# PARTICIPATION AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CASE STUDY OF "TAVA, PLACE OF REFERENCE FOR THE GUARANI PEOPLE"

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#### ABSTRACT

The category of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), recently institutionalized by several countries (2000, in the case of Brazil) and, internationally, by Unesco (2003), requires the participation of groups and communities in the identification, safeguarding and maintenance of their heritage. Due to the recent nature of these policies, there is still only a small number of studies examining the levels and strategies of participation used in determining ICH. More recently, Rodney Harrison (2013) argued that is important to study not only the participation of humans in heritage processes, but also, especially in indigenous contexts, the participation of nonhumans. In order to contribute to these discussions, the article describes and analyzes the patrimonialization of the ruins of the São Miguel Jesuit-Guarani Missions, located in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, as "Tava, Place of Reference for the Guarani People". The process lasted a decade and initially encountered some resistance from the Guarani. However, the establishment of reciprocity and affinity relations between indigenous and non-indigenous agents, the recognition of ICH's political potential and the influence of spiritual aspects, including nonhumans, promoted the participation of the Guarani, who proved to be essential actors for the identification and registration of the cultural landmark in 2014.

#### **Keywords**

Brazil; dialogical heritage; Guarani; intangible cultural heritage; participation

# Participação e património cultural imaterial: o estudo de caso de "*Tava*, lugar de referência para o povo Guarani"

#### **RESUMO**

A categoria de património cultural imaterial (PCI), institucionalizada no início deste século por diversos países (no ano 2000, no caso do Brasil) e, a nível internacional, pela Unesco (2003), exige a participação dos grupos e comunidades detentores dos bens culturais na sua identificação, salvaguarda e manutenção. Devido ao carácter recente destas políticas patrimoniais, ainda existe um número reduzido de estudos que reflitam sobre os níveis e estratégias de participação utilizados no PCI. Mais recentemente, Rodney Harrison (2013) defendeu a importância de não só estudar a participação de humanos nos processos patrimoniais, mas também, nomeadamente, em contextos indígenas, de não humanos. Com o intuito de contribuir para estas discussões, o artigo descreve e analisa a patrimonialização das ruínas da Missão Jesuítico-Guarani de São Miguel, localizadas no estado brasileiro de Rio Grande do Sul, enquanto "Tava, Lugar de Referência para o Povo Guarani". O processo durou uma década e encontrou inicialmente diversas resistências por parte dos Guarani. Contudo, o estabelecimento de relações de

reciprocidade e de afinidade entre agentes indígenas e não indígenas, o reconhecimento das potencialidades políticas do PCI e a influência de aspetos de ordem espiritual, incluindo de não humanos, promoveram a participação dos Guarani, que demonstraram ser atores essenciais para a identificação e registo do bem cultural em 2014.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Brasil; Guarani; participação; património cultural imaterial; património dialógico

### PARTICIPATION AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The category of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) was institutionalized at the beginning of this century, at the international level, through the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Unesco (2013) and, at the national level in Brazil, in 2000, through the National Program of Intangible Heritage (PNPI), coordinated by the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN). Unlike tangible heritage, ICH can only be registered and safeguarded if it is part of the active life of groups and communities. For this reason, national and international ICH legislation introduces significant innovations in recognizing the crucial role of participation, of groups and communities, in ICH production, identification, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation (Blake, 2009). This innovation also stems from criticisms on tangible heritage policies that are exclusively regulated by the state and scientific experts (Harrison 2013; Smith, 2006) and from the need to develop "bottom-up" policies that recognize the knowledge and experience of the heritage holders (Herzfeld, 1991). This approach has become increasingly important in managing the dissonance inherent to heritage, particularly in plural societies (Ashworth, Graham & Turnbridge, 2007; Ashworth & Turnbridge 1996). In any case, as in other contexts (Cooke & Kothari, 2004), the use of participation has also been criticized because of the risks of its instrumentalization by the state or certain agents of the communities, and because of the dangers of essentializing and reifying concepts such as group, community and culture (Bortolotto, 2014; Noyes, 2006).

However, at the institutional level, and in most studies on this topic, participation in the ICH has only been equated in terms of human action. Drawing on the works of Bruno Latour and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and his work with Aboriginal peoples in Australia, in *Heritage: critical approaches*, Rodney Harrison (2013) expands on the idea of participation in a constructivist perspective in order to include the participation of nonhumans and things, and proposes the concept of "dialogical heritage". According to this thesis, heritage is not constituted by the attribution of meaning by human minds to objects and practices, but emerges in an interactive and mutually constitutive way through the relations established and continually reconstructed between humans, human and nonhuman, and between these and inanimate objects. This way of thinking the world breaks with the Cartesian divisions of mind/body, nature/culture and human/

nonhuman, and is based on a "connectivity ontology" that urges us to analyze how the connections between different elements construct the whole. As Deborah Bird Rose (2011) argues, "connectivity ethics are open, uncertain, attentive, participatory, contingent. One is called upon to act, to engage in the dramas of call-and-response, and to do so on the basis of that which presents itself in the course of life" (Rose, 2011, p. 143). Harrison further argues that the expansion of the concept of participation can promote the creation of "hybrid forums" in which experts, non-experts, humans and nonhumans participate in the construction of heritage in order to foster a "dialogical democracy". In short, if heritage is ontologically dialogic, it is essential to understand, as we will examine in this article, the participation and mutual influence of humans (experts and non-scientific experts), nonhumans, and things.

With this in mind, the article aims to understand how ICH emerges through the relations established between these various actors, describing and analyzing the case study of the IPHAN's patrimonialization of the ruins of the Jesuit-Guarani Missions in São Miguel as "*Tava*, place of reference for the Guarani people". Currently, the Guarani inhabit an extensive area of South America, including Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and the south and southeast regions of Brazil. Those who live in Brazil are divided into three groups: Kaiowá, Ñandeva and Mbya. This classification was proposed by Schaden (1974, p. 2) based on linguistic and cultural differences, but it is also recognized by the indigenous people, although the use of the ethnonyms may diverge, as is common in the case of native classifications (Castro, 2002a). The article, as do the Guarani themselves, alternates between the terms "Guarani", "Mbya" and "Mbya-Guarani". In methodological terms, the work used ethnographic observation among Mbya-Guarani and other actors, such as the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Video in the Villages, interviews with indigenous and non-indigenous participants, and archival research.

# THE JESUIT-GUARANI MISSIONS AND THE GUARANI THAT NEVER LEFT

The ruins of the Cathedral of São Miguel are part of the Jesuit-Guarani Missions built during the 17th and 18th centuries in the southern cone of America under Spanish rule. The purpose of the Missions was to "civilize" and catechize the indigenous peoples, mostly Guarani, in order to assimilate them as "productive" subjects of the Empire (Ganson, 2003). In 1750, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty of Madrid, which updated the Treaty of Tordesillas, and determined that the former would transfer the Colony of Sacramento to the latter, in exchange for the territory corresponding today to, approximately, the southern and interior states of Brazil. In the twentieth century, these structures were classified as heritage by the nation-state (1938) and Unesco (1983). In both cases of patrimonialization, the supposedly civilizing dimension of the Society of Jesus was emphasized and the contribution and agency of the indigenous people ignored.

For a more detailed analysis of the non-indigenous heritage discourses and images on the Jesuit-Guarani Missions, see "O Plano, o "Contraplano e o 'plano sem plano': imagens ocidentais e os Mbya Guarani das Ruínas de São Miguel" (Lacerda, 2018a).

Until recently, historiography and heritage discourses argued that the missions under Portuguese command had been quickly abandoned and that the remaining indigenous people had assimilated with the migrant population of the region. However, recent studies, including the work developed during the ICH recognition process, indicate that the structures continued to be used until the mid-nineteenth century, and that a part of the indigenous population took refuge in places far from colonization, continuing to frequently visit the Missions' ruins (Batista, 2015). In the 1990s, a group of Mbya-Guarani settled more permanently in São Miguel. In 2000, through the intervention of several non-indigenous allies of the Mbya, the Rio Grande do Sul State Government purchased the area of the Inhacapetum Indigenous Reservation where that group founded the Tekoa Koenju village. Due to the small size of the reservation, indigenous people continue to sell handicrafts at the São Miguel Archaeological Park to buy food and other subsistence products (Lacerda, 2018a).

# NATIONAL INVENTORY OF CULTURAL REFERENCES

The PNPI established the Register of Cultural Goods of Intangible Nature and the National Inventory of Cultural References (INRC), as a methodology for mapping the cultural goods. The INRC consists of several steps: preliminary survey; identification; and documentation. The IPHAN Superintendent of Rio Grande do Sul (IPHAN-RS), Ana Lúcia Meira, proposed the application of this instrument to the minority populations of the state which had not been considered with regards to the processes of tangible heritage. Taking into consideration that the Cathedral of São Miguel is one of the main symbols of that state, and that the presence of the Mbya selling handicrafts at the Archeological Park was controversial at IPHAN, Meira, together with fellow historian Beatriz Muniz Freire and the anthropologist that worked at the main IPHAN office, Ana Gita Oliveira, decided to implement the INRC with this population. The government agency established a protocol with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), and hired a team of anthropologists. This group was led by Catafesto de Souza, who had already worked in the areas of archeology and anthropology in São Miguel, namely with the Guarani population (Souza, 1998).

Right at the first meetings, Catafesto de Souza warned IPHAN that the Guarani are a reserved people due to the colonial and racist persecutions they suffered and continue to suffer, and because conviviality with the *jurua*, that is to say, the nonindigenous people, is dangerous in cosmological terms for their good living (Pierri, 2018; Pissolato, 2007). However, in recent years, due to the consecration of indigenous rights in the 1988 Constitution, the Guarani initiated a process of opening up to civil society in order to fight against the racism they are a target of, and to claim the demarcation of their lands, using policies of objectification of culture (Handler, 1988) or "culture with quotes" (Cunha, 2008), such as the recording of a music CD and regular presentations of the children's choir in the public market square of the state capital, Porto Alegre (Pires,

2007). Although the Guarani are one of the most numerous peoples in Brazil and have a continental presence, the demarcated lands are small and those that were bought by the states, such as Inhacapetum, are not recognized as such by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI). In addition to the cross-cutting problems of indigenous peoples in Brazil, this situation is exacerbated by the intense agricultural colonization in the south of the country that has pushed the Guarani into increasingly small areas of forest, sometimes on the other side of the border, or, as the Mbya, who do not accept the territorial limits imposed by the nations say, "on the other side of the river". This conjuncture causes the national society to call them "foreign", "Argentine" or "Paraguayan" and to not recognize their right to land.

For these reasons, in spite of the distrust caused by the sudden interest of the state, that is, the IPHAN, to hear them now, after centuries of colonization and racism, the Guarani agreed to participate in the INRC when they recognized in the new category instituted by the state, heritage, the political potential to defend their land rights. Even so, when they became aware of IPHAN's inability to deal with these issues, they demanded the presence of FUNAI representatives at every meeting organized during the INRC. In order to guarantee the involvement of the Guarani and to establish relations of reciprocity and affinity between indigenous and non-indigenous agents, IPHAN-RS promoted and financed Guarani meetings in several villages, and anticipated some ICH safeguard measures (e.g., financial support for the naming ritual [nheemongarai], the construction of prayer houses [opy], and filmmaking workshops).

The team of anthropologists faced other dilemmas on the ground. According to the official documentation of the PNPI, the ICH must be owned by the community of a certain "site". However, the Guarani are characterized by their multilocality (Pissolato, 2007), that is, by traveling frequently between villages for, as they say, "visiting relatives", and changing their place of residence several times during their lifetime<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the socio-political unity of the indigenous peoples of the lowlands of South America is not, contrary to common sense, the village, but the extended family, constituted by networks of affinity built through marriage, commensality and conviviality. In this sense, as the team of anthropologists argues in the report of the identification stage (INRC, 2006), and other evidence presented later corroborates<sup>3</sup>, the most appropriate translation of the concept of community to the Guarani way of life would include all the individuals of this people that live in several villages and states.

Nonetheless, at the beginning, the study was conducted solely with people living in the INRC-boundary site: the ruins, where the Mbya sell handicrafts and Tekoa Koenju, where they live. Due to the small size of the indigenous lands, a village is often divided

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This mobility is also based on the Guarani *ethos* of following the conduct of the deities who, like the sun (*Kuaray*), every day brings light and life on his course from the east (where *Nhanderu Tenonde* lives) to the west (where he visits the god *Tupã*).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The demand for the expansion of INRC to the other Mbya villages in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay during the "First Meeting of Indigenous Peoples and Heritage: the Mbyá-Guarani and the Missions" and the proposal to register *Tava* as belonging to all Guarani and not exclusively to the Mbya.

politically into several large families. According to the anthropologist Daniele Pires (2007), of the INRC team:

from the political point of view, the village was divided into two groups at the time of the research: those who supported the then chief Floriano Romeu (Verá Xondaro) in his practices of co-opting politicians in the region, accepting resources from them in exchange for votes from the indigenous people, of not sharing with all the resources destined to the whole community, etc.; and those who revolted and stood against the cacique and his supporters because of these practices. The latter claimed to be more concerned with *Mbyá rekó* in the way of treating the people, not having an interest in accumulating money, always trying to be close to *Nhanderu* (god/our father), saying that greed for money is a *juruá* thing and that the *Mbyá* who enters this game is moving away from *Nhanderu*, is lost, is sick. (Pires, 2007, p. 96)

Thus, as Carlos Moraes, another anthropologist from the INRC team, summarized: "what was in fact in question was a dispute between two large families, who, due to lack of space, were forced to occupy and divide the same area" (Moraes, 2010, p. 35). During the INRC, a case occurred that uncovered this problem. At one point, Catafesto de Souza asked IPHAN for the main Mbya interlocutors to be paid as researchers. Since they did not have an individual taxpayer's registry (CPF)4, the number of another Mbya was provided, whom should have transferred the payment to them, but did not do so. Catafesto de Souza went to the village to solve the situation, but was prevented from entering it. From there on, the research was suspended in that space. On the other hand, the INRC report (2006, p. 8) does not mention that episode and refers to "a series of contradictions, generated by the doubt about the benefits of applying the INRC", which would have been caused by external agents and which culminated in the substitution of the cacique because of interferences of political parties in an election year. Due to this obstacle, the INRC team extended the project to other villages with which they had affinity due to projects developed jointly with UFRGS and Cacique José Cirilo (see below). This was detected by IPHAN officials who tried to extend that universe during their meetings, inviting other Guarani representatives and indigenous and indigenist NGO [such as the Guarani Yvyrupa Commission (CGY)] and the Centro de Trabalho Indigenista (CTI)].

The second stage of the INRC was delayed for five months due to "administrative and financial contingencies" that led to some negative consequences, such as the loss of some Guarani events, a break in daily interaction and, above all, the demobilization of Mbya interlocutors. Due to continued political problems at Tekoa Koenju, in August 2005, the INRC team asked José Cirilo, chief of Tekoá Anhetenguá, the Mbya village closest to Porto Alegre, and named by some as *Mburuvixá Tenondé* General Cacique of Rio

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Equivalent to the tax identification number (NIF) in Portugal.

Grande do Sul<sup>5</sup>, to accompany them and intercede with the people of the village. Cirilo was born in 1974 in Argentina, and moved to Brazil when he was very young. Eventually, he settled in Lomba do Pinheiro, where he founded Tekoá Anhetenguá [True Village] and a children's choir that makes presentations in Porto Alegre and other localities. His mother, *kunha karai*<sup>6</sup> Ana Pires, and his brother, *karai* Augustinho Duarte, both important spiritual leaders, are his main influences and, for these reasons, Cirilo "presents himself as a spokesperson of tradition that relies on the approval of many Mbya old people, adults, women and children" (Pires, 2007, p. 124). On the other hand, he also learned early on to collaborate with state projects and NGO in order to build allies for the struggle for the rights of his people, even though he also criticizes them. As explained by Pires (2007, pp. 131-132), who was supervised during her master's by Cirilo himself, he

[d]iffers from most Brazilian indigenous leaders because he does not fight for equality and does not agree with the recurring discourse that one day the indigenous people will become politicians and presidents. For him, the goal is to consolidate recognition of the cultural difference of his people, where school, church, political parties and health do not exist as separate categories from the rest of life; and at the same time defend equality in the fulfillment of their rights, but differentiated, specific. (Pires, 2007, pp. 131-132)

Cirilo acquiesced to the team of anthropologists request and, during the first day in São Miguel, visited the house where the Mbya sleep, in the Archaeological Park, when they are selling crafts and cannot return to the village. They complained of the structure's lack of conditions, such as the absence of plumbing and electricity. At night, he attended the Sound and Light Show, which is held daily since the 1970s, and is based on the romantic heritage narrative, in which the Jesuit priests fought for the earthly and spiritual salvation of the Guarani. The next day he reported to the team that he had dreamed of Sepé Tiaraju, the mythical leader of the Guarani of the Missions, and that this was a sign of the gods for him to get involved with the INRC project. According to the report included in the INRC dossier:

that night, in São Miguel, after having circled the Ruins and attended the Sound and Light Show — which shocked me a lot, I did not keep my tears thinking about why only the whites are telling the story of Sepé and the Guarani people - I went to sleep with these pictures on my head. First, I saw only one hill. Forcing the gaze I saw the Guarani person, wearing only *tambeó* [thong], I wanted to hold his hand. He said: I am Sepé and I am alive! There were a lot of rocks up the hill where he was standing. Beyond the stones the earth was very slippery and no one could touch it. The older Karaí had already said that Sepé was not dead, but I did not believe it. (...) This work appeared with the guidance of Sepé, with the truth. (INRC, 2006)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It is, however, important to note that this category did not exist previously in any state in Brazil.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Mbya-Guarani male shaman is called karai, and the female, kunha karai.

This experience marked the definitive entrance of Cirilo into the project, and a greater openness by the cacique of Tekoa Koenju to the INRC.

In 2006, the team organized the "1st Meeting of Indigenous Communities and Heritage: the Mbyá-Guarani and the Missions" with the objective of discussing the INRC process. Cirilo translated the event to "Nhemboaty Mbyá Kurey Tava Miri py São Miguel Arcanjo" and, for the first time, the anthropologists discovered that there was a Guarani name to designate the ruins: Tava Miri. Etymologically, it comes from stone (ita) and person (ava), and can be translated as "stone house" or "stone village". Miri means perfect and heavenly, just as in Nhanderu Miri, those who got to the Land-without-Evil (the imperishable heaven abode). This perspective on the Missions had been transmitted to Cirilo by his mother and his brother, but he considered it important to hold the meeting to hear the voices of the other spiritual leaders and decide the validity of this proposition. For this purpose, Cirilo requested resources for "mobilization trips" to the villages to carry out the invitation personally, including not only political and spiritual leaders, but also young people, women, the elderly and children. On the other hand, Beatriz Freire, of IPHAN, admitted that they face problems in contacting the remaining villages, especially those that had no connection or were not allies of Cirilo.

The meeting was held from December 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The initial idea was to stay overnight at Tekoa Koenju, but visitors chose to settle near the ruins. During days 4 and 5, the Mbya visited Tekoa Koenju, and discussed various topics among themselves. Days 6 and 7 were dedicated to the discussion with the non-indigenous organizations involved, especially the IPHAN. The discussions were thus organized in the way that Cirilo considered most appropriate (Moraes, 2010): first at an intra-ethnic, then at an inter-ethnic level. During the meeting, several leaders demanded that INRC be expanded to all Guarani, including villages in other Brazilian states, Argentina and Paraguay. IPHAN was able to implement the first phase of the INRC, coordinated in this case by the CTI, in the remaining villages in Brazil, but the payment and methodology were not considered appropriate by any proponent to continue the process for the next steps. At the international level, Brazil presented the proposal for a cross-border inventory program with the Guarani at the 2006 meeting of the Regional Center for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPIAL), which produced, however, few concrete results<sup>7</sup>.

#### THE "MYSTERY DIMENSION": ETHNIC BORDERS OF NON-PARTICIPATION

At the end of the second phase of INRC, the team delivered a report to the IP-HAN-RS in which they presented some criticisms and proposed which cultural aspects should be patrimonialized. Regarding the criticisms, in addition to some of the issues already mentioned, the document warned of the bureaucratic, over-schematic, superficial and not holistic approach of the identification sheets, which were inappropriate for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Retrieved from http://www.crespial.org/pt/Proyectos/index/0003/inventario-del-universo-cultural-guarani

understanding the complexity, interconnection and dynamics of culture, especially given the radical alterity of indigenous peoples (Castro, 2002a).

Regarding the cultural assets to be patrimonialized, the report makes the following proposals: 1) the "mystery dimension"; 2) "access to forest areas"; 3) "officially recognize the right of Guarani to exercise their 'free territoriality'" (INRC, 2006, p. 27). According to the institutional classifications that, in the case of Brazil, are divided into the books of registration in "knowledges", "celebrations", "forms of expression" and "places", the proposals of the INRC team are *sui generis* and reveal an attempt to use the report to draw attention to the main cosmopolitan concerns of the Guarani, which was not considered adequate by IPHAN.

However, for the sake of the topic under discussion in this article, it is interesting to analyze the proposal to patrimonialize the "mystery dimension". Firstly, this element refers to the conscious limits of communication that the team had experienced on the ground, including the non-disclosure of aspects of its culture that the Mbya deem dangerous to record and disseminate to the *jurua* (such as the sacred chants received from *Nhanderu*), and the prohibition of audio and/or visual recording or even of attending certain events (e.g., *nheemongarai*). These limits are, however, fluid, constantly under negotiation, and change from village to village or even from person to person. For example, in Rio Grande do Sul and Argentina, filming inside the house of prayer (*opy*) is prohibited, while in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, it is allowed.

Second, these limits are also political and ethnic. Certain elements, like Cirilo, consider that the Mbya must first discuss among themselves and, after reaching a consensus, pass on their opinions and claims to the *jurua*. For example, the meetings mentioned above were first organized with talks among the Mbya, and then followed by discussions with the state bodies on the following days. This approach allows for, on the one hand, the building of ethnic cohesion and, on the other hand, avoiding exploitation by external elements, and divergences and fractures within the group. However, this approach also favors the Mbya, who are privileged interlocutors with the colonial society. In short, as several authors argue, (Clastres, 1974/2013; Pissolato, 2007); Guarani power is intrinsically constituted by a diverse array of power foci (political leader, spiritual leader, extended families, etc.), and the state must promote and accept the internal discussion process, which can take years.

Finally, there is a weariness among the Mbya regarding the work of anthropologists in the villages, especially on the short-term projects of NGO, government agencies, and undergraduate and masters students that do not respect the people's way of life, "only ask questions" and do not produce a substantial return for the community.

In short, as EJ Milne (2012) states, non-participation, or the establishment of limits to participation, is also a form of participation that, in addition to allowing the protection of the (un)involved, is a demonstration of power and an opportunity to subvert the institutional agendas.

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/122

# THE COLLABORATIVE CINEMA OF VIDEO IN THE VILLAGES AND THE MBYA-GUARANI

During the INRC, some Guarani leaders expressed an interest in receiving training in filmmaking, since they consider that only the Mbya know when they want to speak and be filmed. For this reason, IPHAN-RS hired the NGO Video in the Villages (VNA), which has been working collaboratively with indigenous communities for 30 years and which, since 1997, has organized filmmaking workshops in indigenous villages. As we will see, the introduction of collaborative cinema reorganized intra and interethnic relations, leading to the emergence of new leaderships, and expanded the participation to other actors who brought new data to understand the ruins of São Miguel according to the Guarani ontology and cosmology.

The first workshop took place in 2007, initially at Tekoa Anhetengua, and then at Tekoa Koenju. The trainers of VNA, Tiago Campos Tôrres and Ernesto Ignacio de Carvalho, met in Porto Alegre (RS) with the Mbya-Guarani Ariel Ortega, who had traveled from São Miguel. Sandro Ariel Duarte Ortega was born in 1985 in Missiones, Argentina, at Tekoa Vera Guaçu. His name in Guarani is Kuaray Poty, but chose, as filmmaker's name, which he also uses on Facebook, a hybridization between the two: "Ariel Kuaray Ortega" Ortega is a very curious person, as Tôrres explains:

Ariel is a guy that if you start talking about the World War, "Then there was the Cold War! Wow!" And such. A guy who's interested and hungry, hungry for the world... So that's it. Ariel was very much in the mood for battle and there we were introducing very interesting weapons. And he went mad with those tools. (Interview with Tiago Campos Tôrres, March 11, 2015)

Moved by this energy, Ortega, Tôrres and Carvalho arrived at Tekoa Anhentegua very excited. They were received by the cacique Cirilo, who criticized them for their non-Guarani attitude, and even questioned the workshop taking place. According to Carvalho,

our arrival in the village was explosive. (...) We were at 100 miles an hour and he [Cirilo] was at 1. If the Guarani are generally meditative, contemplative, philosophical, Cirilo is even more. We met him and began to talk. My idea of how that moment should be conducted was to explain everything as clear as possible. But we were exhausted, off-kilter, wired and that was our first experience of the collision between the Guarani way of being and the white way of being. The way in which they relate to time and communication, dialogue, silence, despite living in the middle of the city, is radically different. We explained everything to Cirilo, from production to editing, the importance of the finished film, our eagerness to do the work. After listening to this explanation, this rushed outburst of ideas, Cirilo kindly said to us: "Well, you know, you whites are very different from us, you say everything straight away. We don't, we're different, we wait a while". That was when I finally realized what was happening. So I said to Cirilo: "let's start

again". We went back to the car, arrived at the village and we began to talk about settling in, putting up the hammocks, sleeping. (Carvalho quoted in Carvalho, Carvalho & Carelli, 2011, p. 227)

According to Ortega, the workshop was very difficult. The VNA methodology is based on practical, intense and daily learning (usually during three weeks). After learning the basic technical aspects of the camera, the trainees begin filming the village using a direct cinema approach. In order to have a focus, trainers often suggest that students follow a character throughout the day. In the afternoon or evening, trainers and students watch and discuss the recorded material and plan the next day's filming. This immersive interpellation to the real catalyzes new questions and relationships that can give rise to significant political results (Lacerda, 2018b).

Despite the success of this methodology in other contexts, initially the workshop was closed to failure. First, most of the students appeared and disappeared and it was difficult to maintain continuity. Then, as already mentioned, the Guarani are suspicious of projects that come from the outside, are limited in time and do not usually bring a substantial return. This attitude began to generate an atmosphere of suspicion, namely that the students were being paid, because the VNA was present with expensive audiovisual equipment. As Ortega explains, "wow, it was really hard because I was like, 'no, that's not the point. It's the money from the INRC, and the IPHAN called them, but the idea is not to make money or give money. Because the movie is going to be ours [the Guarani's], it's yours'"9.

Because of this, Ortega managed to persuade Tôrres and Carvalho to finish the workshop at Tekoa Koenju, something that was not part of the initial plan. However, the situation in this village was also difficult because of the problems already mentioned concerning the political division of the village and because Ortega did not belong to the extended family that dominated the community's relationship with the *jurua*. After a few days of tense atmosphere, the cacique Floriano Romeu decided to suspend the workshop and had the trainers of the VNA expelled. This decision led to a general meeting of the village which lasted throughout the night. Around three o'clock, they informed the non-indigenous that they had replaced the cacique and that the workshop could continue.

This intense process gave rise to over 100 hours of footage and the first documentary of this collective: *Mokoi Tekoá Petei Jeguatá, two villages, one walk* (2008)<sup>10</sup>. The film is divided into two parts corresponding to the villages where the workshop took place and presents the colonial situation<sup>11</sup> of the Mbya, surrounded by the *jurua*, and dependent on them, due to the smallness of their lands, and aspects of the spirituality of that people.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Interview in Portuguese with Ariel Kuaray Ortega, March 10, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The documentary was screened at several national and international festivals and was awarded Best Film at the Forum-Doc.BH Festival in Belo Horizonte in the same year.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Understood in this context as "internal colonialism" (Casanova, 1965) but also as "coloniality" (Quijano, 2010) in the sense of oppression and political, economic, cultural and epistemic exploitation of ethnic groups and/or racialized by other dominant groups with or without the presence of colonial administrations.

In the second part, the work shows the tense situation of the Guarani selling handicrafts in the ruins, and the speeches of the non-indigenous guides that highlight the Jesuit's "civilizing" mission and ignore the contribution and agency of the indigenous people in the construction of the Missions and the presence of the Guarani contemporaries. As the Mbya Mariano Aguirre says at the beginning of this sequence:

the whites took everything from us and appropriated these ruins that our relatives built. Now they do not want to give us what is ours. (...) Our relatives built this, forced by the whites, the Jesuit priests. (...) Our relatives worked, faced suffering, to leave that here on earth. They left that and worked so hard for the whites to kill them all. The whites fought over that here. (...) All this is painful for us. If we think about it, it hurts to this day. (Aguirre quoted in Morinico, Beñites & Ortega, 2008)

Two villages, one walk was an important catalyst for discussions in various Guarani communities about their relationship with the ruins, thus contributing to the development of the ICH process. A few months after the conclusion of the film, Ortega was elected cacique of Koenju, a position he held until March, 2016. The following documentary, Bicycles of Nhanderu (2011), on Guarani spirituality, was even more successful, nationally and internationally, and is still today exhibited in indigenous film shows. On the other hand, this film began the process of separation between Ortega and Cirilo due to the fact that that cinematographic work shows the "white parties" of the village in which the Guarani, including the karai, drink alcohol and play cards. As Carvalho explains, "[the first] workshop and the others that followed put Ariel at the center of discussions and turned him into a political actor, reconfiguring alliances. Marriages were made and unmade. Video penetrated deep into the community and people's lives, catalyzing new situations" (quoted in Carvalho et al., 2011, p. 229). Thus, and as explained further below, through the cinema and collaboration with the VNA, Ortega became an important agent in the ICH process.

# THE PROCESS OF REGISTRATION OF TAVA

In 2007, IPHAN organized the "International Encounter for the Valorization of the Guarani Cultural World", in São Miguel, in order to answer to the demands of the Guarani to expand INRC to other Brazilian states and bordering countries. Concurrently, IPHAN wanted the Mbya to decide which cultural item should be registered as ICH at this meeting. This phase of the event was tense and led to discussions between the parties involved, namely IPHAN, the INRC team and Cirilo. The disagreement was only resolved through the intervention of the older Mbya who, through their "soft talk" (Pissolato, 2007), calmed the moods. As a result of the meeting, a Guarani representative from Paraguay and 12 representatives from villages in six Brazilian states (Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo) requested the registration of the São Miguel ruins as an ICH of its people.

However, it is important to note that it is not clear how Tava was selected as the element to be registered. Taking into account previous conversations with the Guarani, the IPHAN-RS thought that the nheemongarai naming ritual would be their choice. Although this event is fundamental to Guarani life and is threatened due to the colonial situation, it involves the communication of the karai with Nhanderu and it was probably never the intention of the indigenous people to reveal this process. On the other hand, according to reports collected by the author, whose sources are not identified for ethical reasons, some agents consider that the IPHAN pressured the Mbya to choose the remnants, while others argued that it was the INRC team that suggested this idea to affirm the Mbya's land rights. In fact, as we have seen, the ruins were always a central and tense theme during the INRC, eventually becoming a focus in which the main Guarani causes intersect: colonial violence in the past and present; the expulsion of their territory and the near absence of land demarcation processes; racism and, on the other hand, romanticism and the colonial appropriation of its image and history; but also the importance of living where their ancestors lived in search of body maturation without going through death (aguyje). This focus, developed through encounters, lectures, interviews and even conflicts, led to the identification or, more concretely, to the emergence of the ruins as a synthesis, not of a culture, but of a past and present colonial situation understood through the Guarani metaphysics.

Following the request for registration, IPHAN-RS initiated the research process to develop the application dossier. Due to several factors, the state agency chose this time to hire the NGO Institute of Cultural and Environmental Studies (IECAM), instead of UFRGS, which, in turn, established contacts with the Catafesto de Souza team. After a year of work, the team returned to IPHAN with more information related to *Tava*, but the IPHAN-RS, dominated until then by technicians with training in architecture and history, therefore without an anthropological knowledge necessary for the processes of the ICH, had finally hired a Social Sciences graduate, Marcus Vinicius Benedeti, who was unhappy with the meager, dispersed, non-theoretical and cosmological framework of the collected testimonies.

In this context, IPHAN-RS again contracted the VNA in order to produce the documentation film that was also an essential part of the research. The final work, *Tava, A casa de pedra* (2012), is signed by the non-indigenous Vincent Carelli and Ernesto Carvalho, and by the Mbya-Guarani Ariel Ortega and Patrícia Ferreira and focuses on interviews with elderly members from villages in Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Argentina. The participation of Ortega was fundamental because, besides being a charismatic Guarani who knows how to listen and speak with the elders, he is also the grandson of Dionísio Duarte, one of the most important caciques of Argentina, whom every Mbya knows. Undoubtedly this was a key introduction card for getting the various testimonials about the ruins that were largely unknown to non-indigenous and even to a significant part of the Guarani. On the other hand, in an interview conducted by the author, Cirilo was very critical of Ortega's approach because he violated the "mystery

dimension". According to him, the filmmakers should have first discussed this with the leadership, and they should not have spread the polyphony of interpretations of the Guarani about the Missions.

The richness of the material obtained during the production of the documentary gave more confidence to the IPHAN-RS, which went on with the preparation of the registration dossier of *Tava*. At the latter's request, the dossier was drafted by Sílvia Guimarães, who had conducted her master's research with a Mbya-Guarani community in Espírito Santo, and at that time worked in the Registration Coordination of the Department of Intangible Heritage of IPHAN's headquarters. In this sense, the anthropologist combined a significant ethnological knowledge, with a relevant bureaucratic experience in registration processes. Guimarães did not receive any salary for this work, but she felt that she ought to do it because she had a "historical debt" to the Guarani since, it is thanks to them that she had a professional career. Before beginning the report, the anthropologist took advantage of a meeting of the CGY where several Guarani representatives met in Koenju, to confirm if they agreed with the heritage process. After their approval, the anthropologist wrote the report giving preference to the testimonies collected by the VNA, while using her master's degree research as theoretical support. When it came close to a final version, she returned to Koenju and met with kunha karai, with linguistic and cultural mediation from Ortega and Patrícia Ferreira, in order to verify the validity of her argument and to remove some ethnological doubts. Finally, Guimarães and IPHAN-RS met with the village in order to determine the official name of the cultural property. During the research process, it had been decided that the term tava was more consensual than tava miri, since these are perfect and imperishable (miri) and therefore exist only in the Earth-without-Evil. As the Mbya Mariano Aguirre explains in the above-mentioned film, "Tava miri we do not see, because it is not on this earth. It's where we see the lightning. This is an imperfect tava, which we see" (Aguirre quoted in Ortega, Ferreira, Carvalho & Carelli, 2012). In addition, one of those present at the meeting recalled that the Nandeva and Kaiowá subgroups also visit the ruins, and it was decided to use the comprehensive ethnonym Guarani instead of naming the cultural good exclusively Mbya. The designation agreed was "Tava, place of reference for the Guarani people".

Finally, on December 3, 2014, the Advisory Council met with the presence of IPH-AN-RS members, Ariel Ortega, Patrícia Ferreira and other Mbya-Guarani representatives. Despite some controversy, the registration was approved unanimously. Thus, after a tenyear process, in December 2014, the Jesuit-Guarani Missions were recorded in the ICH's Book of Places. At the end of the meeting, Ariel Ortega asked to speak:

first, thank you for this beautiful moment. I think I speak on behalf of the entire community of my village, of all my grandparents, my ancestors who lived there in the Jesuit reductions. I have no doubt that they are present here, accompanying us. I think it's a very important moment for our grandchildren, my grandchildren, future generations, for all Guarani, this

recognition is important for us (...) because today we only have 234 hectares in São Miguel das Missões, when before the vast territory was all ours. I thank Nhanderu very much for this moment, for enlightening each one of you, Council. I am sure that all the Karaí, the spiritual leaders were also meditating for this moment to happen. So I want to thank you for that moment, thank you. (IPHAN, 2014, p.74)

#### EVALUATION OF THE PROCESS BY THE GUARANI

The concrete consequences of this process for the Guarani seem to be, at least for the time being, somewhat ineffable. In an interview conducted by the author<sup>12</sup>, Cirilo argued that what is most important is that the INRC has helped prove that the Guarani are entitled to their traditional territory and that they are not "foreigners", "Argentine" or "Paraguayan", as many people, and even institutions, including some within the IPHAN, call them. Moreover, he criticized the fact that the *Tava* was not recognized as a World Heritage Site<sup>13</sup>. At this level, we can argue that the non-indigenous interpretation of the Missions at the Unesco level has a greater symbolic power than the Guarani patrimonialization of the Missions at only the national level. In addition, Cirilo regrets that INRC has not continued, or explored some elements more in depth, such as Guarani ceramics, which his son teaches at the school in the village today.

One of the demands of the Mbya of Tekoa Koenju and Cirilo, is that they may be able to work as guides at the Archaeological Site. As he explains, "it must be the indigenous themselves working there to be able... It looks more beautiful, does it not? A Guarani talking about his history" <sup>14</sup>. This proposal is not related to a property regime because "there has to be freedom" <sup>15</sup>. The main hindrance seems to be that the guides are obliged to take a course at the Ministry of Tourism which has a prohibitive price for the Mbya. In fact, the measure of the safeguard plan chosen by the Guarani for 2016, was a tourism workshop, rather than the production of a bilingual book to be distributed to indigenous and non-indigenous state schools, as IPHAN was expecting, based on previous conversations.

Another of the demands of the Mbya is, that one part (12.5%) of the income from the ruins reverts to the "community". IPHAN and the City Hall (owner of the Sound and Light Show) do not oppose this idea, but IPHAN warns that the revenues cannot even finance the management costs of the Archaeological Park, and that there is no legal framework for passing on these funds. Alternatively, IPHAN proposes using that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Interview in Portuguese to José Cirilo Morinico, April 7, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> As an example, the "Kusiwa art: Oral and graphic expressions of the Wajapi", and the "Yaokwa, the Enawene Nawe people's ritual for the maintenance of social and cosmic order" were classified as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by Unesco, following their registration at the national level by IPHAN.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Interview in Portuguese with José Cirilo Morinico, April 7, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Interview in Portuguese with José Cirilo Morinico, April 7, 2016.

percentage on community projects. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Brazil is undergoing a deep political and economic crisis and that the future of the financing of the safeguard plan, and even of IPHAN, is uncertain.

Meanwhile, in May 2015, the Jesuit-Guaraní Missions, Moxos and Chiquitos were declared Cultural Heritage of Mercosur<sup>16</sup>. This category was created in 2012 as part of Cultural Mercosur and aims to strengthen the cooperation and integration of countries through the identification, conservation and promotion of heritage shared by more than one of the countries. The IPHAN site<sup>17</sup> on this patrimonialization focuses on Western and/or Jesuitical history, making no mention of the relevance of the Missions to the present Guarani. However, at the "XVII Meeting of the Committee on Cultural Heritage of Mercosur", on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, responding to the demands of the Guarani representatives, Mercosur recognized *Tava* as a Mercosur Cultural Heritage, meaning

the recognition of the ancestral presence of the Guarani in the Yvy Rupá territory, which today integrates Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, in which they organized a great ethnic network, formed by villages, paths and sacred sites. Moving freely through this territory, as did their ancestors, the ancients, is one of the foundations of the well-being that the Guarani wish to preserve.<sup>18</sup>

#### CONCLUSION: DIALOGICAL HERITAGE

At first instance, the case study of the patrimonialization of the ruins of São Miguel confirms the importance of the participation of non-scientific groups, communities and "experts" in the identification of the ICH. Even though the bibliography on the Guarani is one of the most extensive of the Amerindian peoples of South America, the different ontology and cosmological importance of the ruins for that people were practically unknown to non-indigenous, and even to some Guarani<sup>19</sup>. This was only possible through the participation of the Guarani in the research process and through their understanding of the benefits that they could obtain from this. It is also important to emphasize that the participation of the Guarani was only made possible through a strategic hybridization between the indigenous and non-indigenous political approaches, including the anticipation of several safeguard measures and the training of indigenous researchers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Mercosur refers to the Common Market of the South, an intergovernmental organization founded in 1991 that includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (currently, suspended). Bolivia awaits bureaucratic procedures to become a full member. The official languages are Portuguese, Spanish and Guarani (proposed by Paraguay but still not adopted institutionally). In the beginning, Mercosur was mainly a customs union within which there is a regime of free trade and a common commercial policy, but its area of operation has been expanding.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Retrieved from http://portal.iphan.gov.br/uploads/ckfinder/arquivos/Decis%C3%A3o%2oMERCOSUL.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Retrieved from http://portal.iphan.gov.br/rs/noticias/detalhes/4883/lugar-de-referencia-para-o-povo-guaran-can-around-patrimony-cultural-of-mercosul

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> There was, however, already some evidence in Ladeira (1992/2007).

and filmmakers, in order to establish, according to Amerindian logic, degrees of affinity (Castro, 2002) between indigenous and non-indigenous agents. Some of these relationships already existed (for example, between Catafesto de Souza and Cirilo due to the activities promoted jointly with UFRGS), while others were established during the process, but with some distance from the governmental body (for example, between Ortega and the VNA). At this level, it is interesting to note that the connections have not only been established within ethnic borders, but also through different interethnic alliances.

However, as Harrison (2013) advocates in his proposal for a "dialogical heritage", heritage does not only emerge from the relations between humans (experts and non-scientific experts) but also through connections with nonhumans and things. In the case study under analysis, the Guarani action is determined by the gods (Schaden, 1974). Everything that happens is decided by the gods and the Guarani try to understand the deliberations of those through dreams, song-pray, "beautiful walk" and other aesthetic-ethical practices of corporality, commensality and conviviality. One of the examples mentioned was Cirilo's dream with *Nhanderu Miri* Sepé Tiaraju that led him to decide to support the ICH process. Similarly, Ariel Ortega's speech at the end of the Council acknowledges that the success of the process was only due to *Nhanderu*'s intervention. According to this framework, the process of patrimonialization was only made possible through the influence of nonhuman persons.

Moreover, the very historical and symbolic value of the ruins of São Miguel had influence in its transformation into heritage. On the one hand, according to the Constitution of modernity, the ruins are one of the most evident arenas of the colonial Guarani wound, since these, due to the smallness of the lands bought or demarcated by the state, are forced to survive through the sale of handicrafts to the jurua, which, in turn, discriminate them and classify them as "acculturated" or "foreign" ("Paraguayan" or "Argentine"). This focus of tension contributed to the emergence of the ruins as a synthesis, not of a culture but of a past and present colonial situation. According to this perspective, the patrimonialization of the ruins as Tava is a recognition of the historical relation of the contemporary Guarani with those structures and, implicitly, of their right to the demarcation of indigenous lands. On the other hand, according to the Guarani ontology, the ruins are not just inert physical structures. Tava points out where the ancient Guarani lived on their way to the Land-without-Evil, and therefore is a place chosen by Nhanderu for the good living of this people. In this sense, the ruins are not only an object of the past, but a place where the past bends over the present and where the Guarani can find signs of the gods to reach the state of corporal maturity (aguyje) in order to reach the imperishable heavenly abode.

Finally, the cinema and the camera were also part of the heritage process. The camera was not only used to represent a preexisting reality, but it instigated reactions and connections, namely in the relationship with the tourists in the ruins *in Two villages, one walk* and in the research carried out between Guarani of several villages of the South American continent, which, in turn, led to discussions that resulted in the registration of

the ruins as *Tava*. As the old wise man Adolfo Werá Silveira states in *Tava*, the stone house: "since you are filming, I will tell you the truth" (Silveira quoted in Ortega et al., 2012).

In short, despite the occasional moments of dissonance inherent to these processes, the patrimonialization of *Tava* was an important experience in expanding the concepts of heritage and participation in which the various non-indigenous actors "took seriously" (Castro, 2002b) the Guarani ontology and cosmology, giving rise to a "hybrid forum" (Harrison, 2013) in which humans, nonhumans, and things participated in a more dialogic democracy that takes into account different ways of constructing the world. The challenge now, as Cirilo and Ortega's testimonies point out, is to continue this process and integrate this new constructivist and comprehensive perspective of participation in the management of IPHAN and, specifically, of the Archaeological Park of São Miguel.

Translation: Rodrigo Lacerda

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