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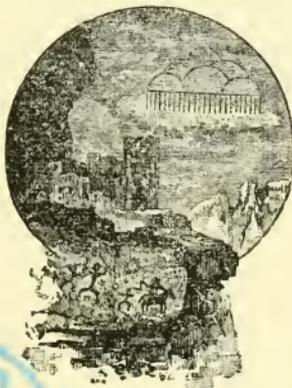
HANDBOOK OF SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

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THE MARGINAL TRIBES

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THE SOUTHERN CAYAPÓ

By ROBERT H. LOWIE

HISTORY

Southern Cayapó (*Kayapó*).—A *Ge* tribe related to, but distinct from the *Northern Cayapó*. The term "*Cayapó*," which remains untranslated, was first applied to the *Southern Cayapó* in the second half of the 17th century. Its bearer (map 1, *No. 11*; map 7) was occupying the area embracing in Goyaz all right affluents of the Paranahyba River and the upper drainage area of the Araguaya River; in southeastern Matto Grosso, all right affluents of the Paraná River as far as the Nhanduhy-Pardo River and the upper drainage area of the Taquary River and the Piquirý-Correntes River; in northwestern São Paulo and western Minas Gerais, the territory between the Paranahyba River and the Rio Grande (lat. 18° S., long. 50° W.). After endless fighting, the *Cayapó* made peace in Goyaz in 1780, and, in 1910 about 30 to 40 survivors were living below the Salto Vermelho (lat. 19°50' S., long., 50°30' W.) on both banks of the Rio Grande. Today their tribal existence has ceased.

CULTURE

Pohl (1832-37, 1: 399-406) and Saint-Hilaire (1830-51, 2: 94-119) both of whom visited the tribe at the aldea São José de Mossamedes, report several characteristic traits. The habitations, originally arranged in a circle, had a frame covered with palm leaves and grass thatching. The inmates slept on platform beds, had stone fireplaces, and cooked in earth ovens. In fire making, the hearth, which had a lateral groove, was held with the foot; both parts of the apparatus were of urucú. Live embers were used to singe off the hair. Black and blue varieties of maize were preferred. Cotton was neither cultivated nor spun. Textiles included mats and elliptical baskets of lurití fiber. Bows, arrows, and clubs are mentioned as weapons. The *Cayapó* were especially troublesome to colonists in about 1750, and the *Bororo* were enlisted against them. In a fight, the women stood behind the men to hand them arrows. Urucú and genipa were the typical body paints. Polygyny was permitted.

Mourners gashed their chests with arrows or struck their heads. At the death of a prominent man they wailed and eulogized the deceased; the chief would club a kneeling Indian on the forehead, and the resulting blood was smeared on the corpse. Interment was in sitting position, and food as well as the dead man's weapons were deposited with the corpse.

Saint-Hilaire (1830-51, 2:105) records a Vulture and a Jaguar dance; Pohl (1832-37, 1:401) a dance in which a performer executes the incredible feat of leaping about with a log weighing a hundred-weight (45.36 kg.) and throwing it to other dancers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Pohl, 1832-37; Saint-Hilaire, 1830-51.