

ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses on the personality of the Jesuit missionary Samuel Fritz. A comprehensive monograph of this Trutnov native has not yet been published in Czech, despite the fact that Fritz's spiritual work among Amazonian Indians, as well as his contribution to the world's cartography and exploration of the South American continent, are highly appreciated by specialists. Fritz was the most significant of cartography committed missionaries in Amazonia; his map of the Amazon from 1691, which gives the first relatively precise record of the river, became a model for further mapping of this area for more than 200 years. The source of the Amazon set by Samuel Fritz into the lake of Lauricocha was thought accurate until the mid-20th century. The thesis presents the biography of Samuel Fritz in the context of the historical and political situation at the verge of the 17th and 18th century as well as the contemporaneous geographical knowledge of the New World. Apart from compiling the information from historical documents, scientific publications and archives, the thesis compares the picture of current Amazonia to that from Fritz's times. It builds upon the conclusions of my own research of Fritz's heritage, conducted during a more than two-month stay in the region in 2000. The thesis thus covers three levels - the historical facts interweave with the quotations from Fritz's diary and the author's reports of the current state of Fritz's former territory.

Keywords: Amazon river, province Mainas, reductions, history of mapping of Amazon river, Jesuits in the New World