

Surveying and Mapping Lands and Waters in Mozambique in late 19th Century

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This paper addresses the first geographic and hydrographic descriptions of South Mozambique written by Alfredo Freire de Andrade and Mateus Serrano in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Both texts were published in the *Boletim da Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa*, in 1894, and since then have been considered key references for the study of the colonial occupation of Mozambique. However, most of the potential of these texts has been neglected as they provide important geographic and hydrographic data that very rarely has been considered in present day studies.

The reports of Andrade and Serrano are the result of the first surveying mission encompassing all the territory from the Limpopo River till Inhambane, in the East, and Lourenço Marques (Maputo) in the South, giving detailed information on the main characteristics of the Limpopo river basin and the inland territories up to the Mozambique's South Africa border.

Produced in the scope of the works of the Commission for the Delimitation of the Borders in Mozambique these reports include also the first sketches of some areas and represent the huge effort to gather information on the territory in order to support and legitimize the Portuguese presence and sovereignty over those areas, but they also testify the knowledge on that same territory and the way that knowledge was transmitted and incorporated in colonial diplomacy and politics.

Within this framework this paper presents the data collected and discusses the information produced upon those data and the way this information was used, as well as the importance of recovering the original data on the territory in order to support present day databases and contribute for a better perception of the geo-climate changes and environmental evolution in this region.