



ARCHAEOLOGY,

SOCIAL CONFLICTS

AND INDIGENOUS ANCESTRY

IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

FABRICIO J. NAZZARI VICROSKI

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FABRICIO J. NAZZARI VICROSKI



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Preface

Live together

ARCHAEOLOGY AND LIVING TOGETHER IS NOT AN IMMEDIATE association. Archaeology is often taken as dealing with the most ancient past, far removed from the present. Otherwise, archaeology is associated with adventure and entertainment, as with Tomb Raider, and even colonial impetus and overreach, as with Indiana Jones. Archaeology has started and continued to be a military and intelligence gathering action in colonial settings for a long time, since the 18th c. This has been challenged from the start, but increasingly since the mid-20th c. Just when Indiana Jones (1981) started the saga, social issues were at the center of the renewal of the discipline. Natives, but also other subaltern people, took a particular role at the heart of archaeology as the study not only of old things, but also of power relation in society. Archaeology means the study (*logos*) and the gathering of things and ideas

(also *logos*) about power, principles, old and original issues, all different meanings of *arkhé*.

Since the 1960s, the Latin American Social Archaeology (*Arqueología Social Latinoamericana*) developed an early experiment, applying archaeology to study and to empower natives and the subaltern. José Luis Lumbreras was among the pioneers and summed up the innovative proposal of social archaeology:

Archaeology is a liberation weapon, when it helps to find the historical roots of the people, explaining the genesis and features of exploitation; when shows the transient character of states and social classes, institutions and behavior norms; when archaeology interacts with social sciences dealing with contemporary issues and shows the general historicity and the regional and local specificities.

La arqueología, en cambio, es arma de liberación cuando descubre las raíces históricas de los pueblos, enseñando el origen y carácter de su condición de explotados; es arma de liberación, cuando muestra y descubre la transitoriedad de los estados y las clases sociales, la transitoriedad de las instituciones y las pautas de conducta. Es arma de liberación cuando se articula con las demás ciencias sociales, las que se ocupan de los problemas de hoy, y muestra la unidad procesal de la historia en sus términos generales y en sus particularidades regionales o locales” (Lumbreras 1981: 6-7).

In the 1980s, archaeology changed worldwide towards a growing concern with natives and the subaltern, as witnesses

the World Archaeology Congress, established in 1986 (Funari 2006). The inclusion of native peoples, ordinary people in general, scholars from different disciplines beyond archaeology *sensu stricto*, students and scholar without rigid hierarchical differentiation, all these ground-breaking moves characterized the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) and led to a plethora of new archaeologies: public, inclusive, feminist, among others now flourishing everywhere. Archaeology has changed from being a military and imperialist endeavor to being a force, among others, for justice (Funari, 2009). As justice is a most subjective and contested subject, perhaps we should refer to the Hebrew Bible, or Old Testament:

וְנִתְּיָא לַחֲנֹכַּ, הַקְדָּצוּ; טָפְשָׁם, מִנְּמַכּ לַגִּיּוֹ.

Amos, 5, 24

English Standard Version:

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Martin Luther King (1929-1968) quoted this verse in his I have a dream speech:

“I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight.”:

Bernie Sanders (b. 1941) mentioned the same lines more recently.

In Latin America dictatorships led to persecution, exile and even death, in particular in countries of the southern cone, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The expulsion of Paulo Duarte of public life in Brazil is perhaps the clearest intricacies of political and academic persecution (Funari 1994; Soares & Funari 2013). Natives were one of the main targets for the military, resulting in a deepening of genocidal previous trends (Pereira 2018). Archaeology played a role in this (Noelli & Ferreira 2007) since the inception, in the 19th c., but military rule, as the previous dictatorship (1937-1945), deepened the impetus against natives. Distention and transition to civilian rule took a long time, from at least Amnesty Law in Brazil, legalization of political parties (1979), elections (1982), civilian rule (1985), new constitution (1988) all this led to a flourishing of diversity in Brazilian archaeology, from then on. Archaeology increasingly dealt with natives in an inclusive way and this book contributes to further advance the critical stand of archaeology to social critical engagement. *Archaeology, social conflicts and indigenous ancestry in Southern Brazil* pledges for overcoming the apparent conflicts of interests between natives and peasants and farmers, all of them subordinate and if at all victims, not beneficiaries of exploitation and conflict. There is also an environmental

commonality of interests, for the creative interaction with nature foster a better future for everybody, much beyond natives, peasants and farmers, to include everyone, and even every living being. The reader of this volume will conclude the reading much more enlightened and forward looking for a brighter future. Difficult to figure out a more inspiring message.

Pedro Paulo A. Funari

University of Campinas (Unicamp)

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Introduction

WHEN REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT OF the human species, it is immediately noticeable the undeniable contribution of the predecessor generations. As much as living in society, the construction of knowledge is a collective work, which spans time and space. There is an indissoluble timeless connection with the antecedent peoples and also with succeeding generations.

Therefore, it seems simple and even obvious that the understanding of contemporary social demands must encompass a broader reflection upon its genesis. The scenario of land conflicts in Rio Grande do Sul, in the middle of the 21st century, most certainly fits into this perspective. In order to understand and, therefore, contribute to the discussion, it

is necessary to know the historical trajectory of the different social groups involved. A proactive attitude of dialogue and contribution inevitably requires knowledge on the topic, otherwise it is possible to defend and promote actions that can deepen or procrastinate conflicts.

In this sense, the present publication aims to provide an overview of indigenous ancestry in southern Brazil, more specifically with a regional cut in the northern portion of Rio Grande do Sul, where one of the main points of social and territorial conflicts between indigenous populations and farmers in Brazil is concentrated.

Despite the notoriety of the **millenary relation** of native populations with the territory in question, this element is frequently overlooked or omitted in discussions on the subject. At the same time, it is a recurring argument that the farmers have a **secular relation** with that same territory.

This inconsistency is part of a broader perspective of **denying the history of native peoples**. A process of erasing the references to indigenous territory is underway. This context ranges from the search and annihilation of historical documentary sources that may possibly favor the indigenous claim, as well as the **destruction of vestiges and archaeological sites**. This stance was equally perpetuated and even stimulated by historiography for many years. Stereotypes and prejudices against indigenous populations are currently impregnated in Brazilian society, resulting in the current con-

text of social marginalization to which these populations are subjugated.

There have been notorious advances in facing these questions in recent decades. The 1988 Brazilian Constitution is a milestone that assured important rights to native populations, recognizing them as citizens and determining the demarcation of their traditional territories. However, the confrontation of social and territorial conflicts around the subject has been dragged throughout the 21st century. Despite small advances, we are currently experiencing a period of attacks and disrespect for Brazilian indigenous people. The climate of hostility is stimulated by government bodies, such as the Attorney-General Office, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Presidency of the Republic. This belligerent stance not only expresses the contempt towards native populations, but also reveals a complete incapability from the executive to propose remedial actions. The populist discourse stirs spirits, postpones the problem, and ultimately culminates in conflict situations that result in the death of indigenous people and farmers.

Such conflicts are not only limited to territorial dispute, but also involve social, economic, environmental, and cultural losses. The matter must be dealt with seriousness and objectivity.

This publication has a modest proposal faced with this scenario. Briefly and concisely, it is intended to present data

about indigenous territorial ancestry, thus drawing attention to the topic and adding to the debate with scientific argument. This publication should not be construed as a call for the expropriation of farmers or the unrestricted defense of the demarcation of indigenous territories in the face of their ancestral occupation, but rather an opportunity to systematize and disseminate information that, despite its notorious importance, are constantly neglected and delegitimized, even causing negative and irreversible impacts to the Brazilian archaeological heritage.

In order to support this approach, it was used ethno-historical, anthropological data, and, mainly, information resulting from archaeological research developed in recent decades in the southern region of the country. These data allow to historically contextualize the presence of indigenous people in the region.



Territory:

the epicenter of conflict

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF comprehension of the physical space to understand the adaptation and occupation strategies used by the ancient populations in the process of populating a given territory. The material culture produced by indigenous population and revealed by archaeological evidences, in technological terms, both forms of adjustments adopted in relation to the physical and biotic environment, as well as management and anthropization effective actions of this environment in order to allow its occupation and exploration.

Regarding environmental and geomorphological characteristics, the region in question is in the southern portion of the Southern Brazilian Highland. To a large extent this pe-

rimeter also corresponds to the area of dispersion of the Atlantic Forest biome with the Araucaria forests. It also presents a vast hydrography, with emphasis on the tributaries from Uruguay and Jacuí basins.

In this context, archaeology allows to identify certain settlement patterns that are characteristic of that region, whose typology is sporadic or non-existent in the other geomorphological provinces, a factor that denotes both a specific form of interaction and adaptation to the environment, as well as a certain ethnic origin of these sites and archaeological remains.

It is precisely to the western border of the Southern Highland that archaeologists direct their attention when dealing with the beginnings of human occupation in Rio Grande do Sul. The beginning of the settlement leads to the banks of the Uruguay River in the period of transition between the Pleistocene and e Holocene¹. Over the following millennia, these Paleo-Indian hunter-gatherer groups sought to explore the other regions of Rio Grande do Sul, making it possible to find the remains of these populations in practically the entire state.

The current territory of Rio Grande do Sul received new waves of population about two thousand years ago. Different groups of migrants entered the state across the northwestern

¹ KERN, Arno Alvarez. *Antecedentes indígenas*. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 1994.



Figure 1.
Location of the
studied region.

and northeastern borders. Nomadic hunter-gatherers had to mediate space occupation with semi-nomadic potter-horticultural newcomers, speakers of the Tupi-Guarani and Macro-Jê language trunks, and ancestors of the current Guarani, Kaingang and Xokleng indigenous populations, composing two fronts of expansion whose point of interethnic contact was the central-northern portion of the state, in the regions of the Southern Plateau and Alto Uruguai.

Archaeologists unveil information about the life of these groups by digging, analyzing and interpreting the material remains of these populations, thus providing data on their diet, forms of housing, age group, pathologies, domesticated plants and animals, forest management, dispersal territorial, among other characteristics, partially recovering the memory and history of these peoples. Eventually, the archaeological data show solutions and behaviors that can assist in meeting contemporary demands, such as coping with diseases or even environmental problems.

There are almost 4 thousand archaeological sites registered in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, however, not all occurrences are properly georeferenced. Furthermore, the National Register of Archaeological Sites of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute needs to be updated, so the number of sites already known exceeds official statistics². Any-

² Cadastro Nacional de Sítios Arqueológicos do Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (CNSA/IPHAN, 2020).

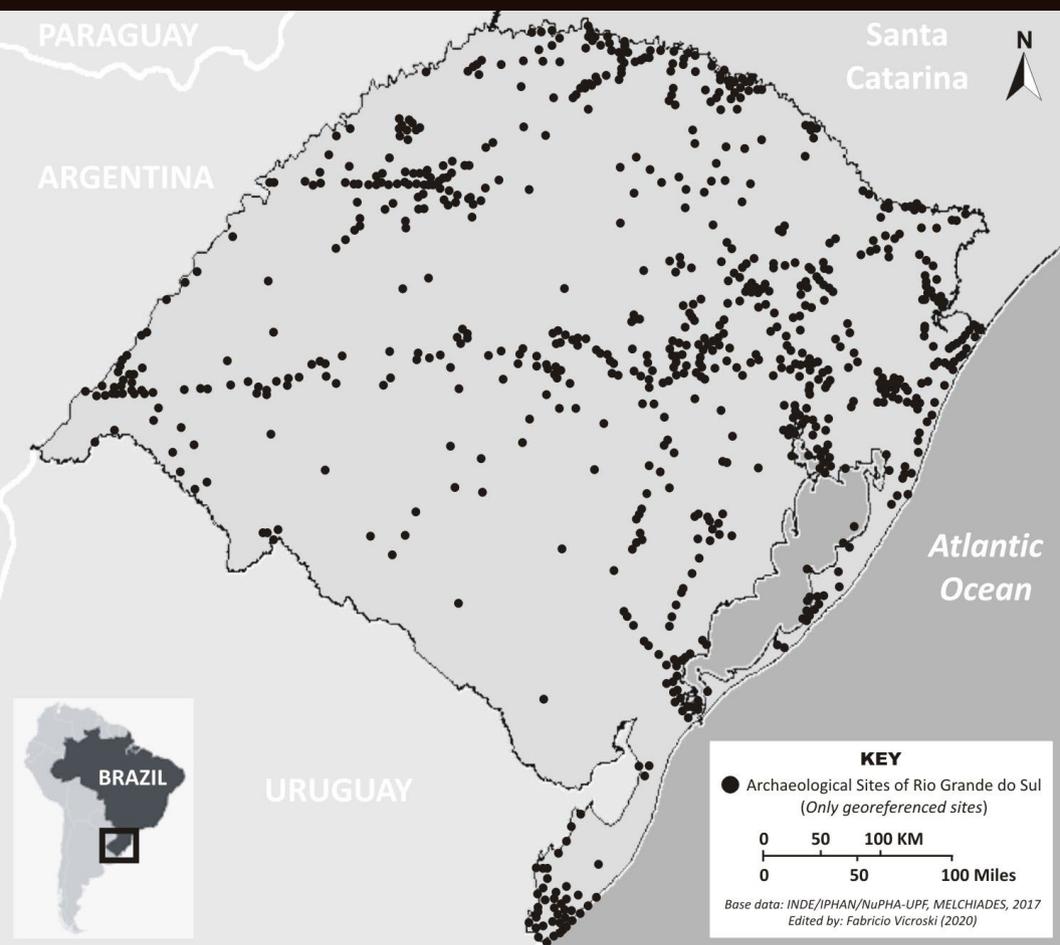


Figure 2.

Location of the archaeological sites of Rio Grande do Sul (only georeferenced sites).

how, such data is an important indicative of the archaeological potential of that territory.

Archaeological evidence refutes the definitions of “virgin forest” and “unsettled lands”, frequently used in the early days of European colonization and still perpetuated by society today. There was no empty land, but land that was violently emptied. There was an intense process of indigenous deterritorialization that should not be ignored.

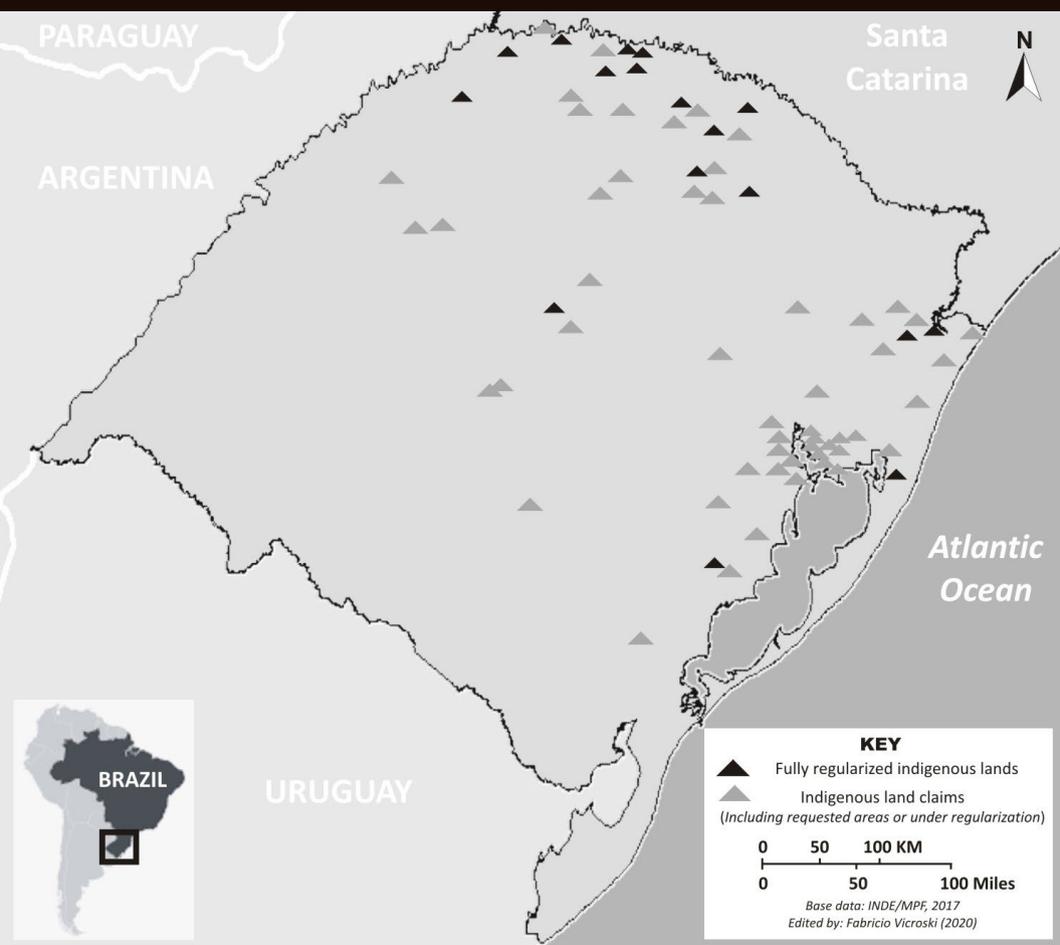


Figure 3.

Claimed, regularized
or in the process
of regularization
indigenous
territories.

Currently, the indigenous population in Rio Grande do Sul has just over 30 thousand individuals of the Kaingang, Xokleng, Charrua and Guarani ethnic groups (Guarani-Mbyá and Guarani-ñandéva), which corresponds to approximately 0.3% of the state's population. The northern part of the state is home to the majority of this population, represented by Guarani and, above all, Kaingang ethnic groups. Despite retrograde manifestations of European ethnic purity that sometimes echo in different segments of society, the genetic and historical-cultural indigenous heritage is shared by a good part of the population of Rio Grande do Sul.

Between the appearance of the first Paleo-Indians inhabitants and the arrival of immigrants in the 19th century, there are millennia of history of human occupation of this territory, with repercussions on contemporary society. Herein is presented a brief overview of the pre-colonial populations of the northern region of Rio Grande do Sul and their main characteristics unveiled by archaeology.



Paleo-indians

THE OLDEST HUMAN POPULATIONS, HITHERTO TRACKED in the current territory of Rio Grande do Sul, cleared the banks of the Uruguay River and its tributaries in the southwestern region of the state about 12,700 years ago, expanding eastward along the Ibicuí River basin³. The migration routes were guided by the courses of the rivers. In the Alto Uruguai, archaeological records point to their presence 11,000 years ago. The basins of the Várzea, Passo Fundo and Apuaê-Mirim rivers served as circulation routes between the banks of the Uruguay river, and the lands of the Southern Plateau and the Jacuí River basin.

³ COPÉ, Silvia Mochlecke; BARRETO, James Macedo; SILVA, Mariane Moreira da. *12000 anos de história: arqueologia e pré-história do Rio Grande do Sul*. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 2013, p. 25.

The climate and vegetation of the time had different characteristics from those of today. It was a period of climatic changes marked by the transition of the geological ages called Pleistocene and Holocene, characterized by the end of the last glaciation.

The progressive melting of large glaciers has caused an increase in the level of the oceans. The coastal coast was dozens of meters below the current level. The predominantly cold and dry climate did not favor the development of large forests. Shrubs, grasses and small trees dominated the landscape, characteristic that reminds the current Pampa biome.

These populations organized themselves in small nomadic groups that constantly moved according to the availability of food. Hunting, fishing, and collecting plants, fruits, and roots were part of everyday tasks. They were structured in family nuclei with a few dozen people, a characteristic that facilitated the mobility and feeding of the group.

The nomadic character demanded that their dwellings had a simple and temporary appearance, similar to small huts covered with branches, vegetation and animal skins. Their material culture was highly portable and adapted to their needs. Their instruments and utensils for ritualistic and utilitarian use were made of wood, bones, stones, leather, and shellfish. The vestiges found in archaeological sites of that period are often limited to artifacts of chipped stone and coal from their fires, the rest of the materials decomposed naturally, except



Figure 4.

Aspect of the characteristic landscape of the Pampa biome (predominance of grasses, herbaceous vegetation and small trees).

for environments less susceptible to the weather and the acidity of the soil, such as grottoes and caves. In such contexts, organic vestiges find better conditions for preservation.

Their material culture also reflects the adaptive responses to the environment in which they were inserted. The set of techniques and procedures applied to the making of stone artifacts is called by archaeologists in the **lithic industry** (term originated from the Greek word *líthos*, which means stone).



Figure 5.

Chipped stone artifacts (arrowheads and spear).

The term “technology”, despite its strong association with contemporary electronic gadgets and devices, is also applied by archaeologists to describe and interpret the gestural involved in the process of making stone tools. The making of these objects was the result of a conscious process that went through the prior conception of the piece, selection of the raw material, and finally the careful execution in successive and planned stages. Such instruments are now completely obsolete and even primitive when compared to the current instruments at our disposal, although, it is necessary to consider that these objects were adequate to the reality in question, that is, they sufficiently met the daily needs of these groups. As new demands presented themselves, new responses and instruments were then conceived, so that each season and each region could demand different adaptations and technical solutions. This ancient cultural diversity, in turn, is currently materialized and recorded in different archaeological contexts in southern Brazil.

Certain groups had a lithic industry better adapted to the fields, others to the forest areas of the Highland. This typological diversity was not limited to instruments and utensils, but was also materialized in the design of villages and houses.

Approximately between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago there was a climatic phenomenon on a world scale, characterized by the increase in temperature that reached its maximum lim-

it in the post-glacial, coupled with the considerable increase in rainfall rates. This period, called the **Climatic Optimum**, brought together elements that enabled new environmental transformations and a certain stability of climatic conditions⁴. With more rain and humidity, the vegetation of the valleys and riversides found conditions to expand. Araucaria trees grew leafy in the basins of the Uruguay, Jacuí, Pelotas, Taquari, and Antas rivers. It was at this time that the current contours of the southern landscape were outlined. The development of fauna and flora also represented an increase in the availability of food resources for human populations that at that time had already dispersed throughout all regions of the south of the country.

Archaeology does not always make it possible to reveal the ethnic origin of the researched human populations. In this case, it is necessary to create names and terminologies that allow dialogue and the exchange of information between researchers. The oldest human groups that arrived in the current territory of Rio Grande do Sul were given the name of **Hunter-gatherer-fishers**, or simply hunter-gatherers. It is an allusion to their form of organization and subsistence. The term **Paleo-Indians** is also frequently used to name these remote inhabitants about whom little information is still available.

⁴ KERN, Arno, op. cit., 1994.

The ethnic origin of the Paleo-Indians is unknown. However, their presence is materialized in the archaeological remains scattered throughout southern Brazil, in addition to their genetic heritage transmitted through contact with other population groups that later entered the same territory.

About 2,000 years ago, new migratory events altered the population dynamics of the current territory of Rio Grande do Sul. The reflections of these events echo in today's society. Two major migration fronts were observed, represented respectively by the speaking groups of the linguistic trunks **Macro-Jê** and **Tupi-Guarani**.



Tupi-Guarani migration

AROUND 2,000 YEARS AGO, THE FIRST HORTICULTURAL-CERAMIST groups who spoke the Tupi-Guarani language family reached the banks of the Uruguay River in the north-west region of Rio Grande do Sul. Some factors such as climate change, population growth and mythological issues are identified as the causes of migration. For these expert canoeists, the course of the great rivers dictated the route of expansion. In addition to facilitating travel, the hydrographic network also offered a whole range of food (hunting, fishing and gathering), the fertile soil of the river floodplains where they established planting areas, as well as the hot and humid climate to which they were accustomed.

The Guarani was a tropical farmer from the Brazilian Amazon. Through a long process of migrations, they expanded through the forested lands of the Río de la Plata, where they created an exclusive domain. The floodplains of the upper Uruguay River as well as the upper Jacuí basin have become a densely occupied border area in that territory. For the reproduction of their traditional way of life, the Guarani sought areas of dense forest and with abundant availability of water resources. In the fertile and warm floodplains of the great rivers, they cultivated plants brought from the Amazon, such as peanuts, corn, tobacco, cassava, cotton and tubers. The sources of protein and fat came from hunting, fishing and collecting mollusks and insects⁵.

Their expansionist impetus, allied to the vast hydrography, made the Guarani dispersion reach all regions of the state, besides territories of the current neighboring countries, like Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina.

⁵ SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio; FERRASSO, Suliano. Caça, pesca e coleta de uma aldeia Guarani. In: CARBONERA, Mirian; SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio (Orgs.). *Antes do Oeste Catarinense: Arqueologia dos povos indígenas*. Chapecó: Argos, 2011, p. 139.



Figure 6.

Map of migration routes and dispersion of the Guaraní peoples.

In the context of migratory routes through the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, the Jacuí River basin occupies a prominent place. After advancing upstream along the Uruguay River, its tributaries on the left bank form access corridors to the central-northern region (Southern Plateau), where the sources of the Ijuí, Várzea, Passo Fundo, Apuaê, and Inhandava rivers are located. From there, the course of the Jacuí River forms an axis towards the center of Rio Grande do Sul, where it changes its course to the east allowing access to the Guaíba estuary, and there to the coastal region and the south of the state.

Between Passo Fundo and Mato Castelhano, within a radius of approximately one thousand meters, are the sources of the Peixe, Guaporé, Passo Fundo, and Jacuí, a watershed between the hydrographic basins of Uruguay and Guaíba, two of the three basins present in Rio Grande do Sul, encompassing four sub-basins, respectively: Apuae-Inhandava, Taquari-Antas, Passo Fundo-Várzea, and Alto Jacuí. In short, it is also a zone of convergence and transition of different ecological, geological, geomorphological, hydrological, vegetation contexts, among other characteristics. Considering the role of rivers in human displacement routes, the region in question can certainly be interpreted as an important area of convergence and cultural diffusion⁶.

⁶ VICROSKI, Fabrício José Nazzari. *O Alto Jacuí na Pré-História: Subsídios para uma Arqueologia das Fronteiras*. Dissertação de Mestrado. Programa de Pós-Graduação em História da Universidade de Passo Fundo. Passo Fundo: UPF, 2011, p. 120.

Research indicates that at the time of contact with the first European settlers, about 200,000 people spoke Guarani in Rio Grande do Sul. If we include the other southern states, in addition to Mato Grosso do Sul and the neighboring countries of Argentina and Paraguay, this number is expected to range between 600,000 and 800,000 individuals⁷. Currently, the various toponyms of Guarani origin can be seen as intangible cultural heritage of this period.

According to Kern⁸, the implantation of Guarani villages did not occur at random, but followed a plan according to repeated patterns from time immemorial. This space generally had a clearing in the middle of the forest, next to high levels of floodplains, still having water resources, clay deposits for its pottery industry, and rocky outcrops or pebble beach for the production of artifacts, among other factors. At times, the effective implantation of the villages was preceded by an initial preparation of the area, such as the opening of fields and the previous cultivation of food.

As the Guarani expanded their territory, they maintained a network of trails and paths between the different villages, thus maintaining communication and political, commercial and cultural ties between the different nuclei.

⁷ SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio. *Pré-História do Rio Grande do Sul*. Documentos 05. São Leopoldo: Instituto Anchieta de Pesquisas - Unisinos, 1991.

⁸ KERN, Arno. *Pré-História e Ocupação Humana*. In: GOLIN, Tau; BOEIRA, Nelson (Org.) *Povos Indígenas. História Geral do Rio Grande do Sul*, vol. 5. Méritos: Passo Fundo, 2009.

In the period of European colonization, many of these paths originated some of the main highways in Rio Grande do Sul, such as the BR-285 crossing the Southern Plateau region at the sources of the Jacuí, Passo Fundo and Várzea rivers.

Under the aspect of archaeological research, material culture is considered the document that allows inferences and interpretations to be made, enabling the construction of knowledge about these populations. Lytic and ceramic artifacts are among the main remains recovered from archaeological sites.

Contrary to what can be assumed, the identification of archaeological sites is not exclusive to archaeologists, as it is often the farmers themselves who identify the artifacts in their daily activities, such as when preparing the land for planting, when opening a road or excavating the soil to make improvements to their properties.

The ceramic containers were used to store liquids and prepare foods and fermented drinks made of corn and cassava. Larger containers, after being worn out or rendered useless, were reused to bury the dead. The burials were accompanied by drinks and food served as offerings in small bowls⁹.

Guarani ceramics come in various shapes, sizes and decorative patterns. Its preparation required a high dexterity and skill of the Guarani potters. Their commitment, care and tech-

⁹ COPÉ, Silvia Mochlecke; BARRETO, James Macedo; SILVA, Mariane Moreira da, op. cit., 1994, p. 91.



Figure 7.

Guarani ceramic containers.

nical knowledge are materialized in the proportions and decorative details. The ceramics decorated with geometric shapes in red and black colors under a white background stand out for their aesthetic uniqueness. In addition to utility vessels, ceramic artifacts such as pipes and ornaments (pendants and necklace beads) were also produced. In archaeology, the Guaraní pottery industry is called the **Tupiguaraní**¹⁰ **Tradition**.

In turn, lithic artifacts (chipped and polished stone) were used for everyday activities such as cutting, scraping, drilling, cutting down trees and working wood, in addition to symbolic applications such as *tembetá*, a male lip ornament used in initiation ceremonies to manhood¹¹, usually made of polished quartz. Among the raw materials used were basalt, diabase, quartz, sandstone and chalcedony, composing instruments such as ax blades, wedges, pestle hands, knives and adzes.

¹⁰ The designation Tupi-Guaraní (hyphenated) refers to the language family, while the expression Tupiguaraní (unhyphenated) corresponds to the nomenclature used to designate the archaeological tradition. The term tradition was coined to designate a set of elements generally related to the production techniques of lithic and ceramic artifacts that persist over a certain period of time. The cultural variations identified within the traditions are interpreted as phases, because, despite having some differences, they still follow the same cultural pattern. The establishment of archaeological traditions refers exclusively to the typological factors of material culture, without considering possible differentiations at other levels. Therefore, such nomenclature should not be taken as an ethnic equivalent.

¹¹ KERN, Arno, op. cit., 2009.

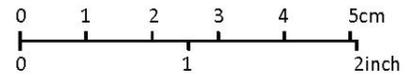


Figure 8.

Polished stone artifact used as an ax or wedge.

The choice of raw material and the gestural actions necessary for the production of ceramic artifacts comprised a previously established operating chain, resulting in typologies that were repeated and improved over time.

In addition to the lithic and ceramic instruments, they also made objects from wood, bones, teeth and mollusk shells, however, such vestiges require specific conditions for their preservation, therefore having a limited occurrence.

The Guarani occupation in the north-central region of the state was fully developed around the 8th century. In spite of the Jê occupation in the Highland and in the araucaria forests of Alto Uruguai in the same period, the Guarani presence is also remarkable in the archaeological record of these areas, denoting a cultural frontier characteristic to the region.

A new social dynamic was created from the contact with the European colonizer, especially with the foundation of the Jesuit reductions and the attacks of the pioneers in the 17th century, demanding a cultural reorganization and adaptation to the new historical context.



Southern Jê migration

CURRENTLY THE SOUTHERN JÊ BRANCH, BELONGING TO the Macro-Jê language family, is represented in the north of Rio Grande do Sul by the Kaingang peoples. Archaeology points to the presence of another group during the pre-colonial period, possibly associated with the ancestors of the current Xokleng (Laklãnõ), then distributed in the Campos de Cima da Serra in Rio Grande do Sul and in the Canoas and Campos de Lages basin in the Santa Catarina state

The Southern Jê peoples were originally from the Cerrados of central Brazil, between the current States of Goiás and Minas Gerais. The migration to the south would have started about 3 thousand years ago, driven by a prolonged period of

drought that resulted in the overpopulation of the region¹².

The Kaingang came to be called that way only at the end of the 19th century, before that period the historical documentation points to a series of denominations, such as coroados (crowned ones), bugres, guanhanás, ybiraiyaras, gualachos, pinares, among others. It is important to note that this plurality of denominations can also indicate different ethnic subgroups. The sharing of the same linguistic branch does not necessarily mean ethnic and cultural uniformity.

It is estimated that the Jê have arrived in Rio Grande do Sul about 2,000 years ago, entering the northeast region at about the same time that the Guarani arrived on the coasts of the Uruguay River on the northwest border. Recent studies, carried out by the Anchietao Research Institute of Unisinos, pointed to an intense Jê occupation in the Campos de Lages region between the 6th and 17th centuries. A still isolated dating point to an even further date, of approximately 2,600 years. However, these preliminary data are not yet susceptible of association with the Jê migration to the south.

The Jê expansion towards the Southern Highland was directly related to the area of occurrence of pine forests (*Araucaria angustifolia*). The autumn and winter seasons represented a period of abundance of pine nuts, guided by collection and also storage, as the jê developed techniques that

¹² SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio (Org.). *As casas subterrâneas de São José do Cerrito*. São Leopoldo: Instituto Anchietao de Pesquisas, 2014, p. 7.

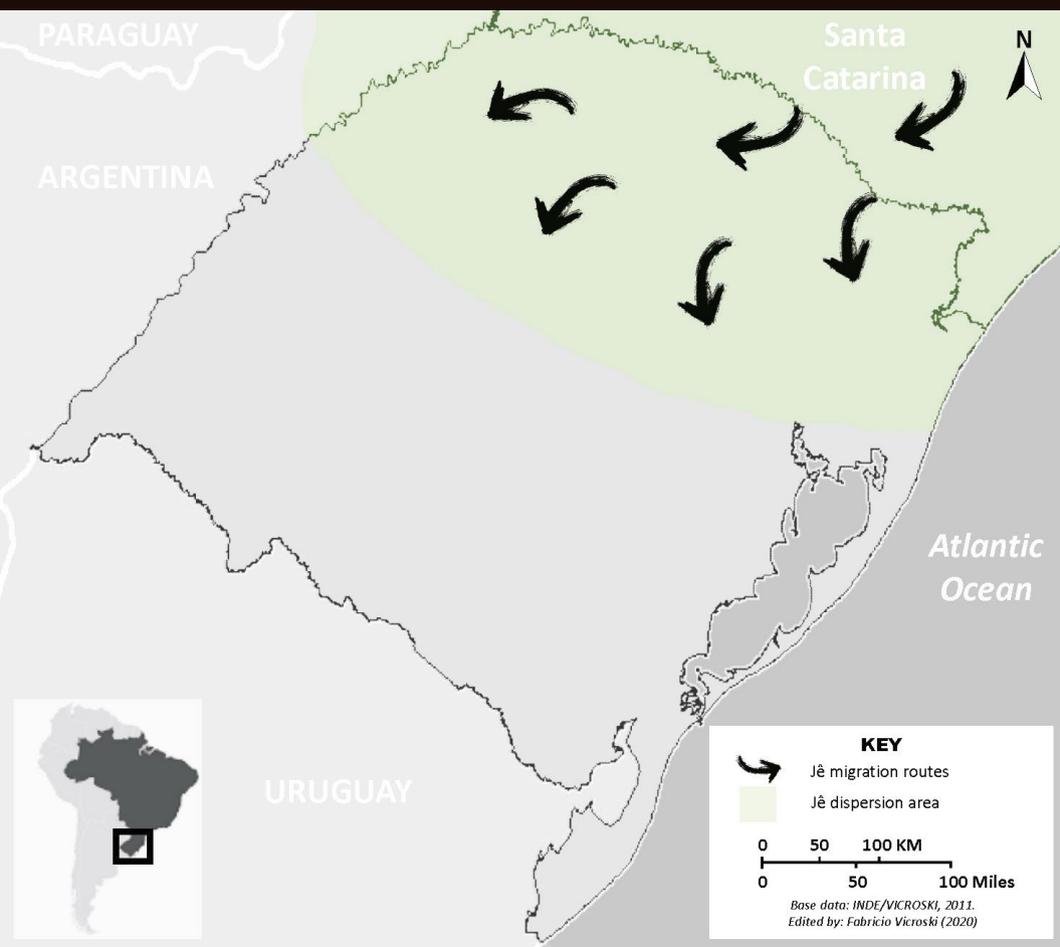


Figure 9.

Map of migration routes and dispersion of the Jê peoples.

allowed the conservation and processing of pine nuts, guaranteeing their offer during spring and summer¹³, when they descended the mountain towards the north coast in order to complement their diet with food provided by the marine and lake environment. In this way, they expanded practically throughout the northern half of Rio Grande do Sul.

Unlike the Guarani who favored the fertile valleys of the great rivers, the Jê had a predilection for the highlands. They installed their settlements next to the pine forests, in places with a strategic view of the surroundings and not far from river sources or small water courses.

They empirically carried out the forest management of araucarias aiming at their subsistence, in addition to the maintenance and expansion of their territory. Estimates indicate that at the time of the arrival of European settlers, the Mixed Rain Forest had more than 200 Araucaria per hectare. Its current dispersion would correspond to about 2% of the original territory¹⁴.

In the 19th century, the Belgian engineer Pierre François Alphonse Booth Mabilde provided services as a surveyor engineer in Rio Grande do Sul, recording a large number of information about the kaingang (crowned ones). In his writ-

¹³ VEIGA, Juracilda, op. cit., 2006.

¹⁴ CARVALHO, Miguel Mundstock Xavier de; NODARI, Eunice Sueli. *As origens da indústria madeireira e do desmatamento da floresta de araucária no Médio Vale do Iguaçu (1884-1920)*. Cadernos do CEOM, Ano 21, n.29. Bens Culturais e Ambientais. Chape-có: UNOCHAPECÓ, 2008.

ings he made notes on the division of pine forests among the tribes subordinated to general dwelling. Initially, the territory was divided according to the number of individuals in each group, the limits were signaled with markings, produced with stone axes in the bark of the pines. Each tribe had a corresponding sign, sometimes these signs were also marked with black ink on the arrows of the chiefs of the tribes¹⁵. In his writings, Mabilde reproduced some of these marks, in addition to others, painted with red and black ink on arrows, attributed to the Botocudos of the forests in the northeastern region of the State, taken as the ancestors of the current Xokleng.

¹⁵ MABILDE, Pierre François Alphonse Booth. *Apontamentos sobre os indígenas selvagens da Nação Coroados dos matos da Província do Rio Grande do Sul: 1836-1866*. São Paulo: IBRASA; Brasília: INL, Fundação Nacional Pró-Memória, 1983.

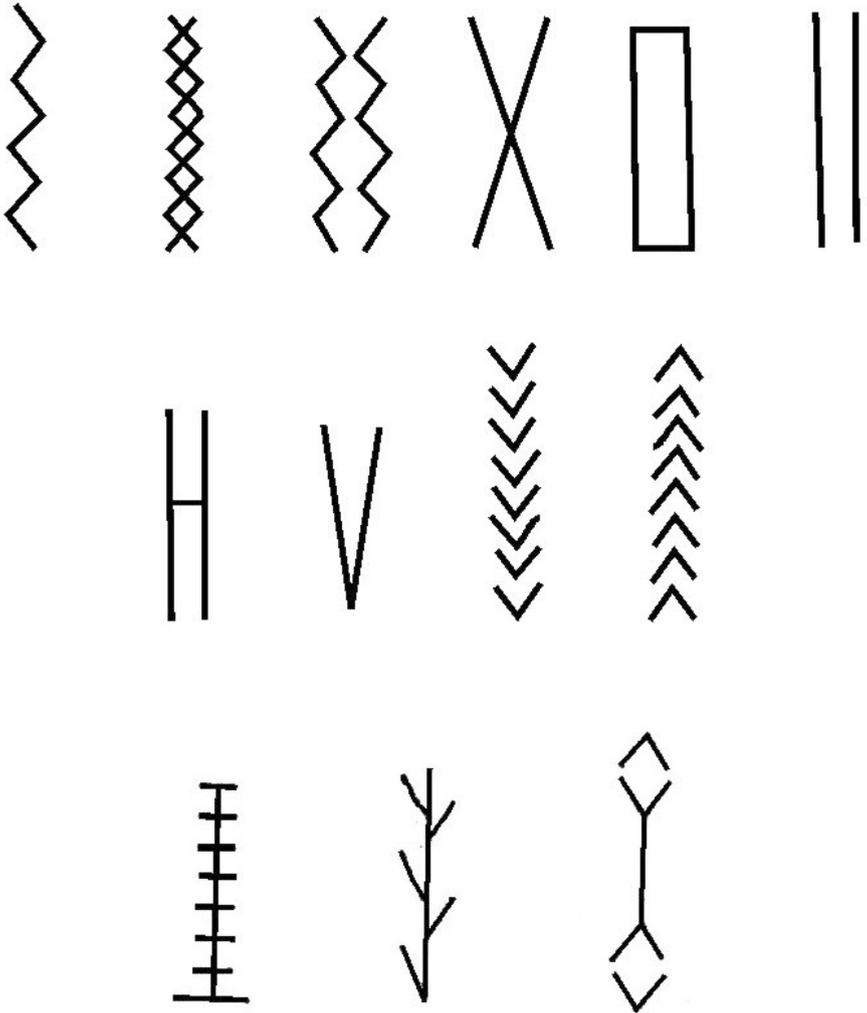


Figure 10.
Graphics related to the Crowned ones (Jê peoples).

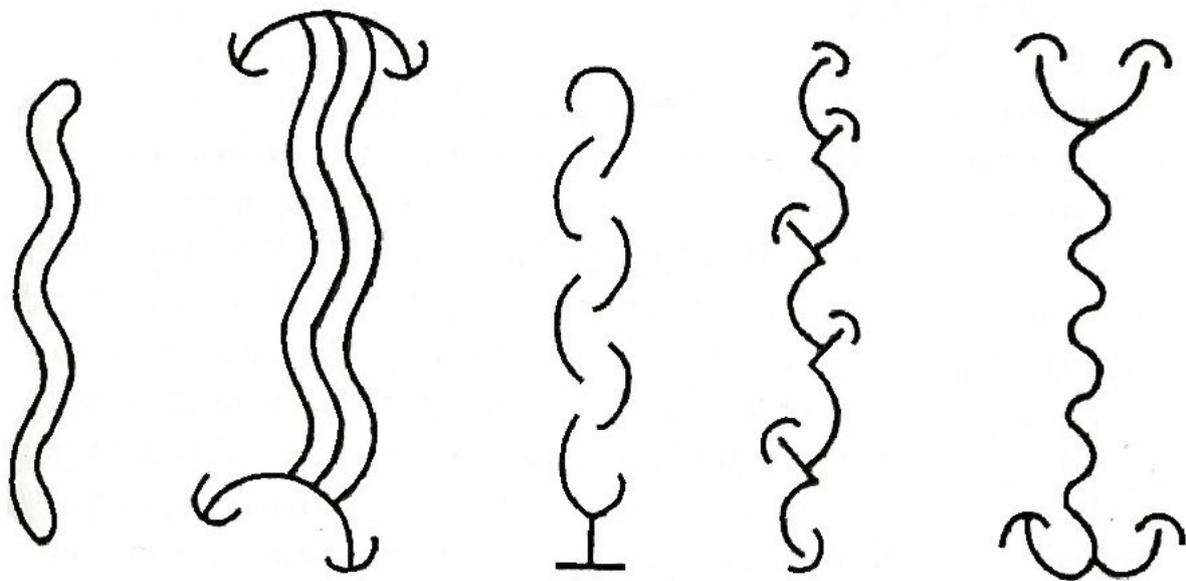


Figure 11.

Graphics related to the Botocudos (Jê peoples).

In the current fragments of forest remaining from the Southern Highland, it is still possible to find their pit houses, one of the most characteristic traces of the Jê occupation of this territory. These are circular or elliptical structures excavated in the ground and covered with a vegetable weave, thus providing a shelter where they could light their fires and take shelter from the cold.

The pit structure was excavated in places with dry soil in high portions of the land, generally in the vicinity of river sources, wetlands and small streams, therefore distant from the great rivers. In the center of its cylindrical shape was placed a central post that supported the roof, made with branches radially arranged, and covered with vegetal weaves that facilitated the flow of smoke from the fires. Archaeological excavations reveal ceramic fragments, lithic artifacts, old fires or even burnt pine nuts, in addition to different overlapping floors that correspond to different and prolonged periods of occupation. Burial mounds are sometimes found around the village with vestiges of ceremonial rituals and offerings¹⁶.

The underground settlement - or semi-underground, in fact - occurred both in isolation and in composing large villages with several dozen pit houses. In addition to the forest sites, currently their traces are also identified in areas of fields and crops, where they are often confused with natural erosion features.

¹⁶ KERN, Arno, *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 46-44.



Figure 12.

Current aspect of an archaeological site with a pit house in the municipality of Passo Fundo.

An archaeological site with a pit house researched in the municipality of Passo Fundo showed a Carbon 14 dating that attests to the Jê presence in the region around the year 650, that is, almost 1,400 years ago¹⁷.

Inside of these structures and mainly in its surroundings are the traces of its material culture, in particular the lithic and ceramic artifacts. The Jê pottery industry differs from

¹⁷ SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio; NOVASCO, Raul Viana. *Pequena história jê meridional através do mapeamento dos sítios datados*. IN: SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio (Org.). *Pesquisas. Antropologia, n° 70*. São Leopoldo: Instituto Anchieta de Pesquisas, 2013.

Guarani ceramics in its shapes, sizes and decorations. It is called by archaeology as the **Taquara Tradition**. The Jê pottery is often underestimated when compared to Tupiguarani Tradition containers, especially due to the absence of large containers and paintings with geometric shapes finely elaborated by Guarani artisans. However, in terms of technique and functionality, the Jê ceramic reflects well-developed technological characteristics, such as the selection, cleaning and preparation of the clay, composition of the antiplastic, control of its burning and oxidation in addition to a perceived aesthetic concern also in the smooth surface containers.



Figure 13.
Jê ceramic containers.

Regarding their lithic industry, they produced artifacts in chipped and polished stone, such as axes, wedges, pestles, scrapers, planers and pickaxes, used for the most diverse daily life activities, such as cutting and shaving the skin of animals, macerating food, excavating the soil and extracting roots and edible tubers. Noteworthy are the curved artifacts with bifacial chipping similar to a boomerang, possibly used to cut down the forest and woodwork¹⁸. As for the raw material, it is noted the frequent use of basalt, diabase, silicified sandstone and cryptocrystalline rocks, such as quartz and chalcedony.

¹⁸ COPÉ, Silvia Moehlecke; BARRETO, James Macedo; SILVA, Mariane Moreira da, *op. cit.*, 1994, p. 74.

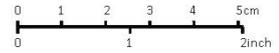


Figure 14.

Polished stone artifacts used to macerate and grind food (pestle and grindstone).

Mabilde registered the process of making bows and arrows by the Crowned ones. There was a predilection for the core of ipê preto (*Zeyheria tuberculosa*). The wood was thinned with fragments of stoneware and then delicately planed with chips of flint or chalcedony, in order to suppress the imperfections, making the arch as smooth as possible. After these steps, they smoothed the bow with the help of dry and rough leaves of the embauba tree, then gave the rods a finish by greasing them with the fat of the jacutinga bird applied with monkey skin. The poles were then heated over a low heat, giving the arches a dark and glossy appearance. The rope was made with palm fibers and nettle. In Mabilde's words, the end result were bows "with a uniformity and finishing perfection that would be difficult for one of our best joiners - with all the competent tools at their disposal - to manufacture a better or more well finished [bow]"¹⁹.

In 2014, the author identified the **Arroio Pinheiro Torto Archaeological Site** in an urban expansion area in the municipality of Passo Fundo. It is a lithic site with material dispersion predominantly on the surface, in addition to the presence of coal in its depth. The site has a small number of vestiges, consisting mostly of chips and cores of basalt, sandstone, quartz and chalcedony, with evidence of anthropic changes (chipping) in addition to a fragmented stone with

¹⁹ MABILDE, Pierre François Alphonse Booth, op. cit., 1983, p. 139.

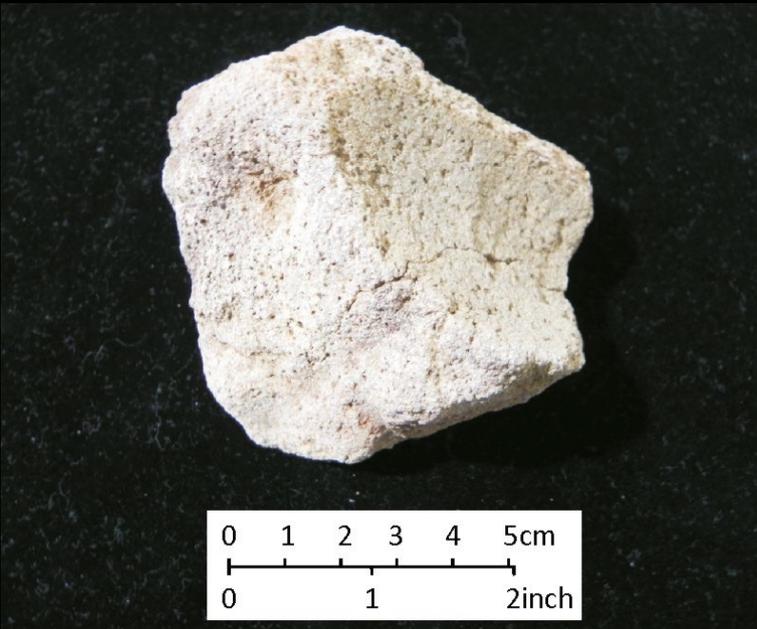
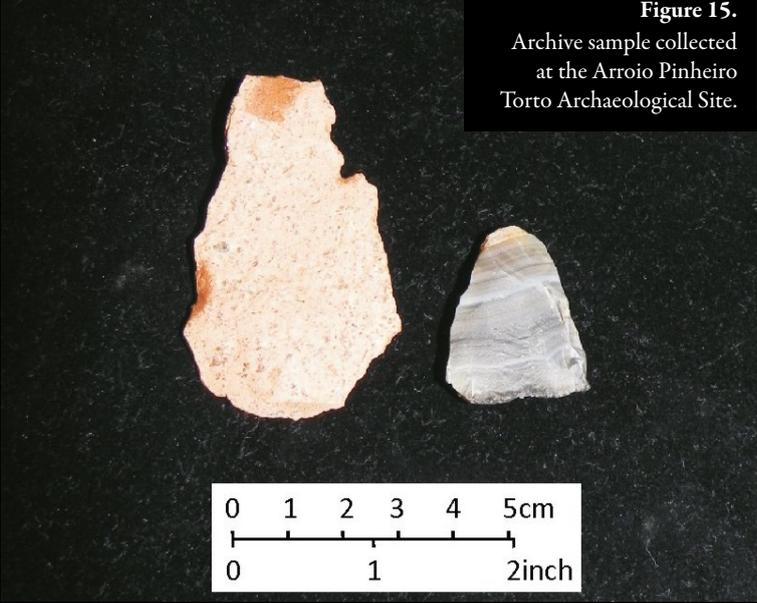
negative marks that suggest its use as a support for polishing of lithic artifacts²⁰.

As the archaeological site has not yet been excavated, the results are preliminary, based on sampling surveys in the sub-soil and the collection of vestiges on the surface. However, when evaluating the context, it is clear that the environment of insertion of the site is compatible with the recurrent settlement sites among the Jê populations in the Highland. Seeking an analogy with the ethno-historical records, a parallel is reached with the typology of the lithic instruments described by Mabilde in the process of making the bows. Certainly, the development of future research on the site may support the deepening of interpretations, however, the simple identification of the site is of great relevance, as it shows that the indigenous material culture and, consequently, the marks of its territorial ancestry, are present even in densely populated and urbanized areas.

²⁰ VICROSKI, Fabrício José Nazzari. *Diagnóstico Arqueológico Interventivo na Área de Implantação do Loteamento Residencial Parque da Cidade II – Município de Passo Fundo – RS. Relatório de Pesquisa*. Erechim: Sírius, 2014.

Figure 15.

Archive sample collected
at the Arroio Pinheiro
Torto Archaeological Site.



Regarding the subsistence of these groups, it came from the collection of foods such as honey, heart of palm, jabuticaba (Brazilian grapetree), butia, pumpkin, ariticum (*Annona sylvatica*), Brazilian cherry, strawberry guava, insect larvae and pine nuts, in addition to fishing and hunting birds and animals such as deer, tapir, peccary, parrot and penelope bird. When necessary, they practiced an incipient horticulture in order to complement their diet with crops such as corn, beans and squashes²¹.

The Jê also used grottoes and caves for protection purposes, temporary shelter and also as burial places. The tunnels (paleoburrows) once excavated by the extinct animals of the megafauna, such as the giant sloth and the armadillo, were also reused for this purpose. Also on the walls of the paleoburrows, rock paintings can be found, attesting to the reoccupation of these structures by the indigenous populations, readapting them for utilitarian (shelter and defense) and ritualistic purposes (burial).

In general, the information resulting from archaeological research has expanded the knowledge about the daily lives of these populations. The interpretive possibilities are expanded even more, always maintaining the concern with the criticism of the sources, by crossing the data with the historical records. Specifically, the Kaingang is an ethnicity that is often stigma-

²¹ VEIGA, Juracilda, op. cit., 2006.



Figure 16.

Current aspect of a paleoburrow excavated by animals from the extinct pleistocene megafauna.

tized both in official documents and in reports by chroniclers and travelers. They were often described as primitive and irrational peoples, opposed to civilization, hostile to whites for opposing the evangelization from Jesuits, colonization fronts, and state settlement policies. Such resistance was interpreted as the denial of Western Christian civilization, which, on the other hand, would have been “peacefully” accepted and implemented by the Guarani²².

²² SILVA, Adriana Fraga da; BARCELOS, Artur Henrique Franco. *A “terra de ninguém”: Índios e bugres nos Campos de Cima da Serra*. IN: GOLIN, Tau; BOEIRA, Nelson (Org.) *Povos Indígenas. História Geral do Rio Grande do Sul*, vol. 5. Méritos: Passo Fundo, 2009, p. 66.

The process of weakening the traditional way of life of indigenous societies began with the contact with the European colonizer, radically altering the dynamics of space occupation and the subsistence of these groups, bringing land disputes to the center of current debates.



Indigenous territoriality

THE UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT LAND AND SOCIAL conflicts necessarily includes reflection on the different concepts of occupation and exploration of a territory, in addition to requiring an exercise of empathy with different cultures. The sensitivity to understand and respect other peoples in relations of otherness is a prerogative not only to understand the current social demands of indigenous people and farmers, but also to guarantee our survival and coherence in a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

From the point of view of governmental bodies, the territory is something to be occupied and exploited economically, assuming as their responsibility the elaboration and application of public policies aiming at this end.

For the European colonists of the 19th and 20th centu-

ries, the occupation of this territory represented the search for decent living conditions, a unique possibility of being a landowner and making a living from there.

In the dynamics of the society then generated from the arrival of the European immigrant, forests and indigenous people were taken as obstacles to progress, and must be integrated into the new society in order to allow the advance of civilization and its expansion fronts, or else they were eliminated, as in the case of Charrua and Minuano people in the Pampean region.

According to the researcher Tau Golin, the term *expansion* designates a process of recurring use between geographers and historians. From this perspective, the Indians are considered a kind of rubble in the territory, ahistorical beings, or elements of nature waiting for the *civilization* that would manifest to exterminate them or end their social structures. Consequently, transformed into a historiographic discourse, this thought demonstrates and articulates a process of representing the *legitimacy* of the territorial expansion of the allegedly civilized colonizers²³.

The notion of occupation of space for the indigenous people was nothing similar to what it was for the white colonizer. Even between Guarani and Kaingang there are substantial differences, since they are different cultures.

²³ GOLIN, Tau. *Passo Fundo do território caingangue*. In: BATISTELLA, Alessandro (Org.). *Passo Fundo, sua história*. Volume 1. Passo Fundo: Méritos, 2007, p. 66.

According to Noelli²⁴, to understand the Guarani space and its traditional occupation areas, it is of fundamental importance to understand some concepts inherent to its culture, such as the definitions of *guará*, *tekohá* and *teii*.

²⁴ NOELLI, Francisco S. *Sem Tekoha não há tekó. Em busca de um Modelo Etnoarqueológico da Aldeia e da Subsistência Guarani e sua Aplicação a uma Área de Domínio no Delta do Rio Jacuí-RS*. Dissertação de Mestrado. Programa de Pós-Graduação em História da PUCRS. Porto Alegre: PPGH/PUCRS, 1993.

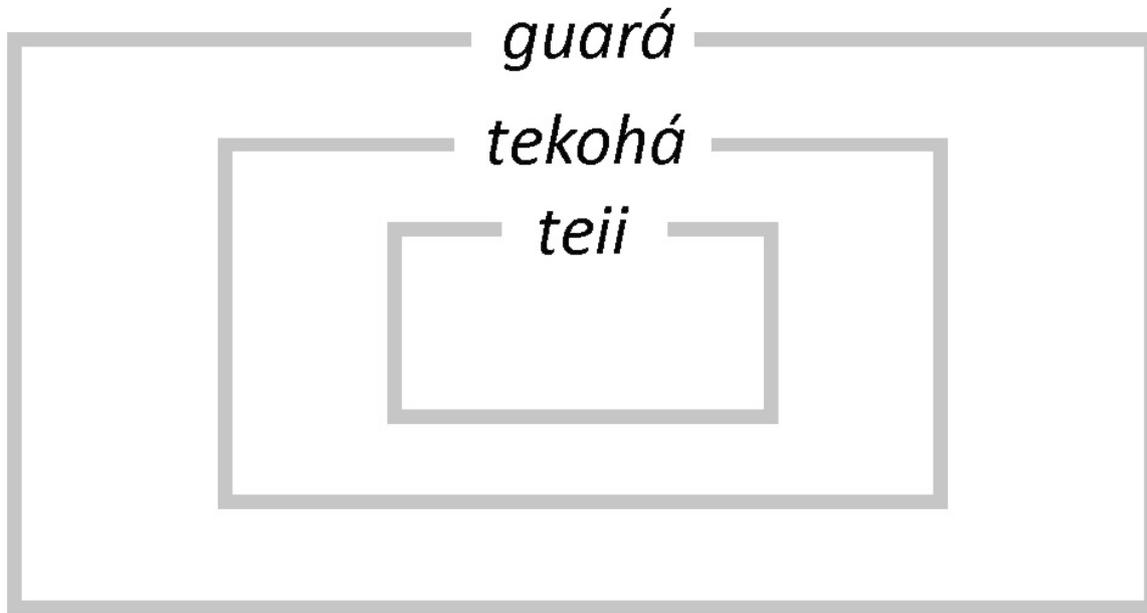


Figure 17.

Graphical representation of the Guarani space organization system.

Guará would be something close to the current concept of region, that is, a wide space covering various environments and landscapes such as rivers, lagoons and mountains. *Tekohá* (or *tekoá*) would be the settlement region itself, that is, the area with specific conditions for the installation and maintenance of the village, precisely delimited by rivers and landmarks, which may include a central nucleus and its partialities. This includes several elements of nature necessary not only for the survival of the group, but also for the maintenance of their culture, thus encompassing places of ritual or symbolic use, where the Guarani found conditions to express the set of beliefs and customs that represent their “way of being”, which they called *teko*.

According to Ladeira, *tekohá* is understood as the place that offers the territorial and environmental conditions that make it possible to exercise the Guarani “way of being”. It would be the space in which an extended family with spiritual leadership could implement the strategies of composing political-social space based on religion and subsistence agriculture²⁵.

The *tekohá* was, therefore, the place where the Guarani developed their way of being (*teko*), and currently corresponds to the archaeological site identified by archaeologists. The group formed by the different *tekohá* composes the *guará*.

²⁵ LADEIRA, M. I. “*O caminhar sob a luz*” - o território Mbyá à beira do Oceano. Dissertação de Mestrado. São Paulo: PUCSP, p. 97.

Finally, the *teii* would be the subdivisions of the *tekohá*, distributed according to their environmental or political characteristics, corresponding to the nucleus of an extended family, bringing together, for example, parents, children, grandchildren and other individuals with some family relationship²⁶.

Advancing the reasoning a little, based on archaeological research, we could ultimately interpret the current territory of Rio Grande do Sul as a mosaic composed of several *guará* according to the Guarani culture. However, this does not necessarily mean that every span of that territory was in fact occupied and exploited by this population in order to take advantage of its natural resources. In turn, the concept of *tekohá* demonstrates that an area of traditional Guarani occupation encompasses not only the ancient sites of their settlements, but also areas of symbolic and ritualistic use indispensable to Guarani culture, such as mountains and waterfalls.

Therefore, the arguments against the demarcation of indigenous territories based on the statement that they once lived throughout the Brazilian territory, only denote ignorance regarding indigenous culture. The area of dispersion of the Guarani during the pre-colonial period should not be taken as an equivalent to the areas of traditional occupation.

²⁶ ANDRADE, Sabrina de Assis. *Uma proposta etnoarqueológica sobre a concepção do território: Os Mbya Guarani e Tekoa Pindoty*. Cadernos do LEPAARQ, N° 21, Pelotas: UFPel, 2014.

In turn, the southern Jê also had a particular notion about the forms of occupation of the territory. According to Ítala Becker²⁷, property right was used in the sense of usufruct of the land for harvesting, hunting and planting. There was a spatial division with respect to the collection of pine nuts, this distribution was made according to the number of individuals, and aimed at organizing the subsistence of groups subordinate to a central tribe, however, there were no territorial restrictions regarding hunting and food collection. The notion of private property of a territory was meaningless to them.

According to Mabilde's reports, there was a high sense of collectivity. No individual ate or drank without sharing with others. There was also no concept of ownership of real estate. "If they had been asked whose territory they lived in, this question would have been so unique and unintelligible, as if they were asked whose space in the sky or the atmosphere that surrounded them"²⁸.

The definition of traditional territory among the Jê can be understood as the place where for generations they had been able to maintain their relation of usufruct of the land, both in terms of their subsistence and their cultural practices. In this sense, the ritual of burying the umbilicus of new-

²⁷ BECKER, Ítala Irene Basile. *O índio Kaingang no Rio Grande do Sul*. Pesquisas Antropologia n° 29. São Leopoldo: Instituto Anchieta de Pesquisas, 1976.

²⁸ MABILDE, Pierre François Alphonse Booth, op. cit., 1983, p. 82.

borns takes on great importance, carried out with the aim of marking the belonging relationship of the child with the place where they were born, also expressing the parents' wishes regarding their child's life, in addition to pointing out the territory where it should preferably be buried. According to this belief, if the umbilicus were simply discarded, the person would have a life of misfortune.²⁹

It should, evidently, be attempted an exercise in understanding these cultures. However, the information presented here certainly does not fully reflect the cultural multiplicity of that period. Even among groups of shared ethnic origin, there were certainly different interpretations about their culture and the occupation of their territory. However, such information is valid insofar as it allows to abstract opinions comfortably supported by our cultural conception, demanding the recognition that today's society is based on a rich ethnocultural diversity.

²⁹ CLAUDINO, Cleci. *O papel social da mulher kaingang da Terra Indígena Guarita*. Monografia de Conclusão de Curso. Licenciatura Intercultural Indígena do Sul da Mata Atlântica. Florianópolis: UFSC, 2015.



Final considerations

FOR MANY YEARS THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE populations that inhabited the fields and forests of Alto Uruguai and Southern Brazilian Highland predominated. Even today, many textbooks ignore this period of history, contributing to the spread of a popular imaginary that inferiorizes the old inhabitants, ignoring that they are people with fully developed cognitive abilities. Though inserted in another historical-cultural context, a factor that does not make them primitive or inferior human beings, but simply people living in another time.

In the last decades, archaeological research has contributed to unveiling this past, evidencing the presence of complex societies in the pre-colonial history of southern Brazil.

“Far from proving the theory of misery and underdevelopment in the study of prehistoric populations, research leads to the verification of the misery of these theories, if they are not continuously tested and subjected to criticism”³⁰.

The ancestors of the current Kaingang, Xokleng, and Guarani peoples arrived in present Rio Grande do Sul about 2,000 years ago. Since then they have been inserted in a context of migrations, cultural contacts (peaceful and warlike), and interethnic conflicts, whether with the populations of hunter-gatherers who were already in that territory, whether with Portuguese, Spanish, the bandeirantes and Jesuits from the 17th century, and finally with the waves of European immigrants and their historical developments in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Despite inhabiting distinct environmental compartments, archaeology shows that for many centuries the Jê and Guarani peoples shared the domain of this territory. Finally, the historical vicissitudes led to the predominance of the Jê ethnic group in the forests of Alto Uruguai, in the Campos de Cima da Serra, and in the forests and coxilhas (hills) of the Southern Plateau. When dealing with a similar context in western Santa Catarina, Schmitz and Beber³¹ point to the 17th century as the strength of the Guarani occupation in

³⁰ KERN, Arno, op. cit., 2009, p. 55.

³¹ SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio; BEBER, Marcus Vinicius. *Em busca dos antepassados dos índios kaingang*. In: CARBONERA, Mirian; SCHMITZ, Pedro Ignacio (Orgs.). *Antes do Oeste Catarinense: Arqueologia dos povos indígenas*. Chapecó: Argos, 20/11.

the region. Then the Guarani were imprisoned by the São Paulo bandeirantes and traded as slaves, contributing to the predominance of the Kaingang occupation in later centuries.

The Bandeirantes invasions of the 17th century caused a sudden decrease in population. The pre-colonial demographic density was only recovered with the massive arrival of thousands of European immigrants from the 19th century. The advance of the colonization fronts surrounded the areas of traditional indigenous occupation. The northern half of Rio Grande do Sul was the last indigenous stronghold and also the region that was later colonized.

In order to discipline the occupation of the territory and also to minimize the risks of potential social conflicts, in the 1840s and 1850s, the Brazilian imperial government unilaterally created villages in order to confine the indigenous peoples in areas that did not correspond to their original domains. At the beginning of the 20th century, with the same intention, new areas were demarcated and effectively recognized as indigenous reservations by the government of Rio Grande do Sul³².

At the beginning of the colonization process, native populations faced illnesses, kidnappings and rapes. Many groups

³² TEDESCO, João Carlos; VANIN; Alex Antônio; SILVA, Gean Zimmermann da. *A pressão pela terra: a política de redução de áreas indígenas e as demandas atuais no Centro-norte do Rio Grande do Sul*. IN: TEDESCO, João Carlos (org.). *Conflitos agrários no norte do Rio Grande do Sul: indígenas e agricultores – dimensões históricas*. Porto Alegre: EST Edições, 2017, p. 269-270.



Figure 19.

Bugreiros militia with the survivors (women and children) of an attack carried out in the early 20th century in the State of Santa Catarina.

were exterminated by militias of indigenous hunters. The so-called “bugreiros” worked at the service of local governments and colonization companies.

Despite the government’s seal of approval for indigenous territories in the early 20th century, their limits were continually attacked, reduced or annihilated. Finally, major actions of expropriation of the reserves were carried out through erroneous agrarian reform policies adopted by the state government between the 1940s and 1960s. In the following decades, such actions reverberated through intense land conflicts in Rio Grande do Sul³³.

³³ TEDESCO, João Carlos; VANIN; Alex Antônio; SILVA, Gean Zimmermann da, op.

This is a peculiar context compared to other regions of the country where indigenous territories are notoriously threatened by illegal invasions. In the case in question, the main illicit attacks of the mid-20th century were headed by the state government. Basically, the current demands of the Kaingang and Guarani peoples in the northern half of the state - as well as those of the Xokleng and Charrua peoples in other regions - are not aimed at retaking all of their ancient ancestral territories delimited by archaeological sources, but at restoring part of their territoriality undermined by the public policies of colonization implemented in the first decades of the republican period. At the same time, descendants of European colonizers should not be penalized for governmental conduct that resulted in the dismantling of indigenous territory and its current social liabilities. The eventual removal of farmers who legally acquired their land should only occur in view of the adoption of just indemnity procedures, otherwise the context of social injustices is perpetuated.

Finally, it is interesting to keep in mind that the territories in dispute are mainly occupied by descendants of Italian, German and Polish immigrants, whose peasant families are dedicated to agriculture in family smallholding. The current territorial conflicts are, to some extent, also a reflection of the social and economic problems faced by Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries.

cit., 2009, p. 271-274.

If it is considered that all treaties and agreements with the European Union must respect human rights in line with its Charter of Fundamental Rights, it is believed that it would be a proposition to stimulate discussions on these conflicts within the framework of negotiations between Mercosur and the European Union. The alleged trade negotiation, currently ongoing, is announced as the biggest agreement between economic blocs in history, responsible for around 25% of the world economy and a market of 780 million people³⁴. Apparently, the notorious dismantling of Brazilian environmental policy has monopolized attention and suppressed other equally important discussions.

Regardless of any historical ties involving European countries in contemporary social conflicts in southern Brazil, the consolidated context of human rights violations that orbit around the theme is presented as reason enough to promote a broader discussion on conflicts.

While relying unilaterally on the initiative for the elaboration and application of public policies for agrarian reform by the state and federal governments, the blood of indigenous people and farmers will continue to be shed.

The social scenario and the historical context of the demands are indeed complex. The maintenance of property rights for small farmers and the incompatibility of restoring

³⁴ According to data from the Chamber of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Economy.

territories to indigenous peoples, are two antagonistic positions. Even a possible resolution of the impasse will not completely end the social, cultural, environmental, and economic conflicting situation. Regardless of the positions taken, the reflexes are and will be felt beyond the subjects directly involved. Such a scenario requires a deep reflection that must be acknowledged by the whole society.

In this context, archaeology is inserted as a possibility to show that both indigenous and farmers, whose ancestors migrated to these lands in search of better living conditions, have a common past. Given this perspective, intolerance weakens and the similarities are accentuated, showing that both parties can act together in the search for a society with less social injustices.



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Figure 19. Bugreiros militia with the survivors (women and children) of an attack carried out in the early 20th century in the State of Santa Catarina *Collection: Fundação Genésio Miranda Lins.*



ARCHAEOLOGY increasingly dealt with natives in an inclusive way and this book contributes to further advance the critical stand of archaeology to social critical engagement. *Archaeology, social conflicts and indigenous ancestry in Southern Brazil* pledges for overcoming the apparent conflicts of interests between natives and peasants and farmers, all of them subordinate and if at all victims, not beneficiaries of exploitation and conflict. The reader of this volume will conclude the reading much more enlightened and forward looking for a brighter future. Difficult to figure out a more inspiring message.

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