

Vikings and Payaguás in Paraguay

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In the middle of the century XX, I heard by oral tradition, that a woman Payaguá died in Asunción, the last one representative of her ethnic, characterized to be canoeist, fishers, pirates, hard-workers, handicraftsmen, artists, merchants and prophesiers.

The anthropologists realized ethnographical and ethnological studies of the Payaguás, with the wrong idea that the European arrived to Paraguay recently in the century XVI, coming to the conclusion of the acculturation of the Hispanos about the Payaguás, in the century XVIII.

The knowledge, what I have about the Viking culture, allowed me to resolve these questions, by consulting the best bibliography.

Idiomatical code: The term Yga, applied to the ethnic, was already collected by the chronicler, reason for which it was necessary to study its origin, as its significance in Guaraní is aquatic transport.

I found many terms with the same significance in Nordic and Guaraní, as kwnia, woman; but Yga resisted, so it was mentioned Drakar, esnakar, etc. Finally, I was visited by a Swedish traveller, who was interested in the Vikings of Paraguay; this opportunity permitted me to explore the popular Swedish language.

I mentioned to him various vocables of Guaraní with the same significance in Swedish. Then I asked him about the aquatic transports and he responded: Drakar, esnakar, etc. I said to him: Tree and he wrote Ek, with the pronunciation Igk; then I said canoe and he wrote Ek-a, with the pronunciation Igk-a. I knew that a´a was water in Swedish, so I said to him: Tree to the water. In conclusion, canoe in Swedish and in Guaraní had the same pronunciation.

Ethnics. It will be made a summary of the names and different characters of the Payaguás.

With reference to the name, according to Maria Miranda, the last one Payaguá consulted by Max Schmidt, was Evo Evi, in the language of the genus Guaikurú.

With reference to the general name Payaguá, it is of the origin Guaraní-Vikings: Pa´i, shaman; Jharl, the lord; gua, the suffix of the genitive. The meaning is: Leader of the shamans.

With reference to the particular names, appear: Aigás, Payaguás and Sarigués.

In the south, from Santa Fe to Corrientes, Ulrich Schmidel found them with the name Ayga: A, cumulative; Yga, canoe. The meaning is the ones with the big canoes of 7 meters of length and 70 cm of width, with the pointed fore and aft. In the centre, from Corrientes to Manduvirá, with the name of Payaguá.

In the north, from Manduvirá to Fuerte Olimpo, with the name of Kadigue, which by the Spanish was changed to Sarigue.

The characters of this ethnic are:

- They were bellicose and pirates.
- They were known as the men of the river.
- They placed the defunct in a canoe and buried him on an island.
- They used the canoes as defense against the Spanish.
- They tricked their enemies, in hiding out between the camalotes (floating plants on the river) of the river.
- They were ceramicists, fabricating pots of burned mud.

Artisanry. They cultivated helpful activities, among them stick out:

- The ceramic, with pots in form of jars and bells of burned mud, with adornments at the borders, with handhold.
- The textile with double fibers, was used by the handcraft men, being origin of the north of Europe.
- The engraving and the engraving with fire of mates (pot of calabash), decorated with stripes of geometrical designs. In their drawings they designed meanders and spirals reaching much harmony on the base of the symmetry.
- It is very interesting to point out that the Payaguás lived in tepees, with temporarily settlements, giving the condition of seminomades. They did not use hammocks to sleep, they used mats (mat of vegetal fibers).

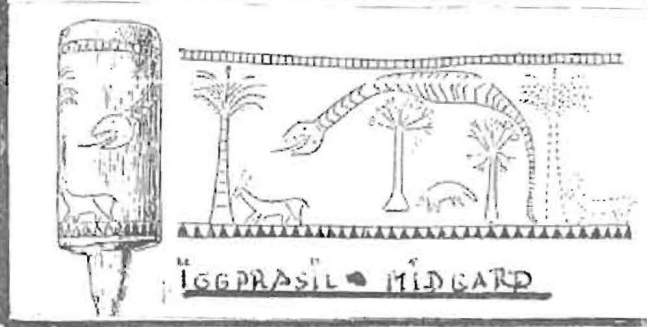
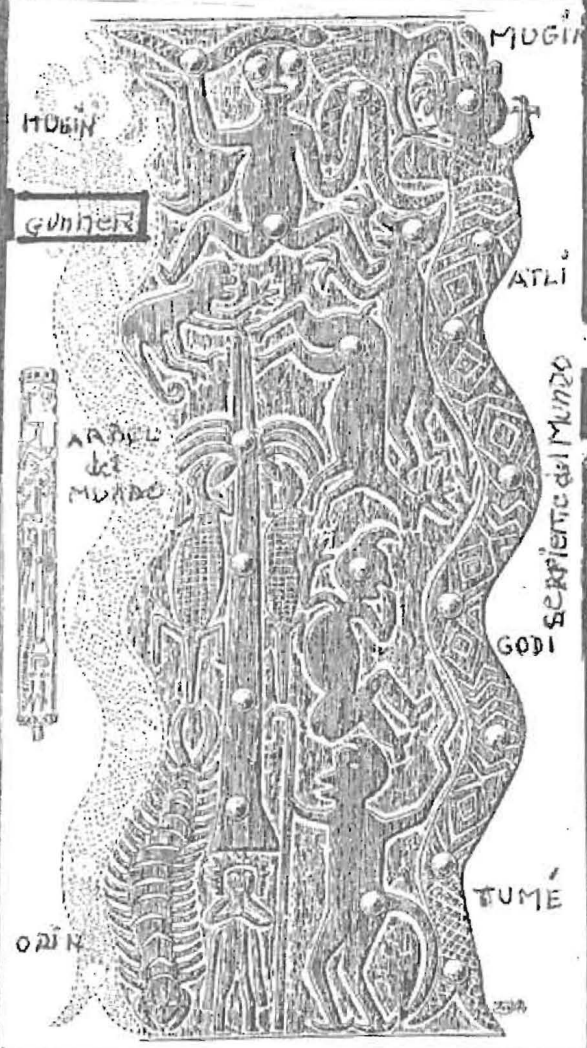
Ethnology. The investigators were impressed by the manufacture quality of these pipes. They intended applications from different points of view, always partially, in introducing contradictory elements, which resulted invalid, as we explain:

- The position of the investigators of the pipes is that they have the tendency to see them as gardens of the paradise of the Payaguás (biblical motives).

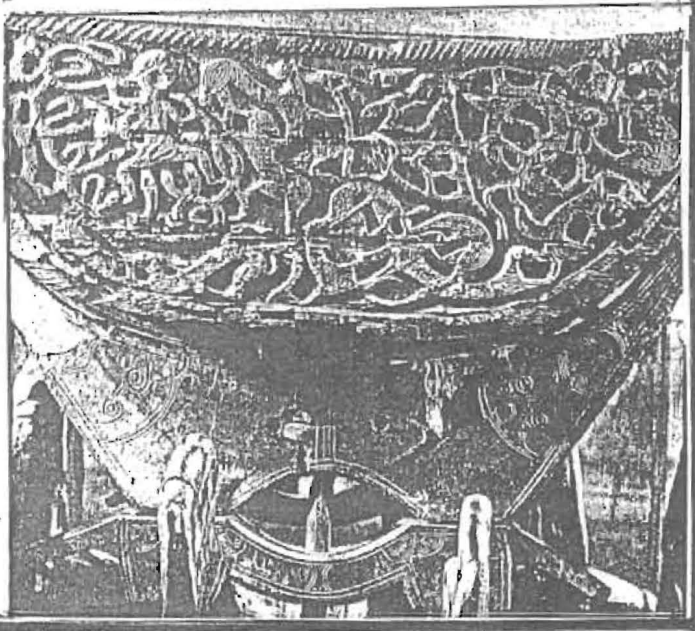
It is correct to suppose that the carving of the pipes were not products of the indigen art, admitting external influence. But to see biblical motives it is still more difficulty to admit, as cristian lamellas do not exist with this composition.

It is still more improbable to admit influence of the Guaranís or the Spanish over the indomitable Payaguás, as the Payaguás were not acculturated since the century XVI forward, as the chronics attest.

LAS PIPAS de KARL VON den STEINEN



GUNNER CARRO DE OSEBERG



Gunner en el Carro de Oseberg (s. ix) y en la Pipa Pagagud (s. xiii)

Supposing that the pipes were used by the leaders of the Payaguás under special circumstances, which were courtesies of other groups, it is to admit the lack of knowledge of these ritual customs, of high religious significance.

The proposal of Max Schmidt, to be the figurative homogeneity, a consequence of the geometrical homogeneity, as the similarity of the meanders and spirals of the pipes of the Payaguás with the pipes of the Kaduveas, is the most consistent of all.

Others confuse the fabulous serpent of the pipes with the viper which fooled Adan and Eve. The stick of Tume was used in pre-Columbine America. The arrow which appears in the back part of Atli, is the runic "t", which significance is: energy, courage and protection in the battle. Atli used it in the fight against Gunner to avenge his sister Brunilda.

Exegesis. We are in the conditions to give a complete explication of the pipes, having a vision of the Payaguán culture, thanks to certain cultural indicators, visualizing in more detail the ethnic group which influenced their acculturation, which we mention:

- There exist 10 testimonies of navigators of the river Parana, who were confronted with the Ygás.
- The canoes of the Payaguás had the pointed fore and aft.
- The Payaguás ubicated their dead people in canoes and they buried them on the islands.
- The meanders and spirals of the Payaguás are similar to the ones of the Kaduveos, who could influence in the Kadigués, what the Spanish changed into Sarigués.
- The Payaguás knew the textile with double fiber.

Finally there exist a tendency to considerate the possible influence of the Vikings, who arrived to Paraguay in the century XIII, being famous as Karios and Iara settling in the oriental coast of the river Paraguay.

Taking as "hypothesis of the work" the possible influence of the Vikings we analyze the two pipes presented by Karl von den Steinen, establishing a theory about the influence of the Vikings in the Payaguás, on the base of the artistic study of the pipes.

The carving of the pipes deserve a special topic, as they recreate legendary and mythical motives of the European Pre-Colombine cultures in Paraguay, with a technique which permits to interlink figures without losing their individuality, forming similar groups in the engraving at the cart of Oseberg and other sites of Scandinavia.

We will be describing the two pipes studied by the anthropologist von den Steinen, to consider it of high artistic level, remembering that those were used by the leaders on special occasions.

The small pipe. It is clearly a representation of Ragnarog, in the beginning of Ocaso of the gods, the end of the Nordic world.

In the carving there are represented two mythical characters: The tree of the world, Iggdrasil, and the serpent of the world, Midgard.

Those two characters are accompanied by four natural characters: a deer, an armadillo and two plants of pindo, smaller than the tree of the world. Moreover, two strips as bands surround the cylinder, the geometrical form of the pipes.

The big pipe. It is a representation of the mythical nordic world before Ragnarog, in which a part of the Nibelunges legend is represented, when Atli, the brother of Brunilda, punished Gunner in the hole of the serpents to death.

The other caverns are the serpent Midgard, the tree Iggdrasil and other figures representing two occurrences of the Nordics: a dwarf Odin, creator of the runes, in the water fountains of the tree; Godi and Tumé, fighting the priest Godi by the Nordic myths and the Christian priest in America, Tumé, who faced the dwarf Odin, the Yasy Yateré of the Paraguayan siesta.

In the upper part of the figure there differ two birds, which remind us to the two ravens of Odin: Hugin y Mugin, the thinking and the memory, which bring them the news of the world.

Note also that Tumé has with him the typical stick of the bishops, still in Pre-Colombine America.

A monkey, a deer, an armadillo and a centipede complete the group.

Conclusion. The big development of the navigation and the art of the carving of wood and the decoration of mates, ethnographically it is only explicable by the acculturation of the ethnic of the Payaguá.

We have detected two acculturations: The first with the Mbyá-Guaraníes, when they navigated on the rivers of the north, affluents of the river Paraguay, to get wood of Timbó for the fabrication of their canoes. The second one with the Vikings, who formed two real different social classes: the ones of the Jharl and the ones of the subjects.

The Jharl, designers of the canoes assembled in advisory ceremonials, smoked in pipes made artistically, the Guaraní tobacco cultivated in red earth (hermatite) and the best COCA of the world, called by the Jesuits the dammed Yerba , which the historian confused with the Yerba Mate, the tea of Paraguay. The prepared subjects for work for continuance and interchange of the products, were ceramicists, weaver, engraver and shamans.

We certificate: The chronicler and ethnographers used selected terms to describe the development of the navigation and the arts of the Payaguás, although they could not identify their authors. But this, should not surprise us, since nowadays exist Scandinavians who do not know the history of the Vikings. Fortunately, I dedicated various years to the study of their culture and can confirm without any doubt something:

The disciples of the artists of Oseberg were in Paraguay.

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