

Images of movement: land, kinship, and history in the Upper Xingu

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The aim of this article is to understand how the Kalapalo, a Carib-speaking people of the Upper Xingu (southern Amazon), describe their relationship with their traditional lands in narratives and personal accounts of their occupation of the area and forced displacement in the 1960's. Based on recorded narratives of their life at the old territory and subsequent displacement to what they consider to be a "foreign land", I will discuss how persons (humans as well as non-humans) are entangled in and by means of places. By bringing forward indigenous perspectives on the relations between land and people, and how these were transformed by the intervention of the Brazilian State, I expect this article to contribute to the understanding of Xinguano territoriality, as well as to debates about the indigenous concepts of "land" and "land ownership".

KEYWORDS: indigenous lands, territoriality, participatory mapping, Amazon, Upper Xingu, Kalapalo.

Imagens do movimento: terra, parentesco e história no Alto Xingu ♦ O objetivo deste artigo é compreender como os Kalapalo, um povo falante de língua karib do Alto Xingu (Amazônia meridional), descreve suas relações com suas terras tradicionais em narrativas e depoimentos pessoais sobre sua ocupação da área e deslocamento forçado nos anos 1960. Baseado em narrativas gravadas sobre sua vida no antigo território e o deslocamento subsequente para o que consideram uma "terra de outros/estrangeiros", discuto como pessoas (humanas e não humanas) são enredadas em e por meio de lugares. Ao trazer ao primeiro plano perspectivas indígenas sobre as relações entre terra e gente, e como estas foram transformadas pela intervenção do Estado brasileiro, este artigo pretende contribuir para o entendimento da territorialidade alto-xinguana, assim como para os debates sobre os conceitos indígenas de "terra" e "posse da terra".

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: terras indígenas, territorialidade, mapeamento participativo, Amazônia, Alto Xingu, Kalapalo.

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INTRODUCTION

“When I first came here, I cried, I cried indeed: ‘Where are my grandparents, my uncles, the owners of this place?’, that’s what I said. I always tell my children this place wasn’t only a ‘farmstead’, this was where they hosted feasts for their chiefs. And that’s why I also always tell them we shall not surrender it to the whites – why would we? It is ours. Here are its stories, look, those we have been telling. This is our grandparents’ land.”¹

This speech was given by Hagama, chief of the Apangakigi village, when we were mapping ancient places and video-documenting their stories in 2011.² His words synthesize a contemporary concern for the Kalapalo, a Carib-speaking people of the Upper Xingu (southern Amazon), that the elders were then trying to show: to protect their lands against political and economic pressures for commodification, it is important to make their relations with those lands visible, both to a wider non-indigenous audience and to themselves, especially the younger generations. He also draws attention to issues of anthropological interest, bringing forward ideas about what constitutes a place, how the landscape is pervaded by narratives, and how places become their land – a claim that the Kalapalo have been making not only to the “whites”,³ but to some of their indigenous neighbors as well.

The land in question is a large area inside the Xingu indigenous land (Mato Grosso, Brazil), on the western region of the Culuene river. It was continuously occupied by the Kalapalo for at least 300 years, but they were forced to leave after the Xingu indigenous park was created in 1961, since the whole Kalapalo territory was left out of its original boundaries (a mistake partially corrected when the limits were revised in 1968 and 1971). While they moved to an area inside the limits of the Indigenous Land (IL), what they consider their “true lands” were left behind. Although those who left still used to visit

1 All reports were translated directly from the Kalapalo language. When necessary, Kalapalo concepts will be discussed in more detail.

2 I would like to thank Elizabeth Ewart, Marcela Coelho de Souza and Marina Pereira Novo for their careful readings of previous versions of this article. Their comments and ideas were of great value for its improvement. The School of Anthropology & Museum Ethnography of the University of Oxford provided invaluable support for this research during my time there as a Visiting Scholar, from August 2019 to July 2020, for which I am very grateful. I also thank Espaço da Escrita – Pró-Reitoria de Pesquisa – UNICAMP – for the language services provided. This article results from the research project “Images of movement: places, kinship, and history in the Upper Xingu”, funded by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP; Process 2018/25900-8). It is mainly based on data collected during the “Kalapalo Cultural Documentation Project”, funded by The Indian Museum/FUNAI/UNESCO/Banco do Brasil Foundation, and during the research project “Transforming Amerindian regional systems: the Upper Xingu case”, also funded by FAPESP (Process 2013/26676-0).

3 The Kalapalo call non-indigenous people “whites”, *kagaiha*.

to collect *pequi* (*Caryocar brasiliense*) fruits and snail shells (*Megalobulimus sp.*), it remained largely unoccupied until the last decade, when three new villages were created there. The region is also under several kinds of pressures. Non-indigenous landowners pressure the Kalapalo to illegally rent their fertile *terra preta* (Amazonian dark earth) for farming, and dams built on the headwaters outside the demarcated IL are drying streams and reducing the fish supply. Inside the IL, the Kalapalo also deal with illegal fishing and hunting tourism, and problems with wildfires associated with climatic changes.

The Kalapalo live in the Upper Xingu, an area located at the Xingu river's tributaries' basin on the south of the Xingu Indigenous Land. The region comprises a multilingual and multiethnic dense social network formed by 11 peoples, speaking languages from three of the major linguistic groups of Lowland South America (Arawak, Carib and Tupi), and an isolate language (Trumai).⁴ The area was first occupied circa 800 A.D. by Arawak-speakers, followed by Carib and Tupi-speaking groups in the 17th and 18th centuries (Heckenberger 2005). Over their long-term occupation of the region, these peoples developed a pacifist *ethos* and a sense of mutual belonging, grounding most of their interethnic relations on marriage, trade, and inter-village festivals. The Xinguano recognize each other as “people” (*kuge*, in kalapalo), in contrast to

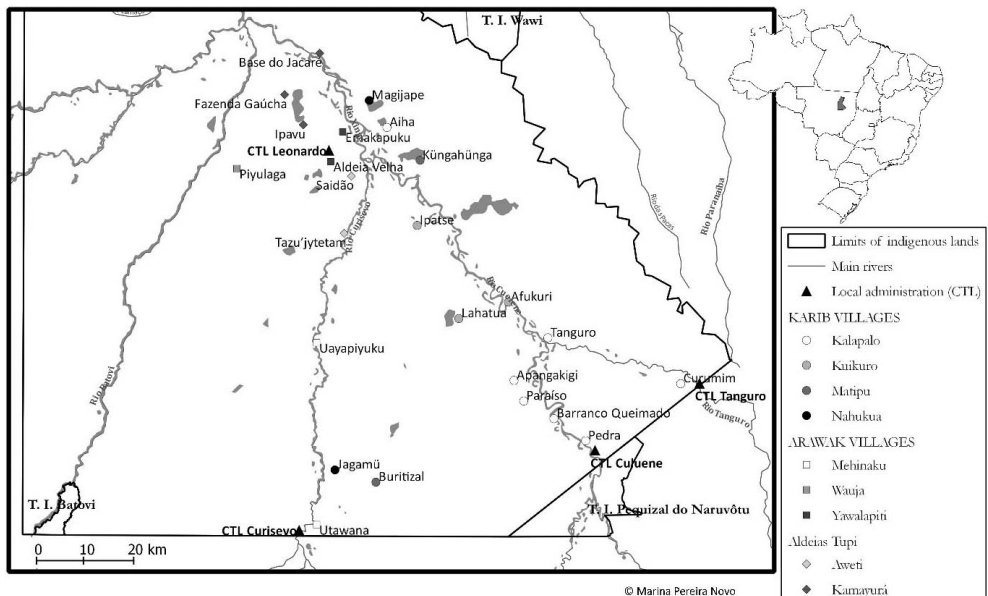


Figure 1 – the Upper Xingu.

4 They are the Carib-speaking Kalapalo, Kuikuro, Matipu, Nahukua, and Angaguhütü; the Arawak-speaking Wauja, Mehinaku, and Yawalapiti; the Tupi-speaking Aweti and Kamayurá; and, occupying a marginal position, the Trumai (isolate).

other indigenous groups (*ngikogo*, considered fierce and violent) and the whites (*kagaiha*). These features have influenced the characterization of the area as a “regional society” (defined on a socio-spatial basis), a “moral community” (because of a shared set of core values) or a “multilingual society” (given the central role linguistic diversity plays in their social dynamics) – see, for example, Basso (1973), Franchetto (2011) and Heckenberger (2005).

The Kalapalo have a population of around 1000 people, and they have the highest number of villages (13, in 2023). This is noteworthy, since no other group has more than four or five villages. Kalapalo villages have been breaking down into smaller communities at a fast pace, with 10 villages created in the past 10 years. There is a tendency to reoccupy lands to the south and to the west of the Culuene river, where there were former villages and small “farmsteads” (places where nuclear families used to live during part of the year cultivating manioc, maize, potatoes, and fruits). Some people returned to places where their kin had already lived, while others moved to places near roads leading to nearby cities, positioning themselves at the interstices of their traditional territory and (what have become) non-indigenous lands (Novo 2023).

This article results from a collaborative research,⁵ and it aims to understand how the Kalapalo describe their relationships with the old territory by means of personal accounts of their occupation of the area and forced displacement in the 1960s. Based on recorded narratives about their life there and subsequent displacement to what they consider to be a “foreign land”, I will discuss how people (humans as well as non-humans) are entangled in and by means of places. By bringing forward indigenous perspectives on the relations between land and people, and how these were transformed by the intervention of the Brazilian State, I expect this article to contribute to the understanding of Xinguano territoriality, as well as to ongoing debates about the indigenous concepts of “land” (Souza 2017) and “land ownership” (Viegas 2016).

The following ethnographic account focuses on Kalapalo perspectives of historical places. As Casey (1996) points out, places are never “plain space”. Besides their spatiality, places are also entangled with time: they are what past experiences have made of them, and it is through emplacement that people project themselves towards the future. As such, places connect different people, for any emplaced experience engages the self with others who have

5 The research began as a documentation project on *inhu* (*Megalobulimus* sp.), a large land snail whose shell the Kalapalo use to make valuable belts and necklaces. That project was part of the Programme for the Documentation of Indigenous Languages and Cultures, carried out by Museu do Índio/Funai (“The Indian’s Museum”) with support from UNESCO and the Banco do Brasil Foundation. It resulted in a multimedia *corpus* preserved at Museu do Índio, and in two short films about *inhu* snails and the traditional Kalapalo territory. Further research on narratives about the Kalapalo territory was carried out from 2014 to 2019, within the project “Transforming Amerindian regional systems: the Upper Xingu case” (São Paulo Research Foundation, 13/26676-0).

already been there, who could be there, or who can be met from there (see also Munn 1992). According to Ingold, places gather life (Ingold 2007), or, as Souza (2018) shows among the Kĩsêdjê of Central Brazil, places may even have a life of their own, for they both emerge from the kinship process – that is, life – and foster it. Places can also be taken as actual agents in entanglements that make no *a priori* distinction between humans and non-humans, or between society and territory, people and land. Based on that, Kalapalo narratives about places will not be treated as representations of an external space, but as part of ongoing place-making (Basso 1996), as well as “people-making”, actions. As Gow argues in relation to the Piro (an Arawak-speaking people of the Peruvian Amazon), narratives about the past “track the production of present co-residence, the here and now of a village, through other places and people. The act of narrating expands the spatial and temporal dimensions of the village outwards into a wider landscape, while simultaneously focusing these dimensions to the mutual co-presence of narrator and listener in this one place” (Gow 1995: 53).

The dialogue between such perspectives and Casey’s concept of place can contribute to a wider debate on territoriality and historicity in the Amazon. As others have shown, the landscape can be deeply entangled with history, becoming for some peoples a support for the “writing” of history (Santos-Granero 1998; Smith 2004). Research on the Northwest Amazon multiethnic and multilingual system have been particularly important for showing how the landscape is full of indexes of mythical characters’ lives and actions, which are celebrated as ancestors in contemporary rituals and have important political meanings (Andrello 2004, 2012; Hill 2009; Hugh-Jones 2012; Wright, Nández and Leal 2017). For other groups, however, it seems like the memory of past occupations is deemed to be forgotten for the process of kinship to go on (Brightman 2010; Rivière 1984), continuously recreating and widening what the “traditional” territory could be. In any case, it seems at stake what kind of relations places can embody and, thus, what kind of new relations they allow humans to create. Casey’s perspective on places allows us to avoid any prior definition of what the relationships between land and history might be, opening our ethnographic accounts to the fact that any given “space” can actually become numerous places, weaving different persons and temporalities.

In the Kalapalo case, as we will see, the memory of the dead and, especially, of great hereditary chiefs of the past, is a key aspect for producing a territoriality in which ancient places emerge as a multitude of “nodes” around which the kinship process orbits. Places where former chiefs and other memorable persons lived and died act both as a differentiation and identification point, singularizing the Kalapalo as a collective of kin regarding other Xinguano groups. This memory is also key to the emergence of Kalapalo ideas on land ownership, which, similarly to other ownership relations in the Amazon

(Fausto 2008), implies in mutual entanglement more than “possession” in Western terms.

Kalapalo narratives will also be treated as part of a larger effort of producing a kind of territorial map, which was one of the aims of our project. But such map is neither an ideal social organization model, nor a representation of an external spatial reality; rather, it “arises primarily from people’s lived world relationships” (Ewart 2013: 28). Therefore, it is worth asking how the types of “maps” produced by indigenous peoples – in their verbal arts, in social cartography projects, or in processes of territorial demarcation and protection –, arise from their ways of living in/with the land, of engaging with it and producing places that result in and foster the continuous growth of their “lines of life”.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Most of the data comes from a collaborative project developed with the Kalapalo from 2011 to 2015. They intended to document the knowledge associated to land snails used to make shell valuables, which thanks to the support from the linguists Bruna Franchetto and Mara Santos became a project funded by the Indian’s Museum/Funai as part of their Indigenous Cultures Documentation Programme. The Kalapalo decided they also wanted to document stories about the traditional territory where the land snail occurs. They saw that project as an opportunity to create public awareness for the importance of those lands to them.

The Kalapalo defined a crew with 10 indigenous collaborators who would go on a trip to the old territory, and that I would accompany them. Three young Kalapalo researchers were responsible to record everything in video and audio, as well as register our trajectory and points of interest with GPS equipment. I have also made additional records and took photographs. All the resulting multimedia material became part of the Kalapalo archive at the museum, and a copy was deposited at the main Kalapalo village’s school.

After fieldwork was concluded, three trips were made to the Indian’s museum, in Rio de Janeiro, by me and two Kalapalo researchers to watch the video material and edit two short films (*Inhu*, 2012, 21’, and *Etepe*, 2014, 14’). The Kalapalo guided the whole process, with help from indigenous filmmaker Takumã Kuikuro and non-indigenous technicians at the museum. The linguist Mara Santos and I assisted with the translation of the subtitles from Kalapalo to Portuguese. We also produced two maps: one with the GPS coordinates about the region (“a map for the whites”), and another one was drawn by the Kalapalo following sketch-mapping methods. A few years later, in 2017, more narratives about the old territory were documented *in loco* by Hagemá Kalapalo and the anthropologist Diogo Henrique Cardoso, as part of a project to produce textbooks for Kalapalo schools. The recordings served as basis for

the production of two textbooks on Kalapalo history and geography, which were freely distributed to indigenous schools.

The narratives supporting this article are all part of this *corpus* and were transcribed and translated by me between 2019 and 2020. Since there would be no space to transcribe full narratives here, I have based the following ethnographic accounts on my own translations, presenting cited speeches and Kalapalo words and expressions when possible.

WHEN ADRIANO CAME TO “ASK FOR THE LAND”

When talking about “places”, I do not refer to any Kalapalo term that could be directly translated into that. When someone wants to know the name of a place, she will ask: “*Tü taka ige ititüi?*”, “what is **this** name?”, where *ige* is a deictic demonstrative of proximity/existence (Franchetto 2000). According to them, a “place” is anywhere *ititükinhü*, “with a name”. Places are not limited to what they call “villages”, but comprise paths, gardens, *pequi* orchards, lakes, rivers – virtually anywhere that can be named. Nonetheless, documenting narratives *in loco* about their territory, the elders mainly referred to former village sites, *etepe*. The term for “village” is *ete*, which becomes *etu* in its possessed form or *etepe* when referring to former village places. However, “village” is an imprecise translation, since the possessed form *etu* also refers to places where species of plants and animals occur, or where hyper beings (*itseke*)⁶ inhabit. *Ete* would be better understood not as a delimited human space (which could be implied from its translation as “village”), but as a “place of dwelling” for any kind of being. *Ete* is where life unfolds, and thus must be defined by the movements and activities of living beings. Following Ingold (2007), *ete* is where several “lines of life” are woven together – which also implies those lines always come from, and point to, elsewhere. Thus, when the Kalapalo engaged in the documentation of their former villages (*etepe*), it became a documentation of a history of movements, or, as they put it, their “trajectory” (*etimokigatühügü*; lit. “past movings”).

Kandinhoko and Kajanai, two men who spent part of their youth in the old territory, were chosen as narrative masters (*akinha oto*). Tühoni, another narrative master who visited the region as a child, also accompanied us, and there we met Hagama, chief of a small village founded in the heart of the territory in 2008. They suggested we started our journey at Kahindzu, a former village site on the western bank of the Culuene river, and from there walk to

6 *Itseke* are beings usually invisible to humans in normal conditions. They are persons, although they may have bodily qualities of animals, plants or meteorological phenomena. Franchetto (2018) calls them “hyper beings” because they are frequently characterized by some kind of “excess”, such as excessive size, antiquity, ferocity, knowledge, seeing and hearing abilities, and have a great capacity of transformative agency.

Kuapügü, the “starting point” of Kalapalo collective identity in the Upper Xingu. Kahindzu is particularly important because it was where the measles arrived, originating an epidemic that decimated part of the Xinguano population in 1954 and, a few years later, prompted the forced move of some groups, such as the Kalapalo, closer to an administrative post that would also serve as an indigenous health center. What follows is a narrative about such events.

The Kalapalo had been into sporadic contact with the whites since at least the 18th century, but the official contact made by the crew of the Roncador-Xingu Expedition in 1946 would bring quick and definitive changes. After their arrival, the expedition crew set up camp at Kahindzu. The Kalapalo, who lived nearly 15 km far from the river in the Kunugijahütü village (*cf.* figure 2), went to see them, and quickly decided to build a second village beside the camp. The village grew into a full circle of houses, and in 1954 they started to build a special house (*talühe*) for their chief Kumatsi. That year, a man named Agusahi went with his wife Juatani to the city of Aragarças, where she would receive treatment. When they returned, Agusahi fell ill, and his body was covered with small red spots. Auma, one of the Kunugijahütü chiefs (Kandinhoko’s and Kajanai’s father), was a shaman, and was called to

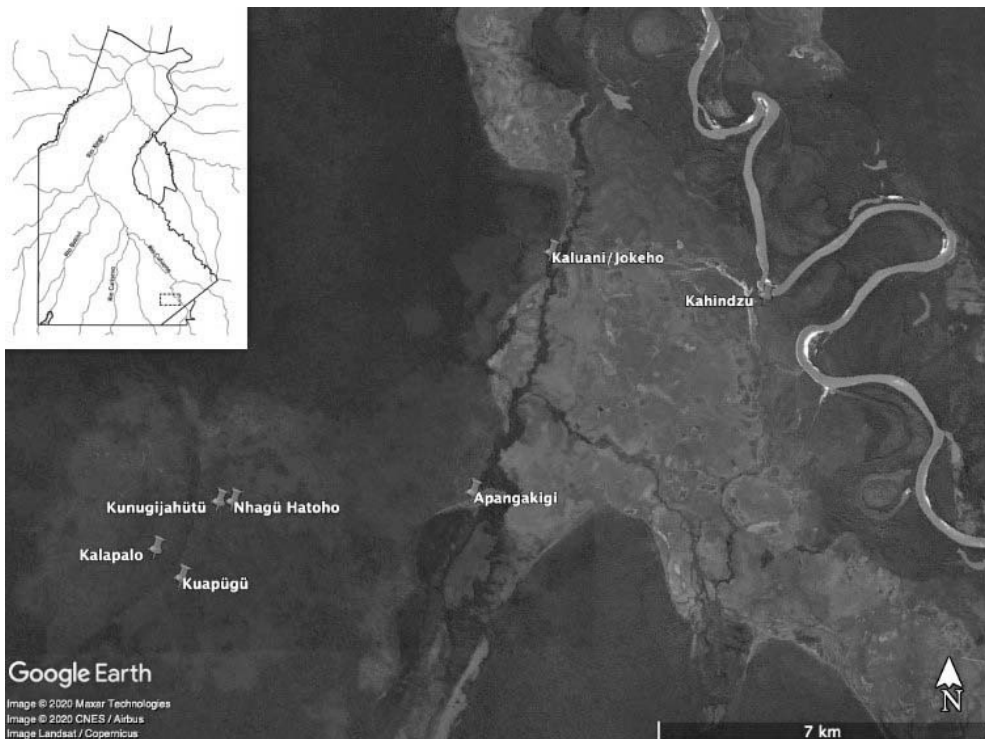


Figure 2 – The most important places visited at the west of the Culuene river.

treat Agusahi. According to Kajanai, when “Odi” (Odilon), an employee of the expedition, saw the shaman blowing tobacco over Agusahi and making suction on his body with his mouth, he got scared and gave a warning: “Flee, right now, you’re all going to die! This is measles, it’s useless trying to cure him. The disease will spread and kill you all, you must flee!”.

Kandinhoko remembers his father was the first to become sick after trying to heal Agusahi: “Because of that, he got it. That was the first time it spread, it spread to him”. Then, the disease also spread to Auma’s siblings, and quickly almost everyone was infected, resulting in many deaths: “Day after day, day after day, Kalapalo were dying here. There was a white man here, named Mosquito, day after day he dug graves, day after day digging graves, day after day tirelessly digging graves – this was how measles killed the Kalapalo!”. Kajanai showed how large collective graves were dug to receive the bodies: one for children, other for adult men, and another for adult women. Many of the dead were remembered by their names, and their positions as chiefs or wrestlers.

The high lethality of measles was attributed to witchcraft practiced by a man from another Carib-speaking group, who was jealous of their proximity to the whites and their things: “Because he got jealous, day after day the Kalapalo were dying. He was throwing his witch’s arrows at them – *tokü, tokü, tokü, tokü* – ah!, he was killing them! That’s why they were dying”. When Kajanai took us where the village’s plaza used to be, he showed where its straight path (*tanginhü*) once started, and explained the witch had buried an *agiütoho* (a powerful type of sorcery) in it, and that was why so many died. Witchcraft “kept coming” to the village through the main path and found its way to other villages. The elders noted sadly that the bones of their dead are no longer buried there: “There, where the macauba [*Acrocomia aculeata*] trees are, that’s where the graves used to be. But their bones are already under the water. The land has eroded into the river”.

The village is proudly remembered by Kajanai for its feasts:

“They danced, they used to dance a lot here, they gave feasts for their chiefs, they gave so many feasts for their chiefs when they were here! [...] Oh, here it’s where they prepared to attend feasts, right behind the men’s house. That’s why others were afraid of the Kalapalo. They prepared themselves, and that is no lie! That’s how things were here. They were the first wrestling champions, Igo, Ahugatu, Anda, Jamiku, Atahulu.”

Kajanai took a long time describing what the deceased wrestling champions and chiefs were like when alive – how Jahanaha was short, and how Kamü, Jamiku, and Anda were tall; how Atahulu had light skin, while his brother’s was darker. Contrasting with the greatness and beauty of the past – when

people feasted, wrestlers were feared, and men and women had strong and beautiful bodies –, Kajanaí emphasized how the measles epidemic was not only lethal, but also made people ugly:

“[My father’s] skin was covered in spots, it made their skin look pink. That disease gave them many lice! While your grandparents were dying, people were covering their heads with *urucum*⁷ [to prevent lice]. There were many lice on their hairs. [...] Also, it made them very thin. I caught measles, but the witchcraft hadn’t gotten to me yet, so I escaped. I was caught, and I got very thin. One of your grandparents lost all the hair on one side of his head. This disease made people ugly like that.”

That year, 114 people died – about 20% of the population of the Upper Xingu –, and the Kalapalo were the most affected, having lost almost half of their population (Heckenberger 2001). Six years later, the Xingu Indigenous Park was created as a means to protect the indigenous peoples, flora and fauna of the region, but the Kalapalo and other groups would be forced to move away from their traditional lands, left out of the park’s limits. Hagama remembers when a white man named Adriano came to talk to the chiefs and convince them to move. He talked to Tajui, the main Kunugijahütü chief, and offered him a gun for them to leave. The elders interpreted it as him trying “to buy the land”, or “to ask for the land”, and the gun was supposed to be its payment. As Kandinhoko says: “If it were today, we wouldn’t have trusted him. We were crazy, we didn’t understand the whites’ language well, we were still children. They said: ‘The whites are going to kill you with bombs!’, and that scared us”. Hagama mentions they feared being killed by the whites in revenge for the death of colonel Percy Fawcett, the British explorer who disappeared in central Brazil in 1925 and whose death was wrongfully attributed to the Kalapalo: “‘If you stay here, the whites will kill you’, people said”.

Another argument brought up by Hagama was the reunion of all villages near a healthcare center: “‘Funai will create a healthcare center’ – that’s what they said – ‘so assistance can be close to you, so you can have medicines’”. On another occasion, Hagama detailed how Adriano had brought several gifts to the chiefs, to “ask for the land” and convince them to move: milk cans, boxes of matches, soap bars, a metal pan, and a gun. To Tajui he also gave a Brazilian flag, which was put in front of his house:

“They put a Brazilian flag there, and it made him vibrate with joy. I was looking at them when I was just a child, and I thought this [pointing to a milk can] was something very valuable, but it turned out to be rubbish.

7 *Bixa orellana*.

Then they took it to the plaza, I remember that, they opened it – they found it really puzzling! – and then shut it, *pokü*. I thought it was something really important to the whites, but it was just rubbish.”

Frightened, but also seduced by industrialized objects, most agreed to move, and planned a trip to see the new place. Kandinhoko was sent by his father (who did not want to move) with chief Apiü to the place of an old Kamayurá village. The Kamayurá had offered two places for them and for the Nahukua and Matipu, who were being displaced from the Buritzal river. Because the Kamayurá chief (Takumã) was Apiü’s cousin, he let him choose first. One of the sites, Magijape, had an extensive area of fertile dark earth near the village site; Aiha, on the other hand, did not have as much dark earth and the soil was not too fertile. However, Takumã pointed out that Magijape was a dangerous place, with a lake inhabited by the hyper spotted Pike-Characin, a hyper being responsible for creating the three main lakes east of the Culuene and that can make people sick. Aiha, however, was safer, for its lake has hyper beings, but none as dangerous. Apiü decided they should move to Aiha, as even if their gardens would be far away and their manioc would not grow too much, they would be safer and close to a good fishing spot. According to Hagama:

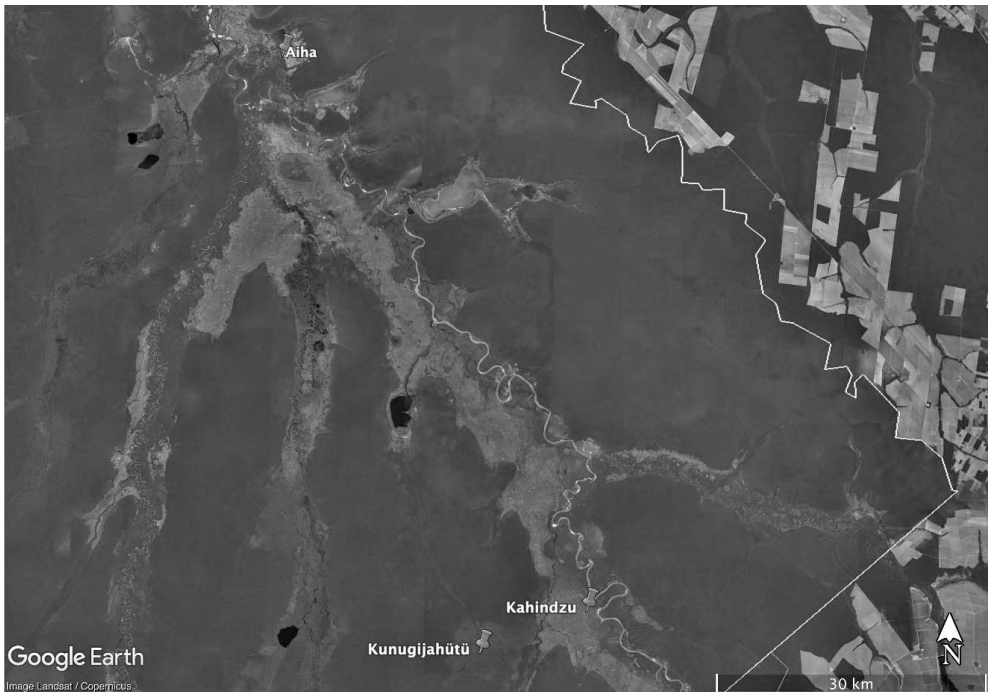


Figure 3 – Location of the old villages of Kunugijahütü and Kahindzu, and Aiha, to where the Kalapalo were transferred.

“They saw the lake there, at Aiha. There they have killed fish, they have killed peacock bass. And then they came back!: ‘There we will have food, for you see, our village is too far [from the river]. We stray too far from it to fish’. They built canoes at Kahindzu, and left: ‘And after all that, they left crying, our grandparents, our parents, uncles and aunts, they left this place. Their possessions were still here, their ceramic pots’. Kandinhoko mentions houses were abandoned intact with most of their goods inside, and after they had already moved, they came back to burn them down.

Their gardens at Aiha were new, and the first years were of food shortage. There were no *pequi* orchards there, and they had to travel to their old settlement to collect fruits in the rainy season. Many of the contemporary elders first visited the old territory accompanying their kin on those trips (see also Basso 1973), and all of them mention how their parents would cry after seeing the abandoned orchards. The Kamayurá grew angry at them. The Kalapalo say “they were jealous of their land”, and up to this day provoke the Kalapalo by saying that Aiha is not their land and asking: “Where are your ancestors buried? Are your chiefs actually buried here?”

The creation of the Xingu Indigenous Park in 1961 helped preserve part of the indigenous lands, but initially left out the whole Kalapalo territory. The reduction in the area proposed in the original project led to the forced displacement of the Kalapalo to the park’s borders, which was an ambiguous move. On the one hand, it was done to avoid possible violent contacts with colonists and to guarantee healthcare in the event of other outbreaks; on the other, such displacement – based on fear, menaces, and bribes – was lived, and it is still remembered, as a violent and painful experience. The Kalapalo were left without their lands and put in the vulnerable position of living in “the land of others”. However, soon chiefs started to be buried in Aiha and have feasts hosted for them. As a young leader once told me, “this place is ours now, and we have already honored many *caciques* here”. What roles might the dead and their memories play in place-making, and what did the separation of the living from their forbears’ lands mean for the Kalapalo?

CHIEFLY PLACES

Kandinhoko decided that at each visited place he would tell us who were its owners, and who were the chiefs buried there. By reciting villages’ and chiefs’ names, he started to create both a topographical and a sociopolitical map. When we arrived at Kahindzu, he added that we should only visit villages where true chiefs were buried. In Kalapalo storytelling, chiefs are central characters (Heckenberger 2005, 2007) and can be considered as chronotopes, *i.e.*, spatiotemporal coordinates of their territorial history and collective symbols that help shape people’s image of themselves (Ball 2018).

Kandinhoko told us which chief had a *talühe* in Kahindzu, and named other chiefs buried there. He mentioned the names of wrestling champions, who were both admired and feared by others. The same happened when we arrived in Apangakigi (or *Caramujo*, “Snail”), a village with only two households at the time. Kandinhoko recalled the chief’s and his wife’s names (Hatisagü and Hagagi), commenting on the former’s great abilities as a wrestling champion and as a hard worker. As a wrestler, he had always been one of “those who have run” (*tatsakugatinhüpe*), *i. e.*, one of the first wrestlers to be called forward by chiefs when confronting other villages. As a worker, he was known for having enormous manioc gardens, now recognized as *capoeiras*, areas of secondary vegetation grown on former manioc gardens.

After arriving at Kunugijahütü, the elders recalled a controversy regarding a movie on the history of the Xingu Indigenous Park and the Villas Boas brothers filmed in 2010, which was suggestive of the close association between the names of chiefs and places. Part of the movie was about the Kalapalo, who provided the producers with their narratives, but it was filmed with Yawalapíti actors. When news arrived that Yawalapíti actors were interpreting characters named after Kalapalo chiefs, the Kalapalo were both sad and furious, and some elders even cried. A woman angrily declared she would go to the Yawalapíti’s village to confront them: “I will go there and ask them: where are my cousins?! Where are my cousins?! If you are using my grandfather’s name, you must be my cousins!”. According to Kandinhoko, those being interpreted were chiefs who had lived (and many had also been buried) there, in Kunugijahütü. “Their graves were there”, not at the Yawalapíti’s village, and “they [the Kalapalo] are the ones who miss them”. For these reasons, the Yawalapíti could not use their names. This inadequate use of the personal names of deceased chiefs seemed to provoke an unintended, and highly undesired, spurious connection between non-kin.

A detailed memory of chiefs is also kept for older villages, like Amagü and Kuapügü. The former was located on the margins of the Buritizal river, and it was from there that a widowed man named Makala and his nephews (ZCh) moved out to form Kuapügü, the main village to which the Kalapalo attribute their collective origin. Makala became its first chief, having Kajü Ihegü, an Akuku man, as his secondary chief. After Makala died, his nephew Haja became chief, along with a Kankgagü man named Kapita. The latter would in the future form the village known as Kalapalo (its true name is Hataga Logogu, “Red Deer’s Plaza”), on the other side of Kuapügü’s bathing place. There he would share his chieftaincy with Hatisagü, who would later become the chief of Apangakigi. These men, in their respective generations, were said to “stand in front of each other” (*i. e.*, to be on an equal footing). Such duality seems to replicate itself on another scale, with the dual villages of Kuapügü and Kalapalo also “standing in front of each other”. Dual villages were apparently more com-

mon in the past among the Kuikuro (Franchetto, personal communication), and reappeared in 2016 among the Matipu (Leite 2018).

The importance of chiefs for a place was also made clear when we visited a contemporary village known as Paraíso (“Paradise”), where a small village called Jokeho once stood. According to Kandinhoko, Jokeho was not a “true village”, but just a “rubbish one” (*talokito*). There were only three houses there, and “it had no owner” (*i. e.*, it didn’t have a true chief). It was only a *hihits-ingoho*, a “family farmstead”, where kin spent time working in their gardens “but did not partake in feasts with other villages”. Accordingly, “there were no chiefs buried there”, “only rubbish people”. Kandinhoko contrasted it with the nearby village of Agikuangaku, which had a reputed chief (Kuigihe) and where many feasts were held. The same comparison was made in Apangakigi, when talking about Hatisagü. His large gardens were important for hosting great feasts, contributing to the status of the place as a “true village”, “where they hosted chiefly feasts” (*segitsundatühügüko*). It was seen as a “peer” (*tagingope*) of Agikuangaku, both of which could host interethnic feasts.

Kandinhoko and Kajanai also identified each village’s *tanginhü*, “straight path”, always adding comments about how “great” and “beautiful” they were. The *tanginhü* is a village’s main path, always wide, long, and very straight (hence its name). In a proper village, the *tanginhü* should give the visitor a direct vision of the main chief’s house, across the plaza. *Tanginhü* are built for groups to move during rituals, which means they are built by and for chiefs, who are those responsible for “taking their children” to rituals and welcoming foreign leaders and their groups. It is a connection with the Xinguno moral community, making the village a collective agent on an interethnic scale.

It is noteworthy that the graves of deceased chiefs, as well as their names and the memory of feasts given for them, are such important features for Kalapalo place-making (see also Heckenberger 2005: 242 on the Kuikuro). It seems to mark a difference between the Kalapalo and other Amerindian peoples for whom the memory of the dead is enough reason to abandon a village and not return to it. Among many Amazonian peoples, a village hardly survives the death of its founder, and places (along with their founders) must be actively forgotten (such as, for example, the Wayana and the Trio in the Guianas; *cf.* Brightman 2010). Outside the Amazon, among the Tupinambá of Olivença in Northeastern Brazil, settlements tend to be abandoned when its owner(s) dies, triggering “prospective movements in which new kin-based settlements are founded and the memory of death is left behind” (Viegas 2016: 251).

Among the Kalapalo, chiefs are the “base” or “trunk” sustaining life in the village. They support the community’s growth over generations. Part of this process is the ritual of remembering deceased chiefs, who are regionally acknowledged as such and ritually compared to the mythical woman who gave birth to the Sun and the Moon, creators of humanity. The soul of the deceased

is separated from the living, and his or her living kin are shown as his or her “substitutes” or “shadows/images”, and, at the same time, as the “body of the people”, *uguketihü* (Guerreiro 2015). “Substitution” here does not mean linear descent, but the recreation of chiefs based on an archetype: the deceased are modeled after a mythical ancestor, and the living after the deceased. In this way, the Kalapalo both create a divide between the living and the dead, but still keep their dead’s memory alive in their substitutes. An image of the continuity of a people through time may be achieved through this, which holds particular significance in the Xinguano multiethnic context: by keeping alive the memory of those who supported the community’s continuous (and emplaced) growth, the Kalapalo support the means to continually differentiate themselves from their neighbors, who remember other chiefs, from other places – that is, who lived, died and were celebrated elsewhere.

PLACES OF KINSHIP

In the narrative about Kuapügü, an ordered series of places connecting the Amagü village to the new site is repeated five times, depicting movements from both directions: Ahangi Hügi (“Chigoe’s Arrow”), Ogoko (no translation), Tahugape (“Old *Capoeira*”), Takeinhü (“Curved Path”), Eüē Akegü (“White Clay’s Curve”), and Hotogi (a water stream and Kuapügü’s bathing place). All those remembered as the founding chiefs of a village are also remembered as migrants – every village starts with a rupture elsewhere. Every *tanginhü*, despite its relation to the central plaza, chiefs, and ritual life, is crisscrossed by paths leading to gardens, bathing spots and *pequi* orchards. One way the Kalapalo talk about their lands is as *kutaüpüaōko engikagüpe*, “our grandparents’ former pathways”. They translate *engikagüpe* as “region” or “where they moved/walked”, and *engika* refers to the set of pathways surrounding a village. While walking in the forest, they would frequently comment that places were *takataki gele*, “still open paths” (old paths still visible in the landscape), and that was reason to reinforce that “*ukuge engü baha igei*”, “it is indeed people’s possession”. Dwelling produces walking paths, and villages, as dwelling places, are where lines/paths connect with each other, keeping a constant flow with many other places and their inhabitants, humans or otherwise. This section discusses how selves are entangled in places, and, in particular, how places embody kinship relations and become active elements of the kinship process.

Many places are known as *itseke ekugu*, “places of hyper beings”, including small mounds on the ground, trees, and old tree stumps. Accidentally kicking a mound may trigger the anger of its *itseke*. However, contrasting with rivers, whose parts are almost always named after hyper beings, these are not the main sources of place names on land. Many express the abundance of plants or animals, suffixing the species name with the locative *-hütü* (or its

allomorph *-mbütü*), resulting in names like Kunugijahütü (“Place of *Kunugija* Shrubs”), Akähütü (“Place of *Macuco* Birds”), Angambütü (“Place of Genipapo”), Ahuahütü (“Place of Pumas”), or Sogokohütü (“Place of Hory Foxes”).

Other names are formed by an action followed by the instrumental suffix *-toho* (Santos 2007), resulting in names like: Jali Itsaketoho, “To Cut Tapirs”, where a man is said to have killed a tapir with an axe; Imühisoho, “To Show one’s Face”, where men would stay hidden in the bushes with only their faces out so they could look at women who went bathing; and Nhagü Hatoho, “To Make Manioc Graters”. Paths themselves are also named, usually according to their form, location, destination, or those who used it the most. Hence, there are many paths called Takeinhü, “Curved Bordering Path”, or Ogi Akegü, “Savannah’s Border”. Other examples are Akähütü Gitagü, “Straight Path to the Place of Solitary Tinamous”, or Kuikuro Entatühügü Hagitói, “From Where the Kuikuro Came as Guests”. Place names may also allude indirectly to diverse activities, highlighting objects or features of the landscape associated with them: Haho, “Hanger of Fiber Backpacks” (wrestlers used to put their possessions in fiber backpacks – called *ha* – when taking them to rituals; the place called Haho is where they used to hang their *ha* while preparing themselves); Uagi Ohinhagü, “The Jatoba’s Shade”, where the Kalapalo would rest or sleep when returning from or going fishing. While rivers are typically named after hyper beings, alluding to a mythical spacetime, places on land tend to get their names mostly from the interaction of humans with the landscape.

Most documented placenames were of *pequi* orchards. These places are usually named after features of the landscape, events or activities like: Kündüpe, “Former Dense Bushes”; Tigite, “Peanuts”; Heulugi Etsiniketoho (“Made for the Beetle to Beat one’s Forehead”); Agaho, “Place of the Aga Festival”. They are also usually called “someone’s *uika*”, “someone’s *pequi* orchard”. Since *pequi* trees do not form natural orchards, their existence is a sign that a place is owned. Orchards have a special temporality, because many are planted by someone for his or her descendants. A *uika* may be named after the one who planted it, but also after his/her descendants who collect its first fruits. Orchards are planted in abandoned manioc gardens, and are a register of an enduring form of personal ownership of places, which is a common idea regarding fruit trees present among other peoples, like the Tupinambá (Viegas 2016), or peasant groups (Micaelo 2014). Everywhere we stopped to drink *pequi* porridge (*indzene*), the elders stressed we were actually drinking “our [their] grandparent’s *indzene*”. Hagama, when explaining why he had the right to call Apangakigi his land, argued that he and his children were “still drinking our grandparents’ porridge, still eating our grandparents’ fruits”. Feeding is key to the production of kinship, and the elders’ views on *pequi* orchards suggest they create longstanding intergenerational feeding chains, for the *pequi* one eats or drinks today is from the same trees that fed their ancestors – it is still their *pequi*. By embodying

past kinship relations (*pequi* is planted for close kin), they also foster the production of new ones in the future.

Other elements of the landscape also embody kinship relations and engage in their production. At Kuapügü, we found large areas with bamboo for making arrows. That was the defining characteristic of the old village plaza, and Kandinhoko identified three groups of arrows belonging to different men. Hagemma stressed how he was “still using the same arrows” as his grandfather, and how he frequently sent to Kandinhoko “his father’s arrows”. They commented that other ancient villages could also be identified by bamboo plantations or mangaba fruit (*Hancornia speciosa*) orchards. According to them, people plant these in former plazas “to leave it for their grandchildren”. If *pequi* orchards mark a village’s old *engika* (set of paths), these plants may mark its old plaza, and similarly to what happens with *pequi* orchards, bamboo and mangaba fruits keep flowing among kin from one generation to another, connecting old dwelling places to new ones through their inhabitants.

Another way a place may be said to be part of the process of kinship relates to its connection to people’s bodies. On the one hand, it may directly carry the effects of bodily practices, as is the case of the great copaiba (*Copaifera sp.*) tree where one can see the holes made by wrestlers to extract its oil, after which the place where it stands is named (“Tali”). On the other, several places evoke specific bodily practices and qualities. The old bathing place at Kunugijahütü is remembered as the place used by young men to provoke vomit with emetics. Another bathing place nearby is called Matso Nakagagü (“Bathing Place of Menstruating Women”), where women in their periods bathed with their small children, away from wrestlers who could be negatively affected by their blood. When we crossed a water stream near Apangakigi, Kandinhoko noticed the place was the ancestors’ *etimbatohokope*, “former place for drinking”, to which Hagemma added that it is now his family’s *etimbatoho*. People may also “disperse” throughout the landscape due to supernatural events. When someone’s soul is taken by a hyper being, it will inhabit this being’s supernatural village in the landscape. For this reason, some people are said to have houses, and kin, inside trees, old tree stumps, mounds, or at the bottom of lakes. These people may visit their supernatural villages in life, but after they die, their soul-shadow will dwell in the hyper being’s village permanently.

Everywhere we went, the elders stressed how beautiful those places were in the past, regretting the decay of *pequi* trees and the growth of the vegetation. This interest in the beauty of places should not be seen as being merely motivated by aesthetic contemplation. As is well known, throughout the Amazon aesthetics are associated with morality, and are a sign of the different capacities and qualities of persons and social relations (Overing 1991). In the Upper Xingu, beauty is a central value, and in contemporary villages the concern with beauty is very high: houses must have a proper architecture, and their

thatched roofs should be carefully repaired before an inter village ritual can be hosted; the main path to the village and the main path to the bathing place must be kept open and clear; the plaza and gardens must be kept free of herbs. Those are seen as signs of how caring the villagers are, and how willing they are to work together and build a beautiful collective living place. The beauty of contemporary places is valued as a sign of the proper practice of Xinguano ethos, and perhaps the interest in noting the beauty of ancient places can be seen as comments on how caring and considerate their deceased kin were.

Walking through places full of memories of deceased kin caused the elders to speak in a deeply emotional manner. Hagemá repeatedly stressed that he cried when he returned, missing his uncles and aunts. He told us about how when he came to clear his gardens, he found a large area of dark earth, but decided not to burn the vegetation because, since it was “his grandparents’ land”, it made him *otonupi*. To be *otonupi* is to “to feel *otonu*”, which the Kalapalo translate in Portuguese as *saudade* – the melancholic feeling of missing someone, something, or somewhere. His feelings towards deceased kin evoked by the landscape made him decide to preserve the area, “so my children and grandchildren know this is our grandparents’ land”. It was something “given to him”, and for that reason he was now “shaking the land to harvest its fruits”. He would “pass it on to his grandchildren”, so they could do the same. Kandinhoko also mentioned several times how he misses the place: “Foreign lands, ah, that’s where we are living, but these are our grandparents’ lands. This makes me miss them. For me, they are something cherished and missed. My thoughts keep coming to it, my thoughts keep coming to it... that’s it, how my thoughts come here”. *Otonu* is not just an individual mental state, but a bodily condition that opens the subject to the world independently of her will or control. Prolonged *otonu* may leave one vulnerable to be taken by hyper beings and fall seriously ill; being *otonupi* may lead the soul to the missed place in dreams, and prolonged trips may expose the person to the hyper beings who dwell there. *Otonu* is a bodily and affective disposition which produces connections to someone or somewhere else, and thus, is an important element connecting people and places – although its effects, in excess, may be negative.

Place names shed light on the several entanglements between land and social life. According to Souza (2018), this could even imply that toponyms may be seen as analogous to kinship terms. Memories evoked by direct experiences with the places also reveal that the landscape is the product of kinship, and that it is also an agent of kinship itself, mediating connections between people through the land, its products and affects.

CONCLUSION: LAND, KINSHIP, AND LAND OWNERSHIP

We have seen ways in which land, history and kinship are entangled in Kalapalo narratives and testimonies. Former villages are remembered by their prominent chiefs and wrestlers, and by the greatness of their feasts. Such villages are “reference nodes” in a wide network of places and persons, simultaneously producing difference and collective identities. Villages are also crisscrossed by a multitude of pathways leading to former orchards, gardens, lakes and rivers, which are related to kinship processes: orchards and former gardens connect people to their deceased kin, who “left” those places to be “looked after” and “harvested” by their kin; pathways and other landscape marks materialize past actions, and connect people in the present with such past; places inhabited by hyper beings may be inhabited by human souls of people attacked by those beings, who may help to bridge the contemporary relations between humans and the *itseke*.

The Kalapalo call the places we visited in many ways, one of them being “our grandparents’ former land” (*apitsiko ngongogupe*). What they translate as “land” is *ngongo*, referring to the soil or the earth. This is not, however, an “extensive” concept, since *ngongo* itself has no strict boundaries, which seems to be the norm in Amazonian territorialities. As Davi Kopenawa argues, territorial boundaries are an invention of the whites that was only made possible by the invention of “land drawings”, or maps, necessary for the land to be “cut” or “divided” (Kopenawa and Albert 2015). Or, as discussed by Echeverri (2005: 234), we are not dealing with an areolar notion of the territory, that is, the territory as a political-administrative zone. On the contrary, a non-areolar notion of the territory conceives it as indivisible, relational and inseparable from the life-process it hosts.

Nonetheless, places are always someone’s (a hyper being, a group or a person) *engü*, “possession”, a term also applicable to objects and knowledge. Possession, or ownership, does not mean exclusive appropriation. As it happens with other ownership relations in the Amazon, to “own” something (or someone) is tantamount to create it, originate it, take care of it – but also, inversely, to be defined by what is owned (Fausto 2008). Ownership can be, indeed, a relation of mutual creativity (Brightman 2010). For the Kalapalo, on the one hand, those who own the land are those who planted gardens and orchards, walked, encountered others (spirits, enemies, or guests), built houses and raised children there. For this reason, a possessed land is usually referred to by the nominalized form of several activities. When talking among themselves or telling stories, the Kalapalo call the land their grandparents’ *anhapügü*, “finished pathways”; *ihülundatühügü*, “their finished walkings”; *tegatühügü*, “finished continuance”; *tengikogupe uhisatühügü*, “finished search for their possessions” (snails); *engikapügü*, “finished set of pathways”. What they call “their land”

are these activities in emplaced form, the embodiment of their lives on earth. On the other hand, land has a creativity of itself (Strathern 2009): whatever exists in a place depends on the actions of hyper beings who dwell there, and as places embody others and their actions, they invite people to act in specific ways. A group “possesses” the land it creates as its dwelling space, but it is also created as a group (Leach 2004), recognized by others in the Upper Xingu, as the owners of a specific place. Land is a relational entity that emerges from dwelling, and so are groups which come into being as place-owners.

If the land can be seen as something “passed on” to others who may “hold onto it”, and who will in the future “hand it down” to their children and grandchildren, an association with gift exchange is tempting (Strathern 1988). The land appears as a product of the actions of others and, as such, is part of them. Land is thus inalienable, and to lose it is the same as losing a kinsperson. Perceiving kinship within the land is a highly affective experience, as is made clear by the repetition of discourses of nostalgia – not only by elders, but also by young people who “dream” about returning. Marks left throughout the landscape make people want to keep it as it is, to return to see it, and invite them to think about their kin, their lives, and to compare past and present. Relationships between deceased and living kin are mediated by the land, making it part of the kinship process. Affects are a key aspect of that, instigating new connections with the land, and, consequentially, with other kin through the land. This creates a dynamic between land and people in which the former alternates as the index of someone’s past action and the cause of someone else’s future action (like persons and things in gift economies).

Finally, it is worth making some considerations on maps and mapping. Mapping the territory and sharing its narratives was a performance of sorts: the land was not “described” (or “represented”) in the process, but presented. It was being presented to young Kalapalo researchers who had never had first-hand knowledge of the traditional territory, and to a future audience of young Kalapalo men and women who would see the results of the documentation project in the form of maps and films. The combination of walking, mapping, storytelling, and video recording was the Kalapalo’s attempt to enact relations that connect this audience, through the narrators, to the land. The political context of threats to the territory demanded, and still demands, not only an abstract knowledge of the old territory, but an actual engagement with it. It is not uncommon that the mapping of indigenous lands ends up converting their understanding of the territory into a Western standardized language with little meaning for indigenous peoples (Chapin, Lamb and Threlkeld 2005: 631). However, while the Kalapalo acknowledged that typical non-indigenous mapping techniques were mainly going to be useful in their relations with the whites, they were clearly seeking means to depict their traditional lands in a culturally meaningful way for themselves. For instance,

tracing detailed relationships between the living and the landscape by means of those who imprinted their marks on it was a huge part of the process. The Kalapalo filmmakers also intentionally recorded several minutes of pure walking, as an explicit attempt to capture how their ancestors moved through the land, always walking in line, following an elder leader: “That’s how we go from one place to another”, one of the filmmakers told me trying to explain why they were shooting all those walking scenes. Rather than representing the land statically on a map, they tried to recreate movements that characterize life there. This invites us to look at maps not only as technical objects – even if we already recognize their political nature (Elwood and Cope 2011), but as something analogous to ritual artefacts, able of acting upon persons and relations. Even if returning to the old territory is unlikely for most of them, mapping it was a means of calling others to visit those places and “take care of them”, to reactivate the land’s potential by making the relations that created it, and that it creates, visible (“illuminating the land”, as the elders repeated).

The Kalapalo concept of land (*ngongo*) is inseparable from their *ügühütu*, their “mode of being in the world”. It comprises a complex topography, but one that does not sustain an opposition between “representational” and “non-representational” space (Viegas 2012). The topography we documented is an existential topography (Glowczewski 2015), a register of lines of life entangled through the land, and a resource of new life paths to be taken. This is of course an issue for mapping and cultural documentation, since maps and archives, in trying to represent a non-representational territory, tend to “flatten” this ontological density (Glowczewski 2001). Nonetheless, this draws attention to the process of mapping and documenting, as it may lead to an affectively charged relational context that, as is characteristic of ritual action (Houseman and Severi 1998), is potentially able to (re)create social relations with the territory. Representation becomes presentation, and through performance, some aspects of the territory’s ontological density may be kept, quite literally, alive.

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