

TRADITION ITAPARICA

WESLEY HURT

Indiana University

Since 1967 when Calderon described the Tradition Itaparica on the basis of sites in rockshelters and in open areas, along the São Francisco River, from Petrolina to Cabrobó, Pernambuco (1967), there have been other sites and phases assigned to this tradition. Nevertheless, this tradition has not been described adequately in the sense of the original meaning of this unit of classification nor has attention been called to the traits that set it apart from other already defined traditions in Brazil.

According to Wiley and Phillips the word "tradition" originated in the attempts made by Peruvian archaeologists to characterize pottery styles that spread rapidly over a wide area as contrasted to "horizon which were confined to a smaller regions but which continued over a long time period" (1958:34-43). The concept of a "tradition" is fluid since it does not define a fixed magnitude of time or a specific degree of differences that separate a single tradition from another in the same region. In this paper the Itaparica Tradition will be defined on the of the common cultural traits of the phases and sites that have already been assigned to this classificatory unit and the differences from other related traditions in Brazil will be considered.

As yet the origin of the Itaparica Tradition is unknown but sites extend over a wide area in Goiás, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco and probably Bahia. In the Lago da Casa site, Município de Bom Jardim, Pernambuco, Laroche states that found artifacts in association with bones of extinct animals, such as elephants (1981:45). These remains lay in conglome-

rates that were formerly the bed of an extinct Pleistocene lake, but Laroche does not describe the details of this find nor does he assign it to the Itaparica Tradition. In the same area, at the open site of Chã de Caboclo B.J.10, he encountered a stone industry and assigned it to the Sub-tradition Bom Jardim (1980). The lowermost cultural deposits produced a C14 date of ca.11.000 years. Artifacts include unifaced flake choppers, possibly burins, fan-shaped scrapers, ovoid scrapers that have been flaked over the entire upper surface with pressure-retouched edge, elongated terminal end scrapers of the type known as "lesmas" and perforator unifacial, square-stemmed unifacial projectile points, pentagon-shaped projectile points and triangular-shaped points resembling mousterian and levallois point illustrated by Bordes (1979, planche 11,43).

Laroche also found evidence of cultural change in the estrata of the Bom Jardim Sub-tradition at the Chã do Caboclo site (ca.11.000-2.000 B.P.; *ibid* 1980-81). There was a shift in the tools made from thin flakes, often "microlítico" in size to those of larger tools made of thicker flakes to those made of grounded or pounded cores and polyhedral flakes to a terminal phase where the latter types of tools become less common. At about 5.000 B.P. a new stone industry entered the region, designated as the Fase Passansuga, characterized by artifacts made from stone blocks, flaked on one side, with the edges ground. Ground stone tools are also characteristic of the Fase Paquevira that appeared at the Chã do Caboclo site at about 4.600 B.P. Common tools of the latter phase are axes, squakers, pitted hammerstones ("quebra-cocos"), picks and net weights, as well as bifaced tools. Apparently ceramics entered the region at about 2.800 B.P.

The oldest dates of the Bom Jardim Sub-tradition are similar to the oldest dates of the Paranaíba Phase of Goiás (10.800-9.000 B.P.), also assigned to the Itaparica Tradition by Schmitz (1980). Schmitz reconstructs the climate of the region in this time period on the basis of changing positions in the drip line of the Rockshelter Go-Ja-01, as a rapidly fluctuating rainfall regime with five short wet periods and five dry episodes, although the whole trend was toward warmer climate. The vegetation may originally have been of the "caatinga" type but through time the "cerrados" increased.

The tools of the Paranaíba Phase represent those of a hunting culture and include a wide variety of scrapers and knives and with the exception of a few bi-faced choppers, the stone instruments are all unifaced. A diagnostic tool is the

end scraper made from a blade or an elongated flakes that has the base ground for insertion in a bone handle. These "lesmas" are also characteristic of the Bom Jardim Sub-tradition. Unique, however, are bone projectile points. Kitchen refuse indicates that modern fauna, such as deer were hunted. Another site in Goiás, of the Parnaíba Tradition is the Abrigo GO-Ja-01 (Barbosa, Schmitz and Fernandez, 1978). A similar stone industry was encountered in Bed IV, abrigo da Lapa da Foice II, northern Minas Gerais that produced radiocarbon dates of ca. 8.000 — 4.255 B.P. (Dias de Carvalho, 1982).

In the rockshelters of southeast Goiás, a cultural complex, designated by Schmitz as the Serranópolis Phase, appeared but was sufficiently different that it should not be considered as part of Itaparica Tradition. Kitchen refuse indicated that fish, mollusks and reptiles were the main source of food in addition to wild plants. This economy is reflected in fish-hooks made of bone and mollusk shell, grinding stones and "quebracocos".

Calderon on the basis of his work in the lower middle São Francisco River valley, refers to two traditions "Indústria de Lascas" and "Indústria de Seixos", although it is not clear if he meant to include the latter as part of the Itaparica Tradition (1983). The type site for the Itaparica Tradition, is the Gruta do Padre near Petrolândia, Pernambuco. In this rockshelter there were four distinct stratigraphic units, with the lower three assigned to the "Indústria de Lascas" and the uppermost to the "Indústria de Seixos". The lowermost level produced a C14 date of ca. 7560 B.P. and the uppermost a beginning date of ca. 2300 B.P. The primary raw material was a cobble made from milky quartz, although there were several tools made from cherts and chalcedonies. In the lowermost level only 38,2 percent of the flakes were modified and these were associated with a few bifaced choppers. In level 3 there were a larger amount of well-fabricated scrapers and knives. Among the latter was an elongated, ovoid scraper with a carinated longitudinal cross section that were completely flaked all over the dorsal surface. These same types of scrapers, usually made of exotic materials, such as cherts and chalcedonies, also characterized the Sub-tradition Bom Jardim. The uppermost level, those of the "Tradição de Seixos" has many of the same tools but also a greater number of core tools made from quartz cobbles. In the upper levels were cremated human burials covered with stone slabs. Ceramics apparently entered the Gruta do Padre at the termination of the cultural

deposits. Gabriela Martin found an artifact in the Gruta do Padre that appeared to be a projectile point of the Bom Jardim type.*

Conclusions

In examining the sites, phases, and sub-traditions already assigned to the Itaparica Tradition, the following characteristics are present on all the sites and thus should be considered in the definition of this tradition:

- 1) Time period from 11.000-2.000 B.P.
- 2) Tools are primarily unifaced, but bifaced instruments occur in small quantities.
- 3) Tools are primarily made from flakes but core choppers are present in small numbers.
- 4) The primary economic activity appears to have been living animals.

On the other hand:

- 1) unifaced pre-stone projectile points appear to have been confined to the Bom Jardim Sub-tradition while bone projectile points to the Paranaíba Phase.
- 2) "Lesmas" are confined to the Paranaíba Phase and the Bom Jardim Sub-tradition.**
- 3) Unifaced scrapers, flaked entirely over the dorsal surface and which have a "keled" or carinated longitudinal cross section are confined to the Bom Jardim Sub-tradition and the Gruta do Padre Site.

* A Gruta do Padre não existe mais, pois foi coberta pelas águas do lago artificial de Itaparica, em maio de 1988. Em 1987, foram realizadas as últimas escavações arqueológicas nesse abrigo depois de retirados dois grandes blocos de pedra que permitiram escavar uma área ainda intacta que proporcionou abundante material ósseo, cerâmico e lítico, além de carvão e enxoval funerário. Os resultados finais dessa escavação serão publicados no próximo número de **CLIO — Série Arqueológica**, por Gabriela Martin e Jacionira Rocha.

** Nas escavações citadas foram também achadas lesmas de calcedônia de finíssimo acabamento. (NOTA DO EDITOR.)