

The Napoleon Series

Maps and Mapmakers of the Napoleonic Wars: Portuguese Cartography

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In Portugal, there had been a revival of interest in maps and charts.

Fostered by the Marquis of Pombal¹, the effects of the revival were confined to the learned academies, and did not reach the public. Francisco Antonio Ciera, a Piedmontese by origin, had measures two long bases in Portuguese Estramadura between 1793 and 1802, and a number of officers of the Portuguese Royal Engineers were permanently assigned to the preparation of the 'Carta Geografica do Reino' from 1799 onwards. In this respect the Portuguese were probably ahead of the Spaniards. But for some reason, no doubt the bankruptcy of the State, these researches had yielded nothing that was of use to the traveller and very little that was of advantage to the army or the commander of an allied force. The survey of the neighbourhood of Lisbon, carried out by Major Neves Costa as the basis for his proposal of fortified lines to cover the capital, proved to be inaccurate and misleading. The only tangible result of this interest in topography was the so-called 'Mapa Militar', compiled by one of the officers concerned in the 'Carta Geografica', Major Lourenco Homem da Cunha d'Eca, and published in the year of the Battle of Vimeiro by Eloi de Almeida . It was a large map (73 x 134 cm) in two sheets, more reliable than Lopez's Portugal (1778), but, as experience in the war was to show, contained several inaccuracies and distortions.²

A copy of this map is in the Library of Congress and can be seen at [Carta militar das principaes estradas de Portugal. Por L.H. - Lisbon 1808](#)

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1. He implemented sweeping economic policies in **Portugal** to regulate commercial activity and standardize quality throughout the country. Pombal was instrumental in weakening the grip of the **Inquisition**. Further information see [Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, 1st Marquis of Pombal](#)

² *Wellington's Headquarters* by SGP Ward, pages 103-110