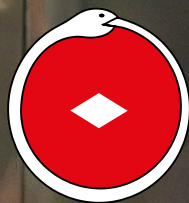
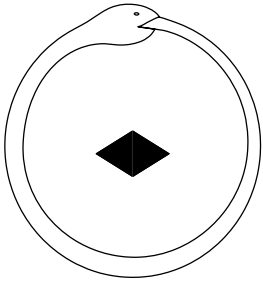


TIDY UP THE HOUSE,
I'M ON MY WAY
Glicéria Tupinambá



notebooks
SELVAGEM





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I'M ON MY WAY
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This notebook was elaborated from Glicéria Tupinambá's talk, recorded on 23 October 2024, in front of the Tupinambá Mantle housed in the technical reserve of the National Museum of Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro. Glicéria Tupinambá's video can be accessed [here](#).

I want to deeply thank you for the opportunity to be here, once again, talking to people; for people lending their ears to listen to me. To listen to someone who came from the Indigenous village, who was brought to life by the hands of a midwife at the foot of the hill and received a mission, without even knowing she had been chosen for it. But from the beginning, from the choice of my name, one could have a sense, right? For being named Glicéria. Glicéria was once eaten by the jaguar in the village of Nossa Senhora da Escada, in Olivença. My grandfather would ask my mother, every single time, that when the time came for her to have a daughter, she should name her Glicéria. My grandfather was a shaman and made his passage to the realm of the enchanted ones. And I never understood why my great-uncle Alfredo would keep telling me everyday what my name meant. And mother would tell me that I was the leftover of the jaguar, what remained of the jaguar; only the name Glicéria.

I didn't realise how great a mission it was to walk the path of my ancestors. To follow a rite I had never even heard of, that no one had taught me or educated me for in the places I had been, above all within formal education, where an object is just an object. From my research, I came to understand that the "universal" European culture – in which people created this "white" category – does not include the culture of my people. It doesn't include. It lacks the dimension, the words, the vocabulary, and even the framework to justify or explain another culture, another way of being: a way of existing and being oneself attuned to nature, with their own form of mediation and communication.

In light of such a deep search, of being in contact with the Mantles, and having those Mantles speak to me and give me direction, guiding me toward something more, things began to surface more and more each day. But then, people had some reservations, some reluctance: “We shouldn’t read the travelers”. I said: “I want to read them. What do they say about me? About my people? What’s in there that’s so serious, so bad, that I shouldn’t have access to?” Then, I went – and I gained access. And what did I find? I found women, the magés, who are there to carry out the rituals. Rituals that search for spirits. Spirits that come to dwell inside a borduna [Indigenous cudgel]. They will give it agency; it has its own exclusive hut, around which women and children dance.



Scene of the New World, woodcut by Johann Froschauer, made around the year of 1505. Source: personal archive.

I also discovered the manufacture of a *Maraca* [Indigenous rattle]. It’s basically a branch. In his description, Hans Staden¹ compares it to

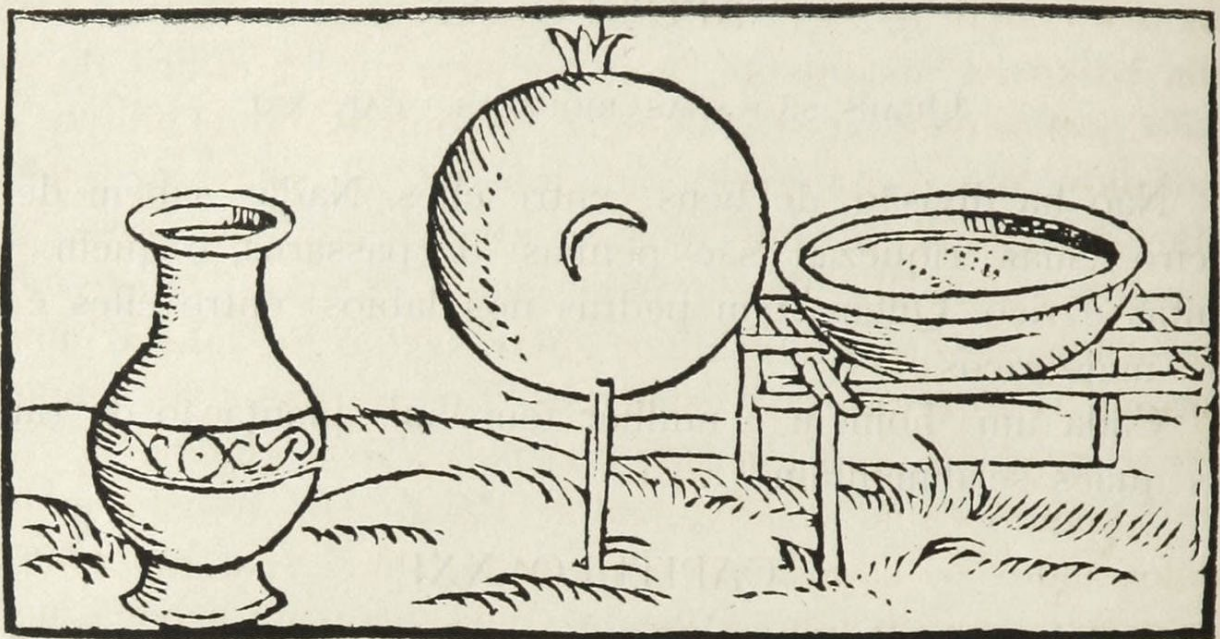
1. Hans Staden was a German gunsmith who made two trips to Brazil between 1547 and 1555. Mistaken for a Portuguese man, he spent nine months in captivity among the Tupinambá. From this experience, Hans Staden wrote the book *Duas viagens ao Brasil* [*Hans Staden’s True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*], published in Brazilian Portuguese by Dantes Editora in 2004.

a pumpkin. (It's not so far off – they're from the same family.) He details the procedure of crafting this instrument, a rattle, as he describes it. Suddenly, this rattle is taken to a hut, along with the shaman. And then, everything that the shaman commands, the warriors so do, during this ritual in which the hut is emptied, and neither women nor children are allowed, only men. There, the *Maraca* is stuck into the ground. Afterwards, it is ornamented; painted red and adorned with feathers. Then, the shaman arrives with his pipe and smudges all of them with smoke, chanting words to call the spirit to settle inside the gourd. And, from that moment on, that gourd will have the power of speech.

CAPITULO XXII

EM QUE ACREDITAM. CAP. XXIII.

Elles acreditam em uma cousa que cresce como uma abobora e do tamanho de um meio pote. E' oco por dentro e lhe atravessam um páo. Fazem, depois, um buraco em forma de boquinha e põem pedrinhas dentro, para que chocalhe. Chocalham com isto quando cantam e dansam, e chamam-no *Tammaraka*. E da forma como segue:



Hans Staden: suas viagens e captiveiro entre os selvagens do Brasil [Hans Staden: his voyages and captivity among the savages of Brazil]. Source: Guita and José Mindlin Brasileira Library

Has Staden is so astonished because he, too, is participating in that ritual and going through the same process, following the shaman's orders. And he was a prisoner. Then, he leaves the hut, because he is skeptical. He is saying that he only believes in his God, and that our God was just a gourd – was materialised inside a gourd. These are my Gods. They aren't crafted, ok? They aren't in a frame. They exist in a spirit that settles there and carries a will. And you must have the ears to listen to the will of that spirit. That spirit joined with the gourd is named *Itamaracá* due to the stones and the spirits of the rocks inside the gourd. An *Itamaracá* spirit, *Tamaracá*, who will speak to his bearer, the warrior. And from that day on, this warrior will treat that *Maraca* as his son. That *Maraca* is the son of the bearer. The warrior will care for it like a son and will listen to him. It is funny that him (Hans Staden) even draws the clay bowl, draws the pot and the *Maraca* stuck into the ground. This is the setting where food is offered to the spirit of the *Maraca*. It was all there written, drawn. I didn't know that. I didn't know.

I was in such agony, such a severe cosmoagony, trying to explain to people that the Mantle speaks to me. How to explain to other people, get close to them, to find words, mechanisms... A way to explain that the Mantle speaks? There is no way to do that within white people's culture. Because the Mantle is seen as an object. But not in my culture. We turn an object into a being; a being who speaks. And the Mantle becomes a child. It changes the degree of relatedness. I found something that was left spoken, written in the language of the other, but the one who did all of this, all this scene, was a shaman. And that suits me, that fulfills me. And I can say that the *Tupinambá* Mantle has agency. She (the Mantle) lived through ritual. That's why she has this spirituality. She has a cultural code of communication, and only her people can hear her. So, I don't know if the language of the other is enough to grasp this sense that my culture goes beyond what can be explained; beyond what is seen as an object to be used. When you have the Mantle on, you become a bird. I always speak of the ritual. The Mantle brought me the ritual of a big bird.

Because this weave, its backside, when I asked... This was the first Mantle I asked to see from the back, and the people authorised and

brought me the backside of the Mantle. The other Mantles, which are a bit decayed, apparently show their weave, but the weave is at rest, so we cannot really see the details of the diamond shapes. As she is at rest, we can't see them. But, in some photos exhibited of tensioned Mantles, the diamond shapes are visible. And they have a line crossing through them, dividing the diamonds into triangles. This image is something I was born with. I grew up with it and I lived with it, as I saw my great-aunties weaving the *jereré*. The *jereré* is a weave, made with cord and needle, and it's a circular fishing tool. When we were children, we used it a lot to fish in small rivers, the *igarapés*, and we would catch a lot of small fish to eat with it. I lived it, I grew up with that weave. So, for me, that's in my DNA.

Then, I am around this weave, and the Mantle says: "The Mantle is feminine. The Mantle is worn by women". Now, how do I prove this? If no one has ever seen this Mantle being worn except through misappropriation and appropriation of our Mantle by people in Europe, by their kings and queens, or by the carnivals of the Americas? That's when she commands: "You are on the right path and will figure it out". When I arrive in Versailles, I find myself close to the king's throne, and there's a fresco on the ceiling. There, I see a woman wearing the Mantle, with a bow, an arrow, a *borduna*, a spear, and an alligator. (Even though the alligator has the face of a dog – I think that part was due to the painter's limitations.) But there's a Mantle there, and I get to identify the Mantle, to identify the woman. These are two components that don't vary. So, what the Mantle said to me, that she was worn by women: It was right there. Then, I continued this search to see these women, until I found the map of Brazil: "Atlantic France".

There were a lot of things there. There was this experienced historian there informing the travelers, explaining all the drawings, all the details in the compositions, and then, there was a woman there, in the middle. And I said: "What about this woman?" He: "No, this is not a woman". I said: "No, this is a woman here". In that book, the map was made by hand. The first one is an original copy, which was on display at the museum (the Military Museum) during an exhibition about religion. (Wars and riots, religion, or something like this was the theme of that exhibition in 2023.) I was invited to visit, and I saw it. I said: "No, there is a woman".



Cosmographie universelle, selon les navigateurs tant anciens que modernes / par Guillaume Le Testu, pillote en la mer du Ponent, de la ville francoyse de Grâce [Universal cosmography, according to the old and modern navigators / by Guillaume Le Testu, pilot on the Sunset Sea, from the French city of Grâce.] Le Testu, Guillaume (1509-1572).

Cartographer. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8447838j/f96.item#>

I was distressed. So, I went to uncle Google and downloaded that map in the highest resolution I could find. Then I had it cropped, and extracted that woman from it.



There is a woman wearing the Mantle, holding a cross in one hand and a Maraca in the other. She is wearing a colourful Mantle. And I looked and thought: “But colourful? Where did all these colours come from?” It was due to the painter’s limitations as well. He was trying to depict the Parrot feathers. Then I said: “It’s average, but he is entitled to it. Art allows for these arbitrations”. He tried really hard to represent that Mantle, which was made of Parrot feathers. If you know Parrots well, you know they have various textures, various layers, various shades of green – greens that are sort of blueish. All of that is referenced there, and you can also see details in red. And there are lighter greens, with shading. So, each body part has its own colouring. People say that the red Mantle – the extinct Mantle – can only be made from *Guará* [Scarlet ibis] feathers. Nevertheless, in these engravings, where I conduct this archaeology of research, I keep finding these women. Still, they told me those women are just random. That those women were there only because someone thought this would look nice; that it would be interesting, like, “I’ll do something different and put a woman here”. I said: “No”. There is something much deeper in these women that history hasn’t told us yet. That history didn’t allow it to be told, because things were seen through the patriarchal lens – a view that mostly accessed the male places. Where was Hans Staden? Sitting in the circle of whom? In the circle of men. He was treated as a prisoner, yet at the moment he receives the *canitar*² and the rattle, he is conducted to the patio, to dance in the yard. It was the women who taught him how to dance, even though his leg was injured (according to him). Still, he is portrayed here in this image, that describes his experience.

Then, I went searching for these women. What was their role? Where did they disappear? Suddenly, a group of women is revealed, but as time goes by, they are forgotten. They vanish. The group of women is no longer there. It’s just a “random” woman now. So, we lose the strength of the group, of the collective. I found *Poçanga-iguara* – who was *Moçanga-iguara* – in the writings of Jean de Léry³. The person who

2. Plume: an adornment made of feathers.

3. Jean de Léry (1534-1611) was a French pastor and writer. He authored *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, a diary that recounts his 1556 trip to Brazil (then known as Antarctic France) and his encounters with the *Tupinambá* Indigenous people.

speaks about her is the one he's in a dialogue with in a colloquium, right? They were talking about the main leaderships – the main leaders of their people. The *cacique* said: “There is a woman, *Moçanga-iguara*, guardian of the medicines, who receives spirits”. He then describes her briefly. So it's not the other speaking about the women. It's my people speaking to the other about who these women are, and acknowledging them as leaders. Acknowledging that they have power. That they weren't subordinates, but people who made a difference in society, among their people.

So, a Mantle survives today and returns, but people understand things differently, taking them somewhere else... Because the Mantle is speaking about something much deeper, and people content themselves with this shallow place – I'm going to call it shallow – of theft. I think theft is shallow due to everything I've lived, I've been through, and I've researched, in the places I've been and studied. I understand there's more to it, since many species were taken from Brazil: fauna, flora, and people. Cabinets of curiosities were built. There were universal exhibitions, human zoos. And museums inherited some of that – they are heirs to it.

Our culture has been profoundly fragmented, our people has been profoundly fragmented, divided, until we could gain this comprehension, reach the level of maturity to understand what identity is, to search for that identity, to search for our territory, to understand that you're different from the other, that you have a path to follow – to find. To understand that you need this knowledge to distinguish an object from a being who is your relative, perhaps your son in a spiritual place, and to know that the other's culture cannot give you these answers. It won't be able to speak to my people, my children, or my nephews that, when they say “the Maraca spoke to me”, they mean it because the Maraca really spoke to them. It's not a case for hospitalisation or for taking medicine. It's a case for society to reflect on something: that colonisation is not resolved yet.

It's such a good thing having Ailton Krenak here to say this, that we're still at war. I completely agree with that. There's no use smiling, because the war, the colonisation, still isn't resolved. We need access to the museums, because for a museum to survive today, it needs dialogue as well. It's a place that stocks knowledge. But this form of stocking, of

preservation, of care, has limitations too. There could be collaboration – collaboration with Indigenous peoples – so that there can be survival, so that this knowledge has life. So that the museum doesn't serve as a source just for one side, but for both sides. So that we can understand each other, comprehend, and say: "All right". For me, it's all right, because the Mantle has returned. The birds donated feathers to me. My people would dream – they dream – collectively! My people, when the Mantle arrived in São Paulo and came down the Customhouse, we already knew it, back in the territory. My people had already dreamed of it; had already felt that the Mantle had arrived. That's it.

So, if we're speaking about dialogue, possible dialogues between technicians, about forms, and formations, it's because we need that knowledge too. My grandfather told us to go to school and learn the white people's culture, so we wouldn't let them steal what we already had. So, we need to know what belongs to others and what is ours.

I listened to all the Mantles. I closed that cycle in April this year, when I was in Italy. She spoke of the place of diplomacy. She spoke of male and female ambassadors – I must bring in Catarina Paraguaçu. Many Indigenous people crossed the ocean and sat with kings and queens. And they returned. Many came back, but not all of them: some died there, just like this *Tabajara*, *Caripira*, who passed away over there. Six were taken from the state of Maranhão: three of them died, and the other three, well, I don't know if they made it back, or if they were taken by the sea, you know? What we know is this: six Indigenous people were taken by the Médiçi family to Italy, and they didn't return. That's why the presence of the Mantles there matters. Understanding this course – that these people were displaced from their land to discuss something important in their culture – the presence of the Mantles over there shows us that these people are still around, waiting to be found. That's what the Mantles tell me. And to look for them we need the museums to collaborate, to open their doors, so we can begin to understand what all of this means.

Recently, I received the news about six Indigenous skulls from the South of the state of Bahia at the Museum of Sweden⁴. It's a small num-

4. Find out more in [Briga sobre 'herança racista' na Suécia inclui 9 crânios brasileiros](#) [Sweden's 'racist legacy' row includes 9 Brazilian skulls] - BBC News Brazil.

ber. Six Indigenous people. The description said: “These are six Indigenous people who were killed by colonists; decapitated”. A doctor acquired their heads for his collection of two thousand skulls. And they were on exhibition. Recently, due to a student mobilisation, they were removed from the exhibition, and now are in a technical reserve.

Understanding that, in Brazil, we fight daily to guarantee our rights, especially in terms of the law, of constitutional rights. Understanding that masses of society, within universities and schools, are shaped by one culture, and its universal language. We never knew about those ambassadors who crossed the ocean. We never knew about those people who were decapitated. We never knew about those people who were exhibited in a human zoo so others could find out whether they ate human flesh or not. This wasn’t something that happened exclusively to Indigenous peoples in Brazil – it happened to other peoples as well. They faced the same consequences. It’s easier to learn about the other’s culture from abroad, about those from other countries, than it is to learn about the people living under our feet, our neighbors. It’s easier to understand Indigenous peoples from other countries – from Mexico, the United States, and other continents – than the ones who are from here.

And I find this, because the Mantle guides me to say: “Your people are here”. When the people from Copenhagen bring me a box full of belts, they say: “Here, we brought some feather headdresses just like yours”. Then I said: “Feather headdress?” When I looked at the symmetry, I said: “These are not headdresses. Put them on the table for me, please”. And they put them on the table: they were 11. There were 11 so-called belts; by symmetry: adult people, women, teenagers, and children. There were 11. “No, it was only the pieces. Only the pieces have arrived. It was only the pieces”. “People’s pieces!” Because I learned this thing with the Afro people from Bahia – the people from *Terreiro* – the ACBANTU⁵, who studies Afro matters. They told me that when a person was sold, they called them a piece. If they included one child, it was one and a half pieces, but two children were equivalent to two pieces. So, if you take this old language,

5. ACBANTU is the National Cultural Association for the Preservation of Bantu Heritage, which is located in Salvador, Bahia.

in which my people were also enslaved, it wasn't just 11 belts that arrived there. It wasn't just 11 pieces, it was 11 people, with their apparel.

Then I arrive at this reflection, because the Mantle puts me in this place to reflect and try to understand this language they don't teach in schools. The judge filing the injunction against us, granting the reintegration of land against us: this is all part of the *marco temporal* [historic cut-off point], which is coming back to dismantle our rights, with these people that have never studied the real situation of this Indigenous society, which continues to suffer to this day. Because the Amazon is the mirror of the Northeast; its inverse image. What we experienced and endured in the Northeast, the Amazon is going through now, even though the Indigenous peoples of the Northeast have tried to stop this violence as best as they could. We still have more than 60 isolated Indigenous groups in Vale Javari [within the state of Amazonas], according to Beto Marubo. We're in dialogue with him, who is a defender of the isolated Indigenous peoples. Then, you see all of these things that the people could keep with so much fight, only for today there to be practically a task force to take back the Indigenous rights and take the Amazon down, making it become productive for something we don't know who is gonna benefit from. This is the impact that is there, of constant disappropriation.

Then, when the Mantle comes back, she comes back for people to think, to reflect, to understand what these colonisations were. Because the Mantle is part of the Dutch colonisation in the region above the state of Pernambuco. She, the Mantle, is in the king's personal collection and, later on, is transferred to the care of the museum. See the difference! Then you need to understand; to search for this diplomacy, this dialogue, so you can come to understand that not everything was stolen. That Indigenous peoples today can cross the ocean by plane too. Raoni, Davi Kopenawa, Ailton Krenak: they cross the ocean to discuss climate issues, to speak about the existence of native peoples. They are ambassadors who are following the same path that others paved before them. Only back then, they didn't have the internet, means of communication, cellphone – no support network. Yet the same movement happened. I take this reflection and understand that this time is still an infinite time.

The people are all there walking towards the end, and I am thinking that there's gonna be a turn, from the end to here.

So, the way I understand it is that the Mantle returns in the middle of this discussion so that she can open up dialogue, to better understand these questions. The Mantle returns to the museum. "Oh! But why the museum?" I said: "The Mantle has her own will, folks. She has a spirituality. It isn't me, Célia, telling her to go here, to go there, to go anywhere. No, I don't have that power. Once the Mantle has the power of speech and speaks, she conducts things her way. I don't have all that power". But when she said, "tidy up the house, I'm on my way", I arrived here and said, "the Mantle is coming back". And it sounds unbelievable, right? The Mantle is coming back. "Really?" The Mantle is coming back. The Mantle said she would return, and she will; we just need to tidy up the house.

I tried – I really tried, I swear. I did try, and then I began *O Manto em movimento* [*The Mantle in Motion*]⁶, which is the Mantle conceived in the territory, and we go on to dialogue in various spaces where we're invited. We established a partnership with Casa do Povo and with MAC-USP [Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo], through Fernanda Pitta and other people involved in the project (Augustin, Juliana Gontijo, Juliana Caffé). We build this team and take *The Mantle in Motion* to São Paulo, where the return of the Mantle will be announced. Everyone was waiting for the Mantle, right? And when the Mantle arrives there, she's a caramel-coloured Mantle. This is the Mantle that was created in the territory. It is a feminine Mantle. And an ambassador Mantle. We begin to demystify people's minds, to bring down their walls (which are indeed great walls). Then, other questions began to emerge, with another stance, because people, when they looked at the Mantle, used to say: "How many birds had to die for this Mantle to exist?" I've heard that one many times. And I always answered: "Not a single one". "How could it be that 'not a single one'?" Well, there's the feather cycle. Hair has a cycle. The fur of animals – cats, dogs – has a

6. The project *O Manto em movimento* [*The Mantle in Motion*] is organised by Glicéria Tupinambá, in partnership with Casa do Povo and the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo, with the help of Fernanda Pitta. Through the work of the team, composed of people such as Augustin de Tugny, Juliana Gontijo, and Juliana Caffé, the Mantle conceived within the territory is brought to the city of São Paulo and set into motion.

cycle. Everything has its own cycle. Everything goes through a change. So, in these moments, the Mantle can be made without anything being killed, just by collecting. And it was even easier back then, when birds were abundant, right? If we can manage to do this today, imagine how it was back then... So, we open up people's minds to understand that feathers also mature. They need to be collected or gathered. People's minds open up as the Mantle arrives. They open up to other possibilities of viewing the world that, until then, hadn't been accessible.

And then, the return of the Mantle is announced. People began to think that the right place for the Mantle wasn't the museum, but the territory. But the territory is not yet demarcated. We suffer constant attacks. The territory is burned all the time. There are murders all the time. Prayer houses are set on fire. "Oh, but the [National] Museum burned too". Is there any other museum available to receive or collaborate with Indigenous peoples to build an ethnographic collection?

And when the Museum burned down here in 2018, what actions were taken? It was an Indigenous woman, a *Karajá* ceramist, who sent a doll here. A doll that gives people strength, hope to revive – strength to rebuild all of that. That way, we combined our energy with another relative, Tónico Benites⁷. So, we come from Serra do Padeiro, we create these collections and help the people here to tell our story, so that others can study it and pass it on. And so that we understand this as a place built on reflection and knowledge. So, inside my territory, we understand that a pilgrimage isn't necessary. Every Brazilian should have access to the Mantle. The Mantle didn't come only for the *Tupinambá* people of Olivença, but for all Indigenous peoples of Brazil. And for the Brazilian people too, so that they may also feel this sense of belonging. And the place of access we find most appropriate is this structure: the museum. We are working with the ethnomuseum here, with my advisor João Pacheco⁸ and the whole team. We worked hard, but we collaborated with each other, always trying to do our best so that people today could contemplate the Mantle, could see her, could come close to

7. Tónico Benites *Guarani-Kaiowá* is the first Indigenous curator of the ethnological collections at the National Museum. <https://harpia.mn.ufrj.br/tonico-benites/>

8. João Pacheco de Oliveira is an anthropologist and a professor at the National Museum/UFRJ.

her without having to cross an ocean to pay their respects and carry out their rituals. I told the team: someone that communes with the Bible may come here; someone from a *Terreiro* might as well come here and offer their devotion; or some Indigenous people. Some people may get here and speak, and some may come just to look and to listen. All of that is valid. All of that is allowed, because we have a heritage. It's fragile. It's made of cotton, of plume – so very fragile. It's different from the canons, from those structures that we have here to remind of the presence of colonisation. We have this thing so fragile that it needs people to care for it. It needs all of us to care for it. And I'm not just speaking about physical care, but spiritual care too. That's what I'm telling you. Thank you, and sorry for the tour.

(laughs)

(applauses)

I am open to any questions.

Rita Carelli: Célia, can I ask you a question? In your pilgrimage (I'll call it that, though I'm not sure if it's appropriate) of listening to the Mantles across Europe, I understood that there were some Mantles... That this specific Mantle chose to return, right? There were Mantles you encountered that...

Glicéria Tupinambá: They still have a purpose there. Things are not resolved yet, but people keep saying: "All of them should come". No, guys, let's take a moment. We haven't even found these people yet. There are people involved in this process. There are people who went, for example: in Basel, Switzerland, we have the enrollment record of a student, Diogo, who was taken in 1585⁹. A student, an academic, people. The first Indigenous person – that's how I'll classify him, right? – enrolled in a university as a student. Where is he? What happened to him? Where is he now? Has anyone heard from him? He was taken by José de

9. About the October 1585 enrollment of "Diogo, an *Indian* from the Americas", find out more in: [Um "índio da América" \(do Brasil?\) estudante na Universidade da Basileia, em 1585](#) [An "Indian from America" (from Brazil?) studying at the University of Basel, in 1585].

Anchieta. And not just him, because here in Rio de Janeiro, there was also a school. São Paulo had a school too. Many Indigenous people were placed in these schools. Did everyone die from smallpox and measles? Did no one survive? And what about those Indigenous people who were taken in masses into universities? Where are they now?

I think that inside every Mantle, in each place where the Mantle is found, you will see a place of colonisation and a big question mark. I think that, wherever they are, they're questioning something: something that we have to figure out. We need to search, to understand, and to comprehend, because it is easy to judge or to stay outside, shouting. What I need is for us to sit at the table and have a dialogue about all of this. Because everyone knows how to explain what Greece is. Everyone can explain Egypt, the mummy, the mummified cat. Everyone knows why the pyramids lost their noses, and knows about the hieroglyphs; all that stuff. Everyone can explain all of that. But what about Diogo? Where are the ambassadors who crossed the ocean and went to Italy? Where are they? Where are these people? So, I think, from my point of view... Oh, and the women: Where are these women? I think the Mantle shows the women who were made invisible, because they were important within this ritual that, for a long time, was believed to be reserved only for men as shamans, not for women as shamans. I learned that the shaman's condition is a condition of a person being spiritualised. They are with the spirit. The shaman is the person who has the spirit. Not the healing being, nor a healer: the being who is with the spirit.

Rita Carelli: Ailton keeps saying this too. You may be in a state of healing, you may be in a shamanic state, but that doesn't mean you are a shaman. One becomes a channel.

Glicéria Tupinambá: Finding this, for me... In each Mantle's journey, I believe there must be something much greater. Because I found the *bordunas*. The *bordunas* carry a signature that is formed in ritual, passed through the hands of women. They insert something like a marquetry with eggshell or shell. It's ephemeral. It's not made to last. Yet it keeps

the women's signature imprinted on the surface. To the naked eye, no one sees it. But I could see it, and I said: "Shall we do some research? Try to prove it?" Then, the woman who performed the ultrasound on the *borduna* was impressed, because she was able to find the signature too. She couldn't believe it. She took a picture and sent it to me. She was astonished. We're now going to present this at a congress in Warsaw, Poland. And there's much more. We have the stone axes in the museum. In Copenhagen alone, there are around 800 pieces I would love to study and understand.

Folks, do you know what it's like to have a flute made out of human bone playing in your ears for eight months? With you not understanding what it means, not having a tangible answer to solve it? Until you arrive in the city and ask someone: "Is there a flute? Is the flute here?" And the person replies: "It's here". Then, they show it exists in a catalogue. It's not my imagination; it's not, because I'm here, oh my God, and I don't know... I only know what happens. Then you have to search for an answer; I can only heal with an answer. Maybe I'm a sick person. But I can only find peace of spirit, have my cosmoagony eased, resolved, when I can access all of that. It's only when I can touch it, understand it, and say, "this, here, is actually different from what the other is reading to me". Because, now, I don't read what the other reads to me. No. I read as well. Are you reading? I am reading too. Because I need to hear the message that was left for me.

I also understood it, while studying anthropology here – now I'm speaking from my anthropological side. I learned from the anthropologists, from the founders of anthropology, especially Clifford¹⁰, about alterity and body-texts. I said: "I'm a fan of his". Because, even though many people like to discredit the images produced by the travelers of what was happening there, those images are the only images we have.

And there, we can understand that those bodies also carry a text. The position of the foot, the way the Maraca is held. Even if the image

10. In his *On Ethnographic Authority*, James Clifford writes: "It is the process through which unwritten behavior, speech, beliefs, oral tradition or ritual, come to be marked as a corpus, a potentially meaningful ensemble separated out from an immediate discursive or performative situation. In the moment of textualization this meaningful corpus assumes a more or less stable relation to a context, (...)" (Clifford, *On Ethnographic Authority*, Spring, 1983, p. 130).



Tupinambá ceremony observed by Hans Staden in Brazil.
Theodor de Bry (1528–1598). Source: Wikipedia

is still, it's performing a movement. The muscle that holds the Maraca is tensed; the fist isn't relaxed. Those who have held a Maraca and know how to play him, know which muscles stand out when you grip him to play, to produce sound. Then, you go and see this movement mirrored in the hand of the other shaman. If you perform such a movement, you'll produce a note, a gourd sound. If you replicate the movement of the feet, stepping and circling the floor... That's the dimension where we have the three shamans and the warrior's circle. It's a ritual, a movement. But you will notice that this other circular movement doesn't appear in the other images. That's because the Europeans didn't have a way of depicting circular matters. They can only change their view to draw these movements when they hear our narratives about how the scene unfolds.

So, the one who made this performance, who performed, and created this wonderful, descriptive scene that the other tries to capture to represent in that woodcut... Congratulations to them, because they outdone themselves. There are many kinds of limitations, but they still managed to represent these little details there, especially the movement of the muscle. There's a box, a drum that is played by the elders. The people commonly think that we, the **Tupinambá** Indigenous people, didn't have percussion instruments, but we do have percussion too. There was a big drum, which is played by the elders. There is one drumstick striking the box and another suspended. If you do that, you will produce a musical note. So, even though it's a frozen image, a still image, it communicates. It carries a text. For me, it's about listening to these codes, translating, and trying. I'm trying. I'm truly trying to find ways to translate all of this.

It's that question people asked me recently: they want the Indigenous knowledge inside universities. I replied: "Are you prepared to have that kind of knowledge inside the university?" "Do you really want to add one more structure? Because you already have a structure, your own pillars. And then, how are you bringing Indigenous knowledge inside without the pillars for it? Are you prepared to receive real Indigenous knowledge, to try and translate other ways of knowing?" People are so sure of themselves; they have their place of comfort. If the Indigenous wisdom is brought in, it's going to destabilise all of that. And then what? To what extent do people truly want this knowledge inside the university? To think differently? To research our culture? Someone who speaks very well about this subject, and whom I admire a lot, is Gersem Baniwa. He always raises these questions. He is a trailblazer in education, in the university – today, a professor and a philosopher. And we contribute to this conversation, because there's a real struggle in how we enter the university, and how the university conceives us once we're inside. Above all, it's about understanding this other way of thinking. Time is different for us. So, it all starts to pile up. People would rather finance a rocket to throw trash at the Moon than invest in a knowledge system that could build a different logic. That's something I saw just this week, and it's been bothering me. I can't really wrap my

head around this idea of sending rockets to the Moon. It's 2025, and they are sending a tiny piece, a penny, up there. I kept thinking about that. But, like, understanding how we think requires that we are here on Earth, caring for it, understanding it.... Thinking about how each of those Mantles represents a family clan. Maybe there's a whole family there, who sent that person to represent a nation – you never know.

Because I've been encountering little inconsistencies, subtle remarks that don't appear as clearly to me, but still, they make sense, because I belong to a family clan. Each family belongs to a family clan. This is something I think is common to all Indigenous peoples (...)¹¹ The family clan represents and is always connected to nature itself. We have no surname. Beings have names and the clan they belong to, which usually is an animal (a bird, another fauna's member), a flora's member, or something like this, which is tied to our sense of belonging. It's a different sense of belonging compared to other origins.

Rita Carelli: It's the individual stitching of each Mantle that takes into account its prior history as a being. It's not a package.

Glicéria Tupinambá: It isn't a cube, no. It is not like that.

João Pacheco de Oliveira: We are now at the National Museum. So, I wanted you to talk a bit about the repercussions of having the Mantle here in Brazil, and the *Tupinambá* community from Serra de Olivença. I know that today is your third encounter with this Mantle. The first was in Copenhagen, when you were visiting. The second was when it arrived here. You came with your mother and Jessica¹² to visit the Mantle. You welcomed her, in her return to Brazil. And now, at this moment, it is your third encounter. I know that, back there in the community, as soon as you received the news of the Mantle's arrival at the National Museum, you started carrying out rituals in the village. Could you talk a little more about it: the emotion of the community upon seeing the Mantle

11. We lost a few seconds of audio of Glicéria's speech at this point in the recording.

12. Jessica *Tupinambá*, from the *Tupinambá* people, is an activist and researcher, and she was with Glicéria and her mother during the visit to the Mantle in September 2024.

return to Brazil, and what do they expect from the Mantle being here in Brazil? What does it mean to them?

Glicéria Tupinambá: There are 23 communities within the *Tupinambá* territory of Olivença. Altogether, there are 14 *caciques* in the territory. In my community, in Serra do Padeiro, which includes 220 families, we have Cacique Babau. There are other leaders in other territories. I can't speak for those other leaderships, but in our community, which was very involved in the process of the Mantle's return, we were very happy when, in 2020, Mrs. Nivalda embraced that journey. She came to us through an invitation of *Folha de São Paulo* [Brazilian newspaper], with the help of ANAÍ [National Association for Indigenous Action] and Augusto "Guga" da Laranjeira [José Augusto Laranjeiras Sampaio]. ANAÍ is led by anthropologists. It is an association of anthropologists that facilitated Mrs. Nivalda's travel to São Paulo at the time. So, she went, made the journey, and spoke about what we were seeking in the *Tupinambá* Uprising: ethnic recognition. She said, "the Mantle is ours. We want her back". Mrs. Nivalda then returned to the territory, going from village to village to collect signatures. Then, she filed a legal case requesting an embargo to prevent the Mantle from leaving. This case was shelved, and the Mantle went back to Copenhagen. Then, many years later, when we began the process of regaining our rights over the territory, I decided to make a Mantle. I did that to thank the enchanted ones, because the process of retaking the territory was successful, with little use of violence. We were able to settle and speak. We secured our land. The anthropologists and researchers, together with the FUNAI [National Indigenous Peoples Foundation of Brazil] team, conducted a study for our territorial and ethnic identification—all of that. That's when I made the Mantle, which was later taken to the exhibition *The First Brazilians*, curated by João Pacheco [de Oliveira]. So it all began a long time ago. I didn't even realise it then. This search, this mission, all of it. And then that Mantle began to travel, and I started to understand it better.

Then, everyone said that, since the enchanted ones had given me this mission, I would donate that Mantle. But I actually had the mission of making three more Mantles, so I need this maturity for that. I wasn't

mature enough at that period; I was very young. I didn't have the same mind I have today, the same worldview, the same way of thinking. A lot has changed since then. Then, it was all happening – this process of understanding, of maturing, the return of the Mantle – when João announced it to us, through WhatsApp. I was on the street with a *caçara*, and received the message: “Jessica, the Mantle has arrived. João told us”. So we went home to process all of that and reflect on the dreams we had. The guidance was to ensure the spirituality of the Mantle, to carry out a ritual. So, during this period, we carried out rituals in the village, in the community. We were also already offering workshops on the craft of the *bordunas* in the community, and we intensified the rituals to ensure the spirituality and the reception of the Mantle, even from a distance. It's one of those moments when society manifests, with people speaking their multiple points of view, but often from a place of judgement, of pointing fingers without having undertaken the journey themselves. So, placing yourself in the other's shoes is also very important.

Then, when we carried out these rituals to welcome the Mantle, to mobilise the community, we were also thinking that that moment was the demarcation of our land. And I think it's not just about the demarcation of our land, but also about the understanding that Brazil, the Earth, belongs to Indigenous peoples. It isn't just about a signature on a piece of paper of someone who crossed the ocean and arrived here. We did not have paper before. But still, that paper will claim the Earth as ours.

Therefore, I understand that when the Mantle says she is returning to Rio de Janeiro, she is saying that Rio de Janeiro is also her home; that Rio is also a *Tupinambá* village. This territory here, which has been the stage of various battles; and a region of great *caciques* like *Cunhambebe* and *Arariboia*, of many *Maracajás*, and various other ethnic groups. So, I thought: “That's right! The Mantle is correct.” “Where is the Mantle from? Somewhere I don't know...” The Mantle chose to come to this place. She chose to come here. And what do we have here? What are we thinking about here? What can we build here? This is a place for building. Other places are already full. And I see beauty in this: in being able to collaborate, to help, to build. So when you are building, you are elaborating, you are making, you are helping, you are thinking, you are teaching, you are learning – you

are helping. If more people arrive, they can form a task force. This's what we call collective. For me, the Mantle returning, being in this place, it's to build all of that. And we've created the conditions for this other moment, for people to speak up. For people to express their thoughts as they like, as they have them. Everyone carries a scar, and sometimes we need to show it, too. Because this place is a place of theft. And people need healing as well. They need to let that out. I believe the Mantle has also created space for that; for people to express themselves in that way. And I think that the greatest thing about it is that no one said: "No, don't say that. Don't do that". No. You can speak, you can shout; you can say "this" or "that" – it's allowed. I don't think it was ever forbidden, and we never forbid it either. Also in the hills, we have not forbidden people from sharing their viewpoints. But we recognise that we need more knowledge, to go deeper – to seek knowledge and go deeper. So, it's for these reasons that I speak of another kind of place. The Mantle calls me to this other place. So, I have this place here, and I know the path by which I am being led.

So, the Mantle arrives, but people think she shouldn't be here. That she should have stayed in Copenhagen, or stayed within the territory, right? Well, that's their opinion. That's their point of view, their assumption, how they see it. And I said: "Ask the Mantle. Analyse all of this". Rethink museums, rethink the place, rethink research, rethink history, rethink the possibility of access – discuss access. Two years from now, the museum will be here. Imagine how many Indigenous people will want to be here to study plumage conservation. Because, I mean, most of the materials that are repatriated are made of wood or bronze. But when it comes to feathers, to woven fabric, to cotton, to cotton thread – I think these are among the first artifacts of that kind to be repatriated. That requires everyone to sit down and think about how to care for them. It's not the role of just one person, of just one technician. But think of how these technicians were challenged. I believe that wherever the Mantle goes, she challenges everyone – all fields, all societies. She questions everyone, puts every thought on trial. Then, everyone has to reflect. Consider that school textbooks did not include anything about the Mantle. And now think: the Mantle has returned. It's a historic milestone that we get to finally talk about the Mantle. She has come back, and you are witnessing

it. We are making history now. We are building something. We're healing some wounds, some scars. We are closing some wounds. So, when we think about the return of the Mantle, about her arrival here, we see that, despite the obstacles, things happened the way they were meant to. Because people need to heal, to reflect, and even to make a mistake. Just like a child, who first crawls, then falls a few times before getting up, finding balance, and finally learning how to walk – for life – until becoming an adult. Of course, over time, they slow their steps as age comes. But until then, they need to go through that progression, to think. I believe that the teachers here today are already going to start rethinking things, rebuilding ideas. So, I truly believe it was the Mantle who chose this place. It wasn't me, Célia, who made that decision. According to the Mantle, she came on her own. No one had to wear her or take her by the hand to bring her here. She came by plane and she arrived. Just like she said: "Tidy up the house, I'm on my way". She arrived.

Now, we have people discussing the terms: whether it's "donation", "repatriation", or something else. But the Mantle is here. Because France and the people from Greece built a museum due to the conditions imposed for receiving the Parthenon. The museum was built 10 years ago, and it hasn't received a single piece yet. This was a legal win, with one condition: to build a museum. They built an appropriate museum, and after ten years, no piece has returned. Now, cut to Brazil: the museum is being restored and the Mantle is arriving. The Mantle is here, in front of all of you. The challenge for us is to think about how we will deal with all of this, how we will collaborate. I think of a different approach. I don't think about stretching the rope, or determining what is right and wrong, but about how we can elaborate, think, build, and see this other place for Indigenous peoples together, this new museum: the ethnomuseum. Not about the type of museum people usually think of, because there are many types of museums. There's the colonial museum, the whatever museum, but there is the ethnomuseum – the museum of the Indigenous peoples that has secured several land demarcations, and could secure even more, if we build it right.

We won't live forever. The Mantle made it 400 years, but I don't think I will get that far, no. We have our limitations, but we were very happy to

see how the Mantle was welcomed, to see her arrival. My mother and I were here; we were received by the staff of the ethnomuseum. We came with the *Terreiro* people from CECURE¹³, from Paraty [state of Rio de Janeiro]. We got here and carried out the rituals to thank and welcome the Mantle. We were really glad to have that moment, to be allowed to have that moment. We need to try to find ways and, above all, to sit at the table. We need to get to the table, so that we can speak eye to eye and discuss new ways, new possibilities. And I believe that's what the Mantle offers us: the opportunity to think, to rethink, to discuss, understand this (to better understand this spirituality). Because people often get confused. Sometimes we're shadows, but we need to be crystals. Maybe we need to polish, improve ourselves, to see things with more clarity. Maybe we need to understand other fields, that, sometimes our eyes just can't see. But Rio [de Janeiro] told me this is my village too, my home too. And I think the Mantle is feeling at home here too, because this is also *Tupinambá* territory. And I believe all Indigenous peoples would agree with this: expanding the territory is a better condition for us today than reducing it, than being delimited on a piece of paper, than depending on the signature of someone who received the "universal", unlimited education.

Anna Dantes: Célia, you know what just came to me? That whenever the Mantle is on display, she's always facing us from the back. In a way, do you think it's as if she were ahead of us, walking in front, with everything else following behind?

Glicéria Tupinambá: I see how people see and are drawn to the feathers; to their redness, not the movement. It's about how people want to perceive perfectionism, perfection, the texture and the layers of the feathers. Because if you think about it, when you look at the Mantle from the back, you won't be able to see the first weave. The Mantle has many layers, many textures, many knots, and many threads. From the back, it's like that first weave doesn't exist. And that first weave is the bird's skin. It's a skin. From each knot, comes a new feather. And then, in this layer, you have the skin of a bird; you have a body – a part of a

13. CECURE is a centre for studies, applied research, and spiritual healing therapies.

bird's body. These are represented there because that's what brings the Mantle close to people, even though we are all terrestrial birds. So that was the strongest approximation between the people and the birds; making them equal. The reference we typically have is this close relationship with the birds. The way others look at the Mantle... Throughout history, she has always been remembered by her colour, her redness, and this effect that the feathers create – this gracefulness. When someone looks, it's usually through this lens. So, understanding this scenic gaze... What people want to see is the texture of the *Guará's* feathers, the amount of feathers that is there. I believe that some feathers are from Parrots. Others, from Macaws. And then, we have the yellow ones on top; these must be from some other bird, maybe a yellow Macaw from that time. That's how we get to understand it, to see it as it is. I believe it's about that; about how a person's gaze takes shape. For me, it's like that.

[Rafael Rolim (the cameraman who is filming) asks if he can go in with Célia to see the Mantle]

Glicéria Tupinambá: I think not yet, because I prefer that this moment now be with my people. It is not for me; I'm not allowed to yet. I prefer that the Mantle speak to my people, like she did to my mother when we first came to visit her. We had gained access to the Mantle, and the Mantle responded to her by becoming thicker and redder than she normally is. My mother's immediate response was: "The Mantle is alive". And now my mother will return to see her, and so will the cacique – because he has never seen the Mantle in person. That's the moment we've been waiting for. That's the most important moment. And that moment isn't mine. The Mantle is here in Brazil, and it's about her and the cacique. I think the Mantle and the cacique will have this dialogue, since the cacique even dreamed of her. The cacique needs to dialogue with the Mantle, not me. My role was to listen to the Mantle, to understand her, and to say she would return. To tell my people that the Mantle would come back: that was my part. This other part, of dialogue, of saying something more... I believe that's the moment the Mantle has been waiting for: a moment that the cacique is ready for, and some people from my community can come to her and have a dialogue.

Glicéria Tupinambá, also known as Célia Tupinambá, is an artist, researcher, teacher, educator, farmer, and activist. She is one of the leading women of Serra do Padeiro village, located in the **Tupinambá** Indigenous Land of Olivença, in southern Bahia.

She was a teacher at the Serra do Padeiro State **Tupinambá** Indigenous School and earned her Bachelor's degree in Intercultural Indigenous Education from the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Bahia. She holds a Master's degree from the Postgraduate Program in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where she is currently pursuing a PhD. She has experience in the field of education and co-directed, with Cristiane Julião of the **Pankararu** people, the documentary *Voz das mulheres indígenas* (2015) [*Voices of Indigenous Women*], which received an award at Cine Curumim in 2016. More recently, she was awarded at the 10th edition of the ZUM/IMS Photography Grant for the project *Nós somos pássaros que andam* [*We Are Birds Who Walk*]. In 2023, she received the PIPA Prize and curated the project *O Manto em movimento* [*The Mantle in Motion*], which featured an exhibition at Casa do Povo in São Paulo and a series of visits by the **Tupinambá** Mantle to cultural spaces across the city. She was also a guest artist at the **Hãhãwpuá** Pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale in Italy, which was curated by Gustavo Caboco, Arissana Pataxó, and Denilson Baniwa. Her journey in search of the **Tupinambá** Mantles was documented in the film *Eu ouvi o chamado: o retorno do Manto Tupinambá* [*I Heard the Call: The Return of the Tupinambá Mantle*], which won an award at the Cannes Film Festival.

She researches the process of accessing the museums and the listening to artifacts of the **Tupinambá** people's culture.

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More information at selvagemciclo.org.br/en/

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