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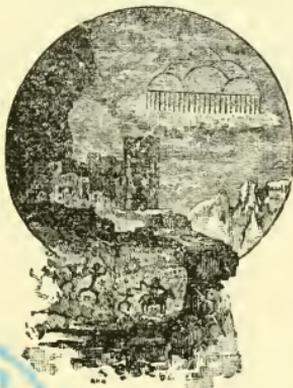
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OF
SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS

JULIAN H. STEWARD, *Editor*

Volume 1

THE MARGINAL TRIBES

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THE TARAIRIU

By ROBERT H. LOWIE

The *Tarairiu* (*Tarairyou*, *Tarayruck*, *Tararyou*, *Tarairyoww*, *Otshucayana*), were a "Tapuya" people in northeastern Brazil. (See The "Tapuya," p. 553.) Linguistically, Ehrenreich (1894) suggested affinity with the *Ge* and, specifically, with the *Patashó* or *Koropo*, who are no longer reckoned as *Ge*. In any case, the evidence is too meager to carry conviction. Pending the discovery of new data, the *Tarairiu* may thus be conservatively treated as a distinct linguistic family, as proposed by Pompeu Sobrinho (1939, pp. 221-235).

HISTORY

The *Tarairiu* were sublitoral, living not so far inland as the *Cariri*, but back of the coast occupied by Europeans, possibly between Natal and Ceará, centering in what is now Rio Grande do Norte (lat. 6° S., long. 36° W.). In the wars between the Dutch and the Portuguese they generally aided the former. Our best primary sources are Jacob Rabbi (see Piso and Marcgravi, 1648), Elias Herckman (1639), and Roulox Baro (1651), as well as the paintings by artists in the retinue of Prince Moritz of Nassau-Siegen, governor of the Dutch possessions from 1636 until 1644. Nieuhof (1732), Barlaeus (1659), and De Laet (1644) are secondary sources. Tribal, subtribal, or horde names abound (Pompeu Sobrinho, 1939). Of the relevant groups the *Jandoin*, i. e., the horde or subtribe under the chief of that name (*Janduy*, *Jandovi*, *Jandubi*, *Johann de Wy*, *Jan de Wy*, *Jan Duwy*) was the best known. They are located by Portuguese chroniclers on the Assú, Mossoró, Apody, and Jaguaribe Rivers. Their population was set at 1,600, usually divided into two bands, presumably for economic reasons (Laet, 1644). According to Studart (1926 b), they were almost annihilated by the Portuguese in 1666. The last reference to the *Jandoin* is dated 1699, the year of a Paulista attack; and they probably became quite extinct in the war of extermination of 1721. The *Payakú* (*Pajoke*), originally on the Apody and Choró Rivers, were, ethnographically, close to the *Jandoin*, and sometimes joined them against the Portuguese. Their descendants lived in Jesuit mis-

sions in Monte Mór o Novo, Ceará, until after 1762, and in Pôrto Alegre, Rio Grande do Norte, until 1817.

CULTURE

Notwithstanding statements in the secondary sources that the *Tarairiu* were pure nomads subsisting on wild fruits, game, fish, and honey, the same authors speak of sowing, the consecration of fields, and prophecies as to the maize crop. Farming is in no way refuted by seasonal migrations, from November to January, to the seashore in search of favorite nuts not found in the interior. As a matter of fact, primary sources explicitly establish agriculture. In March and April, we learn from Rabbi (Piso and Marcgravi, 1648, p. 281 ff.), when the waters of their river had subsided, the people returned to their settlements, where they planted maize, beans, gourds, and other species ("... serunt autem imprimis grandius milium seu Maizium, phaseolos varios et cucurbitas lagenaeformes, aliasque"). A portion of the crop was segregated for the next sowing, the rest being consumed ("... tantum seponunt quantum ad proximam sementum sufficere putant, reliquum abliguriunt"). Roulox Baro (1651) refers to the planting of tobacco and maize.

A root, "arrohu," was made into bread: After crushing it with a stick, a native would catch the squeezed-out juice, crush the mass again until soft, then make it into round pellets, which were baked. The women chewed a certain root in preparing a spirituous beverage.

The weapons included atlatls, spears, and wooden clubs. Special interest attaches to the atlatl, described by Herckman and drawn by Eckhout as a grooved wooden board; a museum specimen in Copenhagen demonstrates this. Herckman expressly mentions bows and spear throwers in the same breath, but the former appear neither in Rabbi's nor Baro's reports nor in the illustrations drawn by Eckhout and Wagener.

Both sexes went virtually naked, the men tying the prepuce with a string, the women wearing a perineal covering of foliage supported by a girdle. One of Eckhout's paintings shows a man wearing sandals, and Rabbi speaks of youths tying their calves for festive athletic games with a pliant withy and donning footgear of the same material ("... quidem primo uras vinciunt lento quodam vimine, è quo et calceos confectos induunt"). Further, Eckhout pictures male dancers with the caplike haircut of modern *Timbira*. The ear lobes of boys about 7 years old were pierced for the insertion of plugs, and about the same time green, black, red, or white stone pencils were put into perforations of the lower lip. Long fingernails, as well as a crownlike haircut, were a badge of distinction, but it was the "king's" preroga-

tive to keep them long on his thumbs. Depilation of body hair was general.

Notwithstanding the alleged nomadism of the *Tarairiu*—Herckman declares that they would not stay over 72 hours in one spot—and the flimsiness of their leafy shelter, they are credited with sleeping in hammocks.

Both sexes are said to have been expert swimmers. The men were good runners and practiced wrestling, especially to show off before women. A reference to a pair of girls by Rabbi suggests that the *Canella* maidens associated with the age classes (p. 496). In the evening young men and women would dance together.

Polygyny was permitted. According to the accepted Dutch legend, Janduy had 60 children by 50 wives—though at times he had been content with 14. Only for a first wife was there a special 4- or 5-day celebration in the chief's presence, the bride and groom being painted with urucú and genipa and decorated with feathers. The suitor had to prove his worth by warlike deeds or, according to Herckman, by the carrying of heavy logs, but Rabbi and Baro describe the log performance as an athletic game of *Timbira* type. The suitor also gave his prospective father-in-law some game and honey. According to Barlaeus' (1659) obviously bowdlerized account, a nubile girl was painted red by her mother and presented to the "king," who would blow tobacco smoke on her, put a wreath on her head, and throw a dart at it; if he hit the girl, he licked off the blood in order to prolong his life. From Rabbi, copied by Nieuhof (1744, p. 135), it appears that this applied to an uncourted girl: The chief, playing a doctor's part, bade the maiden sit beside him, warmed his hands by the fire-place and stroked his body with them, then blew tobacco smoke on himself and the girl, deflowered her, and licked up whatever blood came forth. A husband refrained from intercourse during pregnancy and also, unless monogamous, during lactation. A woman went into the woods for her delivery, severing the navel cord herself and first cooking, then eating the navel cord and the afterbirth. Twice daily she would bathe with her infant. Adultery was rare; a husband might expel a faithless wife and even kill her if caught in the act.

The chief lacked coercive power and was more highly esteemed in war than in peace. However, he enjoyed various prerogatives besides those already cited, receiving a tribute of fruit and meat. His shamanistic and priestly functions included the doctoring of little boys by blowing smoke on them, and the custody of a sacred vessel enclosing rocks and fruits that no one might touch without his permission. At his accession the "priests and prophets" anointed him with balsam and crowned him with feathers. His secular duties consisted in an-

nouncing through a crier the day's undertakings, settling where the camp was to be pitched, and when it was to be broken.

When visiting friends, the *Tarairiu* saluted one another with weeping.

The shamans were consulted on public affairs and would invoke spirits in the woods, returning with the impersonator of a supernatural being, who would foretell the future; but in case of a disagreeable prophecy both the shaman and the mummer were liable to rough treatment. However, a priest's dreams were esteemed and revealed to the chief. In major prophecies, e. g., as to war, the shamans consulted the chief's vessel, first blowing tobacco smoke on it. In 1641, when the floods had destroyed the fields, the holy rocks were uncovered and six prophets interpreted the future, promising plenty of maize, honey, etc. No sowing was done before the performance of sacred rites: the priests purified the soil, and then incensed the seeds with tobacco smoke in order to enhance their fertility. The Morning Star was worshiped with chants and leaps in the morning and at a major tribal festival uniting the bands in the summer. This involved racing contests and dances.

A corpse was dissected by the priests and roasted by the old women, who bewailed their loss, and then consumed the flesh, gnawing the bones. The body of an eminent man was devoured by those of his own status. The bones were preserved for a subsequent festival, at which time they were pulverized, the powder mixed with water, and then swallowed. The hair was consumed in a similar manner.

Doctoring involved both the blowing of smoke and suction of the affected part. In treating Janduy on one occasion, the medicine men sucked, bellowed like cattle, and extracted an awl, a root, and a rock as the cause of his illness.

There was a belief in the division of souls according to the manner of death, those dying from natural causes being apparently favored. The souls were supposed to go west, assembling before a stagnant body of water, where a spirit comes in a boat to question them as to the way they died, whereupon he ferries them over to a place of good fish and honey.

Among various observances and beliefs may be mentioned the faith in omens from bird calls, laceration of the body to forestall fatigue on a journey, and the offering made to big rocks lest they bite the Indians (symplegades motif?).

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