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# For a Greater Enchantment

**Memories, Imagery and Rituals  
of the Xucuru-Kariri of Palmeira  
dos Índios, Brazil**



Universidade do Porto. Faculdade de Letras

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First Published November 2017

**by Universidade do Porto. Faculdade de Letras**

**[University of Porto. Faculty of Arts and Humanities]**

**Porto, Portugal**

**Printed by Concordia University of Edmonton**

**Design:** Alexandra Carvalho

**Cover Artwork:** João Mimoso

**Credits Photos:** José Adelson Lopes Peixoto

**e-book ISBN:** 978-989-99966-8-7

The publication was supported by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology, within the scope of UID/SOC/00727/2013.

All the content presented in texts are solely the responsibility of the authors.

The ideas presented do not necessarily represent the opinion of the editors.



Photo 1. Lenoir Tibiriça at Velho Chico soap opera's shooting, of the Rede Globo TV channel.

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# Opening

This publication presents a historical, sociological and musicological study of the sacred ritual of Toré, a form of spiritual practice carried out by indigenous groups of Brazil and depicted here in an exploratory case study of a tribe of Xucuru-Kariri ethnicity settled in the reserve of Mata da Cafurna, Palmeira dos Índios in the State of Alagoas.

The primary goal of this study is to advance the understanding of world cultures by exposing a small fraction of the centuries-old wisdom of native peoples of South America through one of its most popular forms of religious manifestations. It involved a multidisciplinary research team from Canada, Portugal, and Brazil in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, public health, and music to offer a wide-range perspective on the many facets of the ritual. The research team studied extensive audio and videographical material collected at the small village of Mata da Cafurna, AL from May to October 2017.

The Toré is a sacred ceremony carried out periodically by the Xucuru-Kariri and is comprised of a sequence of dances, chants, calls and prayers. Special occasion ceremonies may be summoned to address issues of particular concern of tribe members including, but not limited to, ceremonies for the cure of ailments, resolving of disputes, and blessing of harvest. The ceremony features a vast array of materials used in the manufacturing of costumes, percussion instruments, body and face decorations, and painting. The research team focused on the main allegorical and textual elements presents in the ritual and sought to define their meanings and significance as conduits to indigenous spirituality. This was accomplished through transcription and analysis of interviews, chants, videographic material, photographs and relevant textual elements. The methodological

perspective here is the analysis of a text in its context – the conditions of production and reception. These texts are built as markers of a specific space – an identity producer – of the tribe.

The research team acknowledges the invaluable support received from Prof. José Adelson Lopes Peixoto, for collecting audio and videographical material in the form of interviews and recordings at Mata da Cafurna, AL to be used as primary source for this research. We also thank the Concordia University of Edmonton for the Internal Research Grant that enabled the realization of this research, publication and exhibition. We thank the University of Porto for the possibility of allowing these exchanges and approximations of know-how within MOBILE +.





Photo 2. (From below to the top) Tanawy, Lenoir and Pararam, in the tree on the dam.



# 1. A history of persistence. But also a history of survival and resistance

"These [indigenous movements] are so diverse, so fluid in organization, goals, and methods they all but defy summary. Probably the most salient difference between typical class based forms of resistance, as opposed to global capitalism forms of resistance is the emphasis on local community, identity politics, land claims, and rights to a variety of traditional practices, which include alternative family organizations such as matrilineality (...), communal ownership of resources such as land, the use of land for sacred ceremonies, and indigenous knowledge (...). Many of these practices contradict, challenge, or threaten deeply held values in state-based systems. The most fundamental challenge to capitalism, though, comes from communal ownership of resources because it denies the legitimacy of private property rights. Contrary to what many early explorers, missionaries, and colonizers thought, and unfortunately many so-called development experts today may think, it is not that indigenous people do not understand individual ownership. Rather, they have long recognized what many environmental movements are beginning to force capitalists to accept: resources are always partially, if not wholly, "public goods" (to use the terminology of economists) and are thereby sites of contestation."

(Hall & Fenelon, 2004: 156)

The approach to the Xucuru-Kariri – their practices of religiosity, sociability, and conviviality – is, in this publication assumed as an investigation based on an anti-(hetero-)patriarchal, anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-white supremacist practices by women, men, and/or with their communities, termed variously as 'Indigenous', 'Aboriginal', 'First-Nation', 'Indian', or 'Native', along with their allies, from the North to the South, from the East to the West. Our focus lies precisely on the Xucuru-Kariri and their practices, considering them as rooted in a cosmology, a way of life that deems all beings as relations.

The Xucuru-Kariri are one of several indigenous tribes in the Northeastern Region of Brazil. There are currently some 40,000 indigenous peoples divided into 23 tribes, recognized as Indians protected by the Federal Government (Martins, 1994), under the assistance of Brazil's government-run National Indian Foundation (FUNAI)<sup>1</sup>. In Brazil, after the Second Empire, during the Republican period, a "concern" with the indigenous population

was institutionalized. The most formal certainty of this process was the creation in 1910 of the Indian Protection Service (SPI), for the protection of indigenous peoples. The central objective of the organization was to react to the impact of the civilizing process on the "primitive" living conditions of the Indians, especially those in the Amazon region and its surroundings, creating "protectionist" structures, as the social reason for the service itself announces. Out of this "protectionist concern" stayed the Indians of the Northeast, especially those of the coast, once considered mestizos and integrated. Only in the second and third decade after its founding will the SPI in fact extend its action to these indigenous peoples in the Northeast (Amorim, 2010).

Since then, several marginalized indigenous groups, many of whom lived on the rural outskirts of Sertão<sup>2</sup> and Agreste<sup>3</sup>, were integrated by the SPI and acquired relative "rights privileges", which meant an important advance despite the precarious social conditions still existing between these groups which, administered until the 1960s by the SPI, are now supervised by the National Foundation of the Indian - FUNAI. In the last decades of the twentieth century, FUNAI and researchers have been contributing to the sociocultural recognition of these groups who have lived for decades in diasporas, seeking a reorganization and the exercise of their cultural practices. The tutelary position (since the SPI, from the 1940s onwards) could not fail to concern itself with integrating the Indians considered socially "acculturated" to the Brazilian State, in a kind of "return to oneself."

This situation reflects a series of contradictions absorbed in the diasporas, flows and ethnic ebbs, and whose developments have been observed by the anthropologists and the current tutor, FUNAI. The problems relating to ethnicity - one of the many considered in the context of the aforementioned controversies - find a solution, starting in 1988, with the advent of the new Constitution, in the opening of spaces that may or may not facilitate the process of integration or recognition ethnic and territorial situation of the Indians in this contemporary conjuncture of emergence, resurgence or, as

the Indians prefer, ethnic resistance (Amorim, 2010). Essentially, this means being in a position of attention in the face of a series of problems related to classificatory concepts and categories, such as those of ethnic, Indians or indigenous groups, as well as to the organizational strategies of these peoples and the ethnic elements that provide subsidies for the understanding of such phenomena.

“If the Constitution of 1988 considers as indigenous the societies that “by their categories and circuits of interaction are distinguished from the national society” and whose members are conceived as “descendants of population of pre-Columbian origin”, these indifference-defining parameters are the result of an internal process of self-definition and, consequently, the recognition of these communities must operate with a cognitive process that penetrates the meshes stitched together by a social group that is founded as an indigenous” (Grünwald, 2008: 44).

Although there is currently some state support and regulation, the history of the indigenous tribes of the Northeast is marked by several dramatic events. Let us take as an example the tribe of Caeté, completely decimated by being an obstacle to the fronts of Portuguese colonization between Recife and Salvador in 1600. A political-religious conflict results in the shipwreck of the entourage of the first bishop of Brazil, Dom Pero Fernandes Sardinha, being declared the famous Holy War over the indigenous population. This is one of several conflicts arising from colonization, expulsion from territories, property spoliation, persecution, assassinations, imprisonment in missions and enslavement. In the 19th century, the president of the Province, Luiz Rômulo Peres Moreno, decreed the extinction of the indigenous groups of Alagoas. For almost a century in anonymity – persisting the Kariri-Xocó<sup>4</sup> in Porto Real do Colégio<sup>5</sup>, and, in Palmeira dos Índios the Xucuru-Kariri – in the late 1970s and early 1980s, reappear the groups Tingui-Botó<sup>6</sup>, in Feira Grande<sup>7</sup>, Karapotó<sup>8</sup>, in São Sebastião<sup>9</sup>; Wassu-Cocal<sup>10</sup>, in Joaquim Gomes<sup>11</sup>, and in Pariconha<sup>12</sup>, the Geripankó<sup>13</sup> (Vieira, 2015).

The first question arises in the face of the foregoing is why or how these people persisted in all the persecution they suffered and continue to exist.



Amorim refers to this purpose as follows:

"The more than 220 indigenous peoples and ethnicities present in Brazil, regardless of their ethnic origin or region, have resisted the colonial clash and resist the onslaughts of modern models of assimilation and social integration. Thus, tracing forms of organization and ethnic self-assertion. As those who are in the process of "resistance", as they are so called, so many who, because of their will, have distanced themselves from their ancestors, their traditions and their lands, confronts power and interest groups, these groups have survived moments of many injustices, deaths, murders, humiliations, and irrecoverable losses, both physicals, cultural, ecological, religious, social and territorial." (Amorim, 2010: 47)

It appears from the author's words that the persistence of these peoples is fundamentally due to the attempt to defend the independence and cultural value of their ethnicity; so they fought and continue to fight for the affirmation of their culture and customs. Although now referred to as emerging or resilient peoples, they were once considered savages who had to be educated and as such were subjected to various injustices, murders, persecutions, abductions, attempts at extermination, and suffered considerable physical, cultural and religious losses, social and territorial, of which in favor of their cultural legacy they tried to prevail:

"Nowadays, these peoples have been grouped under new denominations, seeking to guarantee political spaces in a more humane way. In this process of "humanization", the participation of the population in general is still very incipient. However, they rely on mediators from non-governmental organizations, especially from the Catholic Church, under the ideological auspices of liberation theology, from which categories or concepts derive from "reborn people," deriving from this category the "resurgent." (Amorim, 2010: 48).



Photo 3. Tanawy in the woods.



## 2. Brief genealogy of the Xucuru-Kariri

“Rights to land ownership are invariably tied to human rights. Without proper land demarcation, indigenous communities live in constant threat of violence and extinction. The failure of the government to act on the constitution to protect them sends a clear message that their lives are not as valuable as the lives of those in the elite groups of society, including the people who fill bureaucratic positions in government agencies. Terrorist acts against indigenous tribes have not been granted the same degree of urgency as similar acts would against government agencies. The right to survive with dignity should not have conditions. It should not be reserved exclusively for people who cooperate with homogenizing, colonizing goals to achieve global conquest.”

(Martínez, 2015: 96).

Vigário de Maia Mello, secular priest of the Church of São Pedro, was the parish priest of Palmeira dos Índios between 1874 and 1899, and in his reports we can see explanations about the ethnonyms Xucuru and Kariri, which also links them to migrations of Indians originating from different localities: “in 1740, come down Indians from the village of Cimbres, in Alto Sertão of Pernambuco (locality of the municipality of Pesqueira, where Xucuru still living) and others come from the village of Colégio do Rio São Francisco (nowadays, Porto Real do Colégio, where the Kariri-Xocó are located), ... those of the Xucuru tribe and these of the Kariri tribe (see figure 1).

“In these reports are also identified different localities in Palmeira dos Índios, in which the Xucuru settled on the bank of the small brook, Cafurna, between land of the farm Olhos d’água do Accioly and Serra da Palmeira, and made the name of their village... and Kariris, also gave the name of the place where they settled, Serra do Kariri, where they built a small church, made of palm straw” (Martins, 1993: 37-38).





Photo 4. City viewed from the village.



Photo 5. Xucuru-Kariri's dam.

The Xucuru-Kariri are one of the twelve indigenous people of the State of Alagoas. The majority of this ethnic group lives in the municipality of Palmeira dos Índios. The Xucuru-Kariri group that lives in this municipality is divided into the following indigenous areas: Fazenda Canto, Serra do Capela, Mata da Cafurna, Cafurna de Baixo, Serra do Amaro, Boqueirão, Fundo de Baixo, Coité and Monte Alegre or Vista Alegre, the latter not recognized by its peers. There are families residing also in the city of Palmeira dos Índios (Chaves, 2014).

It is on the Xucuru-Kariri that precisely our approach focus, essentially supported by the analysis of the interview with Lenoir Tibiriçá. He is one of the members of the Xucuru-Kariri who accepted to answer thirty-three questions about the social, religious and ritualistic dynamics of his tribe. This allowed us, together with other data - videos, documents, photographs - to elaborate an analysis of this civilization, the experiences of the Indians, and the representations they have about themselves and the rest of the world. The film material presented, consented and authorized for use by the Xucuru-Kariri, indicates that, possibly, there is a need to break with the invisibility to which these rituals are voted. The ritual is embodied by verbal, corporal and kinetic language. It is experienced and felt in a ritual of interaction, as noted by Erving Goffman (1967). From the corner, the body materializes an aesthetics of the social construction that in the performance is verbalized and will define the process of identity affirmation of the group. This narrative - of an inescapable sociological and musicological richness - was accompanied by images (photos and video), as objects, which describe (visible) behaviors, palpable objects, gestures, even surpassing the written text.

An analysis that is based on the voice of belonging and the legitimate reflexivity of who owns the identity lived, since, according to Antônio Kalankó, in an interview with Jorge Luiz Gonzaga Vieira: "When comparing with the non-indigenous, 'I can be you, but you can never be me.'" (In Vieira, 2015).

All these Xucuru-Kariri substitutes, as well as the different indigenous tribes

of Alagoas, have communalities, as is the case of religion and its importance in the social structure and organization of the tribe, in the attribution of roles, in education; the singing and dancing of the Toré and the ritual of Ouricuri also have a high religious status, which gives the music a structuring role in these civilizations. The focus of this point is exactly to illustrate how these indigenous peoples live, how their society works, and what are the common and differentiating aspects within the tribes. From the analysis of the interviews, we observed that the dynamics of this community is centralised in the rituals.



Photo 6. Housing made of straw.





Photo 7. Xucuru-Kariri's family: The elders, Salete and Antônio, their daughter, Tânia, and their ex son in law, Lenoir.

**Figure 1:** Location of the natives in the Northeast territory



**Source:** Amorim, 2010

### 3. Enchantments, community, rituals and symbols

Throughout the ages, diasporas have been translated into identity and symbolic losses, namely at the level of language, ritual practices, behaviors and customs. Many of these tribes are forced to live the drama of miscegenation, transfiguration or ethnic de-characterization. But what happens, as in many instances of mixing and forced miscegenation, is that the potentiation of rituals and cultural traits become more pronounced.

One of the most important social roles within these communities is the Pajé, a spiritual leader. It is the central figure of the religious rituals, including the Toré. He is the one who decrees who stays or leaves the ritual and is responsible for the calling and removal of the spirits, called “Enchanted”. They intercede through him and take control of the ritual, of what is sung, the repertoire, or what the enchanted will eventually want them to sing, also, in the event of a tribe member proceeding against the village principles, the complaint is made to the Pajé. Another important figure in these tribes is the Cacique, who occupies an administrative position in the village; he is responsible for fetching the necessary foods and products, by interceding with the outside world for the advantage and benefit of the village. This responsibility is granted to the Cacique because the Pajé is viewed as a source of energy for their people and for this reason, should not leave the village.

As far as women are concerned, it was noted that, although not very common, women have been playing an increasingly important role in religion and rituals. However, the role they play is in the education of children for religion, as well as healers, mourners and even midwives, should be emphasized, even though the latter is only in the last resort. They are also vigilantes of the village, being responsible for controlling who enters and leaves, as well as



denouncing to the Pajé who is not proceeding according to the norms and values of the tribe.

Concerning men, they are not referred to any other specific role aside from the Pajé and the Cacique, even though they may be healers and become responsible for other tasks that are not specific to the women or the two figures mentioned. Essentially, they integrate religious rituals as singers, dancers or instrument players, and it is also up to them to instill the religious and moral values of the tribe to the children and show them the way forward, inculcating them – especially the elders – in a committed and dedicated way, respect for the whole community. In the words of our interviewee:

*We can say that the Pajé controls and orders the ritual until the arrival of the enchanted, with the arrival of the enchanted he is the one who happens to coordinate through Pagé. (...) There have been major changes on the part of women, they have been more involved in Toré, sacred rituals, more participation in the education of children, they have more sway when talking about religion. (...) Children are the most sensitive part we have, education, teaching, there is nothing to write, all is taught by word in meeting, they learn as a child, so they do not forget anymore. As they become more mature they will hear the words of the instructor through their thought throughout their lives, and it is they who choose their way, the good side or the bad side.*

*Sometimes they seek the bad side, of suffering, sickness, drugs, in which he can do nothing for himself, only others can, to remove all evil from his life, which he has acquired through bad things. When he follows the good side, it is what is a scope, a side that leads to sincerity and respect, he will have everything, daily bread, will not have disease, it is difficult to have, will have how to heal, how to help others is done according to the in depression and suffering. (...) Older people are increasingly engaged, when young and 17 years old they do not know which way to go, the role of the elder is to put you on the right path, patience, when you err show you the way, like children they are the future of our nation what we are taught as certain they will always take for right.*



Photo 8. Tanawy and his wife



Photo 9. Children participating in a public presentation of Toré.

Particular attention must be paid to the overall moral message that is disseminated and transmitted through the religion and culture of the tribe, and in which is present an evaluation of what is good and evil. A constant value judgment on the actions of its members, which according to the plans and intentions of the tribe are good or, on the contrary, if they depart from that which will be the way a tribe member induce the error and, therefore, to the path that brings disease, separation. Of note will be the awareness of the existence of desires and desires often going against what is supposed to be, the notion that they are fallible beings who know how they are expected to act, but who, however, are not free to fail, to deviate from the path:

*We cannot lie or mistreat anyone because we only have to lose, for example for money or friendship, God only wants a clean heart and that the person is sincere and respectful. (...) people cannot lie, when people lie is serving an evil enchantment, brings disease, makes separation, for we do not want that side, but we have that side*

As for the customs of the villages, there are several prayers with the intention of celebrating Christmas, the birth of Jesus, the beginning of a new year, popular festivities such as São João, funeral rituals, as a way of healing or helping someone who is acting badly or in need, or just to tell a story, to remember the past. There are public Torés, open to “non-Indians” and anyone who wants to see and possibly participate; there are the Ouricuri which are secret rituals reserved only for members of the tribe. There is also the custom of doing the bird dance as a way to celebrate the love of a couple, or to seek a love for themselves. These rituals are a central part of this indigenous culture, as such, the essay and teaching of choreography, singing, and instrument manipulation are also an important part of the education of the youngest, in this case boys, always in a vocation and mentoring logic for the elders. Both the instruments and the inks and clothes they use for rituals are produced under local logic, with the resources they have available, whether to use fruits and berries, bamboo, straw, coité or animal skins. It should be noted, however, that we can observe that they

also make use of manufactured clothing and apparently marketed outside the tribe environment, even during Toré, as we can observe:

“With regard to the question of particular social practices related mainly to religiosity and kinship, it was found that these have been key demarcation elements of an indigenous ethnicity. Thus, these groups seem to be following the same style of manifestation of the phenomenon. Through different religious practices linked to the “Toré” or “Ouricuri”, the Indians in the Northeast have affirmed a differentiated ethnicity of the other non-Indian natives living in the regional environment. There are few data available on these religious practices, but it is important to highlight that they are forms of expression of indigenous religiosities differentiated in the Northeast” (Martins, 1994: 142).



Photo 10. Lenoir in the woods.





Photo 11. Some crafts that Xucuru-Kariri's population make with the resources available.

## 4. Toré, religiosity, sacred and identities

“Toré is (...) a ritual dance that enshrines the ethnic group. It is not possible, moreover, to specify an origin of the term and even of the Toré ritual by the absence of colonial narratives about it. Toré gains visibility (and current relevance) from a social process that begins in the first half of the XX century. Today, Toré is even fully incorporated into the indigenous movement in the Northeast as a form of political expression.”

(Grünewald, 2008: 43).

Since religion has a lot of importance in the tribe, we believe that it will be pertinent to analyse how it has evolved, what kind of evolution it has undergone, what is the sense and meaning of the Toré, when and where is put into practice and for what purpose, in order to understand how the Xucuru-Kariri religious aspects work. First know that the Toré is considered as a ritual whose essence is in the Ouricuri, a secret ritual of the Indians; in opposition to the Toré that can be shown to the whites, the Ouricuri is just made for the community. As the Indigenous narratives attest:

*For we can not reveal our secret, because it is the source of our good energy, Christ is a secret and what happens to you, you must keep secret. When the thing is public, it becomes weak, seen by many eyes; the reserved, private has more strength, more wisdom, we only try to do the right thing, then that person who has prepared and was chosen will look for the best places to stay and help your nation. If anything bad happens to anyone in this village, the first person we take to heal is the chosen one. He will also complain if something is wrong, if someone is drinking too much, they will stop until they leave and re-clean their body.*

More than a folk dance, Toré is a spiritual preparation for the Indians, and even for the foreigners, who besides having the opportunity to witness can be chosen by the enchanted to participate. It is based on songs and dances accompanied by instruments; the songs are taken in great consideration because they tell a story to the listeners. As such, the process of creation of

these songs and of new ones is something spontaneous and momentary that arises through the needs of the tribe and the singers, as well as are motivated by the circumstances, as, for example, the Toré to bring the rain in time of dryness – demonstrating well, as it assures us our interlocutor:

*Because every people has its own songs, its own footsteps, each people identifies itself with its singing, its painting, its different rituals, but everything attains at the common denominator that is the spiritual part and God.*

These rituals usually take place in open spaces, outdoors, in a space where you can light a fire and sing and dance at will. The only Toré made in private places are in the celebration of the birth of Christ and the change of year. Men are usually initiated into the ritual at age 7 to be fit to memorize; at this age they can already smoke or drink, not as an addiction, but as a need for healing rituals. The place of women in these rituals is very limited and reduced, if not non-existent, although some may occupy the position of healers, which, as noted, marks a progress in a tradition that excluded the Indies even as spectators of the Toré. The narratives we have recorded are very enlightening:

*The Toré appear according to the night and day of those who are dancing and what reaches in their minds, and will tell a story of what was passed, and it is remembered through the Toré song, remember the family, the father, the grandfather who passed, the Toré for them, is a moment of emotion, of joy, of remembering. Children are already born in rituals but will get involved and develop from the age of 7, who can already withstand the smoke of the pipe that is very strong can give diarrhea, even at this age they can get drunk, but they can withstand, can have other side effects, but if newer may cause a disease or anything worse.*





Photo 12. Tanawy smoking pipe.

The Toré consists of a ritual of spiritual preparation or healing; these are rituals closely linked to music and dance that include the use of instruments. Toré derives from various celebrations or special occasions such as Christmas or New Year, or by funeral ceremonies, spiritual healing, or simply without a reason. The Toré are differentiated according to the various indigenous ethnicities, there are different Torés, but all happen with a purpose for each occasion.

The Toré occurs to convey good things: peace, health, prosperity, for which in times of drought rains, improvements, union. Its duration can vary widely, from 10 to 15 minutes; the spiritual part can take between 30 minutes to one hour; so not constant, depending on what is intended and the occasion. Generally, in the Toré are sung six songs, sometimes seven, and in other occasions ten, varying, on average between one and eight; the number of songs depends on the time it takes to ask the best questions and the time it takes to fulfil the request.

The Pajé leads the ceremony, its repertoire and the proper order of singing, as well as decides on who participates or not in the Toré; the healer may also have a role in what should be sung when it comes to healing rituals. It



should be noted that during the ritual, the Pajé or the healer will eventually become interlocutors between the participants and the enchanted, passing the ceremony to be led by the enchanted. The instruments used during the ritual are the maraca, the gaita, the conch, among others, whose usefulness is to attract through sound and song the strength that they seek to fulfil their requests. It is to be noted that, of these instruments, the principal one is the maraca, since it is the instrument used to call and expel the enchanted ones; most of the instruments are made of bamboo, the maraca is made of *coité*<sup>14</sup>, the gaita is made with wood to produce the sounds, but sometimes also products of animal origin are used.

The materials are the same for several years, natural or made from straw clothes, and painted with white or black paint from fruit. Are also used props such as the pipe (whose name may change in different villages) or straw head ornaments dyed with black and white inks. The ritual is terminated when what is requested is attended to, or when the patient is cured:

*When we see that the patient is well, in health, there is a final chant and that person will no longer suffer. Then there is an end to everything, and we have that end and we run and get caught up with God, but it is always a happy ending.*



Photo 13. Young man in a public presentation of Toré.

## 5. Music is Life: Who sings (and dances) scary his evils

"Alliances established between natives (non-indigenous) and indigenous (mainly through kinship) and associations between indigenous and historical agents present at local / regional / national level have also been the channel for strengthening indigenous ethnic identity in the Northeast. Conflicts and interdependencies within situational contexts, related to the presence and performance of the guardian body, but mainly the interrelation between indigenous ethnic groups in the Northeast have provided the maintenance of indigeneity in this Region."

(Martins, 1994: 143).

As can be seen throughout the analysis, music plays a central role in the life of the Xucuru-Kariri. This is due to the social importance that religion has and derives from the need to sing songs and play instruments in these religious rituals. The music assumes a significant importance in regard to the spiritual preparation of the participants, in particular some instrumental aspects such as tuning and intonation. As our interlocutor tells us:

*Each time it has tuning and the intonation is getting stronger the energy is increasing and feeling the spirituality that comes from the thought. If you look for a remedy, cure, through singing, the masters start emerging, the guides that will bring to our mind the remedy to heal. We human beings cannot afford to pass a remedy because we do not know, and through the spirit, we give the remedy and it is positive and it is approved by the people that already have several years and that never changed, like the prayers, especially do not change the songs of strength. Sometimes we are not successful because we are dominated by not having our own will, doing what is being sent to us, we cannot lie or mistreat anyone because we only have to lose, for example money or friendship, God only wants a clean heart and that the person is sincere and respectful.*

On the other hand, singing is used as a means of concentration, a way of achieving balance, and the clarity that allows the connection with the spiritual world. Here lies its importance and relevant role in the preparation (how to proceed) of the participants who throughout the Toré intend to

communicate with the guides, an enchanted one. During the ritual, there are two moments considered to be the most relevant in terms of feelings triggered: when one feels the presence of an enchanted person and when one is chosen during the ritual:

*When the enchanted is present, we feel joy, we feel love we feel union, we feel the vibration of joy and pleasure and when we have the opposite side only comes the bad side, division, fights. The enchanted himself does not want that side. He wants us let us be brothers, we must help one another. You cannot quarrel, crave, steal, drink and get high, prepare your body and mind always for when you are chosen to be prepared. What is it to be chosen? To be chosen is to be looked by God and be indicated and because of that receive the respect of the whole nation, he is seen and respected by everyone, his word is worth a lot.*

With this testimony, we can understand a little better the meaning of this ritual for this community, in addition to the inherent importance given to music and its learning; to be noted the relevance of music in the education of children, manifested in the incentive to learn an instrument, to follow a vocation, to start them from a young age in these rituals. It ends up being through music and instruments that participation in rituals takes place, the experience of feelings and, possibly, the privilege of being chosen, taking a prominent position in the village, which, given the values that are more than a desire for greater importance or influence, is a source of personal fulfilment (Guerra, 2013). The themes and types of music for the Toré vary according to what is wanted, for example the Toré de Búzios which, according to Lenoir, is the most sung given its meaning in the opening of religious works:

*[The Toré] are cheerful, speak about God, Mother Earth, trees, our spirit that we reach in the spirituality of life, we find this divinity that teaches us to be happy, with peace, joy, love.*





Photo 14. A young man singing in a public presentation of Toré.

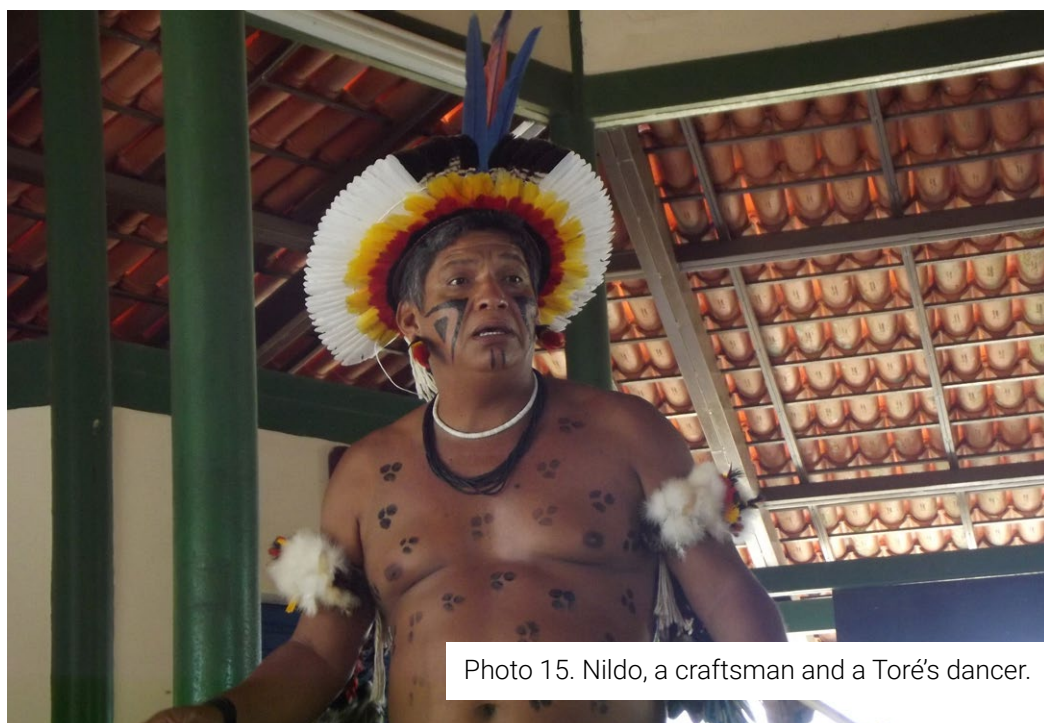


Photo 15. Nildo, a craftsman and a Toré's dancer.

## 6. The Headmaster Ritual: Still the Toré

"One point, therefore, which becomes evident in the emblematic cultural configuration of the indigenous of the Northeast is the possession of a common symbol, the sharing of a ritually expressed ideology that, although with altered contents and formats among many of these communities, inform (and constitute) the north-eastern indigeneity".

(Grünnewald, 2008: 44)

Throughout this analysis, the Toré, a central religious ritual in the Xucuru-Kariri culture, has been referred to several times. Although a description of it has already been made, we intend to now explore the dynamics associated with it, that is, to make known the preparation which it is made, to refer once again to the question of participants and their role, to the role of music and choreography, the connection to Catholicism, as well as trying to better understand what "enchantment" really means.

The preparation of the Toré is thorough. To cite an example, there is a set of rules regarding food intake prior to the ceremony: food consumed should prevent damage to the body; depending on the work ritual participants are not allowed to eat fish, chicken, beef cattle, being sometimes admissible to eat only roots. Some foods cannot be eaten, depending on the nature of the animal – the example given in this regard is that of the chicken, given the fact that it "spreads food and does not put it together":

*For everything there is a beginning and an end. There must be the preparation because it is through it that we attain grace, that is the spiritual power. When we are practicing the Toré both comes, the good side and the bad side, when we meet those who do the preparation make it difficult for evil to enter and dominate, but if we identify any influence, somebody will help that person.*

The Pajé or healer leads the ritual until the intercession of the enchanted, the other participants will sing, dance and play their instruments to start

the ritual; the role of the spectators who, when called out, should also be actively involved, as this is a sign of great respect for the community.

*They are there. They also have the power to receive and incorporate any spirit, he is watching, singing the songs and observing everything that happens. If a listener receives a master, a guide, everyone will look at it, they will be glad, it will be well seen, it will be respected in our village. If that does not happen, it's worthless in the village, it's worthless.*

The choreography, along with the music, as already mentioned, are closely related in the process of invoking a master, a guide, an enchanted one. It is a circular choreography to which is added the beating of the synchronized feet.

*According to the songs and what is going on, if it is things to do a job they rush the steps because a guide is already coming, a master to solve the question, then they will and more and more the intonation will get more beautiful, that footprint is getting stronger, they are getting lighter, then comes the emotion, the crying, the shivering tremors in the body, the skin. Circular because we get closer together to hear each other, the chants are sung in pairs and the choreography too, are important to bring the effect, they do everything to please for the master to arrive. On some occasions, we spend nights and nights and the Master does not arrive.*



Photo 16. Lenoir dancing the Toré with children.



It stands out, within the choreographic process, the participant who dances in the opposite direction, whose role is to coordinate and watch so that all are in the same circle and follow the same steps. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that it is possible for the Toré to be sung without instruments and choreography - whatever; Lenoir – in his narrative – emphasizes the importance of objects, especially the maraca which is the main instrument, but it is enough to enter into the necessary trance and sing, to go and invent (if necessary) to be creative, so that work is done. During the ritual, certain foods and beverages that do not alter the mental state, such as sugar cane juice and spirits, are ingested.

From recordings of the Toré available from the field researcher, José Adelson Lopes Peixoto, is observed a circle, where each of the elements that compose it are wearing adornments on the head, as a kind of bandana, which holds coloured feathers and/or leaves. Each of the participants holds their respective instruments and the ritual begins with a cry and with the sound of what we think is a maraca. Everyone who has maracas, touches them and moves in a circle to sing. To the first participants join children, along with women. They dance, accompany only the steps, without using instruments or adornments, and do not sing.



Photo 17. Maracas, a musical instrument used in the Toré.



We can, therefore, consider that the Toré is a ritual dance of consecration of the group - having promoted the reference of north-eastern autochthony and it is worth to be apprehended in a procedural way because it is precisely its dynamics within and among the ethnic groups that have been ordering life indigenous peoples in the Northeast. (Grünewald, 2008: 44).

In a last example, it is possible to observe the presentation of the ritual to an audience, on the one that will be a stage and to which an audience corresponds and some reporters and teams of filming to observe the moment. Note that in this context all members were duly painted, ornamented and dressed - crowns and bandanas made of straw, leaves and feathers on the head and wear a kind of greenish skirt, also made up of a material such as straw or leaf. One can even see a woman properly dressed in the ritual, which has not happened in any of the examples previously observed. As in the other examples, they perform a circular dance and walk back and forth as they chant and play their maracas, form a line in front of the audience, and keep this step until they form a circle again and give the ritual by finished.

In these ceremonies, a connection between these rituals and Catholicism is still evident. The question will not focus so much on the influence of the dogmas of the Catholic Church - "I do not understand much of Catholicism," Lenoir said, rather in the idea and perception of God, a god of love and peace, and in the figure of Jesus Christ who is to whom the delighted are directed to meet the requests are made. For the interviewee, the idea of a church as a structure, institution does not tell him much, although it is noted a somewhat paradoxical position. If, on the one hand, the church is considered to have hurt them, perhaps alluding to the past of colonization, on the other hand, it is affirmed that the church is a heart, it is peace in the world, peace of the natives, the church is the way to reach Jesus Christ, symbol of that same peace. The meaning of the enchantment finds its base and support here:

*That person who was chosen by God and deserved to be an angel to help a people, a nation, an enchanted one comes in various forms, humble people, a bird; the bad already comes in the form of cat / dog / goat and our body does not*

*resist and already shudders giving a signal of what it does not, when we receive the signal of an enchanted one receives joy and pleasure and has sensitivity to achieve glories and victories, through work.*

Enchantment emerges as the process by which the enchanted ones are created, which can be from anywhere in the world, being the point of connection between the tribe and Jesus Christ, God. Finally, to illustrate the Toré ritual, central point of this analysis and the life of the Xucuru-Kariri, let us take as an example one of the Toré of the tribe “Fita Verde” [Green Ribbon]:

*My people come to see / The caboclos as they sing / With a green ribbon bow / Tied in the throat / You you lê lara/ You lê lê lê lê arrieia aira.*

The theme of this Toré is the repression suffered by these indigenous. A privileged means of communication (since many ancestors refused to communicate through speech and only through the Toré, so that the invaders did not understand the warnings and orientations they wanted to convey), this Toré appeals to the divine spirit for hope, in the midst of all the desperation that they lived, and each corner appears as a distraction from that reality, an ever stronger request for it to end (Thydewa, 2013): it is clear here that not only the notion of ethnic boundaries is crucial for this group, but above all the adaptability of their culture, of their rituals. In fact, it is from this dynamism and liveliness that comes many of the present claims, affirmations and resistances.

*“It is important for the delimitation of these indigenous groups but, in cultural terms, the evident spatial and temporal dynamics of culture must be emphasized, since the cultural forms found in these borders are not cloistered, but in flux that makes them shape new and remodel old indigenous groups in the region” (Grünwald, 2008: 44).*



Photo 18. Tanawy painting Lenoir for a presentation.

## 7. The Musical Heritage of the Toré

The rich musical heritage of the Xucuru-Kariri is passed on to younger generations in the context of an oral tradition. The melodic, harmonic and rhythmic material present in the chants of prayer and the instrumental music performed during the ritual is transmitted via an apprentice-mentor relationship marked by observation and repetition.

During the Toré ritual, well-known and traditional chants are often paired with newly introduced music material. New Torés display lyrics that vary greatly in content from pressing political situations, land disputes, or moral teachings addressing a particular case to more general and playful subjects intended to amuse and entertain tribe members and non-indians alike. This very capacity of the Toré to remain current and to adapt to new and rapid changing ways of life allows it to retain its relevance among tribe members and with that, to perpetuate its practice.

The deconstruction and analysis of the musical samples available to the research team presented some challenges in translating the Xucuru-Kariri's musical system which is characterized by fluctuating pitch patterns (non-fixed tuning) and improvisation, as also observed by Brazilian musicologist Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo:

"As we analyze the phonograms of indigenous music we must be aware of the inexactness of the singer, the absence of melodic fixity, which would make the piece different on a second recording. We must try to deduce the anatomy of the musical scale through these floating sonorous vestments, the true melodic skeleton, reduced for analytical necessity, to the immutable expressions of our own music." (Azevedo, 2011, 466)

The collected samples suggest a pitch-centered melodic construction drawn from modal and heptatonic collections. The Toré utilizes both vocal



and instrumental mediums of expression. However, vocal renditions of the chants of prayer seem more prolific and common among participants. They display an abundant use of vocables (see figure 2) and un-pitched, improvised sounds such as howling, yells and cries perceived as welcomed individual contributions to the collective performance.



**Figure 2.** Excerpt of a chant of prayer that make use of vocables.

The vocal repertoire of the Toré is structured in a call-and-response style, most often within a two or three part texture with predominance of conjunct motion and skips of both ascending and descending thirds. The main melodic call is initiated by the ritual head-master or Pajé and echoed by the participants with a subordinate melodic material. Ritual participants are encouraged to introduce variants of the main melody, usually with slightly modified rhythmic content.

Two and three part homophonic textures often feature melodic parallelism with notable predominance of imperfect consonants (see figures 3 and 4).



**Figure 3.** Parallelism of imperfect consonances.



**Figure 4.** Call and response with parallelism of imperfect consonances. Chant “Ê-ô minha terra bandeirá”

As for sound production, the Xucuru-Kariri use forceful head voice emission for full resonance and volume. Gutural accented sounds were observed as a means to emphasize the metric pulse. In addition, the vocal renditions demonstrate a preference for descending glides, as seen in the melody of “Passarinho verde” or Little green bird (see figure 5):



**Figure 5.** Descending vocal glides are a common feature of the chants. Mediant repose.

Nonetheless, the most unique feature of the Xucuru-Kariri repertoire is a pronounced emphasis on the mediant scale degree (3) of heptatonic collections, most notably at arrival points of the melody and repose gestures as illustrated in figures 4 and 5. Please note the melodic curvature with a repose on scale degree 3 in the last beat of bars 2 and 4 in the above mentioned sample in minor mode.

Another instance that corroborates the importance of the mediant pitch in the Xucuru-Kariri repertoire can be found in the excerpt below where the sense of final cadential repose, usually attributed to the tonic pitch, is achieved here with a descending gesture towards the mediant (see figure 6):



**Figure 6.** Use of mediant as tonic substitute. Pitch center: Ab.

Flourished lines with ornamentation of lower and upper mordents abound in instrumental melodies of the Toré repertoire as well as the custom to add portamenti or pitch-slide from one note to another. Grace notes of greater intervallic gap, such as the major third, were also found in the collected samples.

The repetitive nature of the responsorials, combined with the revolving motion of the round, the inhalation of natural opioids preceding the ceremony, and the continuous and vigorous stomping of the right foot on the ritual site or “terreiro” is conducive of creating the state of trance or high awareness desired by ritual participants.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Toré repertoire lies within its complex rhythmic structure where the main metric pulse is constantly avoided in one voice against a rhythmic background. All material collected display a characteristic metric displacement in the main and subordinate lines with an abundance of accented syncopated rhythms against a steady downbeat.

Both vocal and instrumental genres are often accompanied by an ostinato pattern assigned to the “maracá” or Caucá-Kuá, a type of shaker made from the fruit of the coité, gourd or coconut (see photo 17).

Figure 7 illustrates the prominence of syncopated rhythms found in all collected samples from Mata da Cafurna. The avoidance of the íctus is often heard against a rhythmic continuum in the background layer. The role of the percussion is mainly to emphasize the main beats while the melodic line

gravitates against it creating a unique blend of rhythmic layers. The score below was extracted from a recording of a Toré ritual song for bamboo flute. The flutes crafted by the Xucuru-Kariri vary from four to twenty inches in length.



**Figure 7.** Sample of instrumental music for bamboo flute.

The melodic construction of the instrumental repertoire is based on short motifs that revolve around an axis. In the flute duet below the axis is C#, the most prominent and repeated pitch of the piece. Two melodic cells (quarter note and triplet motifs) gravitate around the axis C# heightening the sense of suspended resolution and continuation in this flute duet. Here, flute II is assigned a percussive role while the maracá avoids the rhythmic pulse after the downbeat creating a rich rhythmic texture (see Figure 8).





**Figure 8.** Flute duet with maracá accompaniment.

There is much to be learned from the Xucuru-Kariri — how to preserve an inextricable bond with the natural world, how to fuel our innate quest for spirituality, and to how to balance societal relationships, to cite a few. The wisdom of the Xucuru-Kariri is encapsulated and manifested with the practice of their rituals. Therefore, the Toré remains a vital part of the Xucuru-Kariri existence, not only as a stronghold of indigenous heritage but also, as it evolves, a safe path for the future. But for us, mere observers in a traditional society, the preservation of world cultures becomes a survival matter to ensure the development of a more tolerant and pluralistic world.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that, through the analysis of the Territorial Situation of the Indigenous Groups in the Northeast in 1983, it can be verified that not all tribes/areas have an effective assistance of this organ, as is the case of the Xucuru-Kariri tribe, with this support in Fazenda Canto (AL), in areas such as Al Mata da Cafurna (AL) and Al Fazenda Pedrosa (BA), the same is not observed (Martins, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Sub-region of Northeast Region, in Brazil.

<sup>3</sup> Sub-region of Northeast Region, in Brazil.

<sup>4</sup> Indigenous tribe from Porto Real do Colégio, Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>5</sup> Municipality in State of Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>6</sup> Indigenous tribe from Feira Grande, Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>7</sup> Municipality in State of Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>8</sup> Indigenous tribe from São Sebastião, Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>9</sup> Municipality in State of Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>10</sup> Indigenous tribe from Joaquim Gomes, Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>11</sup> Municipality in State of Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>12</sup> Municipality in State of Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>13</sup> Indigenous tribe from Pariconha, Alagoas, Brazil.

<sup>14</sup> A fruit from a plant of the same name.

