GEOgrafias
ISSN 2237-549X
Revista **GEO***grafias*, v.20, n.2, Jul./ Dez. 2024

The travel exploration of William J. Burchell to Brazil (1825-1830) and the network of intermediaries in the field

A viagem de exploração de William J. Burchell ao Brasil (1825-1830) e a rede de intermediários no campo

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Abstract
This paper explores the 'hidden' presence and contributions made by the local Indigenous peoples involved in William John Burchell's travel to Brazil (1825-1830). Travelling through regions seldom or entirely uncharted by European travellers, the British traveller and botanist produced a vast and rich 'archive of exploration'. However, as Burchell's Brazilian findings have never been published, his work is underestimated in the context of Brazilian historiography, particularly regarding the agency of Indigenous inhabitants. Drawing on Burchell's archives, which offer invaluable but fragmented and partial evidence, this paper argues that Burchell by largely using local transport, supply and labour systems had a successful fieldwork in a tropical region. This paper aligns with contemporary scholarship in History of Geography which emphasises the role played by intermediaries and local people in exploration. It aims to demonstrate how the geographical knowledge, physical labour and material resources of the 'indigenous intermediaries' were appropriated by Burchell during his expedition in Brazil and later marginalised in his archival sources.

Keywords: History of Geography, William John Burchell, Archives, Intermediaries, Brazil.

Resumo
Este artigo explora a presença 'escondida' e as contribuições feitas pelos povos indígenas e população local envolvidos na viagem de William John Burchell ao Brasil (1825-1830). Viajando por regiões raramente visitadas ou totalmente inexploradas por viajantes europeus, o botânico e viajante britânico produziu um vasto e rico 'arquivo de exploração'. No entanto, como os relatos de Burchell ao Brasil nunca foram publicados, seu trabalho é pouco abordado pela historiografia brasileira, particularmente em relação à agência dos povos indígenas. Com base nos arquivos de Burchell, que oferecem evidências inestimáveis, mas fragmentadas e parciais, este artigo argumenta que Burchell, usando em grande parte os sistemas locais de transporte, apoio e trabalho, conseguiu ter sucesso em sua viagem de exploração em uma região tropical. Este artigo alinha-se com a recente literatura na História da Geografia, que enfatiza o papel desempenhado por intermediários e população local nas viagens de exploração. Pretende-se demonstrar como o conhecimento geográfico, o trabalho físico e os recursos materiais dos 'intermediários indígenas' foram apropriados por Burchell durante sua viagem ao Brasil e posteriormente foram marginalizados em sua documentação arquivística.

Palavras-chave: História da Geografia, William John Burchell, Arquivos, Intermediários, Brasil.

Introduction

Recent research in the field of exploration and Historical Geography studies recognised and valued that scientific exploration "was a job of work, and major expeditions required large labour forces" (DRIVER, 2015, p. 13). This approach considered the historical roles played by "indigenous intermediaries" in making these travels possible and profitable (KONISHI et al., 2015, p. 2). Despite the relevance of local Indigenous peoples in guiding, caring, mapping and collecting for European travellers, in the histories of exploration, the voices of the subalterns appear to have been marginalized or omitted in travel accounts (DRIVER, 2017; MARTIN; ARMSTON-SHERET, 2020). In contrast to this colonial practice of invisibility, the work of the Brazilian Indigenous artist and activist Glicéria Tupinambá offers different perspectives. Glicéria emphasises that, Amerindian artefacts – and natural history collections – in European institutions are landmarks of Indigenous' material culture and "witness to the fact that Tupinambá also occupied Europe" (TUPINAMBÁ, 2022, p. 22).

This paper explores the 'hidden' presence and contributions made by the local Indigenous peoples involved in the journey of William John Burchell – a British artist, botanist and traveller (1782-1863) – to Brazil in the 1820s. William Burchell set sail for Brazil in 1825 as member of a British diplomatic mission led by the British diplomat Sir Charles Stuart – in order to recognize Brazil's political independence and negotiate Anglo-Brazilian commercial treaties (PICKERING, 1998). From 1825 to 1830, Burchell travelled through the current Brazilian states of Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Tocantins and Pará (Map 1). Burchell collected over 52,000 plant specimens, 16,000 insects, and 817 bird skins of 362 species; produced hundreds of visual documents; and noted geographical, geological and astronomical information (PICKERING, 1998; MARTINS; DRIVER, 2005).[1]

In the past few years, Burchell's journey to Brazil has attracted the interest of historians, geographers and architects. The majority of works focus on his contributions to natural history and image-making about the Tropics (PICKERING, 1998; MARTINS; DRIVER, 2005; MOREIRA, 2014). By contrast, there have been few examinations of the agency of Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans during his journey. Although Burchell

[1] After Burchell's death, his sister donated his collections from St Helena (1805-1810), South Africa (1810-1815) and Brazilian (1825-1830) travels to various institutions in England, as the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Oxford University: Museum of Natural History. Most of Burchell's Brazilian drawings are in the possession of the Museum Africa (South Africa) with just a few in the Moreira Salles Institute (Brazil).

loved travelling alone, his methodology in the field was not easy to accomplish by himself, especially when travelling through unfamiliar environments in a tropical and large country.

Map 1: William Burchell's route in Brazil, 1825-1830.

Source: Sanders (1904, p. 483).

In this paper, drawing on unpublished manuscripts (correspondence and plant catalogues) and visual sources from William Burchell's archives – held by the Linnean Society of London, Oxford University: Museum of Natural History and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew –, I provide a new informed reading concerning the local Indigenous groups and European intermediaries who contributed to his Brazilian expedition. The logistics and infrastructure required in this expedition are also recovered with a particular focus on demonstrating the relevance of local systems of transport, supply and labour. This paper contributes to expanding the historical geographies of exploration by acknowledging the diverse actors who made varying contributions to exploration. It also highlights the

methodological challenges of using unpublished accounts to recover the "partial visibility" of local Indigenous peoples in traveller's colonial sources (DRIVER, 2017, p. 90).

'Hidden histories' in the archives: combining sources in History of Geography

Since the 1990s, diverse scholarly literature in exploration studies has devoted growing interest in demonstrating that scientific exploration was a collaborative practice, and that Indigenous peoples and intermediaries must be recognised as co-producers of knowledge (CAMERINI, 1996; BURNETT, 2002; DRIVER; JONES, 2009). In most narratives of exploration, the achievements of expeditions were tend to be credited to a singular, famous, often white explorer (typically, though not exclusively a man), who is solely responsible for the expedition's success. Scientific literature usually fails to recognize the contributions made by indigenous intermediaries (MARTIN; ARMSTON-SHERET, 2020), which often become "lost in translation" (DRIVER, 2017, p. 88).

British nineteenth-century explorers, travelling through different colonial places "discovered its limits and learned that their success, and, indeed, their very survival often depended on their ability to obtain local assistance and acquire local knowledge" (KENNEDY, 2013, p. 5). In this context, unravelling the *Hidden Histories of Exploration* – the title of the exhibition co-curated at the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers – RGS with IBG) in 2009 – is an important scientific task (DRIVER; JONES, 2009). The exhibition highlights that European travellers "depended on local support of various kinds – for food, shelter, protection, information, communication, guidance and solace – as well as on monetary and other resources sent from further afield" (DRIVER; JONES, 2009, p. 5).

In the field, Western travellers usually preferred intermediaries that they could control, as they were afraid of losing the command of their own expedition. In the business of exploration, discerning the leader from the led can be questionable (DRIVER, 2015). In this context, subservient intermediaries who had been separated from their families and communities due to war or enslavement were appreciated by explorers (KENNEDY, 2013). In Brazil, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was responsible for providing a diverse array of

individuals, many of whom offered support to European travellers venturing through Brazilian backlands (ANTUNES et al., 2016).

In the field, the practices of guiding, caring, and collecting were not simple or unskilled, but required from the indigenous intermediaries "cultural knowledge, experience, and discipline" (ARMSTON-SHERET, 2023, p. 68). However, drawing our attention to indigenous intermediaries' voices and histories is extremely complex as many travellers relied mainly on oral information from Indigenous inhabitants (DRIVER, 2017; ANTUNES et al., 2019). Furthermore, nineteenth-century Brazilian society had high rates of illiteracy, especially among the enslaved Africans and rural population (CHALHOUB, 2010), which also contributed to the scarcity of written records. Even when the presence of 'others' was recognised in traveller's writings, they were often noticed without name or identity (KONISHI et al., 2015; ANTUNES et al., 2016).

An alternative to dealing with this limitation in published sources is to examine the 'raw' records, which could shed some light on the local encounters experienced by the Western explorer in the field (BRIDGES, 1998). Journals, notebooks, diaries, letters and sketches are examples of these records. Nevertheless, raw records and unpublished accounts also present limitations. There are at least four reasons responsible for that. First, despite the historical relevance of this first record, it may no longer be accessible for different reasons. As pointed out by Armston-Sheret (2023), in an effort to safeguard the personal details of explorer's activities in the field, family and friends might have chosen to destroy private records. In Burchell's case, his private Brazilian journals have not been located for reasons not well-known. Second, journalizing was a daily activity, and at times, after a rough day of travelling or when faced with a great amount of collections to organise, the traveller failed to register the everyday activities undertaken, which could result in incomplete records. Third, during the nineteenth century, the interior of colonial places was not entirely connected by communication networks, such as the postal service, which could hinder the establishment of regular communication. Finally, original handwritten notes require an attentive and careful reading. Explorers often completed their journals and letters under extremely difficult physical and material conditions in the field, which often resulted in incomplete, incomprehensible, and disorganised notes.

Visual sources also provide thoughtful and original insights concerning indigenous intermediaries' presence in exploration (DRIVER; JONES, 2009). The visual

archive of Burchell's travels in Brazil is composed of around two hundred and sixty drawings and sketches, mainly concerned with landscape and architecture (FERREZ, 1981). Burchell's artwork was carefully composed on the spot, confirming the authentic presence of the explorer and his credibility as a faithful observer (MARTINS; DRIVER, 2005). In this context, by assembling the evidence found in Burchell's unpublished manuscripts and visual sources, it became possible to recover the original aspects of local Indigenous groups and European intermediaries, and travel logistics involved in his Brazilian journey.

The Brazilian journey of Burchell: an overview

On 15 March 1825, the British diplomatic mission, which Burchell took part, sailed from Portsmouth. Before reaching Brazil, the mission stayed for two months in Portugal, one day in Madeira and two days in Tenerife. On 18 July 1825, a board of the HMS *Wellesley*, the mission finally arrived at the city of Rio de Janeiro. Burchell spent almost a year in Rio de Janeiro. During this time, he devoted himself to collecting, drawing, learning Portuguese, getting information about Brazilian culture and nature, and networking – especially amongst the British community-based in the city (PICKERING, 1998). Burchell also made two short excursions: one to Minas Gerais between October and November 1825, and another one to the Organ Mountains in February 1826.

On 10 September 1826, Burchell finally left Rio de Janeiro for the city of Santos on the ship *Aurora* accompanied by his personal servant Joaquim Congo.[2] After spending two months in Santos, Burchell and Joaquim embarked on a journey into the Brazilian interior (see Map 1). They first headed towards Cubatão and then through São Bernardo towards the city of São Paulo, where they spent six months. On 25 July 1827, they left São Paulo and, after three months travelling into the backlands, they arrived at Goiás on 3 November 1827.

Burchell's initial plan in South America was to visit Brazil, Peru, Bolívia and Argentina. However, his travel plans changed due to news received in April 1828 at the village of Vila Boa de Goiás concerning his father's ill health, so in August of the same year he decided to travel northwards to the city of Belém to return directly to England.

After three months travelling from Goiás to Pará, Burchell arrived at the fluvial harbour of Porto Real (now Porto Nacional) in November 1828. Porto Real was a place where

travellers could find the essential provisions and labourers for their travels, including hiring the crew and the vessel for descending the Tocantins River (FLORES, 2006). But, Burchell needed to wait until April 1829 for the proper moment to navigate until Belém. In this case, the rainy season was the best for embarking and descending the Tocantins River as the currents pushed the canoes towards the north (FLORES, 2006). After two-month travelling through unexplored regions by European travellers, Burchell arrived in Belém in June 1829.[3] While waiting for a ship to sail to England, Burchell continued his botanical fieldwork in the Amazon biome until 10 February 1830, when he finally left Brazil, landing in England on 25 March 1830.

Travelling alone in Brazil? Burchell's Indigenous intermediaries

Analysing Burchell's letters to family and friends from his travels in St Helena, South Africa and Brazil, he often described himself as a solitary traveller. Of course, it was true that Burchell was not the leader of a large-scale expedition or accompanied by members of his own class for any prolonged period (MARTINS; DRIVER, 2005; NOWAK-KEMP, 2018). On the other hand, he faced obvious challenges which required the assistance of others, whether locals or intermediaries: how could he travel alone through unknown lands occupied by inhabitants who may be suspicious of outsiders? How could he manage his journeys and transport his large boxes of collections and instruments across large distances, keeping himself and his baggage safe while also collecting, cataloguing, writing and drawing in the field? Like every other Western traveller in his position, Burchell relied on local labour, expertise and the advice of a variety of intermediaries.

Unfortunately, the evidence found in Burchell's archives about the role played by Indigenous groups and intermediaries in his Brazilian travel is fragmentary and marginalised. In addition to that, Burchell had a very negative view of the Brazilian population, which only reinforced his indifference to their labour and skills

> In this country of illiteracy no one is found to whom notions of science are inteligible. Here Nature has done much but man nothing; here she offers him

[2] *Notícias Marítimas*, September 1826, Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (BNDigital).
[3] Only in October 1829, Burchell received a letter with news about his father, who had died in July 1828.

> incomensurable objects of admiration and study [...] yet, he continues neglecting in the darkness of ignorance and in extreme poverty.[4]

According to Burchell, "the Brazilians are a most ignorant and unsociable people. It is a good country to travel through but to reside in it would be a banishment".[5] Describing the locals as immature and ignorant was a common rhetoric practice employed by European travellers to minimize their dependence on local intermediaries and validate the colonial project (KONISHI et al., 2015).

Writing to William Hooker in 1828 from Goiás, Burchell reported that he was "travelling in the same solitary, unassisted manner as in Africa".[6] However, what he did not explain to Hooker was that at this point of the expedition, he was travelling with his personal servant and collector Joaquim Congo. Burchell's party was also formed by three muleteers who helped him from July 1827 until April 1829 with the mules and the considerable quantity of baggage full of collections, provisions and delicate instruments.

Burchell reported that the cost of the Brazilian expedition was such that he could not afford to bring over his English servant. [7] Thus, in Rio de Janeiro he decided to hire one of Sir Charles Stuart's retinue, named Joaquim Congo.[8] With consolidated ideas about race in this period, Burchell obscured Joaquim's name from his family letters, only mentioning 'Congo', 'my black boy' or 'my negro boy' – racist expressions that highlight Joaquim's enslaved condition and the idea of traveller's personal belonging.[9]

In enslaved societies, naming was a complex and critical process. In many cases, it involved the removal of African's original names from official records. In Brazil, enslaved Africans "were only entitled to be registered as individuals (with names) after being baptized" (LÓPEZ, 2015, p.162). Recovering details about Joaquim's life was a challenging task as he had a common name amongst Rio's enslaved population and Congo could not have the

[4] William Burchell to William Hooker, 25 April 1828, South American Letters (DC66), Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBGK), f. 17.
[5] Burchell to Jane Burchell, 10 June 1827, WJB/C/2/018, Oxford University: Museum of Natural History (OUM Archives).
[6] William Hooker, 'Mr. Burchell Brazilian Journey', *Botanical Miscellany*, n. 2, p. 128-133, 1831.
[7] Burchell to Mary Burchell, 15 March 1826, WJB/C/2/028, OUM Archives.
[8] Burchell to Matthew Burchell, 25 November 1825, WJB/C/2/057, OUM Archives.

function of a surname. However, the 'partial visibility' of Joaquim's presence in Burchell's expedition gained attention during our archival research.

Travelling from Rio de Janeiro to Santos in September 1826, Burchell and Joaquim Congo were described by one of the local officers of the Department of Police of the Court's (*Departamento de Polícia da Corte*) – a colonial institution with one of its primary responsabilities being the documentation of the arrival and circulation of foreign individuals in Brazil. In the five-year expedition, this was the first and unique description concerning Joaquim, which highlights his subaltern position in the endeavour, despite the fact that Joaquim saved Burchell's much time in turning out to be a "good naturalist" (POULTON, 1907, p. 98).

> William Burchell a British subject, 39 years of age, of medium height, long face, full beard, blue eyes, thick eye-browns, leaves for Santos, taking Joaquim, a Congo slave, short, long face, beard-less, large mouth, and has certificate (FERREZ, 1981, p. 17).

In order to keep Joaquim faithful, Burchell "told him that if he conducts himself well during my journey, I will give him his liberty, but that if he does not, I will sell him to some sugar life, where he will have to work hard and remain a slave all the rest of his life".[10] Instead of giving freedom to Joaquim, Burchell decided to bring him to England.[11] As has been noted, trustworthy and tractable servants were much appreciated, and in some cases the relationship between Western travellers and their non-Western companions in the field extended beyond the journey (CAMERINI, 1996). We know that Joaquim was a servant at Burchell's house for a while (PICKERING, 1998). Unfortunately, records remain silent about Joaquim's subsequent life in England.

In the city of Rio de Janeiro, many nineteenth-century European naturalists exploited enslaved population to collect botanical and zoological specimens for them (WILKES, 2023). Besides employing Joaquim Congo as his servant and collector, Burchell paid enslaved individuals called money-earning slaves (*escravo de ganho*) to collect butterflies for him in the Atlantic rainforest (MOULTON, 1908). Although Burchell left no records about their names, the scene represented by the British artist Charles Landseer – the

[9] Burchell to Mary Burchell, 29 August 1826, WJB/C/2/029, OUM Archives; Burchell to J. Burchell, 10 June 1827, OUM Archives.
[10] Burchell to Matthew Burchell, 29 November 1826, WJB/C/2/061, OUM Archives.

official artist of Sir Charles's mission – give us an interesting idea about this 'local naturalist labour' (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Enslaved population of Rio de Janeiro collecting zoological specimens depicted in *View of the Sugarloaf Mountain from the Silvestre Road* (c. 1827) by Charles Landseer.

Source: Pinacoteca de São Paulo/Brasiliana Iconográfica, https://www.brasilianaiconografica.art.br/obras/19988/vista-do-pao-de-acucar-tomada-da-estrada-do-silvestre-atribuido (last accessed 18 November 2023).

Another nameless collectors were the men hired by Burchell in the city of São Paulo to shoot and collect birds. Although no further details about these collectors were documented, we can assume that they were members of Burchell's party during his six-month travel through São Paulo. The female assistance in Burchell's journey was very timid, and perhaps hidden in his private documents – an usual practice amongst nineteenth-century Western explorers. The only evidence about a woman being employed in his party was during his stay

[11] Burchell to J. Burchell, 1 December 1829, WJB/C/2/020, OUM Archives.

in the city of São Paulo.[12] He rented a large house on the edge of the city and needed to hire a cook, who was also probably responsible for serving, cleaning and caring.

Although Burchell often omitted in their accounts the name and identity of the individuals who facilitated his journey, he interestingly pictured his party in a base camp in Goiás in November 1828 (Figure 2). The illustration gives us some sense of the muleteers' labour and knowledge involved in the expedition such as preparing the ranch (usually next to a river), cooking for the party, caring for and tracking the animals and organising the traveller's apparatus and equipment. This drawing illustrates how strong, trained and attentive should be the muleteers to organise the bulky boxes and command the troop of pack animals through the impassable, muddy and sinuous roads. Burchell also depicts his several boxes of collections, a plant press and a tent used by him in order to emphasise the enormous volume of natural history specimens collected and the instruments used to produce scientific knowledge Moreover, the image stresses Burchell's ability as a tropical botanical collector whose knowledge was probably supplemented by local people's expertise.

Figure 2: Burchell's drawing *Córrego Fundo near Porto Real* (1828) represents for the first time his travelling party in a base camp in the interior of Brazil.

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Source: Used with permission from the Oxford University: Museum of Natural History (WJB/D/1/002).

Burchell was the first Englishman (and one of the first European travellers) to attempt a journey from Goiás to Pará, collecting over 10,000 botanical specimens during this part of the journey.[13] Burchell confided that he was excited to made "considerable collection on ground over which no scientific traveller had ever passed".[14] In Goiás, an unnamed Brazilian rancher (*vaqueiro*) mentioned to Burchell some native plant names, as well as its traditional use by local people.[15] A close analysis of Burchell's *Catalogue of Brazilian Plants* (hereafter *Catalogue*) suggests that the vaqueiro joined Burchell's expedition for a significant period of time, as the records in the *Catalogue* were found for plants gathered in distinct places in the *Cerrado*.

Burchell also depended on the expertise and bodywork of local pilots and Indigenous rowers to drive him (and his collections) safely through the strong currents of the Amazon rivers. From Holanda's (2014) point of view

> It cannot be said that, during the colonial era, the European immigrant added much to the art of inland navigation, as already found practised among the Indigenous. Not only in the manufacture of vessels, but also in the sea, the established uses, before the advent of the white man, could thus long survive the subjugation of the former residents. One of these uses was that the crew always paddle standing, which was recurrent not only in Brazil but throughout the American continent (p. 57).

In a letter to Hooker written in November 1830, Burchell described his memory of the dangerous navigation on the Tocantins River, where the river had "rock falls, rapids, whirlpools".[16] Losing collections was not unusual in exploration travels and recruiting a skilled workforce of Ameridian crew was essential to minimise the damage (ANTUNES et al., 2019). Burchell did not leave written records detailing the crew involved in this navigation. However, his sketch *The Boat* leaves us some evidence about this episode (FERREZ, 1981). Burchell pictured his boat as having two small parts covered with straw and palm leaves, one in the front and another in the back in order to protect travellers and goods/collections from the extreme heat or storms. The crew was usually consisted by fifteen to twenty people from *ribeirinho* people or Indigenous population (called *indígenas*

[13] Manuscript Memoranda Botanica, Volume 1: 1800-1859, WJB/4/1, RBGK
[14] Burchell to Hooker, 1 November 1830, DC66, RBGK, f. 19.
[15] Manuscript Catalogue of Brazilian Plants, Volume 9: 1828-1830, WJB/3/5, RBGK.

canoeiros), because they had the 'practical knowledge' to navigate, and to find edible food and shelter on the riverbank (FLORES, 2006).

During the replenishing stops on the riverbank of the Tocantins River, travellers had the chance to establish contact with Indigenous groups, visiting and staying for a couple of days in their Indigenous communities (*aldeias*) (POHL, 1976; ANDRADE, 2006).[17] Western travellers usually reported that the interaction with Indigenous inhabitants was commonly made with the exchange of gifts. Generally, travellers offered salt beef, flour, *rapadura* (brown sugar), salt, tobacco, penknife (POHL, 1976), and the Indigenous offered supplies, information and muscular labour. I have not located any evidence about Burchell's using this practice in Brazil, although he carried a number of items to be offered as a gift to southern African natives (NOWAK-KEMP, 2018), it is highly likely that he adopted the same strategy in Brazil. In his *Catalogue*, Burchell reported the several stops he made along river villages, such as Pilões and Carolina, and Indigenous communities, like Boa Vista and Boa Esperança (nowadays situated in the town of Tocantinópolis).[18]

Succesfully negotiating the challenges of his Tocantins River journey, Burchell collected about 3,000 plant specimens.[19] It seems that Burchell's interaction with ribeirinho and Indigenous peoples from the Amazonia region contributed to improve his collection with useful plants, like *Apeiba tibourbou* Aubl. (*pau de jangada*) *Bactris setosa* (*tucum*) and *Bertholletia excelsa* (Brazil nut tree), just to name a few. These plants were traditionally used by the Amerindians in construction of handmade rafts, clothing and fishing artefacts and in culinary, respectively (MOURA, 2001). By reading Burchell's records, we can assume that he joined Indigenous' 'fishing cerimonies' as he mentioned in the *Catalogue* the uses of poisoning roots from *timbó* (*Sapindaceae* family) to kill fishes.[20] Until today it is a traditional practice amongst Brazilian Amazonian natives (OLIVEIRA, 2015). Burchell also described how Indigenous inhabitants used the floral stem of the *cana-brava* or *cana-flecha (Gynerium sagittatum* P.Beauv.) for making their arrows for hunting or fishing.[21]

[16] Burchell to Hooker, 1 November 1830, DC66, RBGK, f. 19.
[17] In the nineteenth century, eight Indigenous groups inhabitated the region where Burchell travelled while crossing the Tocantins River: Karajá, Krahô, Apinajé, Akroá, Xacriabá, Xavante, Xerente and Ava-canoeiro (ANDRADE, 2006).
[18] *Catalogue*, WJB/3/5, RBGK.
[19] Memoranda Botanica, WJB/4/1, RBGK.
[20] *Catalogue*, WJB/3/5, RBGK.
[21] *Catalogue*, WJB/3/5, RBGK.

Although Indigenous peoples' names and labour were missing from Burchell's written accounts, his drawings give insights about their direct or indirect involvement in the expedition. Burchell represented the individuals from the aldeias that he visited during his navigation on the Tocantins River, like the Apinajé, Krahô and Xerente groups. It is not clear from the drawings whether Captain Francisco Xerente, Captain Manoel Doho, Joze Carao and João Pinto were employed in Burchell's expedition (FERREZ, 1981). But as they agreed to sit for a portrait (in exchange for payment or gifts), we can know that this encounter and exchange of knowledge and practices took place (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Portrait of *Captain Francisco Xerente* made by Burchell during his navigation on the Tocantins River (1829).

Source: Ferrez (1981, p. 154).

Burchell noted in the different volumes of the *Catalogue* plants used with medicinal purposes (fever, purgative, snakebites, stitches, toothache), also for basketry, commerce, culinary, dyeing, garden ornament, gum resins and construction. Given that the information about useful plants and herbs and their vernacular names was gathered in a

number of different Brazilian biomes (Atlantic Forest, Amazonia Forest and Cerrado), it appears that Burchell had access to a variety of different informants, collectors and guides during his journey. As Burchell did not publish any account of his travel to Brazil, scholars face a considerable challenge in undertaking a systematic study of the medicinal plants he documented. This stands in contrast to the available studies on the medicinal plants gathered by A. Saint-Hilaire and G. Gardner in their Brazilian travels (BRANDÃO et al., 2008).

The publication of glossaries and dictionaries was one of the outcomes of explorers' fieldwork (DRIVER; JONES, 2009). At some point after the completion of his journey, Burchell decided to organise the vernacular plant names in the *Index of the Aboriginal, Brazilian and Portuguese names of plants (1825-1839)*. It comprises about 300 plant specimens listed alphabetically with their vernacular name and a reference number (linking to the *Catalogue*). This unique manuscript is itself an original contribution to botanical science representing how the Indigenous knowledge was translated into the universal grid of European science, while also being intended as a tool for future travelling naturalists.

In this context, it is highly improbable that Burchell could have identified all the useful plants and their vernacular names and traditional uses independently of native inhabitants, especially in places little explored by European travellers. Burchell's observations and collections in Brazil were assembled at a time when the vegetation of the Amazon region and Cerrado was in its natural state and the medicinal uses of plants were confined to traditional Indigenous population.

As a result of the intense and vivid circulation of European travellers in Brazilian territory in the nineteenth century, the knowledge of guides, servants, interpreters and pilots could not be characterized as being extremely 'local' (ANTUNES et al., 2019). In exploration accounts, "the presentation of locally created knowledge as 'indigenous or native' could be considered from a postcolonial perspective as a deeply colonial move" (DRIVER, 2017, p. 93).

Burchell's European intermediaries based in Brazil

It is interesting to note that, in contrast to the unnamed assistants amongst the local population, Burchell usually identifies his European intermediaries based in Brazil.

Burchell's connections with Sir Charles Stuart and the English consul based in Rio de Janeiro, Henry Chamberlain, were essential in assuring documents for his travels as a special passport provided by the State Secretary of Foreign Affairs (*Secretaria de Estado dos Negócios Estrangeiros*) and letters of introduction and recommendation. In scientific travels, a explorer armed with these letters could assure lodging, supplies and helpers (CAMERINI, 1996). Burchell also requested official permission from Brazilian authorities to pass through the checkpoints without paying taxes, or (most probably) having his various baggage and box collections checked by the local officers – a task that sometimes took the whole day to be completed. Even having successfully obtained these various official papers, Burchell privately complained to members of his family about how slow doing business with Brazilian people could be and how easy it was to lose patience in dealing with them, especially in matters involving bureaucracy.[22]

Burchell widely used these letters of introduction to establish a link with distinct intermediaries. In Santos, the English vice-consul led a small country house to Burchell and Joaquim for almost two months.[23] In the city of Cubatão, a Dane called Erick Smith offered Burchell a lodge in the forest where he remained for eight weeks botanising and sketching.[24] In Goiás, Burchell remained for a short period in the farm *Engenho de São Joaquim*, whose owner was the merchant and politician Joaquim Alves de Oliveira.[25] During this period, this farm was a key site for Western travellers who visited Goiás, due to the possibility of finding provisions (including European goods), information, mules and guides amongst the farm's African enslaved population (BORGES; BARBOSA, 2020). Indeed, Burchell's relationship with local authorities was essential when he needed to transport the hygrometers sent by his sister from London to him in Goiás.[26] And later, in receiving from the officer of the military settlement called São João do Araguaia (Pará) some Indigenous artefacts produced by the Karajá group.[27]

In the field, explorers also depended on intermediaries to sending the valuable collections back home. From 1825 to 1827, in order to lighten his baggage and reduce the risk of loss, especially during the rainy season, Burchell sent eleven boxes with drawings, writings

[22] Burchell to J. Burchell, 10 June 1827, OUM Archives.
[23] Burchell to Matthew Burchell, 29 November 1826, OUM Archives.
[24] Burchell to Mary Burchell, 23 March 1827, OUM Archives.
[25] *Informação Goyana*, January 1921, BNDigital.
[26] Burchell to Matthew Burchell, 26 April 1828, WJB/C/2/063, OUM Archives.
[27] The Pitt Rivers Museum (England) houses Indigenous artefacts collected by Burchell in Pará.

and natural history specimens to London through his European agents based in Brazil. The agents were also responsible for receiving letters and money sent by Burchell's family. One of these agents was Mr. George March (an English merchant and farmer) based in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and the other one was Mr. Frederick Fomm (a German merchant naturalized British) based in the city of Santos.[28] Burchell also became a close friend of Mr. March who invited him to stay on his farm in the Organ Mountains (Rio de Janeiro) in February 1826 – a famous site visited by other European travellers like Georg Henrich von Langsdorff.

In Rio de Janeiro, Burchell had the opportunity to get to know Langdorff and presented him with William Swainson's book *Zoological Illustrations*.[29] Burchell also spent a week botanising at Langsdorff's *Mandioca* farm, which was a place where Western travellers could find lodging, provisions and pack animals. As Langsdorff had returned from his journey from Minas Gerais (1824-1825) and was preparing to leave for São Paulo (1825-1826), he may well have provided precious information to Burchell about travelling in Brazil, mainly about the logistics and infrastructure needed to undertake a expedition in the interior. In Rio, Burchell also had the opportunity to encounter other individuals who had certainly offered useful recommendations to him. For instance, Burchell met the British traveller Maria Graham – who visited Brazil from 1821 to 1825 –, and Friar Leandro do Sacramento – professor of Botany and the first director of the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro.[30] As we can see, the city of Rio de Janeiro was a place of cultural interaction and largely attracted Western travellers in search of intermediaries, information, provisions, and official documents.

Conclusion

This paper highlights Burchell's dependence on intermediaries – guides, servants, collectors, informants, rulers, diplomats, agents, rowers and pilots. It also underscores key elements such as places, practices and social networks that were essential to Burchell's expedition. Indigenous people's direct contact with the environment and long-term experience

[28] Burchell to J. Burchell, 15 October 1829, WJB/C/2/019, OUM Archives.
[29] Burchell to William Swainson, 31 August 1825, MS270, Linnean Society, f. 159.
[30] Burchell to Matthew Burchell, 6 September 1825, WJB/C/2/056, OUM Archives; *Catalogue,* WJB/3/2, RBGK.

were widely appropriated by Western travellers, despite their representation in geographical explorations as passive actors.

Examining Burchell's archive allowed for the recovery of the hidden presence of indigenous intermediaries in his travel and the identification of European intermediaries that supported Burchell's travel. The analysis of the records found in his colonial archives served as empirical evidence to challenging the myth of the 'lone and self-sufficient traveller'. Thinking about the partial visibility of indigenous intermediaries in exploration, calls on scholars to recognise the relevance of linking archives of exploration, not only the one held by European institutions, but also the one situated in other geographical regions, such as in the 'South'. Perhaps we could find there an original and plural narrative concerning non-European involvement in the production and circulation of natural history knowledge.

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