

LEGENDS AND BELIEFS OF THE NAME BRAZIL IN ANTIQUE CARTOGRAPHY

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The name Brazil is known practically since the 12th century, cited in several legal documents, as trade and commerce lists, especially from old Italy and France. As a place name, the name Brazil is present in the Cartography, at least since 1325, in a map due to the Genevese cartographer Angellinus Dalorto, coming to be repeated in others maps lengthily until the mid of the 15th century, having no relations with the discoveries occurred on the new Continent.

The theories about the origin of the name Brazil are diverse, committing to explain its etymology through associated lineages to different languages and sometimes, with quite different explanations. The painting properties of pau brasil (Brazil tree) were already well known and their use was also quite diffused, some hundreds of years before Brazil's discovery. A large part of the name origin is directed to stick Brazil, however some other theories are presented.

On the other hand, relating to the name Brazil presence in cartographic documents, almost in all maps before the 16th century, are found references to the name, mainly as an island, not specifically with a unique writing, but related to several others, coming from the etymological study of the word, and situated at various sites and often in various places at the same time. The most common names are the following ones: Brazil, Berzil, Bracie, Braszil, Bracir, Brasill, Brezill among others, as well as references as one of the mystics' islands of Tenebrous Sea.

The island was represented by cartographers and geographers so famous at the time, as Abraham Ortelius and Gehard Merkator, from the 14th century, as an impressive amount of representations throughout the time until the end of the 16th century. A reminiscence, or not, today are found some rocks called Brazil, in the west Ireland coast,.

Together with the Brazil Island, several legendry and beliefs about other mystical islands existed in the Atlantic Ocean, such as the San Brandan, Not or Never Found, Seven Cities Islands and others, many of them having direct links with the Brazil Island.

This paper aims to recover a cartographical-historic study from that epoch, prior to the great discoveries, presenting the legends and beliefs about the mystical islands, as well as the theories about possible origins of the name Brazil.

It will be shown as conclusion, a link between the name origin, the mystical islands o the Atlantic Ocean, and the Brazilian territory.