

CONSTRUCTING PALMARINO IDENTITY

PRELIMINARY DIRECTIONS IN THE HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF PALMARES

(Em português p. 169)

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Introduction

This study builds upon statements concerning the applicability of analytical models deriving from ethnogenesis to situations enduring during the period of European expansion into the Americas and the subsequent political and social upheaval within displaced native and African groups. Developed in American anthropology by Sturtevant (1971; but see also Shnirelman 1995 on Soviet ethnogenesis and archaeology), ethnogenesis seeks to understand the dynamic social processes and formation of entirely new groups wrought by exploration and colonization. As a model, ethnogenesis challenges the dichotomy of the conquerors and the conquered, emphasizing the adaptive strategies and agency of all actors involved and thus produces local histories tied to global processes (Hill 1996; Orser 1994). With a focus on the margins of colonial society, the creation of ethnic enclaves, and interpretations within colonial political and social contexts, studies of ethnogenesis promise to add immeasurably to our understanding of this period in the Americas and beyond. Nonetheless, while recent trends in these studies may be satisfying on many levels, some shortcomings exist which may be overcome by employing the multidisciplinary methods of historical archaeology.

Bilby has dissected ethnogenesis into two 'types,' reflecting a lack of historical depth in most studies which explore the emergence of new ethnic groups. The first, or 'primary ethnogenesis' concerns the initial development of a group and is juxtaposed to 'secondary ethnogenesis' which deals with the emergence of ethnic consciousness (1996, 135-36). The latter is further defined as "the rapid formation of entirely new societies and cultures when individuals of diverse backgrounds are suddenly thrown together by fate and forced to create societies afresh" (Bilby 1996, 101), such as colonization and slavery. Relying on historical documents, Bilby has applied this model of ethnogenesis to his study of the Aluku of French

Guiana and the Winward Maroons of Jamaica. Both groups were initially developed by runaway slaves who later adopted a new identity and were recognized as such by colonial governments.

Bilby acknowledged the lack of historical depth to his studies which explains his dichotomization of the 'types' of ethnogenesis and demonstrates the need to apply archaeological analyses to these problems. He supported this separation by arguing that 'primary ethnogenesis,' as used in the literature, parallels 'primordial' arguments in ethnic theory and 'secondary' as aligning with 'instrumental' or 'mobilizationist' ethnicity (Bilby 1996, 135-360). But these two dichotomies have been criticized (Bentley 1987; Eller and Coughlan 1993; McKay 1982) and Bilby's case studies illustrate the futility of the dichotomies. Consider that Aluku identity did not emerge overnight, even respecting the rapid social transformations of the period. Ethnic groups 'borrow' or construct the salient features of their identity from history, cultural traditions, mythology, language and so on (Barth 1969). Thus the process of ethnogenesis, from the creation of a new society and cultural identity to the construction of ethnicity in opposition to colonial rule, must be approached diachronically, and understood as a process rather than discrete events.

The separation of the 'types' of ethnogenesis is also reflected in the methods employed to study emergent groups in the Americas. Documentary evidence provides the basis for determining that an ethnic group existed, a necessary context. Unfortunately, when archaeology is employed, it often fills the role of establishing that migrations did, in fact, take place (Sattler 1996), neglecting to consider how and why societies were constructed as they were and what role the material world may have had in the eventual construction of a conscious ethnic identity.

The research agenda employs a multidisciplinary approach guided by a model of ethnogenesis to understand the emergence of Palmares, a seventeenth-century escaped slave community,

located in northeastern Brazil.¹ Of specific interest is how the inhabitants of Palmares constructed and fostered what would later become a *Palmarino* identity (ethnicity). The extant documents pertaining to Palmares exist mostly as scattered references in colonial accounts with the exception of two, which have formed the basis of most studies to date (Schwartz 1992). The *Diário*, a soldier's diary, and *Relação*, a government assessment on the situation with Palmares, detail the exploits of mercenaries and soldiers in 1645 and from 1675-1678, respectively (appended to Carneiro 1947).

Combined with other, more cursory, colonial references (Carneiro 1947), these sources have provided the factual evidence and permitted the construction of a sequence of events for Palmares. Already a well-established *quilombo* by the first half of the century, Macaco, the 'royal stockade' and one of 10 villages comprising Palmares, came under attack by the Dutch in 1645, the last of three known assaults. Failing to eradicate the *quilombo*, the Dutch appear to have tolerated the presence of the Palmares *mocambos*, perhaps considering maintaining their hold on northeastern Brazil a more imminent challenge. Once Portugal regained control over the region, attacks on Palmares were renewed, culminating in the Palmares Wars of the latter part of the 17th century. Included in the records used to construct these events are numerous descriptions highlighting the location of the villages comprising Palmares, flora and fauna, Palmarino manufactures, and demographics.

Looking to the same documents, I have discerned an emergent *Palmarino identity*, particularly in the language of a treaty of 1678 (*Relação*). Though *identity* may exist on several levels with individuals expressing various *identities* in different contexts and situations, *Palmarino* identity may be understood as ethnicity; that level of group identification, formed within a social and political context of the colonial slavocracy, providing cohesiveness within Palmares and a catalyst for discourse beyond. The terms decided upon in the 1678 treaty are intriguing and indicate that Palmarinos by this period saw themselves as different from Africans on the plantations. Claims to territory were stressed as well as the right for all those born at Palmares to live freely within the colonial system. Recently escaped slaves and all future runaways to Palmares would be

returned, a condition apparently put on the table by the Palmarino king, Ganga Zuma, and not uncommon in New World maroon societies (Bilby 1996 Price 1979, 1983, 1990). Thus, the central problem is just when, why, and how a group of escaped slaves became Palmarinos? Furthermore, will the documentary record alone contain enough information to piece together the *processes* involved in the creation of this identity?

As the Palmarinos left no known written record of their own, the colonial accounts, which indicate the formation of a new group from an 'outside' perspective, are not amenable to studying an emergent Palmares. What is known about the initial creation of the *quilombo* derives from European colonists who perhaps misrepresented or misunderstood what they were describing (Schwartz 1992). Rather than seek the merely the manifestation of Palmarino identity in the dirt, and thus proving what may be assumed from the written evidence, archaeological analysis should permit an understanding of the role of material culture in fostering this identity, providing historical depth to the initial stages of Palmarino ethnogenesis.

Building the Analytical Model

This research benefits from an established and emerging literature in ethnogenesis, ethnicity, and the archaeology of cultural identity. Presented to encapsulate the line of methodological and theoretical direction I intend to apply to this case study of Palmares, this section highlights both the benefits and shortcomings of previous scholarship dealing with similar issues, particularly as concerns the study of the African experience in the Americas. As a multidisciplinary pursuit, a series of connecting arguments is required to set forth the assumptions necessary to interpret the central issues of the research. To facilitate this, I discuss three broad issues germane to the study of Palmares: trends in the study of African-American history; the archaeology of ethnicity; and the potential role of archaeological analyses to studies of ethnogenesis.

Africans in the Americas

For many scholars, that Palmares was an 'African' society seems to be self-evident. It was a society founded and maintained by Africans who escaped from the sugar plantations and the bonds

of slavery. While it has been suggested that their society also housed native Americans and the occasional European, its 'African-ness' is clearly emphasized in all of the historical literature, as well as in contemporary Brazilian thought (Allen, forthcoming). Many of the entradas and colonial government records mention the use of 'African' customs at Palmares and beyond. For instance, on their arrival in Recife to negotiate a peace treaty, Palmarinos, wearing only loincloths and braids and carrying bows and arrows, are reported to have prostrated themselves before governor don Pedro de Almeida and beat palm leaves upon the ground in his presence. Apparently the same reverence was afforded to Ganga Zuma and Zumbi, kings of Palmares. 'Pagan religion' (Bastide in Price 1979), 'African' political systems and village toponyms (Kent in Price 1979), and defensive systems (Schwartz in Price 1979, 1992) have all been used as examples of the reconstitution of an African heritage at maroon communities. Such a research agenda fails, however, to consider the complex and dynamic processes involved in the nature of cultural transmission and the construction of completely new cultural or ethnic groups

The position that Afro-American cultural practices may be reminiscent of similar traditions in Africa led to the study of cultural survivals, or 'africanisms.' Herskovits, framing his assertions within acculturation studies, claimed that various amounts of these africanisms were retained by Afro-Americans and played an integral role in the basis of their social lives (1941). Depending on social circumstances, such as the population density of a group from dominant European influences, Herskovits claimed that he could isolate africanisms and index the rate of a groups' retention of these traits. The indexing criteria was a sliding scale ranging from a mark of 'a' ("very African"), 'b' ("quite African"), 'c' ("somewhat African"), 'd' ("a little African"), and finally, 'e' ("trace of African custom, or absent"). The marks were made for various aspects of social life. For example, Afro-Brazilians in Bahia, Brazil, received marks of 'd' in economic life but scored an 'a' in music (Herskovits 1948: 615).

Frazier vehemently opposed Herskovits' claims on the importance of africanisms to Afro-American

culture (1949). Frazier argued that the slave trade was so disruptive that it completely undermined the social lives of African groups. Where Herskovits assumed the homogeneity of an 'African culture,' Frazier asserted that there were numerous cultural traditions represented in the Diaspora and that any idea of reconstituting their heritage was inconceivable. The traumatic affects of slavery required Africans in the Americas to look to the dominant society for the core of their political and social organization. Thus the religion of Afro-Americans, their family structure, and other aspects of life were completely derived from Euro-American models. The 'survivals' that "Herskovits is so fond of" existed only as 'flavor' for these groups (in Bastide 1971).

The acceptance that 'African Culture' could be transplanted wholesale involves two assumptions about the nature of culture. First is that there existed a so-called 'African Culture' to begin with. The second assumption is that historical forces have little affect on culture. In their writings on Africans' experiences in the Americas, Mintz and Price (1976) contend that historical circumstances required the creation of a new Afro-American cultural identity. Their thesis on the creation of Afro-American culture is particularly applicable to the study of Palmares. In developing their argument, Mintz and Price set out to determine that Africans faced too many barriers to 'maintain' their cultures. They argued this from two angles. First, contrary to Herskovits, they asserted that an 'African Culture' simply did not exist. Africans, in their view, consisted of numerous diverse, albeit similar, cultural groups. Thus, to speak of the transplantation of 'African Culture' required the reexamination of 'African Culture' itself. Another barrier was the randomization of Africans from any particular cultural group. They suggested that this randomization was effected on two levels. First, slave raiders preferred the young to the old. As the elderly generally possess more cultural knowledge than the young, their absence would seriously limit the transmission of traditional lifeways. Second, to reduce the possibility of slave uprisings on the plantations, purchasers attempted as much as possible to separate those slaves who spoke the same language (Mullin 1992; Thornton 1992)

The notion of survivals portrays culture as static rather than dynamic and would seem to preclude adaptation and the conscious manipulation of symbols. Though Herskovits wrote that cultural elements could be “reinterpreted” his method of analysis clearly imparts a ‘static-ness’ to these survivals. Africans were captured in slave raids, transported across the Atlantic often stopping in several ports, inducted into the plantation system, pressured into Christendom, and often separated from family and friends. Those who managed to runaway to Palmares were faced with an unfamiliar physical and social environment. Their daily lives focused around a constant attention to defense against the colonial government, forging relationships with native groups, acquiring supplies necessary for survival, and building a new society. In the face of such change, it is doubtful whether complete systems could be transposed.

Though necessary to the study of African-American history and culture, neither the position of a complete retention or loss of traditions is tenable. The criticisms outlined above indicate the importance of traditional African *influences* in Afro-American culture. Archaeologically, these influences may be manifest in the decorative arts, architecture, and settlement patterns. The symbolic systems within which portable and nonportable artifacts conveyed meaning, whether of African influence or not, such as Native traditions in the setting of the quilombo, must be understood within the specific social context in which they were used. Therefore, tracing cultural correlates in African-inspired traditions, material or otherwise, in addition to being quite problematic (Posnansky cited in Thornton 1992), certainly does little to advance our understanding of a specifically Afro-Brazilian, and Palmarino, cultural history (Handler and Lange 1978, 214).

Historical Archaeology and Ethnicity

Virtually every study dealing with African American archaeology considers at some level the ‘africanisms’ discussed above, including architecture (Kelso 1984), pottery and foodways (Ferguson 1980), tools (Groover 1994), and so-called spiritual goods (Brown and Cooper 1990). While several of these studies assume the passive retention of cultural heritage, others have attempted to

understand evidence of traditionally-African elements as unconscious (Ferguson 1991) attempts at maintaining or building a distinct cultural identity. Often geared toward uncovering evidence of resistance and the maintenance of a cultural heritage in the face of oppressive colonial and post colonial societies, most of these historical archaeological studies suffer from two major shortcomings, which have narrowed the scope and understanding of the complexity of the African past. The first is that the bulk of the research to date has been derived from the study of large plantations in the North American southeast. Considering, however, that a mere 8% of Africans involved in the slave trade were transported to North America (Curtin 1969), and that most of them lived and worked on small farmsteads (Genovese 1974), the problem of representation exists. Can we really assume to understand the whole of the African experience in the Americas from such a limited context? While plantation studies are absolutely necessary to understand an aspect of African-American history, and my intention is not a critique of that work, the study of the maroon society, a well-documented part of colonial slavocracies, shall provide a more accurate portrayal of this dynamic era.

A second problem lies in the effort to reveal ‘ethnicity’ in the archaeological record, one which has both conceptual and methodological implications. A clear definition of the ethnic group is often missing from archaeological analyses with authors assuming that their audience will either agree with or understand how the investigator uses an undefined ethnic group concept (Staski 1990). For example, in searching for ‘Afro-American’ ethnicity, scholars have searched for africanisms in the material records of ‘known Black’ sites (see Schuyler 1980) to frame subsequent analyses vaguely related to ethnic theory. According to this reasoning, after one determines the ‘otherness’ of a site, archaeological interpretations commence which seek to understand how the group under study differs in its use of artifacts. The lack of historical context results in the obvious difficulty in separating gender and class-produced patterns and behavior from ethnicity (Spencer-Wood 1987; Staski 1987, Siefert 1991, Scott 1994). Moreover, the studies implicitly attach cultural behavior to racial categories, undoubtedly an unintended outcome.

The use of the term 'ethnic' in historical archaeological studies more often than not proceeds along ascribed ethnic categories rather than a determination of groupness (Cohen 1969). Thus, the study of (usually) non-European groups is considered by-and-large the study of ethnicity (Singleton 1995), often implicitly employing racial criteria. Singleton has summed up the problem eloquently, writing,

by concentrating on ethnic minorities that are both culturally and physically distinct from the white majority in the United States, archaeologists inadvertently created an ethnic archaeology of the Other. This result, combined with the fact that the archaeology profession in this country is almost totally white, has produced a study of ethnicity that more often reflects the perspectives of its investigators than the perspectives of those being investigated. (1995: 121-22)

Reliance on ascribed ethnic and racial categories to interpret social processes ensuing in the past neglects to consider the way actors may have constituted their identities. McGuire (1982) warned of the difficulty in addressing issues related to ethnicity archaeologically proposing that ethnicity be understood as the social organization of a group to better its position in unequal social systems, a position not without adherents in cultural anthropology (Cohen 1969; Nagata 1974). Thus, rather than assume an ethnic identity based solely on the racial characteristics of a site's inhabitants, we must first determine whether a model of ethnicity is at all appropriate.

Archaeology & Ethnogenesis

The necessary détente of 'primary' and 'secondary' ethnogenesis requires the use of multidisciplinary methods in understanding maroon societies. Nonetheless, adhering to a concept of ethnogenesis which can lead to viable and convincing archaeological interpretations requires more than a foundation in the current lines of thinking on ethnic theory. Recognizing that the study of ethnicity is difficult even with live informants, an analytic framework which is useful for archaeologists must, while remaining cognizant of and adhering to the central tenets of ethnic theory, be aware of the particular problems faced in constructing the past (Shennan 1989; Staski 1990).

Material culture is a form of reifying expected cultural norms and in providing a catalyst for

discourse in social settings (Conkey 1990; Beaudry et al 1991, Hodder et al, 1995). Wobst (1977) argued that stylistic variation in artifacts may transmit messages which could be used to regulate and inform social interaction. Drawing on this assertion, Sackett (1990) argued that 'isochrestic variation' (style) carries *imbedded* ethnic symbolism which is largely a passive expression. As used herein, however, ethnicity is the *conscious* identification of a group, in the context of some form of social inequity, such as racism, which may draw on perceived common histories, language, territory and so forth (Barth 1969; Cohen 1969; Bentley 1987; McGuire 1982).

Recognizing the shortcoming of Sackett's model, in which ethnicity is imbedded in the consciousness of its members, Weissner (1983) proposed that there are essentially two types of style, assertive and emblematic. The former may be employed either consciously or unconsciously, and is subject to both individual choice and cultural constraints. The latter contains messages which are geared toward a target audience. She further incorporated 'isochrestic variation' as providing the 'cultural stuff' which could be used to express assertive or emblematic style "dependent on context and conditions" (Shennan 1989; Weissner 1989).

Shennan (1989) has built on these scholars' research and has proposed a workable model to tackle questions of ethnicity in the archaeological record. Isochrestic variation "provides the resources for ethnic identity, and indeed for 'emblematic' and 'assertive' uses of style in general" (pg. 20). Thus artifacts made or used within particular cultural systems may exhibit a rather broad range of stylistic variation (assertive). In certain political, economic, and social contexts, however, the artifacts may take on symbolic meaning (emblematic), sending a message to outsiders and reifying expectations to the group. Though Shennan's model presents a useful direction for archaeological research, a historical context must be established to interpret ethnicity as it is imperative that we apply ethnic models only to groups which self-consciously identified as such (Singleton 1995, Allen 1996a). Therefore it follows that not all sites and situations are amenable to ethnic analysis. For example, an archaeological study of ethnicity in a 'black' or 'Afro-American' site may back us into the corner of

imbuing its previous occupants with political and social trappings they may not have shared (Singleton 1995).

Shennan's use of assertive and emblematic style may be employed in conjunction with primary and secondary ethnogenesis. Escaped slaves had to *become* Palmarinos after first constructing a society which could be viable in 17th Brazil. For example, some salient features of the community probably included the following: constant attention to defense, provisions for the spiritual lives of inhabitants, local manufacture, an exchange network, etc. All of these elements are mentioned, albeit in little detail, in the historical record pertaining to Palmares, and should have archaeological signatures. It is this formative period which may be amenable to applying a model of assertive style. Stated simply, how and why did the escaped slaves, and others, construct the type of society that they did? Once the political situation changed, however, the inhabitants of Palmares were able to enter into formal negotiations with colonial Brazil, as Palmarinos. It is this stage which is visible to historians, via the documentary record, and in which Bilby's evidence lies for the emergence of the Aluku and Winward Maroon ethnic groups. Indications are that a similar interpretation, relying on the documentary record, may apply to Palmares as well. If ethnogenesis is understood as the *process* of becoming a new cultural group, and ethnic identity reaches into culture (including material) and history for definition, then archaeological analyses of the formative period Palmarino society is required for a better understanding of the construction of this new group. Moreover, the archaeological problem of determining specifically which artifact was an ethnic marker and which was not is overcome by tying the construction of cultural identity to ethnic group formation.

Conclusion

In this section I have presented my understanding of the problems and shortcomings of previous and present research into the African past in the Americas and attempts to weave a few skeins in laying out a feasible research agenda for the historical archaeology of Palmares. For a more satisfying understanding of this period, we must consider Africans and Creoles in the context of

dynamic colonial settings. Forced migrations of African and Native groups and disenfranchised European settlers uprooted from European-based wars created a situation in which altogether new and distinct societies emerged. While the predominance of Africans in maroon societies requires the comparative framework central to the study of africanisms, anthropologists must look beyond this superficial level for deeper understanding of the 'whys' and 'hows' of ethnogenesis, focusing instead on individual groups. For example, how did the Aluku become a group? What did they draw upon for this definition? While one might assert that slavery was the common thread in maroon societies, this does not explain the fact that the Aluku maroons saw themselves as distinct from the Djuka maroons of the same area (Bilby 1996). Furthermore, the basis for developing an ethnic polity lies in the specific culture history of a group, a past which is all too often silent or silenced. As such, archaeology is required to provide the historical depth to studies of ethnogenesis, moving us beyond studying maroons as *apriori* ethnic groups and instead unveiling the processes involved in creating the identity initially.

Research Plan

Previous and future excavations center on Macaco, the 17th-century 'capital' of Palmares, located on the Serra da Barriga, a mountain in Alagôas, Brazil. Its importance to the social and political organization of the several quilombos comprising Palmares as well as its long occupation by fugitive slaves (approximately 100 years) avail this site to address the principal issues raised herein. As a highly visible and highly dense archaeological site, Macaco is particularly amenable to historical archaeological research. We know that the inhabitants of the maroon society forged a new identity, as is evidenced by the historical record, though we are left to assume what form their society may have taken. An underlying assumption of this research is that as slaves fled the plantations, they brought with them 'cultural baggage' from Africa as well as learned traditions from colonial society. Moreover, as these maroons moved west, away from the coastal plantations, they came into increased contact with indigenous Brazilians. As such, the inhabitants of Palmares probably incorporated many traditions in the construction of

their new society. Methods of pottery manufacture and use (Ferguson 1992), housing construction (Kelso 1984), and spatial patterning in terms of village layout and activity areas (Schwartz 1992) should, in many instances, neither mirror nor completely diverge from African, Native, and European folkways, instead indicating some degree of fusion, characterizing the distinctive emergence of this new ethnic group. In this section I review preliminary findings resulting from two seasons of research, including ceramic collection analysis (Allen 1995b) and field excavation (Allen 1996b) which have provided the methodological and theoretical direction for my future research agenda. Next, I layout a research plan geared specifically to recover the type of data necessary to address the issues presented at the outset of this proposal. Finally, I propose a data analysis program which will facilitate the classification of excavated artifacts and the development of artifact and spatial patterns which may cast light on the processes involved in the construction of Palmarino identity.

Preliminary Research

Exploratory excavations at the Serra da Barriga, led by Pedro Funari and Charles Orser in 1992 and 1993 yielded over 1,300 pottery sherds, on which I based my master's thesis (Allen 1995b; see also Orser 1992, 1993, 1994; Funari 1996a, 1996b). In that study, carried out from June to September, 1994, I compared the ceramic assemblage to other collections obtained from contemporary missionary, colonial Dutch and Portuguese, and pre-Cabral indigenous archaeological sites. In attempting to address the meaning and significance of the ceramic diversity, I argued for a model which might take into account the fusion of several traditions in the fabrication of pottery at Palmares. I determined, through negative regional distribution, that one type of pottery was manufactured at Palmares (Allen 1995b), a finding supported by continued research (Allen 1996b). Nonetheless, the role of the ware in the construction of Palmares remained unclear as no structures were identified and the excavations were of a preliminary and exploratory nature (Orser 1992, 1993).

Returning to the field for pre-dissertation research, I directed field excavations from June-July, 1996, which enabled me to lay a groundwork for

future study. During that season I accomplished several necessary tasks to prepare for further excavations and to facilitate analysis of the site's components. First, a walking survey of the entire Serra da Barriga resulted in the definition of 'Areas' based upon natural geographic and cultural criteria [fig. 1]. Defined areas are as follows: 'A' – plateau – area of intense mechanical scraping and leveling – surface features and deeply-buried artifacts; 'B' – west of plateau to Lagoa do Negro – cultivated area with extremely high density surface remains (pottery) – slight to steep incline; 'C' – east of Area A to valley – cultivated corn and manioc fields with high density surface remains (pottery) – slight incline; 'D' – west of 'Lagoa do Negro' to a small plateau – low density surface remains – steep incline; 'E' – small plateau adjoining Area D, west, to another small plateau – few surface remains – moderate to steep; 'F' – valley to plateau east of Area C, no surface evidence, flat to steep incline. If the presence of surface pottery is used as a rough measure of the limits of the site, Areas B and C should hold the most promise for revealing evidence of Palmarino occupation. Nonetheless, exploratory units were excavated at all areas (excepting F) (Allen 1996b).

A datum, designated N500E500 was placed at Area A, after which an excavation grid was established. This plateau is the focus of commemorative activities each year and as such has been subject to intense mechanical scraping, revealing numerous surface features, 94 of which have been recorded and mapped. In addition to ten 1x1 units, 10% of the visible features were excavated. Through comparison with the stratigraphic profiles of non-scraped areas, specifically the adjoining Areas C & B, I determined that approximately 40-50cm has been removed from the plateau, in all probability erasing the Palmarino occupation strata [fig. 2]. Area A has, however, revealed what appears to be a prehistoric Aratu burial complex as evidenced by the removal of probable burial urns in previous years, and an urn containing a human adolescent tooth excavated by me in 1996 (Allen 1996; Prous 1993; Martin 1996).

Aside from Area A, I surveyed and tested four other areas on the Serra da Barriga. Through the placement of random 1x1 meter test pits, I obtained an understanding of the site stratigraphy [fig. 2].

With few exceptions, four distinct strata are visible, often with a charcoal burn lens separating levels I and II. Of these areas, 'B' and 'C' are the most promising, the latter revealing a probable structure consisting of four (possibly five) postholes forming a right angle, and a storage vessel and pit in association with iron scrap situated in what may be the interior of the structure [fig. 3]. Time constraints precluded a complete block excavation. In all, 3,353 artifacts were uncovered, processed, and await further analysis at the Center for Afro-Brazilian Studies, Maceió, Alagoas, which I'll undertake in October.²

Research Design

My pre-dissertation research and recent exploratory excavations (June and October-December 1996) have provided a foundation and refined the methodology for continued excavations at the Serra da Barriga. The following discussion lays out the planned methodological and analytical components of a multi-staged research design at areas A (plateau), B, and C. Full-scale excavations shall be conducted at areas B and C due to the significant amount of surface pottery sherds while the location, mapping, and excavation of surface features shall be continued at area A. The mechanical scraping of the plateau has damaged the archaeological signature of seventeenth-century occupation as in places up to 50cm has been removed. Nonetheless, extant vestiges of features and comparative data, derived from the pre-Cabral component of the site, require further investigation. Areas B and C have not been extensively damaged even though they constitute an area of corn and manioc horticulture. Through discussions with local farmers, and by going into the fields, I learned that their agricultural activities turn-up no more than 10-15cm of topsoil, a fact supported by stratigraphic evidence [fig. 2]. Together, these three areas have the potential to yield data pertinent to address the central problem of the proposal.

While the probability exists for several artifact types, including forged iron implements, durable personal items such as beads and combs, and clay pipes, to inform the research problem at hand, I intend to concentrate on pottery sherds collected through excavations and on the spatial patterning of structures, features, and artifact distributions. The

first concentrated investigations will be conducted at Area C, the location of Structure 1 and its associated features. The methods of discovery and excavation I employed previously shall be continued. Specifically, random 1x1 meter test units shall be placed to identify possible features. As spatial data is important to the research, contiguous 2x2 meter blocks shall be used to follow out any anomalies and features revealed by the 1x1 units. All excavated soil will be passed through a 40mm wire screen while random samples at each level will be sifted in a 10mm wire screen. Additionally, the contents of all identified features shall be wet-screened using a nylon mesh.

In addition to the Area C excavations, continued testing will occur at Area B also employing a strategy of random 1 x 1 test units and further blocks if warranted. In previous tests, no structures were identified although Level II artifacts revealed clay waste (but not a complete waster) while Level III turned up an increasing number of lithic artifacts in association with heavily-tempered, thick earthenwares, perhaps suggesting an intact pre-Cabral to Palmarino chronological sequence. Archaeological excavations in this area must be limited, however, due to a large number of young orange trees recently planted. Although I have been given permission by the owner to excavate, I attempt not to impact on the livelihood of the Serra da Barriga inhabitants.

The final component will involve the continued location, mapping, and excavation of visible surface features at the scraped area, A. I have thus far located 94 such features and there are at least as many more to be mapped. Given the small size of the features, I shall increase my excavated sample from 10% to 25%. The purpose of the investigations at area A is threefold. First, to derive patterns left by postholes, hearths, and other features indicative of both pre-Cabral and historic occupation. Second, to assess the integrity of the pre-Cabral burial component and to uncover pottery and lithic materials, both features of the Aratu burial complex (Prous 1993). Finally, to provide a base from which to interpret the findings obtained from areas B and C in terms of comparing the pottery and lithic artifacts and the spatial data. I have invited two specialists in prehistoric Brazilian archaeology to assist in the research at area A.

Data Analysis Plan

To determine whether diverse traditions were fused in the construction of Palmarino identity requires classification of the artifact assemblage, developing groupings based on variables and attributes, and the construction of the spatial patterning of features, structures, artifact distributions, as well as a necessary comparative collections component. The forthcoming plan for artifact analysis is developed specifically for ceramics as they have thus far comprised 90% of the total artifact assemblage. Additionally, the proposed analysis should enable me to test the following propositions related to the process of ethnogenesis:

1. The earliest levels of occupation should reveal predominantly pre-Cabral pottery. This is due to the slow growth of the escaped slave population and a probable initial dependence by the runaways on native groups (Price 1979). I expect the artifactual evidence of the early occupation level to be similar to other regional pre-Cabral native sites excavated by archaeologists at the Federal University of Pernambuco.
2. Later periods of occupation should reveal a diverse pottery assemblage as escaped slaves from several African groups and natives began to foster relations and construct a new society. An illicit trade with colonists (*Relação*), native traditions in the manufacture of pottery, and the increased influence of various forms of African artisanry resulted in an eclectic material world. The assemblage should include wares of known European, colonial Brazilian, native, and perhaps plantation-manufactured types. Additionally, I expect to see the emergence of pottery of unknown attribution in terms of style, manufacture, and decoration.
3. Toward the end of the 17th century, as Portugal increased its attacks on the Brazilian quilombos, the inhabitants of Palmares became more solidified, identifying and being identified as Palmarinos. The effective isolation brought on by increased warfare required the Palmarinos to become completely self-sufficient as well as maintain their society intact. The breakdown of colonist cooperation through fear of colonial Brazilian and quilombola reprisal and the overwhelming identification of Palmares a rogue 'African' nation on Brazilian soil resulted in a

material signature which emphasized this stage in the emergence of Palmarino identity. I expect that the last archaeological signature will demonstrate the replacement of native and non-local traditions with specifically Palmarino-crafted pottery. A mixture of functional necessity and Palmarino identity may be manifest in the manufacture, form, and style of these later vessels.

Related to the expectations I have of the pottery evidence is the archaeological context in which the vessels are found. Parallel changes over time may be expected in the use of the vessels in foodways as well as spatially in terms of hearth location and related activity areas. Moreover, though the above propositions are geared to ceramic data, other invariant artifact groups, such as pipes, architectural structures, lithics, beads, etc., may be studied similarly.

Conclusion and Significance

By employing the methods of historical archaeology within a framework of ethnogenesis, the research may permit more satisfying interpretations of the creation of new ethnic groups in the Americas and beyond. By using the case study of Palmares, I hope to address three major issues in historical anthropology, generally. First, in addition to understanding more about the culture history of Palmares, this research confronts the limited scope of African-American archaeology by looking to the peripheries of colonial society. It is conceivable that the approaches adhered to within this research may be applicable to other similar communities such as *petites nations* (Usner 1992) and New England praying towns, where models of ethnogenesis may be applicable in understanding the formation of these groups and their subsequent relations with colonial systems. Second, the research challenges the spurious attribution of ethnic labels, all too common in historical archaeology, by requiring a historical context amenable to ethnic analysis. Ethnogenesis provides the conceptual framework from which to identify the creation of new groups and sets the stage for subsequent analyses of cultural identity. Finally, archaeological analyses applied to similar situations should elucidate the complex processes involved in building and fostering newly-constructed societies. As the documentary and artifactual records provide a glimpse into differing aspects of maroon societies,

and thus the construction of ethnicity, the analysis of both is required to more fully explore the emergence of ethnic groups.

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¹Escaped-slave communities are known by several terms including *mocambo*, *quilombo*, and *maroon society*. I use the three interchangeably within the text.

²Since this paper was written, I have returned to the field and am presently analyzing over 10,500 artifacts at the newly-founded *Núcleo Alagoano de Pesquisas Arqueológicas*. Though recent excavations have revealed more data, the central issues and research plan contained herein remain the same.

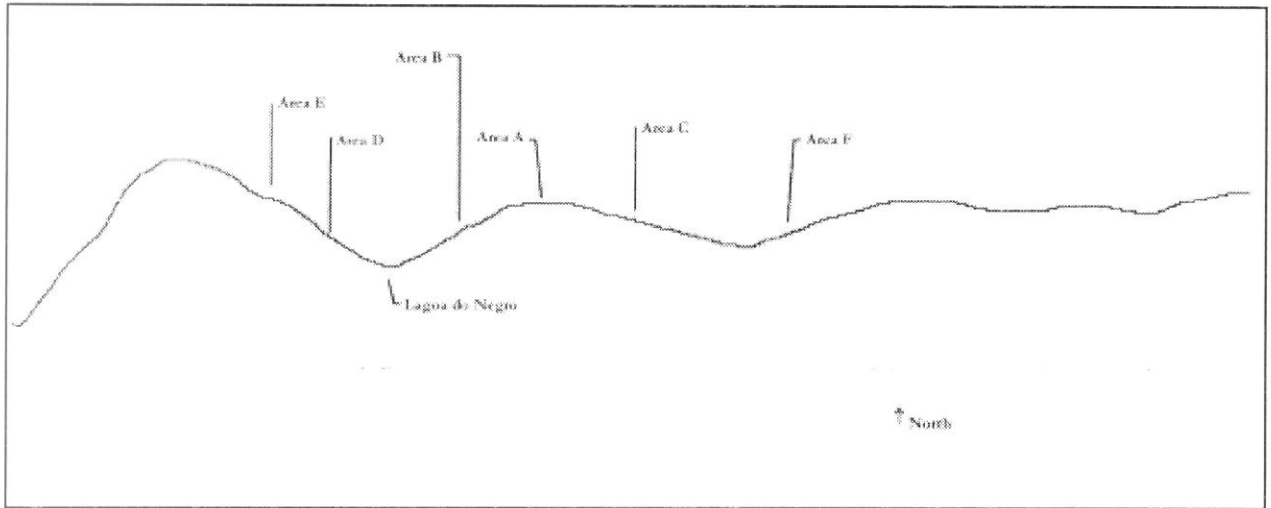


Fig. 1 - Archaeologically defined areas. Serra da Barriga (not to scale).

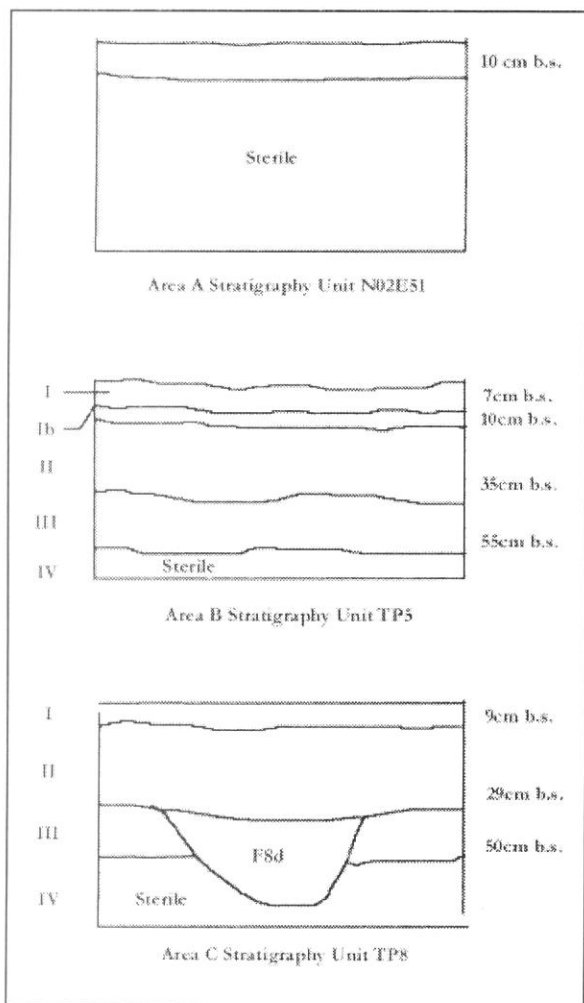


Fig. 2 - Stratigraphic profiles (drawings not to scale).

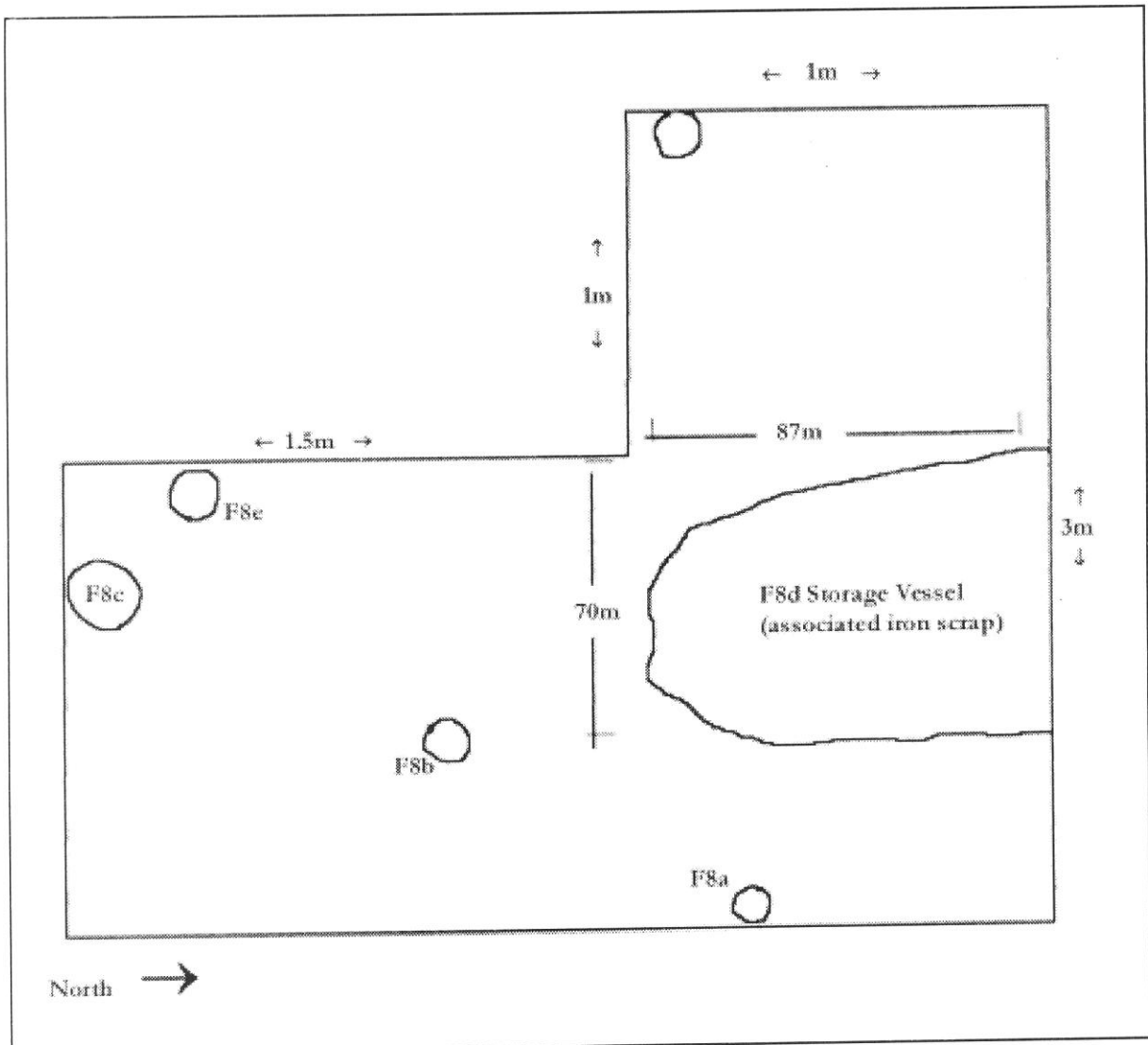


Fig. 3 - Test unit 8 (not to scale).