IN THE older literature there are no usable statements about Eastern Timbira religion. According to Ribeiro,

Nao se lhes conhece a mais pequena demonstração de culto ou religião qualquer que ella seja, pois é sua razão a esse respeito submergida no chaos da ignorancia, sendo lhes bem indifferente que o sol nasça ou que se esconda.

(Not the slightest manifestation of cult or religion is known from them, rather is their reason buried in ignorance in this regard, and they are quite indifferent whether the sun rises or is concealed).257

As will appear, things are not quite so bad as all that.

About Pôrekamekra religion an interpreter told Pohl the following:


I cannot confirm these statements concerning a Supreme Being and am unable to explain the term Turpi. Pohl, with whom Snethlage agrees, ascribes these doctrines to previous instruction by Jesuits from Pará.

Snethlage regards as certain a lunar and astral cult, which he infers from a nocturnal dance he attended.259 This was performed in the plaza by men in a circle stepping first with one leg, then the other, while turning their bodies, gazing toward the sky, and repeatedly uttering the word katšere (star). I have vainly tried to get data from the Indians concerning this dance, which I never witnessed. Thus, I asked all the precentors for texts of songs containing the word in question or otherwise dealing with stars. The solitary chant which they cited again and again is that concerned with Halley’s comet (p. 190). This, however, is sung in quite a different setting and exclusively during a pepyé celebration. Snethlage’s visit, however, coincided with a Mummers’ festival, such as I was also able to attend in 1935, but without noting anything even remotely suggested by his account. The procedure he saw then must have been of a quite special and isolated character. As a matter of fact, hardly any religious significance attaches to the stars among these Canella, whereas the moon does play a part, though by no means the principal one. Concerning animistic beliefs Snethlage reports nothing.

Fróes Abreu conceived the precentor of the nocturnal dances as a medicine-man and the performances themselves as prayers (rezas in Indian parlance). He heard of a celestial god who was the father of all humanity, but was unable to get further information. Nor was Pompeu Sobrinho able to extract relevant data. He erroneously regards the syllable vrÉin paduvrÉ (bút’êra in his orthography), moon, as a feminine suffix, whence he conjectures that a male sun and a female moon are connected with Canella religion. Finally, Abbé Étienne Ignace declares: “Ce sont des catholiques ayant conservé des pratiques supersticieuses.”260

CELESTIAL BODIES

Compared with, say, the Guarani, the RимкÇ’kamekra certainly have very little religion, being in this respect inferior also to the Šerénte and even to the Apinayé.

257 Ribeiro, Memoria, § 9.
258 Pohl, Reise, 2:209.
259 Nordbostbras. Ind., 184.
260 Fróes Abreu, Terra das Palmeiras, 180 f.; Sobrinho, Merrime, 14; Ignace, Les Capiekrans, 478.
Their public cult performances may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and several years elapsed before I discovered a private act unrelated to animism.

The Sun and Moon myth of the Eastern Timbira greatly resembles that of the Apinayé and Serénte. I heard it not only among the RímkÇ’kamekra, but also wholly or in part among the PÇkbье, Kр’pÇmkateye, KréyÇe of Bacabal, and the KrahÇ’. Both characters are conceived as male and as unrelated to each other. In RímkÇ’kamekra myth they create mankind by diving in a brook, in a PÇkbье variant, from bottle gourds in a plantation; but in none of the other six episodes of the myth do they in any way work for the benefit of humanity. Nevertheless the RímkÇ’kamekra regard themselves as primarily dependent on the Sun (PÇt) and in much lesser degree also on the Moon (PÇduvre).

The purpose of all the general cult performances is to invoke the heavenly bodies to protect food plants and animals. These acts comprise prayers to the Sun for rain (p. 62), for protection of game animals (p. 71), and on behalf of wild fruits (p. 72); and to the Moon to prosper the crops when maize has grown to about 3 feet in height (p. 62).

On the other hand, there was no trace of religion at the maize-planting ceremony (p. 62), nor was the hÇ’wá ceremony on behalf of the sweet potato crop at all related to Sun and Moon worship, though it does bear a magical significance (p.63).

During the entire period of my stay I witnessed only two instances of a person’s supplicating the Sun. The first time a young woman was praying for a child (p. 130); the second time I heard a mother instructing her approximately seven-year-old son, who had been ill for a long time, to invoke the Sun as follows: “Kédeti! IymÇ’gÇ’go, vatoekÇne iypey! (Grandfather! Give me a remedy so that I’ll recover!)” Further, I learnt that, when putting the mats soiled at the delivery into the fork of a steppe tree, the mother of a lying-in woman supplicates the Sun, as stated (p. 106), to protect the newborn infant.

The prayers have no fixed text, the suppliant addressing the Sun spontaneously as though conversing with an ordinary person. Thus some address him as pa’pÇm, Our Father; others as Kédeti, Grandfather. I have never heard of any RímkÇ’kamekra seeing Sun or Moon in dreams or visions.

There is little knowledge of the course of the heavenly bodies. Time is reckoned by lunar phases and by seasons (rainy and dry). They do not know how many full moons there are in a year, being handicapped by their aboriginal number system, which does not go beyond four. They do not ponder the nature of the solar body. They know approximately where the sun rises and sets during the wet and the dry season, but they do not empirically determine the solstice or use it in time reckoning.

The younger age classes, regularly assembled in the plaza at sunset, always consider it fun to expect the appearance of the new moon, each youth vying with the rest to discover it first. As soon as it is detected, everybody raises his hands and utters piercing shouts “to give pleasure to the Moon.”

The moon spots are explained in RímkÇ’kamekra myth (p. 244) and somewhat differently by the KréyÇe of Bacabal. No explanation was obtained for the lunar phases.

A lunar eclipse is called pÇduvre ÇhitÇ, that is, dying of the moon. In 1935 I witnessed one and went purposely to the plaza to sleep there. Since the sky was somewhat clouded, the Indians did not notice what was going on until the darkening.

261 Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 158.
262 Nimuendajú, Vokabular und Sagen der Crengêz.
was considerably advanced. I heard one of the pí nástíma arousing his companions and
directing their attention to the phenomenon. For about five minutes they were watching
without knowing what to do, then one of them ran off to bring and question an old great-uncle.
At once the village grew animated. voices became audible, fires began to blaze, the chiefs and
councilors assembled and summoned a precentor. Gradually the entire village foregathered
in the plaza. Forming a circle round the precentor, some fifty men and youths danced
unremittingly while singing, “páduvřkay! páduvřkay! riwahá neymá’ pádupère!”

Others made bundles of from four to six large and empty gourd bottles and used them
as loud rattles. In the meantime the total eclipse had set in. Round about the squares in front of
all the houses huge fires were blazing.

An old man appeared, followed by two women, each leading by the hand a girl of
eight or nine. The girls lay down on their backs on a mat that was extended on the plaza for
them. Two or three youths made a number of incendiary arrows, wato’h’ra, by sticking
kerneled corn cobs to the tips and igniting them at the fireplaces. These missiles they shot
incessantly at the moon, boys picking them up again. Since the moon was in its zenith, the
arrows fell back into the crowd, which had to guard against being struck by them. As soon as
the moon began to reappear from the shadow, the general excitement abated, but the chanting
continued until after 3 A.M., when the moon was again quite undimmed. The two girls
likewise remained until then; I was told that the moon “took” them and then recovered. No
subsequent obligations devolve on them.

According to Kissenberth the Northern Kayapó, singing chants of lamentation and
prayer, shoot burning arrows at the moon during an eclipse in order to restore its light and
prevent its death, whereby it would tumble on them and destroy everyone.

I have never experienced a solar eclipse among the Timbira. It was interpreted to me
as a struggle between sun and moon; the last time “the big star that accompanies the moon”
had also taken part. In contrast to practice during a lunar eclipse no steps of any kind are taken;
the people simply wait in great anxiety for the passage of the phenomenon. Children must not
look at the darkened sun.

In 1910, Halley’s comet caused great alarm. The Rìmknč’kamekra were afraid of a
world conflagration. At that time a precentor long since dead revived the song alluded to above
(p. 190) : “The star is already setting (the earth) afame!” Usually this comet is called kãnti
kamakum because its tail is conceived as smoke (kum).

Meteor (a’kra) flashing above the horizon excite little concern. Only when they pass
near by are the people vaguely afraid of some noxious influence.

When a shooting star slides across the nocturnal sky it is said to be a star running to
the other side of the sky to get married. Thus, they divide the heavens into exogamous moieties
like those of their own village circle.

The Rìmknč’kamekra do not distinguish the major planets and know only a few
constellations, of which the Pleiades (krot) are the most important. When they become visible
above the western horizon after sunset, this is taken as a sign that the rainy season is
approaching and that it is time to make clearings for planting.

The Milky Way with its dark spots is interpreted as an ostrich (mti) whose head lies
below the Southern Cross. If some night this ostrich should begin humming, it indicates that
humanity is to be destroyed. He has already done so once, dragging one wing over the earth
and thereby killing many people. Beside him stands a babassu (rũnti; Orbignia speciosa),
formed by the constellation Scorpion

263 Kissenberth, Araguaya-Reise, 55.
without the stars of the hook on the tail. It stood along the ostrich’s path and he threatened to knock it down, but it begged to be spared since it would kill many people if it fell to the earth. Accordingly, the ostrich passes close beside this palm.

Another constellation near the galaxy, which I was never able to grasp, is called kapúre (= jahó, *Tinamus* sp.).

In Magellanic Cloud they see Auké’s ashes (p. 245).

Against lightning, which they greatly fear because of its frequently observed effects on steppe trees, they resort to magic. A native will put the leaves of olho de boi (ropnto, jaguar eye) on his head and wave them toward the thunderstorm, saying, “mekriwije, amekaprinare witáiye!”

The Krëyé of Bacabal have a tale in which the storm figures as a tapir. The same story was heard among the descendants of the Gamella of Vianna.264

The rainbow (tanyòwadn, person of the rain) has its two ends resting in the open mouths of two sucuriju snakes, which themselves yield rain. It appears as a sign that the rain has ceased. When the rainbow disappears, two eel-like fish, p̱ppeyre (Neobraz.: muçum), rise to the sky, where they drop into a water hole. When there is a heavy rain they again drop back into the terrestrial water. One informant said that snakes ascended to the sky by the rainbow lest there be too many here on earth.

In the sky dwell carrion vultures under their chief, the king vulture, and falcons. They have human shape there, organize log races and celebrate festivals.

There is an underworld (ikrakripý). According to a tale a man hunting an armadillo broke through the ground, tumbling into the underworld. “When he turned round, he noticed that he was on a steppe, but round about no living being was to be seen, not even a bird; everything near and far was still.” The Šerénte tell a similar story, which they connect with their kwíudéúdá racing logs, which they derive from said armadillo.

**ANIMISM**

Every human being and every animal has a soul. Plants “perhaps” also have a soul, but theirs plays no part. At death the soul leaves the body through the mouth; nobody knows how and where it enters the body. The soul of a dead person, the distinct shadow cast by him, and his image are all called mekarô. I have no evidence for belief in a temporary departure of the soul from a living body. Contrary to Apinayé theory, sickness is not imputed to temporary soul loss,265 and the medicine-man’s shadow is not supposed to roam about in order to learn what is going on at a distance. Accordingly, during a man’s lifetime his soul does not play an independent role of practical significance.

It becomes all the more prominent after death; indeed, communion with the souls of the dead is the most conspicuous part of Eastern Timbira religion and forcibly struck Pohl among the Põrekamekra:

Auch hier [i.e. in the cemetery for secondary burial] besuchen die Indianer noch oft die Grabhügel ihrer entschlafenen Lieben und erzählen ihnen alle Vorfallenheiten, fest überzeugt, dass die Verstorbenen sie hören und Anteil nehmen können. Diese Sitte erschien mir stets sehr rührend, und ich gestehe, dass ich oft innig bewegt diese guten Menschen so an den Gräbern sitzen sah.

However, I never observed this form of devotion near the graves. Further, I have neither discovered a belief in everlasting rewards or punishments, such as Pohl ascribes to these natives, nor ever heard that a soft rustling noise revealed the approach of the spirits.

The spirits of the dead usually reside in village-like communities in the localities.

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264 Nimuendajú, Vokabular und Sagen der Crengêz, 635; The Gamella, 13.
265 The Apinayé, 144.
where they lived or were buried, that is, especially on old camp sites and in cemeteries, the will-o’-the-wisps occasionally rising from the ground of the latter being conceived as the spirits’ camp fires. However, at times the souls also appear singly and in other places. Otherwise inexplicable shouting (mekaprēp), such as occasionally resounds at night in steppes and woods, is ascribed to roaming spirits. Another abode is below the water of the Lake Kukómo (p. 249).

Apart from some peculiarities due to their shadowy character, the souls lead an existence very similar to that of the living. They are neither more nor less happy. The spirits of old people, such as parents, grandparents and the grandparents’ siblings, are credited with greater knowledge than is within the ken of the living; some declare that they know “everything.” Accompanying their living relatives, they protect them wherever possible, drive away poisonous snakes from their path, and appear to them in waking hours or dreams in order to warn them against misfortune. Normally they are invisible; but if they so desire they can turn visible even in the middle of the day, either in their mortal shape or in some beast’s. At night their sudden appearance, as a rule of but momentary duration, strikes terror into the visionary’s heart, so that he will remain ill for days—notwithstanding the fact that these spirits are not hostile to man.

The story of Yaw’ (p. 246) gives a tolerably clear picture of the relations between the living and the dead. The hero receives every kind of aid from the spirits and through intimate contact with them ultimately acquires the power to transform himself into an animal.

Around a dying Indian’s bed the spirits of his deceased kin assemble. Sometimes, even some time before he breathes his last, they will persuade him to adopt their customs, to cease eating and speaking. These spirits accompany the corpse to the grave and, rejoicing to have the person in their midst now, they will conduct his soul to its new resting place. Souls of sucking babes are taken by a maternal uncle or corresponding kinsman. On the way to the hereafter the soul gets to a brook bridged by a thin, swaying tree; if the soul should slip off, it will be converted into an aquatic animal.

In general the relations between the living and the dead are wholly individual, but in the ketúaye they assume tribal character (p. 171). Here there are involved the totality of prospective initiates and the entire company of souls of the dead. As explained, it is difficult to get an explicit interpretation of this relationship from the present-day Indians, who obviously are not quite clear on the point. However, I cannot doubt that the principal object of the festival is to establish contact of the boys with the spirits. With reference to the last celebration, in 1934, which I was unfortunately unable to attend, an authoritative informant explained: “When the ketúaye sing in the spirit language [the ayä’k chant], the spirits approach, wishing to take away their shadow-souls. If they succeeded, the individuals in question would die at once. That is why the boys’ kinswomen sit behind the boys with hands on their shoulders, while their kinsmen stand in the rear.”

MAGIC

The sun worship of these people is not connected with magic, or at least can do without it. In the instances on pages 131–132 one prayer is uttered accompanied by the magical use of urucú, while the other has no association with magic at all. The prayers themselves are wholly devoid of magical import. On the other hand, animism and magic are intimately linked. The tale of Yaw’ illustrates the derivation of curative and magical knowledge from the spirits. Persons evincing ability and
inclination for such communion are called kái, and their principal function is to cure and ward off disease. Of the Põrekamekra, Pohl writes:


This last method I have never witnessed. Snethlage possibly rates Timbira medical lore too highly, but his text does not indicate which tribe he has in mind. Ribeiro says:

Curam geralmente as suas enfermidades com e sangria, a com o semente de urucú: A sangria fazem-a com uma navalha de canna verde a que chamam taboca.

(In general they cure sickness by blood-letting and with urucú seeds. They let blood with a little knife of green cane called taboca.)

Thus this author does not mention a blood-letting bow, as Snethlage assumes. Of all the Timbira tribes the Apinayé is the only one among whom I found this implement.

Medical lore is little developed among the Canella. The children rarely wear remedies and amulets attached to necklaces, wrist cords, or girdle cords. Since pretty nearly everyone tries his own luck at doctoring when sick, the medicine-man’s role is rather subordinate. There are no pathological theories comparable to those of the Apinayé. The Canella views are vacillating and confused, so that they have more confidence in Neobrazilian treatment than in their own. An enormous number of plant species yield roots, bark, and leaves for medicinal infusions, which are sometimes filtered with a wad of cotton through spirally twisted palm leaflets. During a seventeen-kilometer ride with me, Kentapi from the back of a horse pointed out some twenty steppe plants on the way and indicated their medicinal use. With such remedies, so far as I was able to learn, they attempt to cure themselves and others without following any true plan.

The manifold magico-medical application of urucú has been noted (p. 52). Another plant employed in this dual role in cases of sickness, particularly in epidemics, is the sucupira tree; the strong and odorous oil of the seeds is smelled against all conceivable diseases, especially catarrhs. Threatening epidemics are warded off by smoking oneself with the incense of the burnt green foliage of this tree or by lashing oneself with its twigs. This use rests on no medicinal virtues, but on the magical attributes of the tree, regarded by all Timbira as the symbol of strength and resistance. Another means for acquiring the toughness requisite for long begging journeys under unusual circumstances is to swallow several small grains of rolled quartz about 3 mm. in diameter from the sand of a creek.

Conjunctivitis is treated by washing the eyes with water into which the molten rosin of the jutahy tree (Hymenaea sp.) has been allowed to drip. Against muscular and articular pains the Indians apply an epiphyte (prñany; Neobraz.:sumaré) which is steamed in hot ashes. When children at the breast fall ill, both parents drink an infusion from the bark of a steppe bush, mekak³ re. The scraped bark of a small steppe tree called pekξparkóp serves as a remedy for scabies, wounds on the ear loop, and head lice. Sometimes powdered charcoal is rubbed into

266 Pohl, Reise, 2:197.
267 Snethlage, Nordostbrasis. Ind., 185.
268 Ribeiro, Memoria, § 16.
269 Nimuendajú, The Apinayé, 144 et seq.
the body. In order to recover from the exertion of a log race the runners refresh themselves with an infusion of the roots of either the graminaceous ha’tûre or of another plant called poyarkwâk.

In this empirical application of remedies religion is involved only so far as prolonged, but unsuccessful, experimentation is generally followed by a consultation of the spirits either directly or through a medicine-man. If the latter’s experience has not yet taught him what medicine the spirits would recommend in a given case, he will seek them out in the woods of a night in order to receive instructions. However, in nearly all cases of grave illness the patient himself attempts to establish contact with the spirits of his ancestors and to learn the proper medicine from them. This procedure, however, involves strict seclusion: the bed is surrounded with mat screens, the patient observes a diet, uses a scratching stick, and abstains from conversation with anyone. Only by following these rules can he hope to see in his dreams the persons he is seeking. He must further preserve complete silence as to his communication with them.

The medicine-men may apply methods besides the above-mentioned infusions and charcoal rubbings. I have several times seen Chief H̓įkt̓c̓kót̓ possibly the most powerful medicine-man of his tribe, sucking disease out of a patient’s body; or, more precisely, heard him, for his treatment was always shrouded in darkness and became perceptible only through a horrible sipping sound. The doctor never exhibits the extracted object, for it would strike the spectator with blindness. In the Yaw³’ myth the hero, after becoming a medicine-man by contact with spirits, kneads out of his brother-in-law’s body the head of a paca which had entered it because the man had eaten food with blood-stained fingers. Others are said to remove sickness with their hands and to throw it away in the direction of the wind. Blowing on the body also occurs for remedial purposes.

The doctor is compensated only for successful treatment.

Against the epidemics brought in by the Neobrazilians—smallpox, measles, the grippe—the Canella admittedly lack remedies individually applicable. From the Neobrazilians they have adopted smoking the house with a burnt cow horn against epidemics generically. Another loan from this source, against measles, is a decoction of weathered dog excrements to be drunk by the patient, whose treatment is completed with Indian remedies, his body being smeared with the grated leaf-shoots of the paty palm, over which they spread the milky juice of a Sapium species, finally rubbing in pulverized charcoal.

When in dread of an epidemic the entire village is subjected to a collective cure in the plaza. In such circumstances H̓įkt̓c̓kót̓ walked around the assembled throng, smoking from a funnel of paty-palm leaflets and waving away the disease with his hands. When the smallpox broke out in 1935, the people made a fire in the plaza, threw quantities of green sucupira twigs into it, and exposed themselves to the dense, white smoke. Then the medicine-man, holding a bunch of twigs of this tree, spread his legs wide apart, whereupon all the villagers, male and female, irrespective of age, had to crawl on all fours between his legs, receiving a few lashes on their backs with the twigs.

Another means of arresting the epidemic is to set up a staff from the rib of a bacaba palm leaf on the road by which the disease is expected to approach the village.

A few words may be injected on the supposed killing of old and sick people. Canella tradition does not mention the custom. In myth, Yaw³’ when hopelessly sick is abandoned by his tribe when it shifts its settlement, but is provided with water and food, and after a while the people call in order to look after him. Accord-
ing to Ribeiro\textsuperscript{270} the starving RìmikÇ’kamekra, succumbing to the smallpox and pursued by Neobrazilians, killed their sick:

Qualquer dos que enfermava durante suas marches, deitava-se no chão pondo por cabeceira uma pedra, e punham-lhe então os amigos e parentes outra grande pedra na cabeça com a qual lh’a esmagavam, e o deixavam alli descansande e livre das suas dores: este fim teve o maioral Tempé com todos os outros gentios seus mais notaveis collegas.

(Whoever fell sick on their marches lay down on the ground with a rock for a headrest, then his friends or relatives took another large rock with which they smashed his head, letting him rest there free from his pains. This was the end of Chief Tempé [error? cf. p. 32 f.] and all the other Indians who were his foremost companions.)

However, this took place in a situation more desperate than any known to the tribe before or after, hence does not prove the customary killing of the sick. Another case cited by Ribeiro\textsuperscript{271} relates to the Gamella of Vianna, hence is irrelevant.

Snethlage quotes a tale heard “von einem durchaus zuverlässigen Farmbesitzer” to the effect that one day a RìmikÇ’kamekra left his work to go home and kill his father, who was too weak to remain alive. The story seems hardly credible; even if the intention was a reality, the Indian is not likely to have ostentatiously informed his Neobrazilian employer of it?\textsuperscript{272}

**SNAKE SHAMANS**

KwàïkÇ’, a man of about forty-five, has the reputation of having special relations with snakes, communicating with them clandestinely, and owning remedies against snake bites. He is generally regarded with fear and mistrust. People may not seek his friendship, but at least they try not to incur his enmity; the majority, I believe, would be afraid to deny him a request lest he take it in ill part and send a poisonous snake to meet them. KwàïkÇ’ rather unscrupulously exploits this attitude, imposing on his tribesmen all sorts of transactions with him that always result to their disadvantage. Though for a long time aware that he neither keeps a promise nor sticks to a bargain, they lack the courage to refuse doing business with him.

He applied the same technique to me on learning of my interest in his knowledge, offering me in exchange an object he did not possess, demanding prior payment, which he received, and then regarding the matter as settled. When I demanded the return of the payment, he obeyed without protest, smiling his peculiar sweetish smile. Kentapi, who had urgently tried to dissuade me, was most upset by my procedure: KwàïkÇ’ was sure to take revenge; and when I said that was precisely what I should like to see, she added that if he failed he would take it out on her. Because of his sneaky conduct and unscrupulous mendacity I was unable to learn details as to his intercourse with the venomous snakes.

During my stay I saw him professionally active on only three occasions. The first time he called me to witness the act. A fortnight before my arrival a snake had bitten an Indian in the leg. He was seated on a racing log behind the house, with his leg extended. KwàïkÇ’ knelt before him and sucked out of the injured spot, which was still swollen, the “snake poison” still inside. A boy of about ten, the shaman’s disciple, was standing beside him. After a while he rose, expectorated the “poison” into his hand, and put it into his pupil’s mouth to be swallowed. The boy obviously had a horror of it and after several unsuccessful efforts he pushed the “poison” out of his mouth with his tongue. I forestalled the shaman by immediately removing it from his lips and at once recognized it as a bit of pink paper such as I was using to write on.

\textsuperscript{270} Ribeiro, Memoria, § 60.
\textsuperscript{271} Ibid., § 24.
\textsuperscript{272} Snethlage, Nordostbras. Ind., 186.
Besides suction these people know but a single remedy against snake bites. The pulvèrized charcoal of a horse bean called kagę’katę is tied on the sore spot and is drunk in water. The natives themselves have little confidence in this procedure. When Kentapi had been bitten by a snake and was bleeding from the mucous membrane, she asked me for some petroleum, which she drank according to Neobrazilian usage in such cases.

On one occasion I saw Kwą'ikę’ safeguarding the whole population against snake bites. All of them were assembled in the plaza in two parallel, facing lines extending north and south. The shaman walked behind the lines from one person to another; he had two little leather straps and for the space of a moment put one around an ankle of each person in turn. Like other medicine-men who undertake collective treatments of this order, he did not receive any remuneration. Subsequently, I had no difficulty in obtaining the straps in exchange.

The third time I observed him doctoring a woman suffering from violent toothache. He lanced the swollen gum with a snake tooth neatly and firmly mounted on a rod the length of a span; this implement, too, I was able to get by barter.

The pupil whom Kwą’ikę’ intended to train showed no inclination for the shaman’s profession, hence was allowed to go. Hıktckó’t also had a disciple, about thirteen years old when I first saw him in action. Even then his master allowed him to execute a collective cure against a menacing epidemic. All the villagers were standing crowded together in the plaza, while the boy ran round them, waving a sucupira twig. Hıktckó’t told me a pupil had to abstain from meat pies and any other form of meat for at least a month; he must refrain from sex relations and daily rub his body with the small pieces of a yellow root in order to be visited by the spirits, who at last would appear to him in a dream. After announcing this result in the plaza he would be acknowledged as a shaman.

Compared to the training imposed in other tribes, the course of a Canella pupil is rather easy and simple. Again and again one is impressed with the slight interest in supernaturalism manifested by these Indians. This was also illustrated during the Guajajára visit. Among these Tupi neighbors conditions are quite different; their shamans, who operate with tobacco narcosis, temporary departure of the soul from a living body, possession by animal spirits, etc., attempted to impress their hosts with an exhibition of their powers. One of them appeared with two assistants, smoked and rattled convulsively, then blew thick clouds of tobacco smoke into the assistants’ open mouths. They fell as though dead, and he resuscitated them. The hosts, however, never dreamt of taking all this seriously; they merely took great pains to learn Guajajára melodies for subsequent use as dance songs, but otherwise the performance meant mere fun for them.

**SORCERY**

Sometimes the spirits give a shaman a disease substance “to be reared” by him. It is said somewhat to resemble rosin. The medicine-man can then use it to afflict personal enemies by blowing it in the desired direction through the hollow of his hand or by furtively interring it before the victim’s door or in the plaza. The person bewitched will then die from some unascertainable disease. According to the mode of application such magic may affect single individuals or the entire village.

On the other hand, clippings of hair or other parts severed from the body are never used in sorcery.

As soon as a person is seriously suspected of having compassed another’s death by sorcery (hëñ), his life is forfeited among all the Timbira, the council decree-
ing his death. Several trustworthy men selected from the number of ever-present would-be executioners unexpectedly club the criminal down either in the plaza or from an ambush on the road. They immediately cut out his eyes or at least blindfold him to deprive the shadow of sight, sometimes they make cross-shaped gashes in the palms of his hands, and then he is interred in a pit without further ceremony. The killers paint themselves with charcoal and go into seclusion for a month.

Suspicion of sorcery almost invariably falls on alien Indians resident in the village, very rarely on a tribesman. Because of this fact I never cease wondering at the temerity of natives who, despite their notoriously mistrustful nature, venture to marry outside their own group. In the exceptional cases a magician apparently charges a tribesman with the death not from jealousy, but rather from fear of being himself accused of sorcery. The Canella told me about a case where this was so obviously true that only the Indians’ blind dread of sorcery prevented their recognition of the fact. The accuser in this instance achieved a double success: he got rid of a colleague who, unless forestalled, would probably have prepared the same fate for him; and through the “discovery” of the evil magic which the sorcerer was supposed to have buried in the plaza the accuser gained great esteem for his services.

In 1903—only a few years after the advent of the Či’kamekra—a certain Kava’i of that tribe who had married a Canella woman was killed for sorcery, after having allegedly in the course of a trifling dispute threatened his wife with evil magic. In great alarm she told her relatives; some time after she fell ill and died. Thereupon her relatives on the occasion of a log race killed her husband without ado, without consulting the council or the then chief, Delfino Kćkaipó. Since the latter disapproved of the execution, he obliged the killers to pay wergild to the slain man’s kin.

In 1927 the Api’nyekra suspected Vacca Preta, a Rımkć’kamekra living among them, of evil magic, killed him with a gun, and cremated the corpse. Thereupon the three Rımkć’kamekra chiefs, accompanied by a number of tribesmen, marched to the Api’nyekra village and forced the people to surrender the killer, but finally, after some persuasion, they were satisfied by an indemnity.

In the former days, however, such occurrences might evoke prolonged intertribal feuds. A Kre’pąmkateye whom I knew was a little boy when his uncle was killed by the sorcery of another Timbira tribe, whose name was kept from me in view of my intimate contacts with most of the groups. The boy was trained to regard vengeance as an obligation, which he had discharged several years before my visit, killing two members of the guilty tribe (Kręče of Cajuapára) with the assistance of several of his tribesmen. This happened at least fifteen years after the uncle’s death.

I have never seen the Rımkć’kamekra so incensed against Brazilian law as when I explained that the Government would not tolerate the execution of sorcerers. “What is to become of us then?” asked chief Kukrą’; the evil magicians will kill us all, by and by.”

MISSIONS

Catholic.—Notwithstanding Pohl’s and Snethlage’s statements, I can find not the slightest historical or ethnographic proof of the influence of Jesuit missionaries on any Timbira tribe. Demonstrably the Jesuits have never maintained a mission among any of them; and it is hardly to be supposed that they would have achieved as transients what the Capuchins failed to accomplish in the course of decades.

The first missionary who demonstrably concerned himself with the Eastern Timbira is the ecclesiastic mentioned by Ribeiro:
Auxiliando a capitania a conversão do gentilismo, que circumvizinhava a referida povoação de São Pedro de Alcantara a qual ainda então pertencia aos seus limites, não se descuidou de nomear e pagar para os ditos fins a um capellão ou vigario; porem que faria Sua Reverendissima neste caso? Excitou por dois ou tres annos todas as expedições que pôde sobre aquelles desgraçados para captival-os, e depois fugiu para o Pará em Junho de 1815, levando numa embarcação furtada a vender muitas destas ovelhas escravas que adqueriu como assentado ser este o derdadeiro modo de aproveitar o seu rebanho. Não foi só este pio sacerdote que teve taes e ainda peores sentimentos; porque certo commandante de Indios que iam a pacificar-se, nos relatou que fora muitas vezes induzido pelo seu mesmo capellão para os envenenar, e livrarem se do trabalho de os doutrinar e soffrer.

(In order to promote the conversion of the pagans living near said settlement of São Pedro de Alcantara [now Carolina], then still within its boundaries, the Capitanía [Goyaz] did not fail to appoint and pay a chaplain or vicar; what, however, did His Reverence do in these circumstances? For two or three years he fomented all raids possible against these unfortunates in order to capture them and finally, in June 1815, he fled to Pará, taking with him in a stolen vessel many of these enslaved sheep of his, which he had acquired as described, convinced that this was the proper way to use his flock. This pious cleric was not the only one to hold such opinions and even worse ones, for a certain commandant of Indians who were about to turn peaceable, told us that their own chaplain had often tried to persuade him to poison them in order to save himself the labor of instructing them.) 273

Beginning in 1848, the Carmelite Brother Manoel Procopio, settled in Santa Thereza (= Imperatriz), tried for several years to convert the Krêyê of Cajuapára and the Krêkatí, but without success.

From 1848–1875 the KrahÇ´ were under the influence of the Capuchin missionary Brother Rafael Tuggia, but the only influence was a considerable admixture with Negro blood, which that missionary is said to have favored. His description of the KrahÇ´ betrays incapacity to understand the Indian character and is full of gross errors. He was of opinion that the KrahÇ´ should be organized in a colony.

The Capuchin missionaries of Barra do Corda have never spent more than a few hours as transients among the Canella tribes, whose children they would baptize on such occasions, once in a while also marrying a couple. Between 1896 and 1901 they had three or four RîmkÇ´kamekra boys in their school in Barra do Corda; one of them is still living and shows no trace of their instruction. Pompeu Sobrinho erroneously reports that the Canella were once settled at the missions of Grajahu and Barra do Corda. The Capuchins of the latter town were always concerned with the Guajajára, but their first attempt (1870) to organize a colony of them ended in 1875 with the eviction of the missionary. The second attempt (1896), based on a boarding school for the Indian children, led to a sanguinary uprising in which two hundred civilized people, including five monks and seven nuns, lost their lives. 275 Since then effort has been directed solely toward the civilized inhabitants, the Indian mission being completely abandoned.

In part the failure of the Capuchins was certainly due to the anticlerical propaganda of Neobrazilians, whose more or less shady relations with the Guajajára suffered because of the mission. However, the main reason is the missionaries’ negativistic attitude, on principle, toward the Indian culture they confront. They feel that they have more important business than to study silly Indian superstitions and Indian customs.

Protestant. — Since 1924 English and Brazilian missionaries of the Heart of Amazonia Mission have been working in the interior of Maranhão; they, too, have concerned themselves mainly with the Guajajára. Unsupported by the Government, they proceeded more cautiously than the Capuchins, but they, too, were obliged to

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273 Ribeiro, Memoria, § 86.
274 Merrime, 8.
give up their mission in Colonia because of the hostile attitude assumed by the Guajajára. An attempt to settle among the Krahçʹ was frustrated by the dispersal of that tribe in 1930. Since 1924 the missionaries have been also interested in the Krahçʹ, where two Neobrazilians, Zacharias Campello and Francisco Collares, have been operating, but in 1930 I was unable to detect there any influence on the native modes of thought. Collares was repeating the old Capuchin error in trying to transform the Krahçʹ villages into a colony. His attitude is illustrated by his remark to me about log racing: this must be abolished, being a barbarous, brutal sport detrimental to Indian health and tending to “exterminate” so useful a tree as the burity; in its place he intended to introduce the civilized football game. He bitterly complained that since my arrival the Krahçʹ were absenting themselves from him, and tried—in intelligibly enough from his standpoint—to throw all sorts of obstacles in my way. I got the impression that even then many of the Krahçʹ were thoroughly tired of him. After another five years’ activity he made statements about the Krahçʹ that prove his complete ignorance of the Indians’ religious and social ideas—the part of their life which should be of foremost interest to a missionary. Not long after this he seems to have abandoned the mission, which his colleague had left some time before. In 1937 I met him again in Piabanha on the upper Tocantins, where he owned a school for Neobrazilians, a shop, and several houses, and—I do not know with what justification—presented himself as a missionary to the Šerénte.

The Rji mkçʹkamekra and Apji nyekra have hitherto had neither Catholic nor Protestant missionaries. Such knowledge as they have of Christianity results from observation of Neobrazilians and the occasional, clumsy efforts of these neighbors to impose their ideas. However, the possibility of adopting the alien faith is quite inconceivable to these Indians, in whose life even indigenous religious notions play a subordinate part. Accordingly, their supernaturalism has remained free of foreign admixture. Baptism and, exceptionally, church weddings are resorted to not for religious but solely from social motives since Neobrazilians equate pagans with the wild beasts and recognize only marriages sanctioned by the church.

The Indians do know the names of half a dozen saints, but lack any notion of their or of Jesus’ personality; these names, like the Devil’s, merely figure as rhetorical embellishments of their Portuguese speech, patterned as it is on Neobrazilian models. They are thus quite indifferent to the figures of Christian faith. Unlike the Šerénte, they have made no attempt to identify these—except for God the Father—with aboriginal counterparts. Auké (p. 245) is regarded as the Brazilian Emperor Pedro II. The cross does not even serve magical purposes; the little crosses and saints’ medallions worn around the neck are regarded as purely decorative. This is the extent of their “Catholicism,” to which Ignace refers. The Protestant songs the Indians, especially the women, try to learn, precisely as they do the heathen chants of the Guajajára.

276 Grubb, Lowland Indians, 29.
277 Estevão Pinto, Indígenas do Nordeste, 214, note.