

A Social History of Brazilian Archaeology: A Case Study

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Introduction: Colonial Discourse in Archaeology

The role of archaeology and material culture in general, in the construction and legitimation of cultural identities, has become central in archaeological theory and practice over the last few years (Jones 1997). The relationship between archaeology and the construction of identities has been at the heart of the discipline from the start, in the nineteenth century, but it was only with contextual, post-processual approaches that a critical assessment of this relationship became common. The World Archaeological Congress and its emphasis on the socio-politics of archaeology played a vital role in this (Ucko 1995). However, the growth of nationalism in Europe and elsewhere in the world, and the spread of globalisation as a popular interpretive framework, has contributed to the realisation that identity building and material culture were to be interpreted as inextricably interrelated.

In this overall context, colonial discourse theory is particularly relevant. Originally, since the 1970s at least, colonial discourse theory focused on the power of colonial ideology and how rhetoric and representations helped in the historical process of the imperial domination of subjected peoples (Hingley 2000: 6). Such thinkers as Edward Said (1978) and Martin Bernal (1987) described how the subjugation of people by colonial powers comprised a complex set of so-called scientific descriptions of strength and weakness, colonialists and colonised. The past was used to substantiate strong colonialists, such as the British and the French, as opposed to weak natives, be they Middle-Easterners, Indians, Africans or Native Americans. The role of material culture in shaping these imbalances was not marginal, but social thinkers were first and foremost concerned with scholarly narratives by social scientists and other students of society. They also focused on how Indo-Europeans qualified as superior to Semites, even though other subjected peoples were associated with the traditionally inferior Semites.

It is only lately that material culture studies have turned to colonial discourse analysis, and this move in archaeology is related to a critical approach to the history of the discipline, as most notably proposed early on by Trigger (1990). Unlike earlier internalist accounts of archaeology, the history of the discipline has been increasingly situated in the changing social, cultural, and political circumstances of society as a whole. This innovative approach considers the historical conditions that have permitted the existence of the discipline, as well as the circumstances in which knowledge has been produced (Patterson 2001: 5). It led to the publication of several books, edited volumes and papers on such subjects as archaeology and nation building (Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996 with earlier references; Olivier 2001, from a French perspective; on Brazil, Funari 1999).

The aim of this paper is to show how a social history of Brazilian archaeology from a post-colonial perspective, can contribute to a better understanding of archaeology as a strategic discourse.

Brazilian Archaeology: Historical Background

The history of archaeology in Brazil must be understood within the context of its complex geography and historical development. Brazil is a large country (8,511, 965 square kms), with its Atlantic coastline 7,408 kms. Most of the country has a tropical or semi-tropical climate: in the north there is the heavily wooded Amazon Basin covering half the country; the northeast region is semi-arid scrubland; a large savannah, or *serrado* area stretches to the south; and semi-tropical vegetation exists from São Paulo State in the south up to the Pampa in Rio Grande do Sul State.

During the first four hundred years of European colonization, slavery dominated the lives of indigenous natives, Africans, and people of mixed race, until emancipation in 1888. Even after emancipation social inequalities continued, resulting in one of the most unequal social structures in the world. Income distribution is a good indicator of social injustice, and the majority of people in Brazil earn a modest proportion of the national income, while a minority are affluent. Brazil had a GNP worth US\$ 789.4 billion in 1999, and with a population of 163.8 million, its GDP was US\$ 4820 per head of population. However, the 10 percent of Brazilians who are the richest section of the community get 47 percent of the gross domestic product, while the poorest 10 percent receive only 0.8 percent (Funari 1999a: 22).

Brazil has the tenth largest economy in the world, but the richest 20% of Brazilians earn 32 times more than the poorest 20%. All of those looked upon as expendable, such as natives and landless peasants are socially marginalised, and several minorities also experience discrimination (Funari 2000: 182). Other forms of slavery are still practiced, exploitation is endemic and social injustice and violence are unchallenged. Even today, the Air Force Minister, Brigadier Walter Werner Bräuer, praises Hitler as 'a great leader' (Funari 2002, with earlier references). Brazilians and foreigners alike describe Brazil as 'Belindia', a small affluent Belgium within a large and poor India.

During the colonial period (1500–1822), there were few references in written sources to archaeological sites. The evidence provided by such documents, including drawings and paintings, must be interpreted with reference to their social context, as they were generally biased against Native Americans, Africans and poor people. The Brazilian Empire (1822–1889) witnessed the beginning of archaeological activities, with the arrival of Peter Wilhelm Lund in 1825, who established a palaeontological laboratory in Lagoa Santa, a village in Minas Gerais Province, where he found human and animal fossils. Between 1834 and 1844 Lund surveyed some eight hundred caves and collected a great amount of material, especially extinct fauna. In the 1870s the Imperial Museum in Rio de Janeiro became active in archaeological research, thanks to Charles Wiener and his pioneering studies of shell-mounds material. The Canadian Charles Friedrich Hartt, and Brazilians Ferreira Penna and Barbosa Rodrigues explored the Amazon Basin, from the 1870s to the 1890s. Carl Rath studied shell middens, known by the local Tupi name *sambaqui*, while the museum director, Ladislau Neto, was the first Brazilian to explicitly write about archaeology as such. Archaeology was also carried out by the Brazilian Geographical and Historical Institute (IHGB) and published regularly in its journal, *Revista do IHGB*. All these activities were largely due to Emperor Peter the Second and his enlightened approach to scholarship. Isolated archaeological research was carried out also in the south of Brazil, and published from the 1870s in Germany, and in Rio Grande do Sul Province.

The early republican period (1889–1920s) experienced a weakening of archaeological scholarship in the country. During the nineteenth century archaeological scholars kept in touch with what was going on in the international academic world. Ladislau Neto regularly exchanged letters with the leading French intellectual Ernest Renan and the contacts with foreign experts were regarded as important. The shift of the cultural center of Brazil from the royal court in Rio de Janeiro, to the new coffee producing elite in São Paulo, helps to explain the new 'inward looking' aspects of archaeology, even though paradoxically, the field was dominated by foreigners. Museum directors became the main participants in archaeology, like the Swiss Emil Goeldi at Belém, where he was in charge of the Museu Paraense (later named after him 'Museu Emílio Goeldi') and Hermann von Ihering, director of the Paulista Museum, in São Paulo, from 1895 to 1916. Von Ihering was out of touch with modern research abroad, and opposed the idea that shell mounds were evidence of prehistoric human settlements. However, Teodoro Sampaio, another leading scholar in Brazilian archaeology during the 1910s and early 1920s, contrary to what academics were proposing abroad, believed wholeheartedly that rock scratches should be interpreted as hieroglyphic writing.

Between the 1920s and the 1940s important political, social and cultural changes occurred in Brazil. Modernism and, later, Fascist and communist ideologies resulted in the democratisation of intellectual

discourse. Accordingly, there were two new developments during this period: the beginning of the study of artifact collections and the publication of the first archaeological manuals. Angyone Costa and Frederico Barata produced several handbooks during these years, and the Argentine Antonio Serrano studied collections of artifacts and thus established a whole new field of research within Brazilian archaeology.

The inception of university research (1950s–1964) was the consequence of Brazil's longest period of democracy (1945–1964). The leading humanist Paulo Duarte established academic archaeology. Due to his friendship with Paul Rivet, Director of the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, France, Duarte created the Prehistory Commission at São Paulo State University in 1952. Duarte pushed for the legal protection of Brazilian heritage, and as a result of his efforts the Brazilian Congress enacted a federal law (3537/57, approved as law 3924 in 1961) protecting archaeological sites. To this day, it is still the only explicit federal law on the protection of archaeological heritage.

The military period (1964–1985) changed the situation. The new authorities used lack of funds to undermine Duarte's efforts and opposed the development of scholarly archaeology. At the same time, North American archaeologists Clifford Evans and Betty Meggers were able to set up a National Program of Archaeological Research, known by its acronym PRONAPA. The program was sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington DC, and by Brazilian institutions, like the National Research Council (CNP). Between 1965 and 1971 PRONAPA trained Brazilian archaeologists and carried out surveys and excavations throughout the country, with few resulting publications. Duarte, on the other hand, was expelled from the University of São Paulo in 1969 and his Institute of Prehistory was subjected to restrictions. Archaeology also suffered greatly, as the result of authoritarian trends inside the profession. However, the reinstatement of democracy from 1985 onwards supported and reinvigorated the interest in archaeology, and new political and social freedom led to the development of a variety of new activities regarding archaeological resources. Interpretive books were published, as were a greater number of articles in scholarly journals, and for the first time, not just in Brazil but also abroad.

Since the nineteenth century, Brazilian identity was linked to archaeological heritage. The Romantic nationalism of the royal court in Rio de Janeiro, was based on the idealization of Brazilian indigenous people, and in this idealization archaeology played a part. At the beginning of the twentieth century, prehistoric and historic archaeological heritage contributed to forging Brazilian identity. Throughout both of these periods the Historical and Geographical Institute (IHGB) played a key role in the development of the discipline of archaeology, helping to establish and perpetuate the social and epistemological features that continue to haunt the discipline to this day.

A Degenerate and Fossilized People

There is tradition, both in archaeology and in history, to consider the former as a study of sources, and as a branch of the latter (Klein 1993: 729). European archaeology was partly the consequence of the history of philology (Champion 1990: 89) and its role as 'handmaiden to history' was a result of a specific definition of history as an interpretive discipline that used different sources, such as those studied by technicians (like palaeographers, responsible for manuscripts), and by archaeologists, collecting artifacts (Austin, 1990) and art objects (Bandinelli 1984: 157, 1994). In the United States archaeology developed differently, having always been considered as part of anthropology (Deetz, 1967: 3; Trigger 1989b: 19; Smith 1992: 24; Renfrew 1993: 73), even though it was also regarded as a discipline based on collecting data that was then interpreted by a true social scientist, that is, by an anthropologist. In Brazil, the philological approach and the history of archaeology's relationship with philology was fundamental to its development as a discipline.

Thus, the IHGB's archaeological practice was organized along the lines of a philological approach. This meant that the criteria for studying material culture and developing hypotheses about the origin of indigenous people were grounded in philology, the major purpose of which was to collect indigenous myths. These were interpreted so as to elucidate the geography and history of the empire,

the history of the oldest settlements on the 'Brazilian continent', the migration routes of Brazilian 'natives', and history of the Native People who had inhabited Brazilian territory for a long time. Thus, according to Manoel de Araújo Porto Alegre (1865: 70), if the echoes of ancient historical traditions could be heard in the sound of indigenous languages, archaeology should be able to discover something about the origins of Brazil's indigenous people and their migration patterns.

In this way, if indigenous myths described a particular immigration route, for instance, of the Tupis and Guaranis as coming from North America, the Andes or the Amazon Basin, then these myths were comparable to reliable historical sources. Thus, the IHGB as the product of European historical and archaeological thought: linguistic evidence could be used to verify historic events (Malina and Vasicek 1997: 33–34). The chronicles of the colony and naturalists' narratives were likened to indigenous myths. This comparative method was used to verify the criteria of hypotheses about the origins and occupations routes of indigenous people. The IHGB used a philological *corpora*, a set of myths and historical texts, as the basis for an archaeology that would enable them to interpret indigenous cosmologies and material culture.

Along with this philological approach, two leading naturalists established pervasive concepts about indigenous groups. The first of them, previously mentioned, was Peter Wilhelm Lund, who concluded that Brazil was the oldest continent on the planet, and that the 'American race' had previously inhabited it when *'the first rays of History had not arrived yet in the horizons of the Old World'* (1844: 338–342). Lund based the antiquity of 'American race' on evidence from his palaeontological excavations in Lapa do Sumidouro, where he found human and animal fossils in the same context. He used comparative anatomy and chemical analyses to prove the authenticity of the fossils (1842: 82, 1844: 336–367, 1950 [1844]: 469). His geological assessments on the fossils' depositions in the geological layers of the caves led him to believe in the contemporaneity between the 'American race' and the ancient fauna (1950 [1844]: 474–483).

Lund used James Cowles Prichard's anthropological taxonomy and examined the indigenous material culture in an attempt to measure the level of civilization of Lapa do Sumidouro's people. He classified them according to their race, customs and *'intellectual perfection'* (1842: 44–45). Thus, he concluded that the skulls of Lapa do Sumidouro had defective substratum for intelligence, although they showed similarities with the Egyptian mummies (1842: 85). According to Lund, nobody could expect any kind of progress in arts and industry from a people whose anatomical configuration was so defective. He used other evidence, such as the rude axes and barbarian stone tools found among the human fossils (1842: 86) to support his conclusions.

Lund asserted that 'the American race' had maintained long-standing traditional survival patterns. He argued that the fossils of Lapa do Sumidouro, dating from the last 3,000 years, were evidence of a long tradition of hunting and gathering by the indigenous populations of South America. He described the still living indigenous to be as frozen in time as their deceased ancestors: they were living fossils. They were firmly fixed in a natural state that lacked any interest in, or impetus towards, progress and development.

Karl Friedrich Phillipp von Martius (1794–1868) developed the other pervasive concept about indigenous groups (1907 [1832], 1905 [1838], 1844) and a novel (1992 [1831]). This German naturalist described indigenous people as a degenerate race. Von Martius agreed with Lund: the indigenous population were fossil people. However, they have been permanently stagnating, but in fact, their development had actually regressed. *Indeed, the indigenous bodies were a calcified surface by degeneration.*

For von Martius there was one *'general weakness in the organization of red race'*. Indigenous people were only a cog in the gears-of the world, they performed a passive role in the history of mankind (1907 [1832]: 81–82, 1905 [1838]). Consequently von Martius claimed that it would be impossible to assimilate them into a modern society. The Brazilian monarchy could not rescue the indigenous

population and elevate them to a civilized level. But could the monarchy reinvigorate these degenerate people? Von Martius argued that to accomplish this it would be necessary to mix indigenous people with Europeans or the 'white race'. He advised that the future aim of the Brazilian empire should be to promote such a healthy racial mix. It had to be nurtured among the 'lowest classes' at first, and as a result, the 'highest classes' would become more strong and vigorous in the future if they then mixed themselves with the improved 'lowest classes' (1844: 391).

On the other hand, according to von Martius, the monarchy should also save indigenous people as sources for the writing of the primitive history of Brazil. Thus, von Martius advised the staff of IHGB to uncover the stages of development of a civilization that should be found, around the Tocantins, Xingu and Araguaia Rivers. He emulated the archaeological quest of Benigno José de Carvalho e Cunha, who had been trying to discover an abandoned city in the forests of Bahia (1844: 392–395).

For von Martius, the indigenous people of Brazil must have belonged to a great civilization which had colonized all of South America. This argument was based on several premises. Von Martius considered the monumental buildings of Central America and Mexico as aesthetically majestic in form. He classified the indigenous Tupis as a civilized people, regarding them as the predominant people among the indigenous of Brazil, who were the descendents of people from north of Brazil, from Meso-america, who had occupied Brazil entirely, conquering and subduing whatever barbarian races that had been there. However, the Tupis and the indigenous people of Central America and Mexico then mingled with inferior races and thereby degenerated. Moreover, the constraints of the Brazilian tropical climate had also weakened them and contributed to the degeneration process (1907 [1832]: 17–18, 80–82).

These concepts, of Brazilian indigenous people being both degenerate and fossilized or unchanging, organized the interpretive framework of the archaeology of the IHGB. Indigenous groups were simultaneously conceived as natural, symbolic and economic subjects. If indigenous groups were natural subjects, but also members of a defective race whose culture was fossilized, then they could be symbolic subjects too. They furnished the IHGB with a set of myths, a material culture and a lexical universe that could be decoded to provide details of their level of civilization, and perhaps of their monumental past. The staff of the IHGB believed that there had been a civilized side to indigenous people although they were now only a 'ruin of people', in von Martius' terms (1844: 395). The search for the civilized indigenous groups worked to define and classify them into the strict racial hierarchies that shaped the empire, and it allowed Brazilian archaeology to dismiss or depicted them as part of the historical discourse that was fundamental to the creation of a national identity. This effort to understand the civilized side of indigenous groups characterized them as economic subjects as well. The staff of the IHGB intended to use criteria based on levels of civilization to select the indigenous groups best suited to be used as a labour-force. The idea was to distinguish the most useful indigenous groups, from the more docile groups, as part of the ongoing colonization of the Brazil.

On these grounds, epistemologically guided by the philological approach, Brazilian archaeology provided interpretations about the origins, migrations and the material culture of indigenous people.

The Old World in the New World

The IHGB had specific use for indigenous or native material culture. As Januário da Cunha Barbosa, former secretary of IHGB, wrote in the first issue of *The Brazilian Journal of Historical and Geographical Institute*, the 'archaeological objects' show us 'the conditions of civilization, industries and customs of the Indians' (Barbosa 1839a: 142). Thus the IHGB assessed indigenous peoples' levels of civilization using artefacts. Indigenous people could be living fossils or 'ruined' people, and remnants of a tropical civilization. By the same token, they were also regarded as barbarians, by their contemporary conditions. Was it possible to rehabilitate them, for the sake of the history of the Brazilian nation? It was possible that they could be valuable sources of information about other more

civilized cultures. Here Brazilian archaeology, was like a numismatist and a coin, regarding indigenous people like coins, with inscriptions on them that would provide evidence about their origins.

These live 'archaeological objects' could demonstrate whether indigenous groups were ancestors of the Jewish people, an American Adams, or antediluvian men. They could thus prove the biblical hypothesis about the settlement of Brazil: the Indian as an inhabitant of one geographical space that had been a tropical paradise, the Indian as a son of monogenism. But perhaps the live 'archaeological objects' would prove to be more civilized than first thought, as though civilized behaviour could be glimpsed under the dirt and patinas covering a coin. Archaeology could then polish and elucidate this reverse side of the coin. The live 'archaeological objects' would then reveal their primordial brilliancy and be able to recount, once again, their long transmarine voyages and migrations. The live 'archaeological artefacts' might be able to prove the Mediterranean hypothesis about Brazilian settlement: the Indian as ancestor of the early navigators of the Ancient World: Phoenicians, Greeks, Egyptians and others, or the Indian as ancestor of modern Europeans, the descendents of involuntary migration, an oceanic accident, of winds and currents winds that had marooned European civilization in Brazil long before the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century.

The IHGB staff also believed that the live 'archaeological objects' could still contain, fragmentary but the empirical traces of Cuvier's theory, evidence of a catastrophe that would illustrate the degeneration of Mediterranean civilization among Indians. However, evidence of this ancient civilization could be found in the forests anyway, perhaps some Greek columns with its volutes corroded by the hard weather of the tropics. The Indian would be now a naked Greek. Moreover the rock paintings could be cuneiform writing, hieroglyphs stamped onto the granite of the caves. According to Manoel Ferreira Lagos, the rock paintings would be decoded by a Brazilian François Champollion (Lagos 1844: 538). Indigenous groups were perhaps the sons of Phoenicians who had unfortunately forgotten the alphabet (Barbosa and Alegre 1839).

The live 'archaeological objects' could help to demarcate the geopolitical unity of the Brazilian nation. As tangible elements from regions whose locations were far from the centralized power of the empire, the live 'archaeological objects', with their primitive materiality, could help to fix national boundaries. In this way the main role of the indigenous people as live artifacts was to help to consolidate the empire's geopolitical limits before claims to territory by other Latin American republics were made. Along with the evidence from the live indigenous artifacts, the marble standards fixed along Brazil's seaboard by Portuguese colonizers, according to Varnhagen, could also be used to draw the geographical unity of nation (Varnhagen 1849: 374). The living human fossils would settle scientific marks on the national soil likewise. As evidence of the 'oldest continent of the planet', the live human fossils would confer one universal background and historical prestige to the nation. They could provide the authentication, by means of science, a kind of birth certificate for Brazilian geopolitical boundaries.

The IHGB was not the only archaeological organization to search for the stages of civilization in the Americas in this manner. The Northern Antiquarian Society, an institution with which the IHGB kept in permanent contact, believed that the Scandinavians had colonized parts of Greenland and Northern America in the tenth century (Rafn 1840), a thesis that was well received in Brazil and as well as in the United States (Horsman 1981: 181). Other institutions produced sagas about European civilizations in America. The Ethnological Society of Paris argued that it was possible that Europeans had colonized America before Columbus's arrival (Warden 1843). Spain too had come up with similar epic stories. Hernández Sanahuja, the first Spanish archaeologist to use the stratigraphic method in excavation, a member of Royal Academy of History and the Tarraconense Archaeological Society, believed that Egyptians had colonised Spain (Remessal et alli. 2000: 37–41). Archaeological remains were evidence for all sorts of civilizations found all over the Americas (Díaz-Andreu 1999: 169–171). Until the end of the 19th century, in the United States, the moundbuilder archaeological sites were regarded as evidence that a civilized race (Greeks, Vikings and others) had occupied the American

territory (Trigger 1980, 1985, 1990: 104–108; Hinsley 1985: 51).

Therefore, the archaeological practice of the IHGB was related to mainstream of international archaeology right from the start, although it did not use stratigraphic excavation at the same time that it was used in France, England and Scandinavia. In 1866 the IHGB was invited to participate in the Historical and Archaeological Congress in Antwerp, Belgium, where its staff would be able to present a written report on Brazilian Archaeology.

The Monarchy and the Indigenous Past

For the staff of the IHGB archaeology embodied the political order, defining the social position of Brazil's indigenous people within the nation-building process. Archaeology, in establishing the 'noble' ancestors (Phoenicians, Greeks, Europeans, etc) of indigenous groups, could incorporate them into the overall picture of civilized nations of the world. In a society where noble titles were distributed, the fossilized 'races' who were integrated into it had to be 'noble' too, even if their 'noble' character was lost among fragmented prehistoric materials.

We can thus conceptualize the archaeological practice of this period as a nobiliary archaeology. Archaeology reconstituted the fragments of material culture, and gave them a voice and a form to become part of the historic discourse, that was recognised by the social elites of the country. The indigenous past could be used as a mirror to the 'white race'. If indigenous people, members of an ancestor civilization, had once been creative in the past they could also be part of the new empire and civilization to be built by the enlightened elite of Brazil. In a society where images of indigenous people were included in its emblems, where the indigenous names baptized the genealogy of an aristocratic family, it was not a surprising that archaeology was confused with heraldry and that it helped to reconstitute the genealogy of the nation, as reflected by the material discourse in the galleries of the Brazilian National Museum (Lopes 1997: 117–119).

There were galleries in National Museum with Egyptian mummies and Mediterranean artifacts, reminders of the civilized origins of the monarchy and its supporters. In other galleries there were collections of the artifacts of the 'savage races', reminders of the inferiority of the 'uncultured Africa' and the need for indigenous people to be domesticated. Indigenous artifacts were even displayed beside Egyptian mummies, since they verified the Mediterranean and Biblical hypotheses about the settlement of Brazil, and since they portrayed, as archaeological texts, the messages of European cultures.

Therefore, the quest for the vestiges of civilization was not like groping in the dark, blindfolded, searching for the monuments that embodied the civilized soul of the nation. There was concern for the finding the empirical evidence, for the monumental artifact that should become visible in order to become an archaeological document. The staff of the IHGB ran away from the 'Walter Scott's antiquarians' (Barbosa and Alegre 1839: 99), and eschewed the counterfeiters of inscriptions and archaeological artefacts. On the other hand, the search for archaeological monuments, as in the case of the Benigno José de Carvalho e Cunha's scientific expeditions, could, according to Januário da Cunha Barbosa (1841), find and claim wealthy new land for the state.

Benigno José de Carvalho e Cunha, in pursuit of the elusive abandoned city, explored the unknown forests of Brazil (Barbosa 1841: 527–528). Thus, in one petition sent to Emperor Pedro II in 1841, the IHGB solicited the monarch's financial support of Benigno José de Carvalho e Cunha's scheme, emphasizing the strategic advantages of the expedition: this archaeological investigation would contribute to the civilization of the interior of the country, that is, it would map its mineral treasures and it would open new lands to agriculture.

Archaeology and Geostrategy

Our aim has been to analyze the IHGB's archaeological practice from a post-colonial perspective.

Colonial discourse is, according to Homi K. Bhabha, an apparatus of power, a system of representations, a regime of truth that has the purpose of constructing the colonized as a degenerate people, in order to vindicate the conquest and to establish systems of administration (Bhabha 1995: 70). At the same time, colonial discourse is also ambivalent, it constructs stereotypes and contrastive images between the colonized and the colonizer (Bhabha 1995: 75–84).

Thus, when the IHGB's staff classified indigenous people as degenerate and as live fossils, they also emphasized how indigenous culture was different from their culture: from Western culture. The nebulous definition of indigenous intelligence as inadequate for civilized behaviour became concrete in authentic documents. The intelligence of indigenous people was measured materially by fossils and archaeological artifacts. The IHGB had 'tangible evidence' about 'indigenous inferiority', about the weaknesses of indigenous people being caused by the tropical climate. Indigenous people were a degenerate people, frozen at a point in their own history that had once shown signs of civilization.

This assessment founded a politic of identity. The IHGB's staff constructed one radical division between 'whites' and indigenous people, between what they conceived of as homogeneous 'races'. Indigenous people could figure in the historical representation of the nation, since their legacy, i.e. their archaeological and ethnographical artefacts, were evidence of their more majestic past. With regard to the live fossils, that were permanently hunting and fishing, the monarchy should integrate them into colonial society, and turn them into ductile people (Barbosa 1839b: 1840).

Brazilian territory, particularly its interior, should be civilized. The annexation of the interior of Brazil was an imperative, and these regions were declared to be *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one). To civilize this territory using indigenous people, it would be necessary to implement healthy miscegenation, to blend them with European colonists, as recommended by the author of the epic *Confederação dos Tamoios* (1856), Gonçalves de Magalhães (Ferreira 2005). But if the indigenous people who inhabited these regions were an obstacle to civilization, they should be overwhelmed or exterminated, as suggested by the official historian of the empire, Francisco Adolfo Varnhagen, and by Gonçalves Dias, the leading national poet (Ferreira 2003, 2005).

The nobiliary archaeology was anchored in a geostrategy, its major role to spread civilization over the interior of the country and civilize the indigenous population. Forging itself from scientific expeditions, archaeology was closely related to geography, to exploring resources, to cartographic exercise, to the mapping the territory and its populations. Archaeological expeditions comprised a double-edged hermeneutic: cartography of the resources to be exploited by the state; topography of the soul of the indigenous people, surveying their practices and customs.

Conclusion

In Brazil, archaeology was a science that helped with the occupation and colonization of the country, with the triumphant advance of imperial civilization through the jungle. It was similar colonial practice in other parts of South America. In Argentina, for example, between 1879 and 1881, the national government sent several military expeditions to the enormous Pampas and Patagonia territories, as part of the so-called 'Conquest of the Desert', to areas that were inhabited by Mapuche and Tehuelche indigenous people. Some scientists accompanied these expeditions and collected archaeological and ethnographic material, as well as the heads of dead indigenous people, for bio-anthropological studies. Following military conquests, the British developed a rail network across these territories, centered around Buenos Aires, and the La Plata Museum (one of the largest museums in South America) was constructed to store and exhibit the recent achievements of the government and the scientists (Politis 1995: 199).

In Brazil, the imperial social elite wanted to expurgate the history of 'fossilized' indigenous people, and produced an illustrated historical epic with Mediterranean artifacts, and a lost civilization like Rome or Greece in the jungle. The post-colonial critique has shown us that archaeology promoted colonial domination, racial segregation and the inculcation of Western 'superiority' (Bernal 1987;

Hingley 2000). Archaeology was an interpretive tool to manufacture a civilization opposite to that of the barbarians, and a powerful instrument to construct nations and modern empires (Patterson 1997: 87–91). The Brazilian imperial elite regarded themselves as the owners of a Classical past, as inheritors of a superior civilization. Using archaeology they classified indigenous people as degenerate, defining them as the ‘Others’ of the nation. The imperial elite regarded themselves as the patricians of a new Rome or Greece spreading civilization over the interior of continent. The aristocratic roots of archaeology continued as an implicit interpretive framework for quite a long time in Brazil.

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