

# Passo Ruim 1868: the strategies of the Xokleng in the borders of their territories in the upper Itajaí River

*Passo Ruim 1868: as estratégias dos Xokleng nas fronteiras de seus territórios do alto rio Itajaí*

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## RESUMO

Na noite de 13 de janeiro de 1868, um grupo de índios Xokleng atacou e matou seis pessoas num lugar chamado Passo Ruim, na Estrada da Mata, próximo da vila de Rio Negro, então província do Paraná, Brasil. O artigo aborda esse acontecimento no contexto das complexas relações sócio-históricas e culturais que permearam o processo de desterritorialização dos Xokleng do alto vale do rio Itajaí do Norte na segunda metade do século XIX. Busca-se a percepção que os Xokleng tinham dos invasores e como desenvolveram estratégias para lidar com eles. Traça-se um panorama da presença dos Xokleng no processo de ocupação da região, mostrando que eles acompanhavam cada passo dos colonizadores em seus territórios e, em seguida, analisam-se os acontecimentos de Passo Ruim, buscando desvendar como o grupo indígena que ali atuava se relacionou com as expedições enviadas em seu encalço, realçando seu protagonismo.

Palavras-chave: índios Xokleng; etno-história; fronteiras e populações.

## ABSTRACT

On the night of January 13, 1868, a group of Xokleng indigenous people attacked and killed six people at a place called Passo Ruim, on Estrada da Mata near the village of Rio Negro, then the Province of Paraná, Brazil. This event is approached within the complex socio-historical and cultural relations that permeated the process of deterritorialization of the Xokleng in the upper valley of Itajaí do Norte River in the second half of the nineteenth century. Xokleng's perception of the invaders is investigated together with the strategies they developed to deal with them. An overview of the presence of the Xokleng in the process of occupation of the region is given, showing that they followed each step the settlers made in their territories. Afterwards, the events of Passo Ruim are analyzed, trying to find out how the indigenous group acting there was related to the expeditions sent in its pursuit, emphasizing its protagonism.

Keywords: Xokleng indigenous; ethno-history; frontiers and populations.

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On the night of January 13, 1868, a Xokleng group attacked and killed six people at a place called Passo Ruim, on Estrada da Mata, seven leagues (42 kilometers) from the village of Rio Negro, then the Province of Paraná.

In the floodplains of the São João River, after traveling more than 40 kilometers from Rio Negro towards Curitiba, the *tropeiros* (muleteers) had the habit of preparing their places to sleep. It was the place for the animals to rest, prepare food in the late afternoon, and overnight for the next day to continue: “Despite the bad reputation given to this place by the repeated raids of the *bugres* (Pejorative term to designate natives in Brazil), it is not uncommon for the *tropeiros* to go to or from Lages and Campos Novos were stopping there, all the more neglected and the less recent news of *bugres* attacks in the backwoods” (Ourique, 1899, p. 354).

Thus, without much concern, a group of *tropeiros* who went from Rio Negro to Lajeado, with the troops loaded with salt, sugar and brandy, decided to take a rest there: “Heavy sleep must have been because they had spent the whole night before in a fandango, riding at dawn and following the way, without having slept a wink” (Ourique, 1899, p. 355).

The news of this attack was sent by the sub-chief of police of Rio Negro, Mr. João Bley, to the provincial police chief, two days after the incident. João Bley went to the scene of the tragedy to take the forensic examinations and faced a horrific scenario. The bodies of four people were stripped, “almost together, and all with their skulls broken to pieces”, turned facedown with the *bordunas* (clubs) that killed them on their bodies. This led the sub-chief to conclude that at the time of the attack they were asleep and had no time to react. Farther away was the body of another *tropeiro*, still in his clothes, and the body of the underage João, apparently the only ones who still tried to escape the ambush prepared by the indigenous. The *tropeiros* Francisco Carvalho, Benedito José Fernandes, José Mariano dos Santos, João Manoel Ribeiro, the boy João and the girl Generosa were slaughtered, their heads crushed by the blows of the *bordunas* with four corns and seven spans (around 1 meter and a half) in length, which were left over their bodies and collected by Bley, who counted them in number of 13 (Bley, Jan 17, 1868, pp. 183-185).

In an examination of the scene of the tragedy, they concluded that the attack occurred at dusk, shortly after the troop arrived: “This was because of the condition of the beans, half boiled and without water, and of the fire off and with little gray” (Ourique 1899, p. 355). The body of the boy João was a little far from the center of the camp because he had gone in search of water.

There was no sign that there had been any reaction from the man of the troop. They were massacred quickly and with no chance of retaliation.

The goods that were transported – *cachaça* (brandy), salt, and sugar – were poured out of their containers in the field, and the 18 pack-saddles and animals harnesses were scattered in complete disorder. The indigenous removed the hardware from the pack-saddles and barrels of *cachaça*, seized their weapons and fled with what they could carry.

The subchief of Rio Negro was in Passo Ruim on January 15, doing the forensic examinations. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, he wrote his report and sent it to the Police Department in Curitiba, which relayed it to the president of the Province on the 19<sup>th</sup>. On that same day, President José Feliciano Horta de Araújo dispatched orders to the commander of the Vila do Príncipe National Guard to designate ten national guards in the parish of Rio Negro, at the request of chief Bley, to assist him in the defense and to carry out necessary explorations in the vicinity. He also ordered the experienced backwoodsman Joaquim Francisco Lopes to go as soon as possible to Rio Negro to assist the chief João Bley (Araújo, 1868, p. 2).

This event was the main subject of conversations, for a long period, in all the parishes, villages and sales of the region along the Estrada da Mata. The engineer Teodoro Ochs, in charge of measuring the land in the region of Rio Preto, informed Horta Araújo that because of this attack he was having difficulty hiring workers to open the vegetation to measure the land (Ochs, 1868, pp. 1-2).

The event also had repercussions in the press in Curitiba and in the country, and the president of the Province, José Feliciano Horta de Araújo, incorporated it into his Report presented to the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Paraná at the opening of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the 8<sup>th</sup> Legislature, on February 15, 1868.<sup>2</sup>

The indigenous attack on the *tropeiros* in Passo Ruim will be addressed here in the context of the complex socio-historical and cultural relations that permeated the process of deterritorialization of the Xokleng in the upper valley of Itajaí do Norte River and the Rio Negro in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The trap of polarized history will be avoided, which simplifies relations between indigenous populations and national society, not forgetting that there was a border war in this region, standing out the Xokleng protagonism in the fight for the maintenance of their lives and against the robbery play of their territories.

The theoretical-methodological anchorage that underlies the analysis comes from reflections on the history of indigenous peoples carried out from

the North American matrix and started with the Conference of Indigenous History of Columbus (Ohio, USA) in 1953, and the contributions of historians and anthropologists who put this question on the Brazilian academic agenda from the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the action of the Xokleng in Passo Ruim will be focused by making combined use of several sources: archaeological data about the region of upper Itajaí and Rio Negro, ethnographic information about Xokleng, documentation of the provincial government of Paraná, journalistic news of the time and works of the regional historians, highlighting the indigenous as a historical subject, as John Monteiro points out:

It is not enough to characterize the historical indigenous simply as a victim who has watched passively for his destruction ... It is important to recover the historical subject who acted according to his reading of the world around him, a reading that is informed both by the cultural codes of his society and by the perception and interpretation of the events that occurred. (Monteiro, 1999, p. 248)<sup>4</sup>

#### XOKLENG ANTIQUITY IN THE TERRITORIES OF UPPER ITAJAÍ AND RIO NEGRO

Aryon Rodrigues (1986) places the languages kaingang and xokleng in the Jê Family. Although the exact moment of arrival of these populations in the southern Brazilian states is still unknown, it is hypothesized that proto-Kaingang/Xokleng-speaking groups originated between the sources of the São Francisco and Araguaia rivers and migrated to the South about 3,000 years before the present (BP) (Urban, 1998, p. 90).

In general, the ethnological studies on the Kaingang and the Xokleng reaffirm sociocultural characteristics that link them to the speaking peoples of the Jê linguistic trunk of Central Brazil. They reaffirm common sociocultural characteristics such as: division into clan halves, body paintings identifying these halves, myths of origin related to these halves, reciprocity between halves, exogamy, uxorilocal residence and marriage between cousins, among others.<sup>5</sup>

The Late Holocene paleoclimate research (Iriarte; Behling, 2007) indicates that the occupation of the southern region of Brazil by ceramist populations of the Taquara/Itararé archaeological tradition is associated with the expansion of the Araucaria forest resulting from wetter climatic conditions in the region, between 1,410 and 900 years BP, which coincides with the dates obtained by archeology.

Researchers working with integrated data (archeology, ethnography, history, linguistics and others) connect the populations producing ceramic artifacts from the South-Brazilian Plateau, defined by archeology as Itararé Tradition, Casa de Pedra and Taquara, pointing them as the ancestors of the Kaingang and Xokleng.<sup>6</sup>

And the archaeological research carried out on the upper Itajaí do Norte River and tributaries of the Negro River reinforce this connection. In the watershed of the rivers Preto e Itapocu is the shelter Ruckl, known like *graveyard of the botocudos* (Xokleng). In that place, engineer Fernando Oppitz, who measured the land of Princess Isabel and Count D'Eu in 1886, found skeletal remains of nine individuals, men, women and children, duly placed in pits and encased in ashes, which made him to suppose they have been cremated before being placed there.<sup>7</sup> And Jacques Ourique described the technique of cremation and burial of the dead: "For this cremation, they place the body in a circular area of ground, previously prepared and trodden, and on it form a conical pile of woods joined at the upper end. On the fire they hope that everything is reduced to ash, and then they bury these ashes in a small grave" (Ourique, 1899, p. 350).

This practice of cremated burials was reported in a more detailed manner by José Maria de Paula (1924, p. 126), who had intense contact with the Xokleng in that region between 1914 and 1922.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1960s, Walter Piazza carried out archaeological research at the confluence of the Plate River with Itajaí do Norte River, where today there is the Ibirama Indigenous Land and the old Duque de Caxias Indigenous Post, and there he identified a ceramic site where he collected 215 fragments similar to those defined by archeology as Itararé and Taquara Tradition.<sup>9</sup>

These traces of material culture (cremated burials and pottery) attest to the presence of the Xokleng populations or their ancestors in the region for at least 1,500 years<sup>10</sup> or perhaps more, as linguistic studies suggest.

Regional historiography is also replete with descriptions on the presence of the Xokleng in the region. It is full of descriptions of actions and clashes between the settlers and the Xokleng. Only for the region of Blumenau, Jose Deeke counted 41 dead and 22 injured by the assaults of the Xokleng in the period of 1855 to 1914 (Deeke, 1967, p. 132).

Once the Xokleng presence in the upper Itajaí region has been evidenced, the *modus operandi* of the expeditions of João Bley and Joaquim Francisco Lopes will be discussed, in charge of looking for the Xokleng group that

attacked the *tropeiros*, and then will be exposed how the Xokleng dealt with these two expeditions.

#### THE PUNITIVE ESCORT OF THE SUB-CHIEF OF RIO NEGRO, JOÃO BLEY

The death of the *tropeiros* in Passo Ruim, on January 13, 1868, led the president of the Province of Paraná José Feliciano Horta de Araújo to take two measures: the first was to order the commander of the Prince's village to place at the disposal of the sub-chief of the parish of Rio Negro ten national guards who were supposed to protect the locality and to carry out explorations in the surroundings of the event to avoid new "runs" of the indigenous; the second was to summon the experienced backwoodsman Joaquim Francisco Lopes to assist the police sub-chief of Rio Negro in these tasks.

Lopes had been exonerated from the settlement of São Jerônimo in October 1867, and was at the disposal of the authorities of the Empire and the Province for tasks that required his accumulated experience in dealing with the indigenous since the 1840s in the service of the Baron of Antonina.

Attending the convocation, Lopes had an audience with the president of the Province of Paraná on January 21, 1868 and received these instructions: he should go to Rio Negro, where he would meet with the police sub-chief to obtain from him all information about the massacre of Passo Ruim; to perform explorations in the vicinity of Estrada da Mata to ascertain the presence or not of the indigenous; if he discovered the paths followed by the indigenous after the massacre, he should request from the sub-chief the necessary force to follow them; in case of finding the lodgings of the indigenous, he should proceed in the most convenient way, taking into account the "benevolence and moderation that must be kept for the savages, only employing force and violence if they are absolutely necessary" (Araújo, 1868, p. 2); if it were possible, to persuade them to settle; finally, if the engineer Theodoro Ochs were to be found, he should assist him in the services of demarcation of lands for the government of the Empire on the banks of the Negro River; finally, he was to report in detail to President Horta Araújo all occurrences and to request the necessary measures.

With the instructions taken, Lopes went to the parish of Rio Negro to meet with João Bley, then sub-chief of police of that locality. But before leaving, he published in the main newspaper of Curitiba a list of the services he had rendered to the country since 1829, when he participated in explorations of vast regions in the provinces of Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Mato Grosso and

Paraná, and the trust deposited in him S. M. the Emperor and the Baron of Antonina (Lopes, 1868, pp. 2-3). It seems that, in anticipation of the difficulties which he would encounter in performing the tasks assigned to him, he wished with this publication to show that he was the man suited for the mission and had the support of the authorities of the Empire, to which the service of catechesis and civilization of the indigenous was connected.

On January 28, Lopes reported that he had arrived in the parish of Rio Negro, and was willing to start explorations as soon as he received the “help that certainly” the police sub-chief would give him. He had already notified the sub-chief, requiring him to make arrangements for his expedition (Lopes, Jan 30, 1868, p. 21), and informed him of new threats that the Xokleng had made on the 27<sup>th</sup> to Vitor de Pinho Ribas, in the locality of Rodeio Grande, as he had told him (Lopes, Jan 30, 1868, p. 22).

However, the sub-chief João Bley had another strategy to deal with the indigenous and was not willing to subordinate to Lopes. He informed him that he had already set up an expedition, and that it would leave on that day, January 30, 1868, in the direction to Passo Ruim, to follow the the Xokleng until he met them, and if Lopes wanted to, he should join it. The entourage formed by João Bley consisted of 31 heavily armed men. In addition to not subordinating himself to Lopes’ orders and strategy, not providing him with the necessary resources – men, arms, ammunition, transport and food – the sub-chief wanted to put him under his orders and responded to Lopes’s requests as follows:

In reply I must tell that if you can follow tomorrow or later, taking some people from here, go join the entourage that today follows to Passo Ruim, and together with it go to Lageadinho making small entrances in the nearby woods and the *Rodeios* where *tropeiros* more often stop to rest, and then inform of the vestiges and recognize if in fact the savages try to attack... (Bley, Jan 30, 1868, p. 23)

With more than 30 years of dealing in the backwoods with indigenous of various ethnic groups and used to deal with superior authorities like presidents of provinces and the baron of Antonina, Lopes joined the Office of Bley to his and sent them to the president of Paraná, and waited for new orders in Rio Negro. He waited two days, when in a new report he informed President Horta Araújo that he was going “to backwoods with competent escort” (Lopes, Feb 2, 1868, p. 45).

Accompanied by five men, Lopes went to the scene of the attack in Passo Ruim. There they made the reconnaissance of the place and returned to the Estiva resort, point of support of the expedition. On February 11, the escort of the sub-chief João Bley was presented in Estiva. It brought orders from the Rio Negro substation that contradicted the instructions received from the president of the Province, of trying to attract the Xokleng by “gentle and soft means” (Lopes, April 17, 1868, p. 273). Knowing how local authorities dealt with the indigenous, forming groups of *bugreiros* (indians hunters) to exterminate them, Lopes, who did not report to the sub-chief and had no intention of using violent methods against the Xokleng, suspended his expedition, while the men of the sub-chief João Bley went into the woods in pursuit of the Xokleng.

Joaquim Francisco Lopes and his men returned to the parish of Rio Negro, and he took in the hands of the sub-chief the orders that the chief of Police of Paraná had given him, and verbally asked Bley 12 men to complete his mission. Sub-chief Bley changed the subject and said that he could only supply men upon the return of the escort he had sent in pursuit of the Xokleng. Lopes then informed the President of the Province that he was awaiting the return of Bley’s escort to begin his diligences (Lopes, March 2 1868, p. 95) and again officiated the sub-chief of Rio Negro requesting reinforcements:

We had, *however*, evasions in frivolous answers and the declaration of not having orders to lend us people. Convinced that we would receive no help from this authority, we were helped by the assistance of Lieutenant Francisco Xavier de Assis, Administrator of the registry, who was effective to us, since we obtained 14 men suited for this diligence, to whom we advanced the sum of 30\$000 each one. (Lopes, Apr. 17, 1868, p. 273)

With the clarity that the sub-chief João Bley would not support him and would do everything to avoid complying with the orders coming from the capital, Lopes sought the administrator of the Rio Negro Registry with the orders of the president of the Province authorizing him a credit of 1:448\$400 (one million, four hundred forty-eight thousand and four hundred réis) from the Tax Collection of that locality, to meet the expenses of the expedition.<sup>11</sup> With these resources, Lopes organized his expedition: he hired 14 men who received 30\$000 (thirty thousand réis) each, and prepared the logistics of his expedition with animals of load, food, guns, ammunition and objects to give the indigenous. This drew the attention of sub-chief Bley, who sent an account of the same value to the Province’s president, seeking reimbursement and

claiming to be the one he had spent with the escort he had sent in pursuit of the Xokleng.

These disagreements with the local authorities and powers of Rio Negro would make it difficult for Lopes to work further when he returned to the region in 1875 to install the Indigenous Colony of São Tomás de Papanduva. The disagreements between the local elites and the authorities of the Empire over the implementation of policies for dealing with the indigenous were a constant throughout the Province of Paraná since its implementation in 1853. So that the Baron of Antonina, representative of the Empire in the Creation of Indigenous Colonies in Paraná, was unable to establish any of them in the areas of fields in the center-south of the province, where the great owners of cattle ranches were installed.<sup>12</sup>

It had been 47 days since the attack on the *tropeiros*, which took place on January 13, 1868, and a month since the arrival of the escort of João Bley in pursuit of the Xokleng. Lopes, who was still in Rio Negro, wrote to President Horta Araújo, informing that he was waiting for the first escort to return to enter the backwood with his own. He did not want to mingle with the men of the sub-chief, nor take responsibility for the retaliation to the Xokleng that they might perpetrate.

The waiting lasted until March 7, when João Bley informed the police chief of the Province, Carlos Augusto Ferraz de Abreu, that his escort had returned from the woods that day. Leaving Rio Negro on January 30, 1868, on February 11, he met Lopes at the Estiva resort, near the scene of the assault in Passo Ruim. From there, he had driven 10 leagues (66 kilometers) eastward and a league south, when it was caught in the Xokleng traps and had several men injured. They did not find the Xokleng but found their tracks and counted twenty *toldos* (indigenous villages) with 10 to 12 ranches in each of them, which led the sub-chief to suppose that there were “a large number of families” living in that region (Bley, Mar 7 1868, p. 73).

From the trajectory, it is possible to suppose that the escort arrived at the watershed that separate the sources of the rivers São João and São Lourenço do rio Negrinho, place of the *toldo*, protected by *fojos* (pit) where members of the escort fell. On this route, they found only empty villages because the Xokleng, who monitored the displacement of this troop, evacuated them.

The punitive escort of the sub-chief did not find the Xokleng and had to return to Rio Negro with three wounded men. And João Bley acknowledged Lopes to have been “unhappy because he had nothing to do with the savages, but suffered work by carrying those who fell in the *fojos* prepared by the

savages in the vicinity of an uninhabited village”. Lopes’s information was that there were six wounded, not just three (Lopes, Mar 7, 1868, p. 72).

The escort of João Bley, in addition to not fulfilling his mission to punish the indigenous, consumed a sum of resources of 1:142\$400 which was divided as follows (Bley, Mar 1, 1868, pp. 239-244):

Payment of 31 men for 26 working days at one thousand réis per day	806.000
Paid to Martinho Mader for the supply of 20 kilos of gunpowder and lead, six glasses of dye of arnica, thousand fuzes and 20 bushels of flour	158.400
Paid to Leonardo Ruths for the freight of 14 freight cargoes from Rio Negro to Passo Fundo	56.000
Payment to Theodoro Petrus for the supply of 30 <i>arrobas</i> (450 kilos) of dry meat and 3 bushels of flour	102.000
Paid to Leonardo Ruths for the supply of 10 measures of brandy	20.000
Total:	1.142.400

Faced with this account, the president of the Province requested to send it to Joaquim F. Lopes, so that he could inform him of such expenses. Lopes’s answer was this:

I will tell you that the force of 31 men in the said escort was not requested by me, it was by deliberation of the sub-chief, and on that occasion I found myself in that city, requesting from Your Excellency new orders to be able to carry out the instructions that Your Excellency had given to the diligence in the woods and had not complied for lack of assistance, which ceased to lend me this sub-chief, despite the strict orders of the Chief of Police. (Lopes, May 2, 1868, p. 236)

New requests for payments were made, many offices went through the internal bureaucracy of the provincial government, and by August 1868 João Bley had not yet received reimbursement of these expenses.

## THE CONTACT EXPEDITION OF JOAQUIM FRANCISCO LOPES

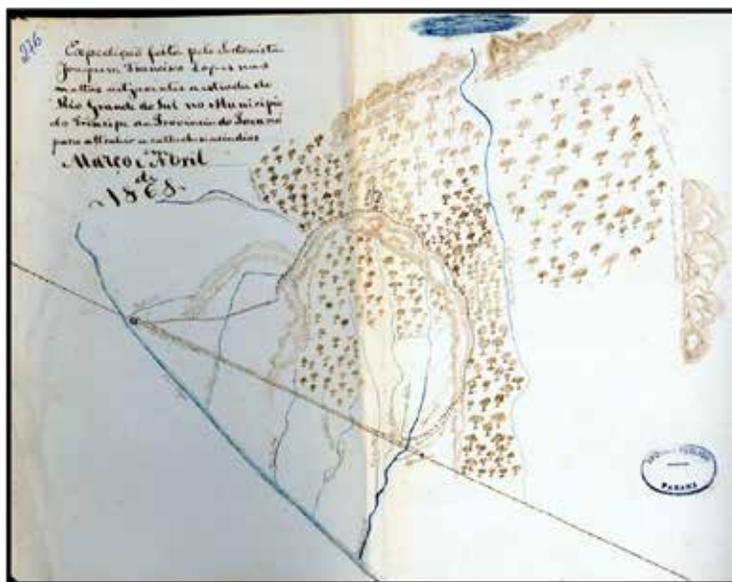
After refusing to accompany the escort of the sub-chief João Bley, and waiting patiently for his return, finally on March 24, 1868 Joaquim Francisco

Lopes managed to place his expedition in the trail of the Xokleng in Passo Ruim. It had been 70 days since the event with the *tropeiros*, on January 13, 1868. Meanwhile, Lopes had already been in the place of the incident in the first fortnight of February, and there he recognized the traces left and the course taken by the indigenous.

In the company of 14 men, he went south and crossed the São João Stream, near the resting place of Passo Ruim. On the slopes of São João, Lopes's entourage began to perceive the signs of the presence of the Xokleng, as Lopes wrote:

We crossed the São João River and climbed the banks of its branches called “*Faxinaes*” where we found traces of firemen of the savages. We looked for the slopes of São João and we discovered the crossings (paths) of the indigenous and abandoned *toldos*; and in one of them the signs that they had prepared the clubs with which they had committed the murders of Passo Ruim. (Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 273)

Figure 1 – Map of the expedition of Joaquim Francisco Lopes in the Xokleng territories of the upper Itajaí River, in 1868.



Source: Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 276.

Lopes also noted that his expedition was being observed, for there were traces of the *firemen*, Xokleng spies, who accompanied the expedition along the route, as they had certainly done with João Bley's escort. The difference is that Lopes knew when he was being observed, he recognized the signs of the presence of indigenous spies, while the men of the escort of the sub-chief Bley did not have this perception, so, despite having found twenty indigenous *toldos*, they could not see any Xokleng – invisible to them.

In the place where the clubs were prepared, the expedition left axes and chisels as gifts, thus initiating the strategy designed by Lopes to attract the Xokleng through peaceful means. While Bley's escort was punitive in character, since it carried a large contingent of heavily armed men with a thousand-shot capacity, Lopes's was certainly armed, too, but he took objects to give the indigenous as a way of making contact.

On March 27, they went up the slopes of the São João River, southwards, in the direction of the ridge where the forming sources of the Itajaí River arise out, probably where today is the city of Papanduva, highest point between the floodplains of the São João River and the sources of Itajaí: "Taking advantage of the elevation of the terrain we examined the contours. From above the canopy of a tall tree we can see the course of the Tajahy, the cut that it makes in the mountain range ... and the mountain range of Taio, approximately 20 leagues" (Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 274).

At this plateau where they stayed overnight, they continued to find fresh signs from the Xokleng spies, and at nightfall they heard shouts from the indigenous who communicated. During the night, they tried to communicate with the Xokleng beaters, but without success. On departure they left iron as a gift. The Xokleng beaters, called by Lopes as firemen, were following the expedition since the São João River.

Four days later, on March 31, after traversing the divisors of the waters of the Itajaí River and the tributary streams of São João, they found the *fojos*, the traps prepared by the Xokleng, where men from the Bley escort had fallen.

These traps were fifteen spans in circumference, bristling with stakes, spears and spikes, in which the blood of those who had fallen was still visible.

Next to this trap, there were two trenches of wood and pine and the earth from the excavations of the *fojos*, to the left a track followed, and to the center of the artificial caves two unpopulated *toldos*. (Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 274)

Lopes's expedition had changed direction, from south to east, and so he traversed the ridges that divided the sources of the Itajaí River to the south, the forming sources of São João to the north and west, and the Negrinho River to the east, possibly in the tracing of the current SC-477, which connects Papanduva to Paraguaçu and Itaiópolis. Situated at altitudes between 900 and 1,000 meters, these plateaus were full of pine trees (*Araucaria angustifolia*) and covered with bamboo grove (*Bambusa taquara*). In them, the Xokleng had their villages protected, as Lopes described. The houses were protected all around by traps (*fojos*) of 15 spans (3.3 m) in circumference, and next to them were the trenches of wood and earth. They were the same traps that the men of the sub-chief of Rio Negro had fallen into because they had not noticed them. In his report to the President of the Province, João Bley also described them: "they found a fortress made of wood with great strength, it was a parapet on both sides of the rail and in front of this parapet there were nine *fojos*, large holes containing in the bottom many sharp spikes, and on the top it is covered with false embankment on which they planted herbs and other weeds so that no evidence of mining appears" (Bley, Mar 7, 1868, p. 73).

Completely camouflaged, the Xokleng traps surprised the men of the escort. "When they passed the escort, three men were victims of this terrible trap, and all three were seriously injured, one falling on one of these sticks inserted the tip at the stern of the butt and left in the hip, and in the other two men, sticks crossed their feet from below to above, so that they were unable to walk" (Bley, Mar 7, 1868, p. 73).

This ambush disrupted the escort, and it had to return to the field of Estiva carrying, for 10 days, in hammocks, the wounded men.

José Maria de Paula, who was Inspector of the Indigenous Protection Service (SPI) in Southern Brazil and was with the Xokleng in the region of Palmas in Paraná and Plate River in Santa Catarina, between 1912 and 1922, wrote that they protected their villages and hunting camps with trenches that were guarded at night by experienced warriors, and with "deep *fojos*, up to two meters and more, riddled with very sharp sticks on the walls, yet fixing a spear at its center" (Paula, 1924, pp. 123-124). And anyone who fell into one of those traps would certainly have a horrible death. They were so well disguised that even the unsuspecting indigenous themselves could fall in them: "Thus, at the Post (Plate River), in the first days after the pacification, the regrettable incident of falling an indigenous who had come to the camp at night from another place, in one of these *fojos*, and died a few hours later, as a result of the horrible wounds that had torn his body" (Paula, 1924, p. 124).

Lopes' expedition explored the mounted Xokleng's *toldo*, and again had the opportunity to hear "thick voices" of an indigenous who warned them to leave. They tried to lure him with horns. After depositing the gifts on the *toldo*, they headed back to the expedition's camp, where they were followed by Xokleng, who "kept talking to us until he grew weary", and only uttered sounds of satisfaction after collecting the gifts left by Lopes.

At dawn on April 1, they were awakened with "bass drum"<sup>13</sup> and heard a different voice, possibly from another spy who watched them at night. They visited the traps again, and there at the center, where the houses were, left other gifts and heard another indigenous who spoke to them with shades of joy.

They collected the equipment from the camp and started the retreat back to Rio Negro, but before gave the horn to the indigenous who had spoken with them on the 31<sup>st</sup>. On the way back, which was not the same as the one they went, they walked through ridges crowded of indigenous trails and with several abandoned *toldos* in the divisors of the waters of the São Lourenço River. They arrived in the parish of Rio Negro on April 11, 1868, after having traveled from the Estiva resort to Rio Negro, 21 leagues (147 kilometers).

With a strategy different from that adopted by João Bley's escort, the expedition of Joaquim F. Lopes sought to establish with the indigenous some form of communication and to attract them with the gifts left on the tracks and in the villages apparently abandoned. Lopes reported no conflicting occurrence with the indigenous and concluded: they were in great need of iron implements; they began to realize hunting shortage in the region, and if there were few pine nuts in the next season (April to June), hunger-stricken, the indigenous could intensify their attacks on travelers and occupiers. He then suggested to the President of the Province a second expedition, for he still had supplies, and had already paid in advance the members of his escort. He requested only new resources for the purchase of tools, beads, and some other article to present to the Xokleng that, in his view, had more villages fixed on the banks of the upper Itajaí.

Then, following the work of attracting the Xokleng, Lopes informed that on April 25 he received from the Treasury of the Province the resources destined to the purchase of new gifts. The objects had been boxed, and he reported that the next day (April 26) he should go to Rio Negro (Lopes, Apr 25, 1868, p. 268). A few days later, in Rio Negro, he reported that the gifts had been taken by three beasts of Lieutenant Francisco Xavier de Assis – who did not want to collect the rent for them – and that he had instructed the men who would

accompany him on the new expedition to deliver in hand the gifts to the indigenous (Lopes, May 7, 1868, p. 228).

Data of the two expeditions, Bley and Lopes, show the design of how the Xokleng managed their territories: a central village, protected by trenches and pits, where they performed their rituals, and a series of temporary villages they built as they made their journeys in a certain area for management of the existing natural resources. This configuration is confirmed by Jacques Ourique: “their ranches ... are temporary and in uncertain places. They are made of sticks often not cut, they lay them and attach them to the upper ends, and are covered with *jerivá*, *jissará* [certainly *juçara*, a type of palm tree], or even branches of shrubs”. The way the families settled in these ranches was also described: “By the arrangement of the fires, whose vestiges have been observed, they usually lie down with their feet towards the middle of the ranch, setting small fires in the intervals between the soles of two rows of sleepers”. This form of accommodation is similar to that of the Kaingang, who used pine knots to keep these fires burning for long periods. Jacques Ourique also heard the news in the surroundings of Negro and Iguaçú rivers that the Xokleng had, in addition to the provisional ranches, “a large *toldo* in the heart of the woods, where they have their headquarters, their *maloca* with plantations of cereals, well-made ranches and even forges” (Ourique, 1899, p. 350).

#### THE STRATEGIES OF THE XOKLENG IN DEALING WITH THE INVADERS OF THEIR TERRITORIES

The Xokleng were not impassive seeing the mountains and plateau where they lived to be invaded. Nor were they just reactive to this process – far more than that, they developed stratagems to deal with the range of invaders of their territories. They developed ways of coping with the fronts of expansion that demonstrate and evidence their dynamics, their role as active subjects of this historical process:

##### *The knowledge of the invaders of their territories*

The Xokleng were not unaware of their white neighbors who hunted in their woods and *faxinais*. With them they even had certain agreements, such as not appropriating each other’s hunting when they ran, pursued the same tapir, a deer or wild pigs: “Although tacit, this convention is highly respected as I have been told by experienced tapir hunters” (Ourique, 1899, p. 351). They

were of a “savage intelligence”, shaped by generations and manifested in wit, cunning, and patience. Attributes that allowed them to know the names of all the inhabitants of the outskirts of the backwood, and for a long time conserve the physiognomy of the people they once saw (Ourique, 1899, p. 353).

### *Invisibility and non-establishment of contacts*

One of the strategies used in dealing with the invaders was invisibility. Based on their assessment of the attacker, they were not exposed to it. This was the case of João Bley’s escort. Although they had found twenty villages, none of them saw the indigenous – for the escort men they were “all depopulated”. Certainly, the Xokleng accompanied and evaluated the intentions of the escort: a group of 31 heavily armed men, placed in their pursuit after the attack in Passo Ruim, certainly did not intend to make friendly contacts, but to avenge the deaths of the *tropeiros*, so the subterfuge of emptying the villages and becoming invisible to the escort – and it is quite possible that even knew some of the members of the escort. This strategy was perceived and communicated to the sub-chief, who wrote that his men “always found in these *toldos* great difficulties in straightening the track”. This is because in Bley’s escort, there should be no scout specialized in tracking indigenous, and because they felt threatened, the Xokleng began to “walk on the outside of their feet to hide the track” (Ourique, 1899, p. 149), and also because each village they did the work of eliminating the vestiges that indicated the direction taken.

### *Protection of permanent villages*

José Maria de Paula reported the layout of the Xokleng villages in Plate River: arranged “regularly in rows, grouped in parallel from eight to eight, thus forming the camp” (Paula, 1924, p. 122). In the villages where they stayed longer to perform ritual festivals, collection of pine nuts and other activities, they built their ranches with more perfection and whim, in larger size: “In these large ranches, live several couples belonging to the same family” (Paula, 1924, p. 122). These fixed camps were protected against the attack of invaders with “deep *fojos*, up to two meters and more, riddled with very sharp sticks on the walls, yet fixing a spear at its center” (Paula, 1924, pp. 123-124).

In addition to the traps that surrounded the villages, they were also lined with walls. It was these structures that João Bley’s escort found when he reached the twentieth village, a fixed Xokleng encampment in the divisors of

the waters of the rivers São João, São Lourenço and Negrinho: “they found a fortress made of wood with great strength, it was a parapet on both sides of the rail and in front of this parapet there were nine *fojos*, large holes containing in the bottom many sharp spikes, and on the top it is covered with false embankment on which they planted herbs and other weeds so that no evidence of mining appears” (Bley, Mar 7, 1868, p. 73).

It was in these *fojos* that three men of Bley’s escort fell and were seriously injured. After 14 years, this event was still alive in the memory of the local population of Rio Negro, and Jacques Ourique recorded it as follows:

Buried the dead and planted on the graves 7 crosses, which I still had occasion to see when I passed through this wild and sinister place, the expedition followed in the tracks of the fugitives. A day later, they arrived at a point in the backwood where they saw a narrow trail through which they had turned cautious. Unexpectedly, shortly before finishing the trail, they saw in the clearing some ranches of recent construction and, in one of these, evident, but not so much to cause suspicion, some objects, like a basket of *taquara*, an arch, and so on. (Ourique, 1899, p. 356)

The Xokleng had prepared the trail so that from a distance it was possible to see the clearing with the ranches where were objects that were appreciated by the local population, but between the beginning of the trail and the ranches were located the deadly pits:

the men on the forehead of the ranks, who followed the trail, prepared their weapons and advanced with their eyes fixed on the clearing and the objects distinguished. Suddenly the front man stepped on false ground and fell into a *fojo*: the two immediate, by an instinctive movement, retreated on the rear, and leaving the track sideways, each one to his side, also fell in two other *fojos*. The companions, perceiving the danger, remained unmoved and ready to receive the *bugres*. (Ourique, 1899, pp. 356-357)

The Xokleng did not appear; they had already assessed the military power of the sub-chief’s escort and should be far away. But they prevented the escort from proceeding, forcing it to end the persecution and to withdraw with the wounded to the Estiva resort, from where they had left.

This Xokleng village defense apparatus – pits with sharp sticks and trenches along the trail – led the sub-chief João Bley to deduce that there should be Brazilians or civilized indigenous among the region’s Xokleng groups. For, in

his view, the “*botocudos* ... would have no memory of making parapets to defend themselves from bullets in combat action” (Bley, Mar 7, 1868, p. 73).

The cunning of invisibility and the *fojos* around the village were the strategies used by the Xokleng not to allow the well-armed and nurtured punitive escort of the sub-chief of Rio Negro to find them.

### *The strategy of visibility and establishing relationships*

When Joaquim Francisco Lopes and the president of the Paraná Province defined how he would contact the Xokleng, it was understood that he would use his vast experience of contact with the Kaingang and Guarani-Kayowá in the north of the Province and in Mato Grosso. This experience meant going to the field with people qualified to recognize the vestiges left and “to call the indigenous by gentle means”. It presupposed the establishment of contact with the gift offering, and for this Lopes was carrying a shipment. If possible, Lopes would make the contact and establishment of conversations even at distance, because he had notions of the Kaingang language, similar to the Xokleng language. Evidently, the men who accompanied Lopes were also well armed, but there was a resolution not to use arms except in the last instance to defend the expedition. This differentiated his action from the escort sent by João Bley. While his mission was to attract the Xokleng “by gentle means”, Bley’s escort was to punish them for killing the *tropeiros*.

As they crossed the São João River and began to climb the slopes on the south side, on March 24, the expedition began to be followed by the Xokleng spies. This was detected by Lopes, who put into action his “gentle means” to contact them: “We leave them gifts – axes and chisels” (Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 274). Three days later, they were in the dividing mountain range of the rivers São João and Itajaí, and the indigenous watchmen continued to follow them: “At nightfall, a savage shouted for another who answered him” (Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 274). Immediately Lopes began to use all means to attract them and to talk with them, but, as he could not, he left new gifts, pieces of iron.

Unlike what had happened to Bley’s escort, the Xokleng gave signs of their existence to Lopes, and Lopes, aware of his signs, sought to contact them. Reporting the experience with the Indigenous Attraction Posts that the Indigenous Protection Service (SPI) tried to implement in the Itaiópolis region in 1914, José Maria de Paula described something similar to what had happened to Joaquim F. Lopes 46 years earlier, when noted that: “the indigenous

were the first to cry out. After this manifestation, for us highly significant of the friendly purposes of the indigenous..." (Paula, 1914, p. 2).

The contact between the Xokleng and the Lopes expedition was established, they had collected the gifts and given signs of their presence, but they had not yet shown themselves visually. Lopes followed the ridge of Itajaí and São João until the divisor of the river Negrinho, where on March 31, 1868, found the permanent village of the Xokleng, which contained the trenches and *fojos*. This permanent village was located in a plateau covered with pines and bamboo grove, a place rich in food in the period of the fall of pine nuts, from April to June. Here the Xokleng not only collected the pine nuts but also slaughtered several types of rodents and birds that fed on them. It was here that one of the Xokleng beaters spoke to them in "thick voices", Lopes said. This was an important step, because the indigenous communicated directly with the members of the expedition, who did not understand what he was telling them. So they sought to entertain him with the sound of a horn until the arrival of new gifts, left in another camp. They spread the gifts around the village and retired, but before they heard the spies "modulating their voice with more satisfaction – they carried the gifts". Strategies on both sides were set for a greater approximation. On the morning of the other day, Lopes repeated the ritual of the previous day: he went to the village of the *fojos* and left more gifts. "There spoke to us another indigenous with a finer voice, who greeted us when the day dawned with a bass drum" (Lopes, Apr 17, 1868, p. 274). Before leaving for Rio Negro, the expedition still had contact with the first spy Xokleng, and for him they left a horn as gift.

With that, Lopes ended his mission. He had been able to establish contact with the Xokleng by gentle means, as he had predicted from his audience with the President of the Province. And the Xokleng had succeeded in misleading their pursuers sent by the sub-chief João Bley, and established relations with the expedition of Joaquim Francisco Lopes.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Xokleng territories of the Serra do Mar and Southern Brazil Plateau were being devastated with increasing intensity. On the plateau, the national population expanded the farms and created villages along the Estrada da Mata, which was opened in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. From the coast, up the Serra do Mar, the new groups of European

migrants advanced with new roads and colonies towards the west. The Xokleng territories declined as these two occupying fronts advanced.

The regional historical literature and anthropological literature show that the Xokleng reacted to this occupation with threats, armed robberies and deaths of many of the settlers and *tropeiros* entering their territories, and suffered reprisals with killings, abductions of children and women and destruction of entire villages by paramilitary forces organized by the regional population, the so-called *bugreiros*.

But the history of the relations of the Xokleng groups with the surrounding population and with the imperial and provincial authorities is much more complex than the simple reaction to the invasion of their forests, fields and pine forests. The Xokleng developed ways of dealing with the invaders that went beyond the simple reaction to the attacks they suffered. They had the patience to prepare meticulous ambushes, like the one done in Passo Ruim; they knew how to conceal and hide the vestiges of their walks; they made structures of protection of their principal villages; carefully examined and knew the goals of each of those who penetrated their domains, outlining ways and stratagems to deal with them, exemplified by their distinctive behavior in the face of two expeditions that came to their search after the attack in Passo Ruim.

## HANDWRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC ARCHIVE OF PARANÁ

ARQUIVO PÚBLICO DO PARANÁ, Curitiba. ofício. 26 fev. 1854. p.97.

1293. Ofício de Joaquim Francisco Lopes ao Presidente da Província em 4 jan. 1868. Arquivo Público do Paraná AP 276.3.33. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 963, flash 1, cx. 7.

1297. Ofício do Subdelegado de Polícia João Bley ao Chefe de Polícia da Província Carlos A. Ferraz. Rio Negro, 17 jan. 1868. Arquivo Público do Paraná, AP 274.1. 183-185. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 961, flash 4, cx. 7.

1298. Ofício de Joaquim Francisco Lopes ao Presidente da Província. Rio Negro, 30 jan. 1868. AP 276.3. 21-23. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 963, flash 1, cx. 7.

1298. Ofício do Subdelegado João Bley a Joaquim Francisco Lopes, 30 jan. 1868. AP 276.3. 21-23. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 963, flash 1, cx. 7.

1299. Ofício de Joaquim Francisco Lopes ao presidente José Feliciano Horta de Araújo. Rio Negro 2 fev. 1868. AP 278.5. 45. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 963, flash 7, cx. 7.

1309. Ofício do Subdelegado de Polícia de Rio Negro João Bley ao Chefe de Polícia da Província Carlos Augusto Ferraz de Abreu. Rio Negro, 7 mar. 1868. AP 279.6. 71-73. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 1, cx. 7.

1301. Ofício de Joaquim Francisco Lopes ao presidente José Feliciano Horta de Araújo. Rio Negro, 2 mar. 1868. AP 280.7.95. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 1, cx. 7.

1309. Ofício de Joaquim Francisco Lopes ao presidente José Feliciano Horta de Araújo. Rio Negro, 7 mar. 1868. AP 279.6. 71-73. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 1, cx. 7.

1317. Ofício de Joaquim Francisco Lopes ao presidente José Feliciano Horta de Araújo. Curitiba, 17 abr. 1868. AP 281.8. 273-277. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 9, cx. 7.

1318. Ofício de Joaquim F. Lopes ao Presidente da Província. Curitiba, 25 abr. 1868. AP. 281.8. 268. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 9, cx. 7.

1319. Ofício de Joaquim F. Lopes ao Presidente da Província. Rio Negro, 7 maio 1868. AP. 282.9, p.228. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 935, flash 3, cx. 7.

1327. Ofício do Subdelegado da freguesia de Rio Negro ao Secretário de Polícia da Província do Paraná e outros documentos. Rio Negro, 1 mar. 1868. AP 281.8. 231-250. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 9, cx. 7.

1327. Ofício de Joaquim F. Lopes ao Presidente da Província. Rio Negro, 2 maio 1868. AP 281.8. 231-250. Código de referência BR APR PB 001. Microfilme rolo 966, flash 9, cx. 7, p.236.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Doctor in History from the Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho” (Unesp)/Assis.

<sup>2</sup> The event was published in the Curitiba newspapers: *Dezenove de Dezembro* (Jan 22, 1868) and *Commercio do Paraná* (Jan 30, 1868); in the newspaper of Santa Catarina *O Despertador* (no. 538, Mar 17, 1868), the newspaper of São Paulo *Ypiranga* (no.168, p. 3, Feb 20, 1868) and the newspaper of Ceará, *Pedro II* (no. 49, Mar 3, 1868).

<sup>3</sup> On the discussion of ethnohistory in the United States and indigenous history in Brazil see MOTA (2014).

<sup>4</sup> In Brazil, many researchers have dealt with the history of indigenous peoples in the last four decades, it would not fit here a balance of these authors, but it is necessary to highlight, from the anthropological perspective, the works of Manuela Carneiro da Cunha and João P. de Oliveira Filho, and, from a historical point of view, the works of John M. Monteiro.

<sup>5</sup> For further details see SOARES (2008, pp. 44-67). For an anthropological synthesis on the Xokleng, see the entry *Xokleng*, by Flavio WIJK, available at: [pib.socioambiental.org/pt/povo/xokleng](http://pib.socioambiental.org/pt/povo/xokleng); Accessed in: Oct 31, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> For a balance on the presence of the Xokleng in the Southern Brazilian Plateau and the implications with the Taquara Tradition, see DE MASI (2006). On the historical continuity between the Jê do Sul and the archaeological traditions Itararé and Taquara, see NOELLI (2000 e 2004), PARELLADA (2004, p. 117) and ARAÚJO (2007, p. 27).

<sup>7</sup> See Fernando Oppitz's office donating two skulls found in this shelter to the Museu Paranaense on Apr 7, 1886. *Gazeta Paranaense*, no. 82, Apr 13, 1886, p. 3, and no. 85, Apr 16, 1886, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> On this subject there is also the description of HENRY (1964, pp. 185-188).

<sup>9</sup> See PIAZZA (1968, pp. 6-14). In interviews with some Xokleng elders, they told about the use and manufacture of ceramic artifacts prior to pacification in 1914. This information about the manufacture and use of pottery is also in HANKE (1947, p. 52) and in HENRY (1964, p. 172).

<sup>10</sup> For the dates of the Jê presence in the Southern Brazil, see NOELLI (2004, p. 35); specifically for the region of the Iguaçu and Negro rivers, see CHMYZ (1981), which dates a site in União da Vitória in 1475 +/- 60 years BP, and PIAZZA (1974), which dates to two sites to the south of the Rio Negro in 1290 and 1660 A.D.

<sup>11</sup> See PARANÁ. Excerpt from the expedient of the presidency in the month of February, day 6. *Dezenove de Dezembro*, Curitiba, Feb 29, 1868, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> For more details on these differences in dealing with the indigenous in the Empire, see MOTA (1998). On the Indigenous Colonies implanted by the Empire in Paraná, see MOTA (2000).

<sup>13</sup> Lopes explains that *bombo* (bass drum) was an "instrument made of cedar (a kind of trough) with five *palmas* in length (1 *palmo* = 4 inches) and 4 ½ the circumference that serves to accompany their dances" (LOPES, Apr 17, 1868, p. 274).