

Understanding the Past Through Indigenous Knowledge and Archaeological Research

Félix A. Acuto & Hilda Corimayo

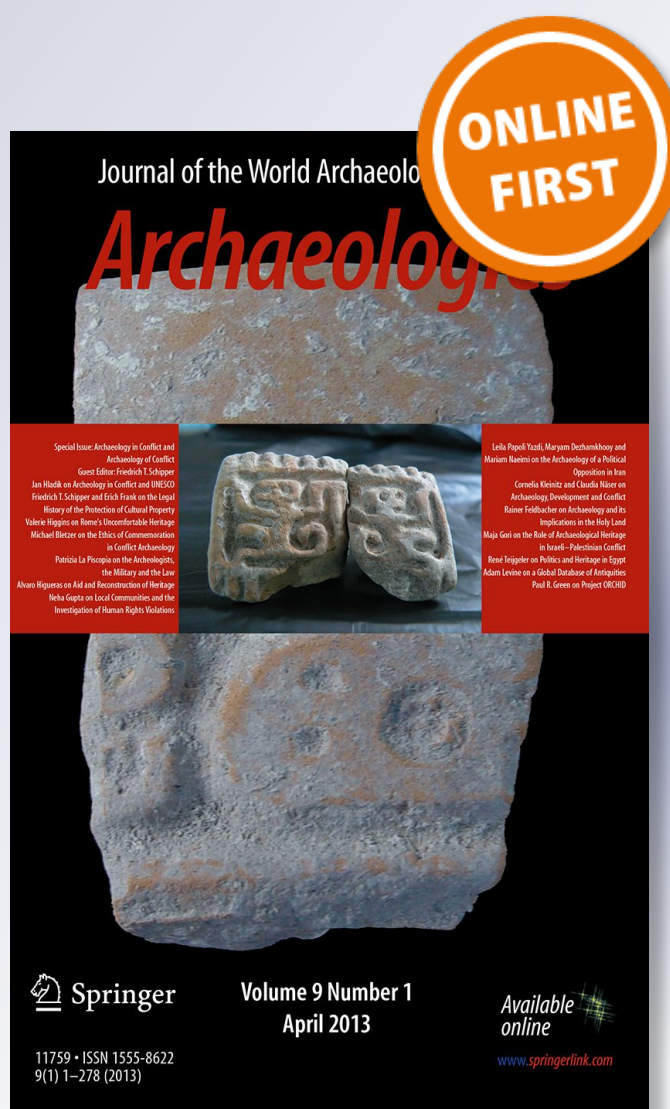
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Understanding the Past Through Indigenous Knowledge and Archaeological Research

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ABSTRACT

This article is the product of an intercultural archaeological project which main goal and praxis is to promote and empower indigenous voices and knowledge in contemporary Argentina, in a context of re-emergence of indigenous identities and organizations after decades of invisibilization and denial. Here we explore the past by combining two sources of knowledge: the archaeological one (with its theories and methods) and the indigenous knowledge (based on a non-Western ontology and informed by oral traditions, cosmological observations, practical know-hows, and the experience acquired by dwelling in the indigenous territory). To accomplish this task, the graphic representations that the Diaguita communities of the North Calchaquí Valley (Argentina) painted on their pots and engraved on rocks during the late intermediate period (AD 1000-1450) is examined and discussed. We claim that analysing prehistoric material culture from these two perspectives and sources of knowledge allows the production of richer, plural, and better-informed narratives of the past.

Résumé: Le présent article est le produit d'un projet archéologique interculturel dont le but et l'objet principaux sont de promouvoir le droit de parole et les connaissances autochtones dans l'Argentine moderne, et de leur concéder du pouvoir dans le contexte de la réémergence des identités et organisations autochtones après des décennies d'invisibilité et de déni. Nous y explorons le passé en combinant deux sources de connaissances, soit la source archéologique, avec ses théories et méthodes, et les connaissances autochtones fondées sur une ontologie non occidentale appuyée par des traditions orales, des observations cosmiques, des savoir-faire pratiques et une expérience acquise à même le territoire autochtone. Pour accomplir cette tâche, nous examinons les représentations graphiques que les communautés diaguita de la vallée Calchaquí Nord de l'Argentine

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ont peintes sur des pots et de la roche durant la période intermédiaire tardive (1000 à 1450 de notre ère). Nous avançons que l'analyse de la culture matérielle préhistorique de ces deux perspectives et sources de connaissances permet de construire des récits du passé plus riches, pluralistes et mieux informés.

Resumen: Este artículo es el resultado de un proyecto arqueológico intercultural cuyo principal objetivo y práctica es promover y potenciar las voces y el conocimiento indígenas en la Argentina contemporánea, en un contexto de resurgimiento de identidades y organizaciones indígenas después de décadas de falta de visibilidad y negación. Exploramos el pasado combinando dos fuentes de conocimientos: el arqueológico (con sus teorías y métodos) y el conocimiento indígena (basado en una ontología no occidental e informado por las tradiciones orales, las observaciones cosmológicas, los conocimientos prácticos y la experiencia adquirida al habitar en el territorio indígena). Para realizar esta tarea, se han examinado y analizado las representaciones gráficas que las comunidades diaguitas del valle Calchaquí Norte (Argentina) pintaron en sus vasijas y grabaron en las rocas durante el periodo Intermedio Tardío (AD 1000-1450). Reivindicamos que el análisis de la cultura material prehistórica desde estas dos perspectivas y fuentes de conocimiento permite elaborar relatos del pasado más ricos, plurales y mejor informados.

KEY WORDS

Indigenous knowledge, Archaeological investigation, Interculturality, Diaguita iconography

Introduction

This paper's pursuit is to produce knowledge about the past of the indigenous Diaguita People from northwest Argentina by creating a counterpoint between the archaeological and the native perspective. We focus on the analysis of the graphic representations painted on ceramic pots and carved on rocks in the North Calchaquí Valley (Figure 1) during the Late Intermediate Period or LIP (AD 1000-1450). Not only Félix Acuto, as an archaeologist, has studied this region's past for more than 20 years, but also Hilda Corimayo (a Diaguita peasant, ceramist, and tourist guide) has been always interested in learning and knowing about her ancestors' life and history. In the Diaguita world not every person is able to speak about the past or has the knowledge to understand and interpret the archaeologi-

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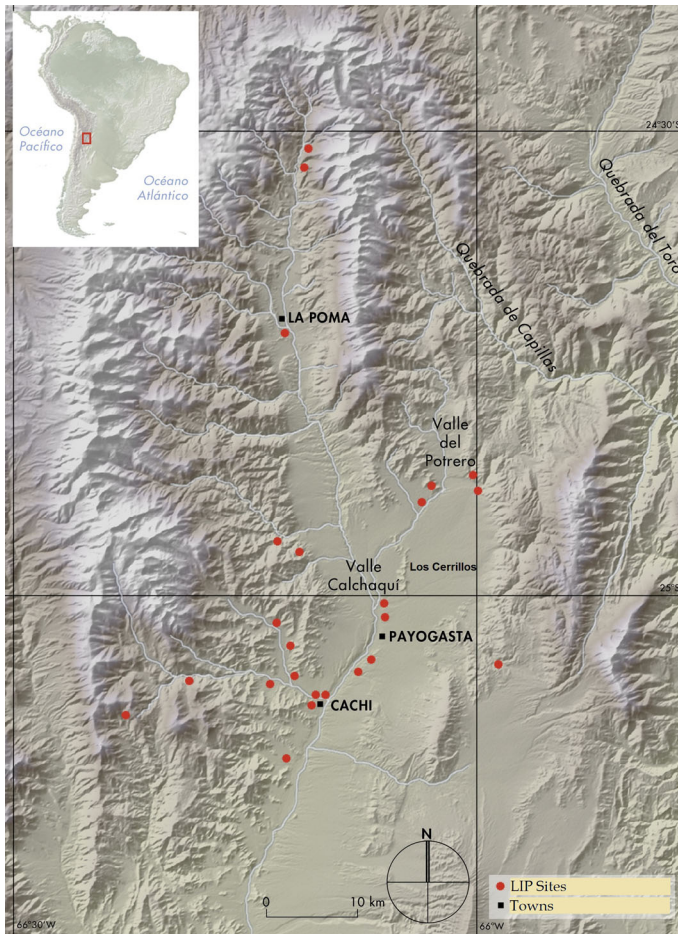


Figure 1. North Calchaquí Valley, Argentina

cal landscape. Elders choose particular people to be recipients of certain cultural information, oral traditions, memories, and specific types of knowledge, especially related to rituals and cosmological understandings. Hilda Corimayo is one of these persons. By touring the territory, visiting the ruins of old settlements, observing and reflecting about the objects exhibited in the local archaeological museum, collecting oral histories, and, principally, establishing conversations with local elders, Hilda has been able to build a solid understanding of North-Calchaquí past.

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Since 2007, this common interest about Diaguita's past has taking us to work together in archaeological and artistic projects and to debate and exchange ideas and views. For a number of years, Hilda Corimayo has been particularly interested in Diaguita iconography, studying and reflecting about the messages that her ancestors left on the surface of rocks and painted on their pots. Encouraged by Hilda Corimayo, Félix Acuto decided to re-orient part of his research project to include the study of local rock art sites and past ceramic motifs. This article is the product of this common interest and the intercultural conversations we have developed for a number of years. However, we have decided to present our interpretations about Diaguita iconography, informed by two different ways of knowing and of producing knowledge, in separated sections in order to keep them balanced and place them in equal conditions, avoiding that one of them (the indigenous one) being subsumed and co-opted by the other (the academic one).

Now, what is the socio-historical context in which we have decided to take these steps? Why writing a two-voice narrative of the past and why one of these voices needs to be indigenous?

According to Argentine social imaginary, Argentina is a nation of immigrants with almost no indigenous people alive. This is well expressed in a Latin American popular saying that declares that “the Mexicans descend from the Aztecs, the Peruvians descend from the Incas, and the Argentini-ans descend from the boats”. Even the very president of Argentina, Mauricio Macri, recently says, during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting at Davos (January 2018), that in Argentina everybody descends from Europeans immigrants. Where does this perception of Argentine citizens and identity come from? Even though Spanish colonialism had a considerable impact on indigenous cultures, it would be after independence from Spain and during Argentina nation-building process, in the second half of the 19th century until the first decades of the twentieth, when a systematic process of erasure of indigenous identities and cultures began to take place in this young country.

Argentine white creole political and intellectual elites, who aspired to create a modern, Western nation following the model of European Enlightenment, liberalism, rationality, and positivism, saw indigenous peoples (together with black and mixed races) as obstacles for progress and civilization (Appelbaum et al. 2003; Briones 2005a; Francia and Tola 2011; Gordillo and Hirsch 2003; Kraay 2007; Pizarro 2006; Schelling 2000). In order to construct a European like society and to overcome what they considered barbarism, Argentine minority political elite and intelligentsia pursued the whitening of the population and the modernization of their institutions and culture. The physical elimination of indigenous peoples through military campaigns—such as the Conquest of the Desert (1878–

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1885) and of the Argentine Chaco (1870–1917)—; the enforcing of educational policies oriented to eradicate local traditions and cosmologies and to impose an homogenous Western and modern identity and culture on every citizen and in every corner of the country; the juridical and political disenfranchisement of indigenous, blacks, and the illiterate (who were excluded from full citizenship and who were not allowed to have property and to vote); and the promotion of European immigration (six million Europeans migrated to Argentina between 1870 and 1914) were some of the state policies developed and oriented to get rid of “backward” non-western identities and cultures and to achieve modernity and civilization.

Since the 1930s, the crisis of positivism and of the liberal project, the industrialization of the country, the new political ideologies brought by European immigrants (such as anarchism and socialism), the emergence of new political parties and social organizations, and the transformation of Argentina into a society of masses (Appelbaum et al. 2003; Schelling 2000), did not encompass any change in the status of indigenous peoples. Although social justice was one of the main goals sought after by the social and political movements that emerged during this period and throughout the 20th century, they were working-class oriented movements with no room for indigenous identities and rights. The situation of native nations did not improve during the numerous military dictatorships that ruled Argentina during this same century. For the nationalistic militaries, firm defenders of Christian and Western values, indigenous peoples and cultures represented an already overcome uncivilized, undesirable, and “heathen” past.

This politic of identity oriented to make modern European like persons of every Argentine citizen was not only an up-down endeavour. Different people, such as Catholic priests, Evangelic pastors, schoolteachers, doctors, state officials, members of the security forces, landlords, among other, constituted key social agents who, at the local level, contributed with this quest towards modernity and cultural westernization. They spread the discourses and practices of civilization, simultaneously correcting, repressing, denying, and transforming the indigenous ways.

Archaeology also played a part in this process of erosion and invisibilization of indigenous cultures and identities (see Endere 2005; Flores and Acuto 2015; Francia and Tola 2011; Haber 2005; Jofré 2010; Manasse and Arenas 2015; Politis and Curtoni 2011; Quesada 2009; among others). Since its constitution as an academic discipline in the late 19th century and until no so long ago, Argentine archaeology appropriated indigenous material patrimony and became the official voice of indigenous history and culture. According to this voice, and the narratives it produced, indigenous peoples belonged to the past and were no longer present in contemporary Argentine society. Far from seeking the integration of what was indigenous

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into the national history and identity, Argentine archaeological narratives served to sustain the dominant ideology and modernity's *status quo* in aspects such as the naturalization of Western racial categories and the representation of original peoples as backward, extinct cultures.

This systematic process of ideological and cultural transformation affected, of course, native people (Briones 2005b; Francia and Tola 2011; Gordillo and Hirsch 2003; Isla 2002; Pizarro 2006). In some cases, people have directly abandoned their indigenous identity, replacing it by other identities such as the national one, but also regional and class identities. This has been the situation of migrants to the city who ended up living at the urban outskirts in conditions of extreme poverty. In other cases, some people recognize their indigenous ancestry but think that this is an already overcome stage. Discrimination and repression took some other native families and groups, such as the Atacama, Diaguita, and Omaguaca from northwest Argentina, to withdraw from the public arena and to preserve indigenous ways within the domestic realms, hidden from the public eye. Nevertheless, and despite this context of complete marginalization and invisibilization from society, certain indigenous peoples and communities, who ended up cornered in small territories, such as the Q'om and Wichi from north Argentina or the Mapuche from Patagonia, among some others, have preserved, as far as it was possible, their indigenous identity, practices, and languages.

In the last two decades, we have witnessed the re-emergence of indigenous identities and organizations throughout Latin America (Jackson and Warren 2005; Le Bot 2013; Seider 2002; Yashar 2005). There is a steady process of self-recognition going on, produced by the conjunction of several factors, especially the democratization of the region and the establishment of new constitutional rights and international treaties that have permitted indigenous people to embrace and voice their indigenous identity, overcoming fear of rejection and repression. Indigenous struggles for lands, resources, rights, consultation, bi-lingual education, intercultural health programs, and heritage have spread out throughout the region, changing the social dynamics of Latin American societies.

This is the case of the Diaguita People from northwest Argentina. Even though Spanish colonialism first, and modernity and the state next, affected Diaguita culture and identity, the Diaguitas, or at least some of them, managed to maintain and reproduce their worldview and some of their cultural practices at the domestic level. Based on the self-awareness of this difference, the Diaguita identity has begun to re-emerge. A first stage characterized by a process of self-recognition as Diaguitas has been followed by the reconstitution of their communities and organizations and by active struggles over lands. More recently, and little by little, Diaguita communities and organizations have included other claims and projects in their

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agendas, such as the recovery of their archaeological heritage and the repatriation of the mortal remains of their ancestors who are part of museum collections. Up to now, and according to Argentine law, archaeological sites and artefacts (including indigenous mortal remains) belong to the national and the provincial states. The Diaguita People, as well as other native peoples, have begun to challenge this, claiming their rights over their ancestral heritage, making strong demands to archaeologists, and developing different projects related to this patrimony (Crespo 2013; Endere 2005; Endere and Curtoni 2006; Haber 2008; Hernández Llosa et al. 2010; Manasse and Arenas 2015). One of these projects is to start to narrate by themselves, and through their worldview, knowledge, and wisdom, their own history.

For the last 10 years, Félix Acuto have been accompanying this process, working together with the authorities and representatives of the National Encounter of Territorial Organizations of Original Peoples (ENOTPO, <http://enotpo.blogspot.com.ar/>) in issues of indigenous rights, archaeology, history, heritage, and repatriation. Forty-five indigenous territorial organizations that belong to 27 native nations, including the Diaguita, participate in ENOTPO. Two of the main principles of this national indigenous organization are: 1. To give local and national visibility to indigenous peoples and their projects and struggles; 2. To use the indigenous voice to talk about indigenous issues, avoiding this voice been mediated by third parties, either the Church, politicians, scientists, NGOs, or anyone else. Following these principles, and working under the premise of making archaeological tools and knowledge available to indigenous causes and struggles, we have developed different cooperative projects, the great majority of them demanded by these indigenous territorial organizations. One of these projects involves the promotion of indigenous participation in academic circles and the construction of spaces for indigenous peoples to narrate their history and their present with their own voices. In order to accomplish this, we have planned collaborative archaeological fieldworks, we have organized symposiums in archaeology national congresses, we have participated in academic meetings and workshops, and we have written joint papers published in academic journals (Flores and Acuto 2015; Huircapan et al. 2017), among other activities. Even though some might see indigenous knowledge as distorted, hybrid, and highly influenced by Western forms, in our intercultural project we vindicate it. We do not deny the great impact that Western colonialism has had on the indigenous world, but we consider that indigenous wisdom, cosmologies, and practices have resisted, they have found room for their transmission and are re-emerging in the present with unusual strength.

This paper maintains this line of intercultural work. As other contemporary reflexive and critical archaeological projects in Latin America and in other parts of the world, we seek to develop an engaged, committed, and

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politically oriented archaeology that supports (and advocate for) indigenous knowledge and interpretations of the past, claiming the need to produce joint narratives, combining the knowledge that archaeology generates, based on its theories and methods, with indigenous knowledge, based on non-Western ontologies and informed by oral traditions, cosmological observations, practical know-hows that come from the past, and the wisdom that dwelling in the territory provides (see Atalay 2006; Aikenhead and Ogawa 2007; Bruchac et al. 2010; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; Echo-Hawk 2000; Hernández Llosa et al. 2010; Manasse and Arenas 2015; Peck et al. 2003; Smith and Wobst 2005; Watkins 2000; Whitley 2007; among others; see Gnecco and Ayala 2010 for a Latin American standpoint).

Pottery and Symbolic Imaginary (by Félix A. Acuto)

Archaeologists traditionally interpreted the LIP in the Calchaquí Valley and in neighbouring regions of the South Andes as a time of social complexity and institutionalized social stratification and inequality (DeMarrais 2001; Ottonello and Lorandi 1987; Tarragó 2000; among others). This interpretation has been reexamined and contested in recent years. Based on new investigations, some archaeologists have argued that social life during the LIP was actually characterized by decentralization and corporative practices (Nielsen 2006), or by equality and communal integration (Acuto 2007), whereas forces towards distinction and stratification were contained. For a number of years, we have tested these ideas, studying villages' spatial organization and architecture, daily activities and practices, artefacts production and consumption, and funerary practices (Acuto 2007; Acuto et al. 2011, 2014; Kergaravat et al. 2014, 2015). As a paramount artefact in North-Calchaquí social life, pots can give us more clues about social organization and interactions during the LIP.

Ceramic production did not constitute a specialized or centralized activity. Each household made their own pots inside their homes (Baralle 2012: 171; Díaz 1978–1984, 1981). In the case of decorated ceramics (whose typical forms are the long-neck pot and the bowl, and to a lesser extent spheroid bowls and everted neck-rim globular pots of different sizes), they were almost exclusively used within residential settlements, either in domestic tasks or public events (to storage, serve, and consume food and liquids), to place and to burn offerings, to bury children, or to place them next to the dead as grave offerings (Acuto et al. 2014; Amuedo 2012; Baralle 2012: 157–187; Díaz 1978–1984, 1981; Kergaravat et al. 2014). Albeit pottery (both decorated and non-decorated) had a strong presence in daily life, it was particularly absent in other LIP places and social contexts. For exam-

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ple, they are rarely found in three important places of the Diaguita landscape during the LIP: agricultural terraces, shrines, and rock art sites.

In order to examine the social imaginary that past Diaguitas transmitted through ceramic iconography in the spheres of daily life and death, I analysed the decoration of 309 LIP pots recovered from the region, currently deposited in the Archaeological Museum P.P. Díaz from Cachi and the Ethnographic Museum J.B. Ambrosetti from Buenos Aires (Ambrosetti 1907). Specifically, I examined: (1) the organization of the design and (2) the repertoire of motifs used to decorate these pots.

The first step taken to study the design was comparing the sides of the long-neck pots and of the everted neck-rim globular vessels. These two types of ceramic vessels present two faces divided by two vertical stripes that run from the lip to the base through the pots' handles. For this exercise, I only considered 51 complete pots, discarding the partially eroded. I found that the decoration of both sides was symmetrical in 94% of the cases (n 48). That is to say, what was painted on one side was also painted on the other (Figure 2.1, 2). One pot exhibited alternated symmetry (both faces had the same motifs but some of them in different locations), while the other two presented a partial symmetry, with slight differences between the motifs used to decorate each side of the pot. For example, in one of these cases both sides are alike, with the exception of the central stripe. Whereas on one face of this container the Diaguita potter drew a pattern of frets, on the other face he/she painted a pattern of 'hand' motif.

The same decorative pattern was found when examining each face of the long-neck pots and of the everted neck-rim globular vessels and the decoration of the bowls and the spheroid bowls. One hundred thirty-five pots (87%) out of a sample of 155 showed that LIP Diaguita pottery makers chose principles of duality and symmetry to decorate their ceramic vessels. In these cases, the decoration was divided into two parts by a central stripe. Each of these parts was the mirror-like reflection of the other (Figure 2.3–6). Four vessels (2.5%) exhibited a dual organization of their decoration with alternated symmetry (Figure 2.7), and 15 pots (10%) combined duality with partial symmetry (Figure 2.8). Only one pot (0.5%) broke away with this persistent decorative pattern. In this last case, and although the dual organization was preserved, the decoration on one side of the central stripe did not reflect like a mirror on the other side.

Even though one could argue that, in the case of the long-neck ceramic vessels, duality and symmetry occur because the decoration painted on the surface of this type of pots represents the face and dressed body of an anthropomorphic being (see also Nastri 2009; Nastri and Stern Gelman 2011; Velandia 2005), symmetry not only has to do with the anatomical parts of this entity, but it is also exhibited in the way these bodies were

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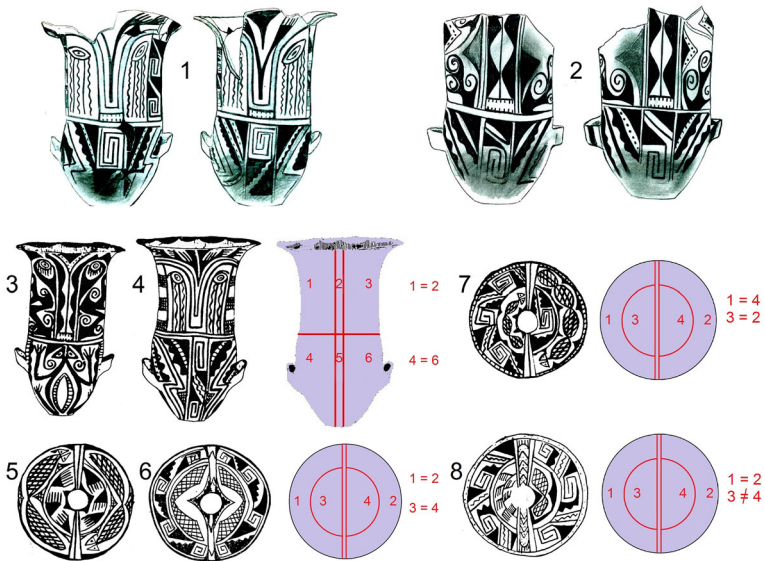


Figure 2. LIP long-neck pots' and bowls' design organization (1 and 2 courtesy of Marina Smith, 3–8 redrawn from Ambrosetti 1907)

decorated. Potters chose to keep the symmetrical pattern in the facial painting and in the design of the outfits, when they could have chosen not to, such as their neighbours of the Yocavil Valley, 200 km south from the North Calchaquí Valley, did (Velandia 2005).

The repertoire of motifs employed to ornament the pots and their degree of variation or repetition give us more clues about Diaguita pottery making and social imaginary. Three aspects were explored: (1) type and diversity of motifs, (2) variations within each type, and (3) type and degree of variability in the elements used as motif fillings. In this paper, I focus on the first two points and I make some comments about the third.

I registered 1047 motifs in the whole sample of 309 pots studied, which I divided into 17 types (Table 1, Figure 3). Four of these types (frets, spirals, snake-like figures, and chevrons) are predominant (reaching 60%) and highly ubiquitous (Figure 3.1–4). Either alone or in combination, frets, spirals, serpents, and chevrons appear in 85% of the pots. If we add up the next three more popular motifs to this group of four (geometric type 1, faces, and the hand figure) (Figure 3.5–7), we can see that this seven motifs reach 80% of the total number of figures used to decorate these 309 ceramic vessels. It is interesting to note that there are some original and unique motifs. However, they slightly exceed 1% of the total number of motifs registered (Table 1).

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I found this same search for repetition when examining the internal variability in each of the four most popular motifs. For example, 220 (86%) out of the 257 compositions with frets recorded were patterns of frets (Figure 3.1.A). Something similar happens in the case of the spirals. The typical spiral motifs that pottery makers painted on the pots were spirals that emerge from triangles or from zigzag lines (Figure 3.2.A, B). They represent 82% of the total number of spiral motifs recorded. Although at first glance the snake-like motif seems to present certain degree of variability (Figure 3.3), pottery makers generally chose two types to decorate their ceramics: the S-shape snake and the snake whose body is a row of reticulated ovals (Figure 3.3.A, B). The first type represents 30% of the snake-like motif registered in the 309 pots studied, and the second reaches 59%.

This trend towards repetition and rigid decorative patterns changes when we observe the small details and the elements used to fill the small spaces. Even though potters certainly liked to decorate their ceramic containers with patterns of frets, each of them introduced variation in this

Table 1 LIP ceramic decoration motifs

Type	N	%
1. Fret	257	24.55
2. Spiral	142	13.56
3. Serpent	130	12.42
4. Chevron	105	10.03
5. Geometric type 1	69	6.59
6. Face	63	6.02
7. Hand motif	51	4.87
8. Lineal motif	42	4.01
9. Reticulated	29	2.77
10. Half-moon	28	2.67
11. Chess board	27	2.58
12. Suri	24	2.29
13. Batrachian	21	2.01
14. Bird	20	1.91
15. Row of triangles, diamonds, and volutes	18	1.72
16. Steppes	7	0.67
17. Special motifs		
17.1 Special #2	3	0.29
17.2 Feline spot	3	0.29
17.3 Special #6	2	0.19
17.4 Special #1	1	0.09
17.5 Special #3	1	0.09
17.6 Special #4	1	0.09
17.7 Special #5	1	0.09
Total	1047	100

Amount and percentages

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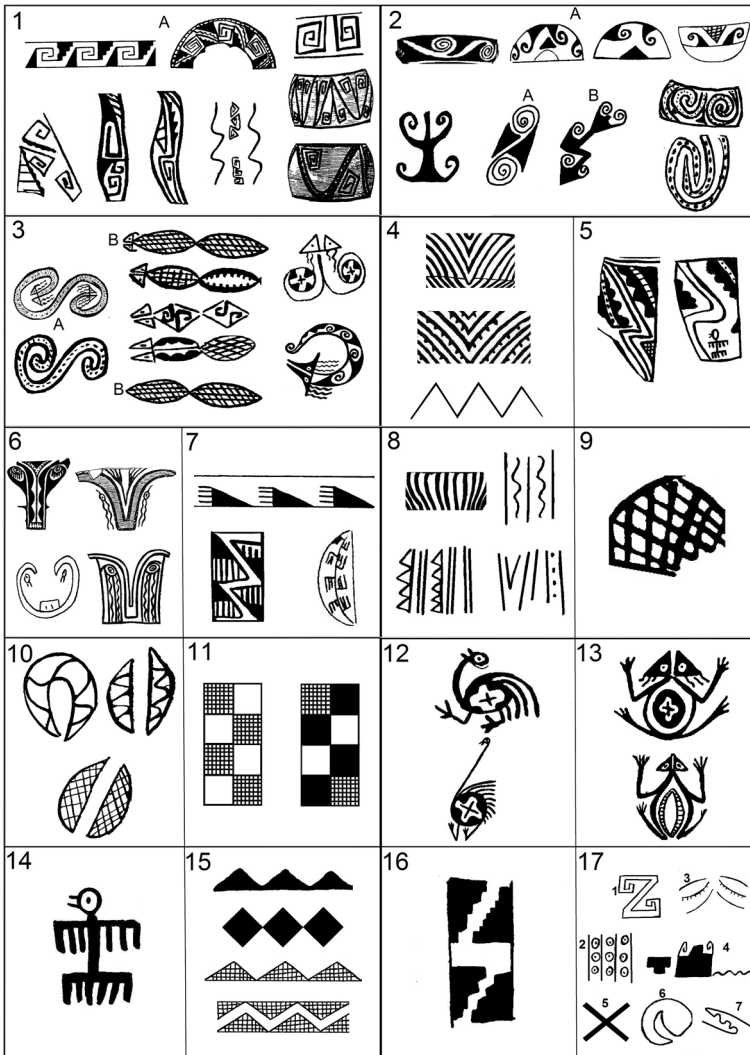


Figure 3. LIP ceramic motifs

popular motif. Some people added up steps to the triangles from where the frets emerge and sometimes they drew straight lines, zigzags, dots, or nothing between these triangles (compare Figure 2.1, 2, 4, 6–8). Something similar happens with the chevrons and the geometric motif type 1. Whereas some people included lines of dots or short lines, some others did not (Figures 2.1, 2, 4; 4). Overall, although pottery makers respected sym-

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metry and preferred popular motifs over innovation, they introduced variations in the small details and the motif fillings.

LIP Diaguita ceramic decoration displays a great deal of homogeneity regarding the decorative patterns and the motifs employed, something also observed by other researchers (Nastri 2009; Nastri and Stern Gelman 2011; Velandia 2005). Repetition and sameness show that ceramic iconography did not constitute a realm for personal creativity and was not strategically used to establish differences and boundaries between the households that lived in the same settlement, or even between those who lived in different villages in the region. On the contrary, past Diaguita pottery makers sought to connect the ceramic vessels they made with a communally and regionally shared symbolic imaginary. Very similar pots from two sites located 10 km apart, and from two different contexts within the same site, 400 m one from the other, portrait this point (Figure 4). Even though some potters used partial symmetries and introduced a few original motifs, these do not seem to have constituted radical actions oriented to break away from the shared decorative patterns and symbolic imaginary. On the other hand, the variation seen in the elements used to fill the small spaces in between the principal motifs were expressions of the potters' agency and skills, something to be expected in any craft practice, and therefore cannot be

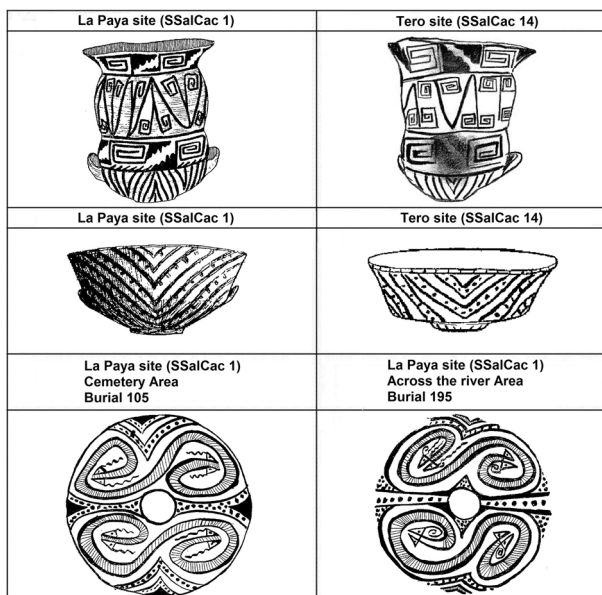


Figure 4. Comparison between pots from different sites and from different locations in La Paya site (from Ambrosetti 1907 and courtesy of Marina Smith)

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considered intentional attempts to introduce diversity and to abandoned the decorative tradition. In a nutshell, when deciding how to decorate their pottery, Diaguitas did not pursue stylistic innovation but rather they leaned towards tradition. They did not seek social distinction, such other researchers have claimed (DeMarrais 2001; Tarragó 2000), but chose connection through similarity.

Pottery and Its Symbolic Imaginary (by Hilda Corimayo)

We tend to separate everything. Sciences have divided things into different fields. We detach human beings from their surroundings. In this region, and according to our worldview, everything is together, interconnected and in reciprocity: air, light, energy, people, animals, mountains, rivers, everything. One thing depends on another and vice versa. People who have been raised in this region truly believe in the equality between people, nature, cosmos, and the territory. This is a totality formed by diverse elements that need one another and that bond up together through complementarity and reciprocity. I claim that pottery decoration presents this worldview and understanding of the territory's nature and dynamics. Specifically they represent the four elements that produce and reproduce life in the territory (water, earth, fire, and air), and the lived world and the entanglement of things.

Past Diaguita pottery makers always included at least one motif that represented one of the four elements. These elements shape life and nature. Birds represent air and suris (the Andean ostrich; *Pterocnemia pennata*) represent soil, the fertile land. They are the largest bird that lives on this region, and they have the colour of the soil. We can see in some of these pots complete figures of suris or parts of this animal, such as in the case of Figure 5.1. The eyes of the animal in Figure 5.2 are also suris' heads, and the dots painted in many vessels could be their traces. Earth is also represented by the hills and mountain ranges that pottery makers often painted in these containers (Figure 6.1.B).

In this region people have always said that frogs and toads symbolize water. Both have the power to control rain; one of them produces it and the other stops it. In April, when the weather begins to change, frogs constantly croak. This marks the end of the rainy season. In August and September, when the weather begins to warm up, toads begin their croaking and frogs become silent. Frogs always croak during the winter, in the dry season, and never during the rainy season. When the rainy season arrives and there are no rains, we need to punish the toad to get some precipitations.

Elders used to say that serpents were related to fire. Fire is a key element of life. It serves to heat and to cook. Like lightning bolts, which produce fire, snakes have a zigzag movement. Furthermore, snakes kill and so

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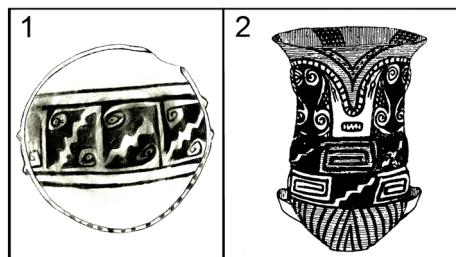


Figure 5. Combination of elements in ceramic decoration (1 courtesy of Marina Smith, 2 redrawn from Ambrosetti 1907)

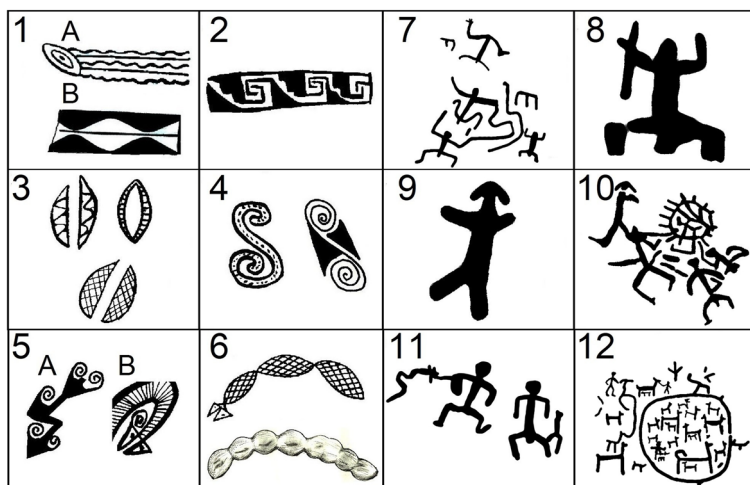


Figure 6. 1–6: Ceramic motifs, 7–12: human representations in rock art

do lightning bolts. People say that in places that have been struck by lightning bolts, one can find the petrified remains of ancient and enormous serpents. In Figure 2.3 we can see a zigzag line—like the movement of snakes and lightning bolts—on the cheeks of the face portrayed on the neck of these long-neck pots. Nevertheless, if we pay close attention, we can distinguish the head of a snake (see Figure 6.5). This type of representation shows the entanglement between serpents and lighting bolts.

When painting their pottery, past local inhabitants included a variety of elements from the world they daily experienced and connected to. There is a mixture of the things they knew, lived, felt, and imagined. These vessels exhibit symbols that represent water, trails, mountains, houses, plants, or

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specific places. At first glance, one may see something not quite well defined, but when carefully observing the decoration of the pots and when one rotates them, different things show up. If we rotated Figure 2.1 90 degrees, we would see that what was an eye becomes a spring and a river (Figure 6.1.A). There are spaces without decoration in this same pot. This is darkness or the space of the night. Day and night are two important elements, as they are represented in the Chakana cross. Many figures in these ceramic containers are representations of mountains. When I flip 90 degrees the long-neck pot portraits in Figure 2.3, what was the nose of this animal becomes a mountain range (Figure 6.1.B). It is like during the nightfall, when you clearly see the shape of the mountains. Mountains are also present in the patterns of frets. I see mountains in the triangles from where the frets emerge (Figure 6.2). Like mountains, these triangles are irregular; they have different sizes and shapes. There is also a variety of local animals painted in these containers: frogs, birds, snakes, and suris and suri's tracks (Figure 3). The animal portraits in the long-neck pots seems to be a llama (*Lama glama*), certainly the most important animal during this time. Llamas, like in these figures, have long noses, teeth, and eye layers.

Other elements of daily life that these ceramic vessels exhibit are seeds and germinating seeds (Figure 6.3, 4, 6); especially corn, bean, and algarrobo (*Prosopis* sp.) seeds. They symbolize life; life that keeps moving forward, a steady reproduction. When I see round-shaped motifs, I immediately think of seeds. Probably, this is because I have been raised in the agriculture realm. Perhaps, someone who has never planted a seed see things differently. For us, indigenous people who still live in our ancestral territories, our experiences and memories are related to the world of agriculture. If we took into account that many of these decorated pots were funerary offerings placed next to adult corpses, or served as urns that contained the mortal remains of children, then we could argue that this type of motifs connected life and dead. Like the seed which dies after germinating to be replaced by a plant (which has a different life force), when someone dies another person emerges to replace him/her. Life never ends.

The house, a living entity and a place of deep symbolism and great centrality in daily life in this region, was commonly painted on this pottery. For us, Diaguita indigenous people, every motif with a rectangular shape, such as frets, represents a home. This idea is part of our oral tradition. For example, when we weave blankets we sometimes include as decoration a type of flower with four rectangular petals. We call this to make little houses. When our ancestors drew rectangular or square figures on the surface of their pots, they were portraying homes with their four corners, which are very relevant in symbolic terms. Today, as in the past, our homes have the four vital elements. There is the air we breathe, water to

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drink, cook, and to use in different activities, fire employed to cook and to heat the place, and earth, which is the very material used to build the house and where the house lays. In these ceramic containers, people did not seek to represent the house in terms of its structure, but in terms of its most relevant meaning: the four corners, the four vital elements.

A very interesting aspect is that all these elements of the lived world and of the territory appear always in articulation and not as individual and separated things. For example, patterns of frets blend the house (the fret) and the mountain (triangles), something that actually occurs in the territory where houses and mountains are linked. There are figures in which houses, mountains, and suris were entangled (Figure 5.1). The faces of the llamas painted on some long-neck pots gather together diverse elements: eyes that are also springs and flowing rivers (Figure 6.1.A), noses that are also mountains ranges (Figure 6.1.B), eyes that look like seeds (Figure 2.1, 3, 4) or the head of birds with stretched necks and open beaks (Figure 5.2), little dots on the forehead that seem to be animal tracks, and cheeks with zigzag lines that are actually lightning bolts/snakes (compare A and B in Figure 6.5).

The S figures, which in many cases are representations of snakes (Figure 4), are very similar to bean or corn seeds in their first stages of germination (Figure 6.4). These little curls are very similar to those of a germinating seed, one going up to form the stalk and the other going down to form the roots. Seeds are also found inside the frog painted on the base of some of long-neck vessels (Figure 2.3). If we observe the main element painted on the pot of Figure 2.5, 7, at first glance we can say they are snakes. However, this animal's body is not like this. They actually strike me as algarrobo pods (see comparison in Figure 6.6). Following this idea, what I see in Figure 2.7 is the reproduction of the plants. There is an older (and probably dying) seed, and newborn one.

Calchaquí Rock Art Sites (by Félix A. Acuto)

There are deep social, material, and symbolic differences between North-Calchaquí LIP rock art sites and residential settlements. As the systematic archaeological surveys we have conducted in the region have shown, rock art sites are usually some km away from residential settlements. Even though there were plenty of rocks suitable for rock art inside or next to LIP residential settlements, people did not chisel out or painted images on them. This is also the case of the agriculture areas, where no petroglyph or paintings were detected despite the availability of rocks.

Rock art sites and residential settlements also differ with respect to their material order. While crowded architecture and the presence of a variety of

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objects (especially pottery, stone tools, grinding stones, and wooden artefacts) are typically found in residential settlements, they are practically absent from rock art sites. This is the case of the area of Los Cerrillos and the intersection of the Calchaquí Valley and the Río Potrero drainage, which we have systematically surveyed during five field seasons (Figures 1, 7). Past Diaguitas did not settle villages or residential compounds in this area; neither they built corrals, tombs, or agriculture terraces. Furthermore, and beyond drawing different figures on rocks, they did not come here to make any type of object. After surveying 18 km², we only detected 13 stone structures scattered throughout this area and a handful of ceramic shards and lithic instruments.

There is also a great gulf between residential settlements and rock art sites regarding the social imaginary lived and the sense of place built through this imaginary. To make this point, I use the case of Los Cerrillos and the area where the Calchaquí Valley intersects the Río Potrero drainage because this is the area with the greatest concentration of LIP rock art in the whole region (see Acuto et al. 2011). Los Cerrillos is an 8-km, north-south row of low hills located in the middle of the Calchaquí Valley, right on the valley's bottom. Systematic surveys allowed us to detect 45 rock art sites located either in round and low knolls (from 4 to 20 m high) or in rock outcrops on the steep sides of taller hills. Empty spaces (without petroglyphs or any other type of settlement) separate each of these rock art sites, which are still visually connected to their north and south neighbour. In addition, and in the area where the Calchaquí Valley intersects the

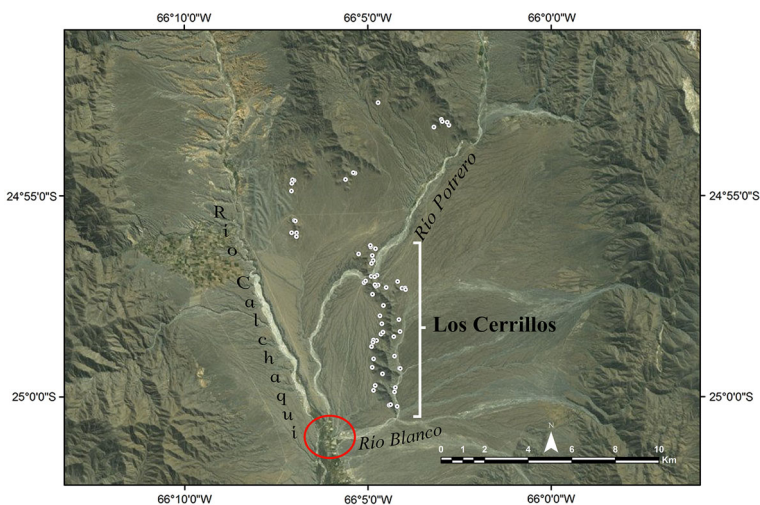


Figure 7. Los Cerrillos and the intersection of the Calchaquí Valley and the Río Potrero drainage areas. White dots: art rock sites. Circle: river intersection

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Potrero drainage, we found 19 rock art sites. Between multi-motif panels and petroglyphs with one unique motif, we registered 517 petroglyphs in these 64 sites.

What was the importance of this area to have received this outstanding symbolic investment? Geographically speaking, this is a special area of the North-Calchaquí landscape where a number of valleys and drainages that connect the Calchaquí Valley with other regions converge. These valleys and drainages provided to the Diaguita people routes to access neighbouring and ecologically diverse regions, such as the Puna (or high altitude plateau) to the west and to the north, the Quebrada del Toro to the northeast, and the eastern mountain forest (Figure 1). In this particular geographical location, those who arrived in the Calchaquí Valley through narrow drainages from the north, northeast, west, and east, found here a wide and open landscape (Figure 1). This is the place where, and due to topographical and ecological transformations, the east meets the west and the south meets the north. In addition, three rivers join in this same location: the Calchaquí, the Potrero, and the Blanco Rivers (Figure 7). These places of intersection are of great significance in Andean cosmology. They are considered *tinkuy*, places of merging and encounter of forces, elements, times, and entities; centres where different social and symbolic spheres (both complementary and oppose) bind together (Allen 1988: 65; Bouysse Cassagne 1987; Wachtel 2001: 64). In addition, Los Cerrillos stands out as a striking topographical feature. Its roundish shape, its separation from the main mountain ranges that define the limits of the Calchaquí Valley, and its position in the valley bottom make Los Cerrillos a distinguishable geological formation (Figure 7). Past indigenous societies believed that these types of natural features, which break up the monotony of the Andean landscape, were animated forces/beings, and many of them became shrines and places of pilgrimage and veneration (Bray 2015; Chase 2015: 91; van de Guchte 1999).

But the most interesting aspects of these rock art sites is that the representations LIP people printed on rocks differ from those they painted on the surface of their pots (Figures 3, 8). To begin with, we have noticed that a number of frequent rock art figures were never included on the surface of ceramic vessels. This is the case of camelids, the most popular rock art motif in the studied area (Table 2, Figure 8.1). The same happened with schematic and full-body anthropomorphic figures and human feet, both common rock art motifs excluded from LIP ceramics (Figure 8.5, 6). This is also the case of the human-shield figure, a typical LIP motif absent in North-Calchaquí ceramic decoration (Figure 8.5, below right). Even though they are not that frequent in rock art sites, canines (Figure 8.2) and tridigits (which could be considered animal tracks or cactus' outlines) do not appear on ceramic surfaces (Figure 8.10). As shown in Table 2, we found

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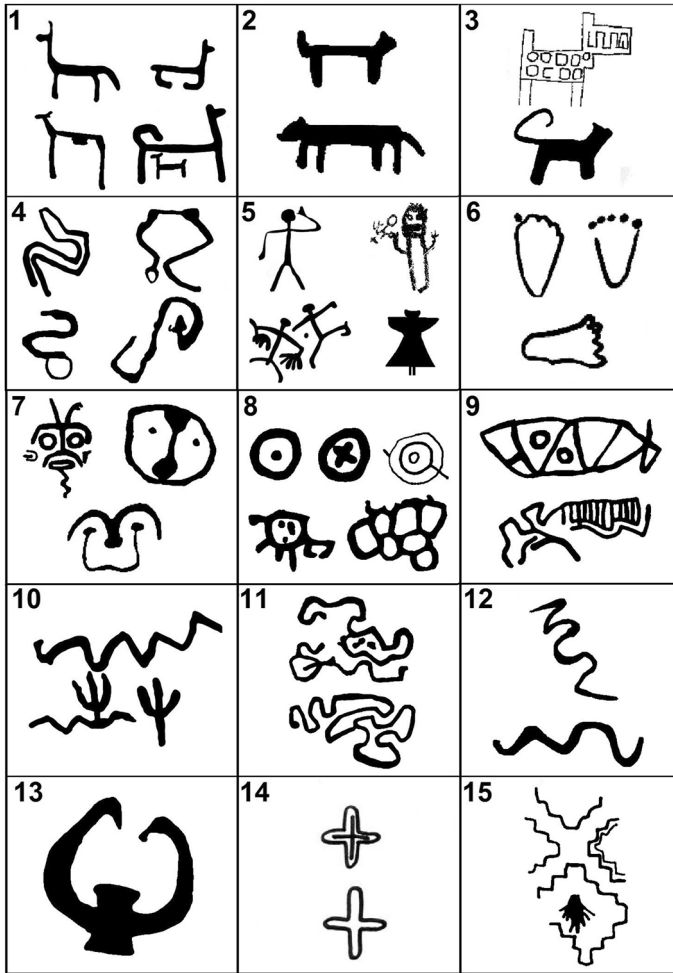


Figure 8. Rock art motifs

that past indigenous people included in petroglyphs a variety of complex and unique geometric figures and a number of wandering lines, none of which are similar to the abstract or linear motifs painted on pots (Figure 8.9, 11). This is also the case of the Chakana Cross (Figure 8.15).

The opposite situation also occurs: figures employed in the decoration of ceramic vessels that were not part of the iconographic repertoire of rock art sites. The fret and the pattern of frets, the most popular ceramic motif, is absent from rock iconography, as well as other decorative elements such

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Table 2 Rock art motifs

Type	N	%
Zoomorphic	511	38.39
Camelid	362	27.2
Serpent, S-shape Serpent, zigzag line	97	7.29
Feline and feline mouth	5	0.37
Dogs	3	0.22
Suri	3	0.22
Fox	2	0.15
Indeterminate	39	2.93
Anthropomorphic	131	9.84
Schematic—full body	92	6.91
Footprint	18	1.35
Face	12	0.9
Human shield	9	0.68
Geometric	281	21.11
Circles and groups of circles	173	13
Complex	79	5.93
Rectangle	16	1.2
Spiral	7	0.52
Reticulated	5	0.37
Clepsidra	1	0.07
Lines	168	12.62
Simple line and groups of lines	113	8.49
Wandering line	37	2.78
Cross	9	0.68
Chevron	5	0.37
Crenel	4	0.3
Others	127	9.54
Pricked	63	4.73
Tri-digit	30	2.25
Facial adornment	22	1.65
Point	10	0.75
Chakana cross	1	0.07
Tumi	1	0.07
Indeterminate	113	8.49
Total	1331	100

Amount and percentages

as frogs, birds, the hand motif, the chess board motif, the geometric motif 1, and the crescent moon (Figure 3.5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14).

There are decorative elements that both clay and rock canvases share, but in different proportions. For instance, highly frequent ceramic motifs, such as chevrons, spirals, and reticulates, are scarcely present in these rock art sites (Tables 1, 2). Spirals are an interesting case. Whereas hundreds of individual spirals were painted on pots' surfaces, we found only seven of them in the 517 petroglyphs studied. Faces also appear on both ceramics

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and rocks, although they differ in their features (Figures 3.6, 8.7), they are more abundant in the former (Tables 1, 2), and the faces painted on pots are more similar each other, but those few that people carved out on rocks exhibit more variability. Eight serpent-like figures with recognizable snake-like features were found in the rock art sites (Figure 8.4, up and left). We also found eight S-shape figures with certain similarity with the S snakes painted on ceramics (Figure 8.4 below). Nevertheless, serpents with triangular heads and oval and reticulate bodies, that LIP Diaguita potters so frequently painted on the surface of their ceramic containers, were not employed to decorate rocks.

Again, the opposite situation also occurs: common art rock figures, unfrequently painted on ceramics. This is the case of Figure 8.13, which has been interpreted as a facial adornment (Nastri and Stern Gelman 2011). Circles, circles with perpendicular lines, and groups of circles are typical geometrical figures in rock art sites (Figure 8.8), rarely present in pottery. Finally, there is a group of rare motifs that ceramics and rocks share, such felines, suris, and crosses. However, felines were never painted on pots' surfaces. There is only one case of a ceramic piece shaped as a feline.

Ceramic and rock iconographies also differ in the way that motifs were distributed and organized. The rigidity of ceramic decoration, where principles of duality and symmetry defined the distribution of motifs on pots' surfaces, is missing from rock art, showing that the distribution of decorative elements in rock art panels did not respond to the same logic of ceramic decoration.

Another important difference between ceramics and rock art is diversity. While there are strikingly similar pots (Figure 4), or segments of some pots (bases, bodies, or necks) whose decoration greatly resemble those of some other ceramic vessels, every multi-motif petroglyph is unique in its type. Moreover, while LIP potters employed a small group of motifs to decorate ceramic containers, rock art presents a greater diversity of figures (Tables 1, 2). This shows that the search for homogeneity and similarity that operated in the realm of ceramic iconography changed into a search for diversity and originality in the rock art sphere. In a few words, LIP Diaguitas created petroglyphs as unique pieces, but they produced pots that resembled other pots.

During the LIP, North-Calchaquí rock art sites (such as the case of Los Cerrillos and the intersection between the Calchaquí Valley and the Potrero River drainage) seem to have been places opposite to residential settlements. Differently from residential villages, architecture is seldom present at rock art sites. People did not build their homes there; neither they buried their dead. Differently from residential settlements, rock art sites were usually away from agriculture fields. And differently from villages, where a

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variety of artefacts were produced and used, LIP Diaguita people did not make or employ many artefacts in rock art locations. In addition, they printed on rocks motifs that differed from those they employed to decorate the pots they used at home in their daily activities, or as urns or burial goods. Not only popular ceramic motifs are absent (or scarcely present) in rock art sites and vice versa, but also the strict decorative design that people repeatedly used to organize the decoration on the surface of ceramic vessels was not applied at all in the decoration of rocks. Furthermore, the homogeneity of ceramic decoration became heterogeneity in rock art. Considering that Andean indigenous rituals were and are inversions of the established order (Greenway 1998: 159), I argue that Los Cerrillos and the mentioned intersection of valleys may have been ritual spaces that reversed the order people experienced in the sphere of the home and daily life.

Calchaquí Rock Art Sites (by Hilda Corimayo)

Los Cerrillos and the intersection of the Calchaquí Valley and the Potrero Drainage remind me of those special places that our people used, especially in the time of my parents and grandparents, to connect with nature through specific rituals. Not far away from my home, and near an archaeological site, there is a special place like this. It is a noteworthy isolated hill with a roundish summit. There used to be many petroglyphs on this hill's foot, and on its summit there still are a group of monoliths. In places like this, they made the calls and they twirled their slingshots. They went there to, for instance, spook storms. There has always been a special hill to do this kind of things. During the time of the sun people still conduct especial ceremonies. They call the sun back. They talk to him like one talks to another person, and they ask him to return. You need to use incense and to make the right signal with your poncho to ask the sun to come back.

Our grandparents had other knowledges until science came along. Now we have a scientific explanation for everything, for example to explain why and how clouds appear in the sky. And now that we know this, we do not believe in our ancient understanding of nature. During the time of my parents and grandparents, people said that it was a matter of faith. Through faith is how they dealt with things. The more the people that connected to their faith, the faster was nature's response.

People used to establish links (and some people still do) with the sun, the rain, the snow, the wind, or the river. You need to talk and to pray to nature. But not by repeating a fixed prayer, like the Our Father prayer. What we do is to converse with nature, with our own words. For example this year (2013), we conducted a ceremony to the river because the river was eroding our agriculture fields. This type of ceremonies takes place at

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dusk, the moment of the day were praying starts. We poured wine into the river, we gave it Coca leaves, we talked to it and asked it not to take away our fields. We requested the river to move to the middle of the riverbed. We used incense and left some lit cigarettes on the river bank, which the river took away, accepting our offering. The next day, we returned to see what the river's response was, and we found that the river had changed its course and begun to run in the middle of the riverbed.

In the sun ceremony, we offer incense, Coca leaves, and words. When we offer Coca leaves to the sun we usually throw them into the air. In the case of river, we throw them into the water. Coca has always been our sacred companion. It has always been a special product that people take into account and use for almost everything. Coca is a principal element in many activities, and this is why it is such a desirable product. It is like water. Nature requires Coca.

There are many ceremonies that people conduct when they are in the field, far from their homes. Our grandparents said that when, for instance, one went to collect firewood, as well as in many other activities that took place away from home, you needed to name the little souls, to take off your hat, and to ask Earth Mother's permission.

Now, what are the principal characteristics of these particular places where people connect and dialogue with nature? They are usually above the ground, such as little hills, away from villages or towns, and away from crowds. The people who conduct these rituals possess the secret and cannot be distracted or interrupted by other people. In order to concentrate, they need to find these isolated and quiet places. My father, who performed these ceremonies, said that as farther off and higher the place, the quicker and the better the connection with nature. To conduct these ceremonies, people also looked for the less culturally modified places.

Los Cerrillos and the intersection of the Calchaquí Valley and the Potrero Drainage offered these features: it was away from ancient villages, it was an undisturbed natural place without architecture, it is a hill range easy to climb that provided several high-ground spots, and it has a great number of petroglyphs, typical of these especial places that people used to connect with nature. Perhaps the different rock art sites in this area were the ceremonial places of different groups. Perhaps they had a ritual calendar and came to Los Cerrillos and the intersection of the Calchaquí Valley and the Potrero Drainage to ritually express their gratitude for the fruits they harvested. Or perhaps they visited this place to conduct a ceremony in order to request the natural forces to improve their lands' and cattle's productivity. There were different cycles (lunar and solar cycles) with different activities, and people needed the support of these natural elements.

The different figures found here give us clues about this place. One common representation is the llama or the guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*). Con-

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sidering that there are no buildings and agriculture fields here, I think this area might have been used to herd llamas and to hunt guanacos. Probably there were a great number of guanacos in Los Cerrillos that people hunted to obtain their meat and leather. Those who were in charge of these activities expended a great part of their day with the animals. Today herding implies spending many hours with your cattle. When people came to this area to herd, or when they were getting ready to hunt, they drew on rocks representations of these animals that were of great significance in their life. I think that drawing was a way to speak with nature and to ask Earth Mother's help.

There are a number of human male representations in these rock art sites. It is interesting that these figures were not painted on pots. Perhaps they sought to express that men and not women were those who came here to interact with llamas and guanacos. Probably women belonged to the house, the agriculture field, and the clay. This same division took place years ago, during the time of our grandparents. Men used to be in the field seeking for firewood and hunting. Women rarely hunted. Both herded, but frequently men were in charge of this activity. When an animal got lost, were men those who had to go out and find it.

Human figures are never static. There is always some kind of movement, either of their arms or legs. Human figures are always performing some activity. Very rarely, you see one of these figures standing still. For instance, in Figure 6.8, these people seem to be dancing and showing the power they had to perform this activity, or the power they had over others. They seem to be saying: "I am capable of hunting" or "I am capable to have this flock of llamas", "this is me and here I am". In Figure 6.8, there is another dancer, but in this case holding some kind of artefact. Maybe there were different groups disputing this area for hunting, herding llamas, and performing rituals, and this is the reason why they printed on rocks these representations of power.

There are examples of people carrying out different actions, such as a person with a little hat adopting a body stance as if he were hunting or throwing something (Figure 6.9), people carrying firewood (Figure 6.10), and two persons that, according to the position of their feet, seem to be walking or jumping (Figure 6.11). There are several human figures who are engaged in activities with llamas. Figure 6.12 shows a person holding a llama, a person with a rope trying to catch a llama near a cactus (up and left), and a person who is running towards a little llama. There are pregnant llamas and small llamas, which represent reproduction. Figure 8.13, a common representation in local rock art sites, seems to be some kind of bird (maybe a condor) with spread wings. It could be also a person wearing some kind of costume, with his arms up, performing some kind of ceremony.

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I see in these petroglyphs a strong human presence. However, the ideas of the four elements and the seed and the germinating seed are absent from these rock art sites. Certain human expressions are present in these petroglyphs: power, strength, action, and desire. I see the senses expressed in the bodies. We do not find here a single motionless person. They either have their arms extended up, they are holding something in their hands, or they have open hands or their feet in positions that indicate that they are moving. Figures of human feet show people's transit. These petroglyphs show human relationship with nature. I sustain that Los Cerrillos and the intersection of the Calchaquí Valley and the Potrero Drainage, like other rock art sites in the region, were places that past people used to contact and to connect with nature. When they needed rain or when they needed to foster the fertility of their cattle, they came to this type of places to contact nature and to request her help. This explains the expression we see in many human figures, with their arms extended upward, as if they were thanking.

Joint Final Words

This paper sought to understand and interpret past material culture through the combination of the archaeological perspective (with its theories, concepts, and methods) with indigenous knowledge (with its understandings, stories, traditions, and experiences). In this exercise, we have examined the graphic representations that the Diaguita communities that lived in the North Calchaquí Valley during the LIP painted on their pots and chiselled out on rocks. These two understandings of the past are the outcome of an intercultural dialogue we established and developed during different meetings, talks, field trips, visits to the local archaeological museum, coffees, and dinners where we discussed and exchanged ideas and stories.

Our idea here was not to produce stories about the past with the contribution of indigenous knowledge (enforcing an intellectual vampirism), but rather to present the indigenous voice in the first person and not mediated by or channelled through the academic voice. There are differences and similarities in the interpretations we have presented, and the reader may have found one of them more appealing and interesting than the other. But beyond this, we think that this joint intercultural work produces richer and plural informed narratives about the past.

Overall, we sustain that archaeological surveys, rock art studies, databases, and statistics are sources of information and knowledge about past social lives and material culture as valuable as contemporary indigenous traditions, oral narratives, and the experience acquired by dwelling in this

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Andean landscape, all elements that nourish indigenous knowledge. This knowledge is a valuable (but generally underrated) source of understanding of the past that archaeology should embrace. Archaeology has much to learn and to win if we conduct it in relation and dialogue.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest Both authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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