaries, that is, from the colonial period, and the reflection of political units with their own identity that wanted to distance themselves from the boundaries in which they are currently included [23].

Territorial disputes in South America during the period of independence (early 19th century) were frequent and complex, arising from a combination of colonial legacies, power struggles between emerging nations, and ambiguous borders inherited from the colonial era. These disputes often led to armed conflicts, diplomatic tensions, and shifting alliances among the recently independent states. The main notable territorial disputes during the era of South American independence involved years of conflict, and this issue was well reflected [24].

For example, the region known as Upper Peru, which encompasses present-day Bolivia, was a focal point of territorial disputes during South America's struggle for independence. Bolivian nationalists, led by figures such as Simón Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre, fought against Spanish forces to assert control over this strategically important territory. However, internal divisions and conflicting visions about the region's future sparked tensions and power struggles even after achieving independence.

Regarding the La Plata Basin, which includes what is now Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and parts of Brazil and Bolivia, it witnessed several territorial disputes during the independence era. Conflicting territorial claims among the emerging nations, along with the strategic importance of access to rivers and control of trade routes, fueled tensions and occasional armed conflicts. Establishing clear borders and

resolving these disputes required diplomatic negotiations and, in some cases, the intervention of external powers.

The case of the project known as Gran Colombia was different. Gran Colombia, a short-lived federation comprising present-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama, was partly driven by territorial disputes and regional rivalries. Disputed borders between the constituent republics, particularly the border between Venezuela and Ecuador, contributed to internal tensions and the eventual fragmentation of the federation into separate nation-states. Additionally, it faced challenges with Peru over sovereignty in areas in the Amazon and on the Pacific coast (in the Andes, Tumbes, and Guayaquil).

The northern borders of Brazil, particularly along the Amazon Basin, were subject to disputes with neighboring countries like Colombia and Venezuela. These disputes revolved around conflicting claims over territories rich in natural resources, including rubber and minerals. Diplomatic negotiations and occasional military conflicts characterized Brazil's efforts to assert control over its northern border and secure its territorial integrity.

The southernmost regions of South America, including Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, witnessed territorial disputes involving Argentina, Chile, and the indigenous peoples inhabiting these territories. Conflicting claims over lands, resources, and access to strategic waterways such as the Strait of Magellan led to border disputes and occasional military confrontations between Argentina and Chile, which persisted well into the 20th century.

Most of these disputes were resolved through treaties [25] or through the Uti possidetis iuris (Public International Law extensively used in America). It is based on the principle that "what was possessed continues to be possessed," therefore recognizing a right of possession based on the succession of legal titles existing prior to the independence of the State. According to Garay Vera [24], "What was possessed on behalf of the King of Spain is now possessed in the name of each American State." The border between Paraguay and Argentina was delineated through the "Boundary Treaty" of 3 February 1876 (Machain-Yrigoyen), and the "Complementary Treaty" of 5 July 1939 (Arbo-Cantilo). It extends 1345 km along the river and 345 km of dry border, totaling 1690 km in its entirety.

In both cases, the "y" means "water" in Guarani (the name of the Iguazú or Iguaçu River, at the tri-border area between Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil, means "big water"). In the case of Uruguay, the Guarani etymology might seem unusual since the Guarani people were not in that area, but the name of the country comes from that of the river, which does pass through the Guaranitic region (northeast Argentina, southern Brazil, and all of Paraguay).

Similarly, Chile and Argentina disputed the precise location of their border in several areas for a long time, particularly in the Southern Cone region. The most notable disagreement concerns the border between the Southern Patagonian Ice Field and the Beagle Channel. The Beagle Channel dispute was resolved thanks to Vatican mediation in 1984, but tensions occasionally resurface between the two countries.

Chile was also involved in a territorial dispute with Peru, which was largely resolved with the signing of the Lima Treaty in 1929. However, tensions occasionally arise over maritime boundaries in the Pacific Ocean. For example, in

2014, the International Court of Justice ruled on a maritime dispute between the two countries, granting Peru a larger maritime territory, but the issue still remains delicate.

The long-standing territorial dispute between Guyana and Venezuela focuses on the Essequibo region, which covers approximately two-thirds of Guyana's territory. Venezuela questions the validity of the 1899 Arbitral Award—almost a century after independence—that delineated the border, leading to periodic diplomatic tensions. The discovery of offshore oil reserves in the disputed territory has further intensified the dispute in recent years.

Guyana is also involved in a dispute with Suriname and Brazil. Brazil has occasionally faced territorial disputes with its northern neighbors, Suriname and Guyana, over areas along the border in the Amazon rainforest. These disputes mainly concern the demarcation of borders in remote and sparsely populated regions, where both countries engage in diplomatic dialogue and sporadic efforts at demarcation.

This highlights the difficulty these territories faced throughout the 19th century in conceptualizing their space and defining themselves. As new states in South America were established and configured their own territories, the very idea of territorial boundaries was being reconceptualized, both in international jurisprudence and political theory. While boundaries had long been zones or strips of diffuse borders, modern territorial formation processes required boundaries that could be delineated as lines on maps. In practice, old and new boundaries were drawn and redesigned throughout the 20th century during complex negotiations, unstable alliances, and military conflicts, and some of them remain unresolved.

Around maps of various origins, such as French maps, which had a particular interest in knowing the fate of the Spanish colonies as they had territories on that continent, narratives of territorial formation and arguments to support their territorial claims were developed. This literally made it impossible for the assembly of maps of the new Latin American nation-states elaborated by each country to result in a coherent political map of Latin America (on the contrary, each Latin American country produced maps of South America, demarcating borders in different ways).

On the other hand, French national maps, with Guiana present in that territory, or the Caribbean islands, were exposed, along with the Netherlands, to a climate of uncertainty during the central years of the revolution, an idea captured by both Bonne—who lived through the final years of the Spanish Empire—and Hérisson, who witnessed the beginning of destabilization of borders.

French cartographers played an important role in the exploration and mapping of overseas territories during the Age of Exploration. Expeditions led by French explorers, such as Samuel de Champlain, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, and Jean-François de Galaup, Count of La Pérouse, resulted in the mapping of new lands and coasts, including parts of North America, South America, the Pacific Islands, and Africa.

4. The situation of territorial disputes before Bonne and Hérisson

In Bonnet's time, in the late 18th century, concerns about the future of the colonies and their identity were already beginning to be felt. Bonne was the first

cartographer to move away from decorative elements, giving more importance to detail and practicality. The map of South America belongs to the "Atlas moderne ou collection de cartes sur toutes les parties du globe terrestre par plusieurs auteurs. Avec approbation & privilege du Roy" was first published in 1761. This atlas contained maps drawn by Bonne, Janvier, and Rizzi Zannoni. The chart contains information on relief, hydrography, political division traced in color, and scale expressed in leagues. In it, the distinction of cultural and identity entities was evident in the maps. For example, in the case of Brazil in **Figure 2**, it did not include the Amazon, which was presented as its own country. Popayán, now part of Colombia and neighboring Peru, was not within the territory of New Granada, also now part of Colombia.

Figure 2. Map of North and South America (Source: Bibliothèque National de France).

Amidst such concerns, late-century cartography focused first on establishing the borders of territories adjacent to French colonies. In this case, the direct implication, as shown in **Figure 3**, was French Guiana, bordering Dutch and Portuguese territories.

Figure 3. French Guiana with part of Dutch Guiana, according to the operations and recent maps of French geographical engineers 1777 (Source: Municipal Archive of L´Havre).

Indeed, due to all the challenges they faced in claiming the territories they deemed necessary to form a new country, Colombia, later under the "Gran Colombia" project (1819–1833), called upon French engineers and cartographers to work on the creation of its new identity. The problems reflected in the maps of Bonne and Hérisson were passed on to these workers, as this project claimed not only the territory of present-day Colombia but also Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, northern Peru, western Guyana, and northwest Brazil. Scholars recall this ephemeral republic.

As can be seen in **Figure 4**, the same occurred for what is now Venezuela, simply dubbed "Terre Ferme," along with other territories such as Caracas, during the colonial era, which both cartographers—including what is now Ecuador—depicted as a subdivision of Venezuela, Caracas, and Cumaná.

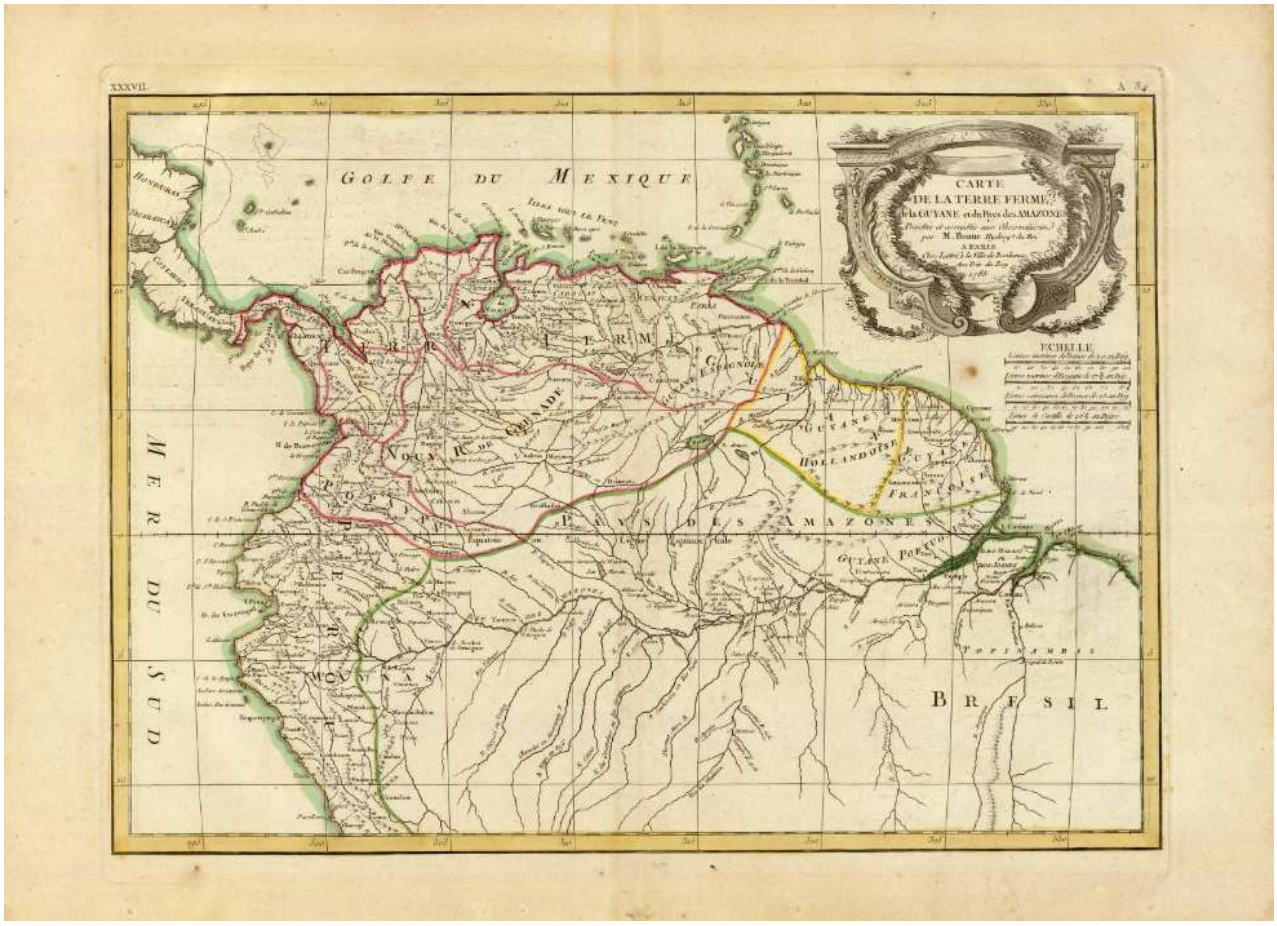

Figure 4. The Map of the Spanish Main, Guiana, and the Land of the Amazons 1785 (Source: David Rumsay Library).

The only territories that seemed to respect their given nomenclature during the Iberian regime were Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile, leaving the rest of the nations that would make up the new political map after independence in limbo. However, as noted, all these territories endured years of territorial disputes before becoming the nations they are today. Conflicting territorial claims between emerging nations, along with the strategic importance of access to rivers and control of trade routes, fueled tensions and occasional armed conflicts. **Figure 5** particularly highlights Argentina, whose territory is now larger than that of its neighbors and which, at the end of the 18th century, did not have a defined entity.

The nomenclature seemed to evolve as the century drew to a close, and by 1795, the entire region was referred to as South America, a name that would continue to be used throughout the 19th century until the official creation of the new nations. It is noteworthy how even between master and disciple, differences in this nomenclature appear, with Hérisson omitting the name of Uruguay, a name that clearly appears in all the earlier maps of his master Bonne and in the later ones, produced both by him and by other cartographers (**Figure 6**).

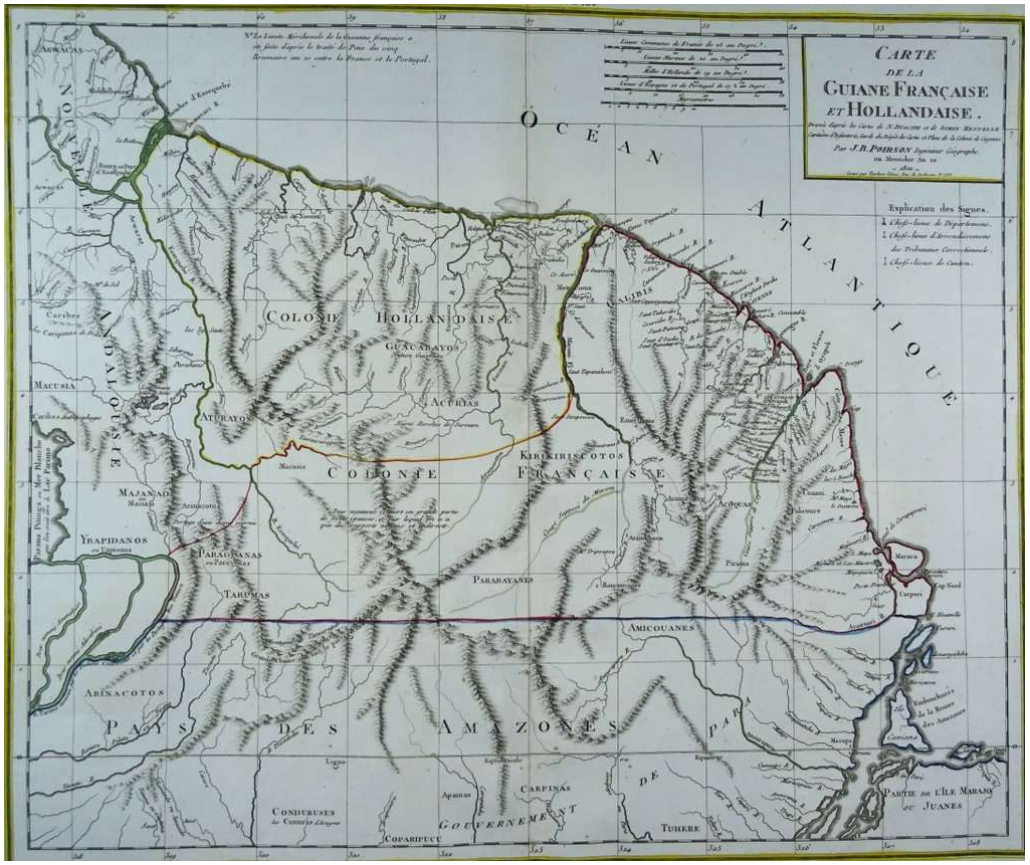

Figure 5. Map of Paraguay and Part of the Adjacent Countries 1782 (Source: Bibliothèque National de France).

Figure 6. Detail of the Map of North and South America 1795 (Source: Bibliothèque National de France).

However, as we have emphasized, the turn of the century and the advancement of conflicts among the different territories to form their own identity were in full swing. The confusion in the formation of each new country's own identity is evident in **Figure 7**, from 1817—that is, once the conflicts that would unfold over decades had already begun—a map where emerging countries like Brazil or Chile already appeared, but not in the case of others. Uruguay appears as the United Provinces, Banda Oriental, or Cisplatina still; Argentina as Buenos Aires and Patagonia. Likewise, there continue to be appearances of non-existent places based on popular lore, such as Lake Parima, a mythical site of El Dorado in the 15th century, which is linked to Lake Amuku in Guyana, and Lake Xareyes, another speculated point for the beloved legend, which was supposed to be the mouth of the Paraguay River. What always remained clear were the boundaries of French Guiana, which maintained its borders to the present day.

Figure 7. Geographical, Historical, and Political Map of South America (Source: Bibliothèque National de France).

5. Conclusions

The cartography from two of the most important cartographers of the change of the century, this is, before and during the era of South American independence,

reflected the complexities of nation-building, identity formation, and geopolitical rivalries after colonial rule. Resolving these disputes often required diplomatic negotiations, compromises, and, in some cases, the intervention of external mediators or guarantors.

In that case, France tried to introduce its ideas through politics, through a discourse where new concepts and boundaries appeared and changed over the years. Cartography, and specifically the French cartography offered by Rigobert Bonne and Eustache Hérisson, is a witness to this problem. Despite the challenges, the establishment of clear and stable borders laid the groundwork for the consolidation of independent nation-states in South America thanks to French collaborators.

The configuration of borders in South America reflects a complex interaction of historical, geographical, and socioeconomic factors that shape the political landscape of the region. Understanding these borders is essential for grasping the dynamics of interstate relations, efforts at regional integration, and the challenges facing South American societies in the 21st century.

The myriad challenges in South America since the late 1700s highlight the intricate dynamics of sovereignty, past grievances, and resource competition. Although certain conflicts have seen progress through diplomacy or global arbitration, many persist, casting shadows over regional stability and inter-country ties. Tackling these issues necessitates diplomatic discourse, respect for international laws, and a steadfast dedication to peaceful conflict resolution methods.

In summary, Rigobert Bonne and Eustache Hérisson provided insight into the complexities of boundary delineation and their efforts to maintain control over French settlements, such as Guayane. Initially straightforward, as evidenced by the clear, color-coded boundaries depicted in various maps, the process grew increasingly intricate. In some instances, it took nearly a century for countries to solidify their territories as they stand today.

Funding: All sources of funding for the research reported come from the Cartografía, delimitación y geopolítica en España (ss. XVII-XIX) project of the Science and Innovation Ministery of Spain with reference PID2021-126835NB-I00.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

1. Shepsle K, Bonchek M. The formulas of politics: institutions, rationality and behavior (Spanish). Taurus and Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas; 2005.
2. Alegria MF. History of Portuguese Cartography: 15th-17th centuries (Portuguese). Fio da Palabra; 2012.
3. Kain R, Delano-Smith C. English Maps. A history. Toronto University; 2000.
4. Lois C. From the colonial borders of the Hispanic empire in America to the international boundaries between independent Latin American states: genesis of the impossibility of a consensual political map of South America (Spanish). Revista de historiografía. 2019; 30: 207-222.
5. Silva Costa N. Maps of an imperial Portugal: colonial culture and propaganda between the wars (Portuguese). Figueirinhas. S.l.; 2011.
6. Schulten S. Mapping the Nation. History and Cartography in Nineteenth Century America. The University of Chicago Press; 2012.
7. Winichaku T, Mapped S. A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation. University of Hawaii Press; 1994.

8. Yonemoto M. Mapping Early Modern Japan. University of California Press; 2003.
9. Grimoldi N. What do we talk about when we talk about Latin America (Spanish) [Bachelor's thesis]. Universidad Nacional de La Plata; 2014.
10. Escolar M. Historical elements for a theory of territorial differentiation and integration (Spanish). Geografía política del Estado-nación moderno; 1991
11. Escolar M. Historical elements for a theory of territorial differentiation and integration: political geography of the modern nation-state (Spanish). 1994.
12. Del Castillo L. Crafting a Republic for the World: Scientific, Geographic, and Historiographic Inventions of Colombia. University of Nebraska Press; 2018.
13. Ternavasio M. Latin American Independences (Spanish), 1st ed. Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de las Revoluciones de México; 2015. p. 113.
14. Mendoza Vargas H, Lois C. Histories of cartography in Ibero-America (Spanish). Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Instituto de Geografía; 2009.
15. Samper JM. Notes for the political and social history of New Granada, since 1810, and especially of the administration of March 7 (Spanish). Bogotá: Imprenta El Neo-Granadino; 1853.
16. Deberle A. South American History (French). Kessinger Publishing; 1876.
17. Buenaventura MM. Affinities: France and South America (Spanish). Montevideo: Servicio Francés de Información; 1946.
18. Desnos LC. Atles consisting of the world map, Europe, Asia, Africa and America, where the most recent discoveries and the routes of Captain Cook's last three voyages are accurately marked (French). Malherbe; 1795.
19. Lois C. Maps for the nation. Episodes in the History of Argentine cartography (Spanish). Revista de Historia Iberoamericana. Universidad de Buenos Aires; 2014.
20. Hofmann C. Illuminating printed maps and atlases 16th-18th centuries (French). Bulletin du Comité Français de cartographie. 1999; 159: 35-47.
21. Hofmann C. The genesis of the historical atlas in France (1630-1800). The power and limits of the map as the eye of history (French). Bibliothèque de l´École des chartes. 2000; 158: 97-128.
22. Lois C. The map, the maps. Methodological proposals to address the plurality and instability of the cartographic image (Spanish). Geograficando; 2015. pp. 287-316.
23. Alija Garabito MA. Territory and conflict in Territory and conflict in Latin America (Spanish). Aranzadi, Cizur Menor; 2017.
24. Garay Vera C. On the border and its dilemmas in South America. Empty spaces, lawless areas, national borders and cross-border dilemmas (Spanish). In: Alija AM (editor). Territorio y conflicto en América Latina. Aranzadi. Cizur Menor; 2017. pp. 59-92.
25. Silva Costa N. Maps of an imperial Portugal: colonial culture and propaganda between the wars (Portuguese). Figueirinhas. S.l.; 2011.