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Trans-Cultural Consumption in Spanish
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Chapter 11

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the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit
Missions of Paraguay

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11 “That in the *Reducciones* Had Been Noise of Weapons . . .”

The Introduction of Firearms in the Seventeenth-Century Jesuit Missions of Paraguay¹

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Introduction

The phrase “That in the *reducciones* had been noise of weapons . . .” is the order given by the Provincial Superior, Father Nicolás Durán, that appears in the Annual Letters of 1628. In it Father Durán authorized the use of arms in the towns the Jesuits set up for indigenous peoples in Paraguay known as *reducciones* (reductions) or *misiones* (missions). The wording “noise of weapons” prompts us to agree with Jaime Cortesão in considering this to be an *early* reference to the detonation of firearms among these Guaraní peoples, although other authors have expressed their doubts about this interpretation.² Leaving aside the question of the precise date of the first use of firearms in the Paraguay missions, two arguments substantiate the belief that the Jesuits armed the Guaraní to protect their villages: first, the constant attacks by the Portuguese from Brazil (called *bandeirantes*) on the area of the Jesuit reductions in the first decades of the seventeenth century and, second, the lack of material and/or human assistance from the authorities and inhabitants of nearby cities (Asunción, Villa Rica and Corrientes) to protect the missions from *bandeira* raids.

It is interesting to observe this process from an imperial perspective. The provision of firearms to the Guaraní Indians illustrates the kind of arrangements developed by the empires of the modern era to introduce European products to native Americans, which afforded them the possibility of better protecting their frontiers against internal and external threats.³ Furthermore, this case study provides us with clues concerning a larger phenomenon that we might call “the globalization of war technology”, which occurred between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries in various parts of the globe: a complex process that even today historians need to redefine, establishing its scope and limitations.⁴

Thus, the task in hand is to gain a better understanding of how this war equipment was incorporated and/or rejected by peoples across different continents and the ensuing socio-cultural mutations that it produced. This demands a broad-ranging analysis of the incorporation and development of this type of weaponry in local populations, from Asian territories, such as China and Japan (Brown 1948; Andrade 2016), to the Ottoman Empire (Ágoston 2005) as well as various American regions.⁵ The contributions of Kenneth Chase (2003) and Jeremy Black (2013), who outline the development of firearms and war technology in different parts of the globe, are significant, both works being based on a broad time-frame, from the fourteenth century to the present day. In the case of Latin America, and specifically during the Spanish Conquest, the studies by Alberto M. Salas (1986) and Pablo M. Gómez (2001) have indicated the characteristics of the weapons used by natives and Spaniards, and their influence on the development of their subsequent relations. However, in all these works the socio-cultural mutations that this type of weaponry generated in local populations are not dealt with explicitly.

Daniel Headrick contends that in order to understand the development of empires in the New World, we must focus on the available resources and the context in which Europeans and native Americans met, with due regard for European successes, but without overlooking their failures (Headrick 2011, 95–96). Therefore, an analysis of case studies that covers a longer period of time, focused especially on frontier areas linked to this “failure of the conquest”, allows us to observe the numerous processes of adaptation and technological exchange. These processes are clear and evident at the particular frontier under analysis. For example, the incorporation of the horse into the daily lives of the Guaraní and Chaco Indians modified not only diverse socio-cultural aspects of these groups but also the way in which war developed. Similarly, traditional Guaraní weapons acquire new meanings and social roles in relation to weapons of European origin, with both playing an important role in the military organization of the Jesuit missions in Paraguay. We believe that there is still a need for a greater understanding of the sociocultural influence of the firearms and hostilities exchanged between native American populations and the Europeans who “conquered” them, which we aim to pursue further in this chapter.

Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper define empires as large, political units that were expansionist or with a memory of territorial expansion, entities that maintained distinctions and hierarchy as they incorporated new peoples. Burbank and Cooper also emphasize that methods of violence and coercion are employed as fundamental parts of the building process of empires and their *modus operandi* (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 1–2, 8). In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that maintaining an empire over time depends on a variety of factors, but especially on money and weapons⁶ (Marichal and Von Grafenstein 2012, 9). However, the

implementation of violence and coercion on the part of empires should not lead us to think of a one-way system, in which violence is monopolized by the imperial authorities and indigenous groups play a passive role. On the contrary, the empires of the modern era developed mechanisms of negotiation with the native groups to achieve their objectives, one of the most important of which was to protect their possessions from attacks from other empires and/or other indigenous factions (Daniels and Kennedy 2002). Negotiations with the natives took on their own set of characteristics peculiar to each imperial area. Nonetheless, to a greater or lesser extent, in practically all of them we find commodity exchanges that promoted or facilitated such agreements. However, a very different situation presents itself when we analyze the introduction of firearms in the various imperial regions. The European empires resorted to furnishing such weaponry to the indigenous peoples who inhabited their overseas possessions in only a few instances, but in cases where this occurred, significant sociocultural changes were experienced.⁷

Against this background, an analysis of the introduction of firearms into the Jesuit reductions in Paraguay inevitably poses the question of what happened in other similar overseas territories and compels us to find common answers that explain this type of imperial arrangement.

Firearms and Cultural Changes in the Guaraní Indians' Living

Arjun Appadurai and then Bruno Latour developed the assignation of agency to objects within a society and the changes they generate in it (Appadurai 1988; Latour 2008). Latour says, "[A]part from 'determining' and serving as 'a backdrop for human action', things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on" (Latour 2008, 107). In this sense, the firearms incorporated in the reductions can be regarded as a key element enabling our understanding of a whole series of alterations in relations between the actors on this frontier.

The Guaraní Indians were part of the Tupi-Guaraní linguistic family that occupied an extensive territory from the Amazon River to the Río de la Plata. Current archaeological studies prevent us from knowing the precise nature of the differences that existed between the groups making up this linguistic family.⁸ However, from a territorial viewpoint we know that the Tupi occupied the middle and lower section of the Amazon Basin and a large part of the Atlantic seaboard, that is, from the Amazon to the Cananea. For their part, the Guaraní inhabited lands stretching from that Tupi territory to the current Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, including the great waterways that penetrate the plateau. Their ability as canoeists allowed the Guaraní to travel along the great waterways of the region, especially the Paraná-Río de la Plata basin and its numerous

tributaries, and in this way expand their occupied territories.⁹ This mobility was aided by the slash-and-burn agriculture they developed and their prophetic belief in the existence and search for a “Land without Evil”, which especially influenced Guaraní migrations following the arrival of Europeans in the region (Mineiro Scatamacchia 2014). Fundamentally, however, it was their combative disposition that induced these periodic forays, impelling them to conquer other indigenous groups and annex new territories. Having identified their warlike character soon after they arrived in the region, the Jesuits endeavored to curb these traits, especially their practice of cannibalism, and redirect them towards protecting the reductions.¹⁰

The change was not simple or swift: for the Guaraní, abandoning their semi-nomadic life to settle in a fixed reduction took a considerable length of time. To facilitate the transition, the Jesuits developed arrangements that allowed for the coexistence of different Guaraní leaders in a much smaller space. This approach sought to “balance” power within a reduction, for which they established the practice of *cacicazgos de papel* in place of the older and traditional *cacicazgos*.¹¹ In addition, the priests distributed posts related to the organization of the town (stewards, magistrates, council members, etc.) to the new leaders, and created confraternities that consolidated their evangelizing work and strengthened social positions within the reduction.

However, war continued to occupy a key role within the reduced Guaraní society. The annexation of territories and resources, the subjugation of other groups and/or the ritual anthropophagy of their defeated enemies were no longer allowed. In exchange, their warring temperament was channeled towards the protection not only of their own reductions but also of nearby territories and cities which they defended in the name of the Spanish monarchy.

This entire series of changes influenced not only the “objective” of the war being waged on the border but also the weapons employed in it. Traditional Guaraní weapons such as bows, arrows, spears and clubs were rendered obsolete in the face of the Portuguese enemy.¹² Thus, the need arose to train the Guaraní in European weaponry, techniques and tactics in order to challenge their opponents. In spite of the great difficulties of the early years, firearms were rapidly adopted by the Guaraní Indians, who saw them as key (in conjunction with the military training they received from the Jesuits) to consolidating their power ahead of the other indigenous groups.

In addition, the incorporation of these weapons in the first decades of the seventeenth century reinforced the strategic alliance between the Jesuits and certain Guaraní chiefdoms. This process served to deepen the differences between the confederate *caciques* under Jesuit tutelage. The most important Guaraní leaders in the reductions carried blunderbusses, muskets and/or swords, showing off their power at every call to service,

while lower-ranked *caciques* were equipped with traditional weapons (Avellaneda 2005, 23). This allowed the Jesuits to bolster certain roles within the reduction and achieve a greater balance of power. Furthermore, the Spanish organization model of militias was introduced in the villages, whereby the Guaraní were divided into companies, usually comprising fifty soldiers, according to the arms they were carrying.¹³ Just like the Spanish infantry organization known as the *tercios*, the Guaraní natives were separated into arquebusiers, pikemen and/or swordsmen. Rather than carrying three types of weapons to the battlefield, which would be expensive and impractical, instead the Guaraní militiamen began to specialize, like their European counterparts.

With the passage of time, it was not only the weapons they carried that marked the difference in the power yielded by the various *caciques* within the reduction; the title of “war captain” was awarded to Guaraní who excelled in services to the crown. Kazuhisa Takeda recounts that fourteen Guaraní leaders were awarded military positions by the governors in the years 1629, 1639, 1640 and 1656, thirteen of whom already had the honorific title of *Don*. During the second half of the seventeenth century, however, natives who attained these military positions did not necessarily come from the traditional *cacicazgos* in each reduction.¹⁴ This demonstrates the process of “balancing” power within a reduction, whereby the Jesuits distributed these positions among a greater number of individuals from different clans.

The Arrival of Firearms During the First Half of the Seventeenth Century

References to firearms in the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay date back to a very early period, but present us with considerable inaccuracies regarding their number and distribution. One of the earliest reports is from the Asunción Cabildo records of 21 March 1618, in which the members report to the governor of the province that the Jesuit Superior General, Joseph Pablo de Castañeda, had insinuated in a letter that he had a hundred guns in his possession. The same report indicates that the arms had been intercepted by the Jesuits in the city of Santa Fe and, despite being originally bound for the city of Asunción, they were sent to the natives in the reductions to defend themselves against the Portuguese.¹⁵ Although we may entertain doubts as to whether or not the Jesuits actually had such a number of guns at that time and whether the senior members of the Society of Jesus acted in the manner described by the Cabildo members, what is striking is that in those early years the members of the order were already linked to the acquisition of arms of this type to defend their missions.

Moreover, in their report the Asunción town councilors underscored the ongoing problems experienced along the border at that time and in

the years thereafter, namely the lack of weapons and the attacks from the Chaco Indians. The councilors claimed to have more than 2,000 men employed “incessantly” in the defense of the province, but without the weapons necessary to defend themselves or to undertake retaliatory raids on the Payaguá Indians.¹⁶

Between 1620 and 1640, attacks from the Brazilian *bandeirantes* accounted for the unquestionable increase in the number of firearms within the Jesuit reductions.¹⁷ But the key question is how they managed to get hold of these armaments. The Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya produced a report in 1633 in which he tried to silence the rumors that the Indians in the reductions had 103 shotguns and ammunition, all given to them by the Jesuits, with which “they could injure or could have injured the Spaniards”.¹⁸ In support of his argument, Ruiz de Montoya cited as witnesses the Jesuits Joseph Cataldino, Simón Maceta and Juan Agustín de Contreras. But, although the main purpose of that document was to deny the presence of firearms in the villages, these records provide us with clues about trading in firearms in the region. Two Jesuits attached to the San Ignacio mission, Cataldino and Maceta, refer to exchanges whereby the natives in the missions obtained arms and ammunition. They mention that a local *cacique* named Lychuaratí obtained a shotgun from a neighbor from Ciudad Real (Alonso de Morinigo) in exchange for a canoe and two pigs, adding that no other Indian possessed a shotgun and that exchanges of gunpowder occurred routinely between Spaniards in the city and the natives.¹⁹ In the Nuestra Señora de Loreto mission, Father Contreras not only identified weapons in his reduction, but he also mentioned that they were obtained from a neighbor of Villa Rica, in violation of the prevailing laws:

[I]n this mission there is no Indian with a shotgun given to him by any of our clergy and those who have one in this town are but three: one who was given his by a *cacique* Carlos de Vera, neighbor of Villa Rica, and it was after Luis de Cespedes ordered that that no person should give them shotguns, that the said Carlos de Vera gave him the said shotgun.²⁰

These clues point to a possible commercial network between the Jesuit reductions of Guairá and the inhabitants of the cities of Villa Rica del Espíritu Santo and Ciudad Real. However, these cities were small and marginalized from the Atlantic commercial market, and would have difficulty in supplying weapons and related equipment to these missions.

Consequently, it would seem that these references allude to wider commercial routes which to date have been the subject of virtually no historical analysis. José Carlos Vilardaga (2017) states that the Spanish cities and the Guairá Indians reductions had used the waterways to establish trade connections with the Brazilian Atlantic coast and especially with

the town of São Paulo, at least during the period 1600–1630.²¹ Concerning the role of the Guairá missions, we do not have exact information on the volume of trade involved and it is unclear whether the frequency of the *bandeira* incursions put a stop to it.²² Undoubtedly, this trading relationship must be studied in greater detail, but we cannot underestimate its usefulness in providing firearms and supplies to the reductions.

Father Antonio Ruíz de Montoya affirms that in 1636 the first firearms (only seven in total) were handed out among the Guaraní by the governor of Paraguay, Pedro de Lugo y Navarra.²³ According to the Jesuit, these arms were handed out in the face of Portuguese advances and were returned at the end of that successful battle. We cannot rule out the possibility that this assistance was provided by the governor of Paraguay. Nonetheless, it would appear to be a very paltry number of weapons in order to overcome “five hundred well-armed Portuguese” and “to strip them of two thousand captive Indians under their control” (Artigas 2016, 290). Aside from this report, we believe that at the time, this type of weaponry had already been introduced in the reductions; otherwise the Guaraní could hardly have defeated the Portuguese *bandeirantes*.

In short, the references to the number of firearms in the Jesuit villages during this period are scarce and in our view this is attributable to two factors.

The first of these is that the Jesuits had not defined whether it was advisable for the members of the order and the Guaraní to use this type of weapon in the reductions, and consequently they were suspicious and/or hesitant about detailing their firearms numerically in letters, briefs or other documents. The question of the use of firearms was the main topic of discussion at the Sixth Provincial Congregation, 18 July to 8 August 1637, which spoke of the Jesuits wounded in the battlefield defending their missions. However, the congregation did not adopt a definitive view on the issue.²⁴ In a subsequent letter, Father General Vitelleschi, in reply to questions from his Provincial Superior, is unambiguous about the difficulty of the issue and mentions that he did not like nor could he approve of recent actions in defense of the Indians.²⁵

It is remarkable how historiographers later developed the notion that the temporary coadjutors (mainly former soldiers in Europe) were responsible for introducing and using firearms in the reductions, and for training the Guaraní. Initiation of the process was attributed to the tardy arrival of Brother Domingo de Torres to the Paraguay reductions in 1637.²⁶ This historiographical perspective released the Jesuit priests from such a charge, an idea that undoubtedly suited the interests of the Society of Jesus in these territories, and thereby managed to separate temporal from spiritual matters.

The second factor giving rise to this lack of clarity concerning the number of firearms in the reductions was that for most of those years the Jesuits were awaiting final approval for the use of these weapons. Therefore,

the members of the society did not want the authorities to know that they already had access to this type of armament. Superior General Mutio Vitelleschi was clear about this, stating in a letter addressed to the Provincial of Paraguay, Diego de Boroa, that it was lawful to defend the Indians “in the best way they could, giving them firearms and making them strong so that they could impede the passage of their enemies.” Vitelleschi, however, also clarified aspects that were not permissible:

[W]hat I cannot approve is that our priests be like captains guiding them in the struggle, both on account of the indecency of it and because I do not recognize the need, and that there is such a lack of Ladino Indians, and of Spaniards for this task [. . .] and I was confirmed in this resolve after they told me that Father Christoval de Mendoza died not *in odium fidei*, and for that cause but in armed combat along with Father Mola, and it remains to be seen if this is something permissible.

Finally, the Superior General ordered the Provincial of Paraguay not to consent to this type of action.²⁷ He considered the possibility of favoring the natural defense of the Indians, but that did not mean the Jesuits would be the first line of defense of the reductions, let alone armed.

From the 1640s onwards, the situation changed with regard to firearms in the Paraguayan missions. In 1637 Ruiz de Montoya was elected procurator of the Jesuit province of Paraguay before the Spanish Court, but he did not arrive there until 22 September 1639, and finished his work on 7 August 1640. His dealings with the Crown were slow, but Ruiz de Montoya finally obtained a Royal decree from King Philip IV (21 May 1640), which is of considerable significance in this connection. The charter ordered the Viceroy of Peru to grant license and deliver firearms to the Guaraní in the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay.²⁸ This meant that the monarchy recognized the need to allow the Guaraní natives access to this type of weaponry to protect those lands. Later, the successes of the indigenous troops against the Portuguese, especially in the battle of Mbororé of 1641, demonstrated the foresight of this provision. Success in these military activities led to the monarchy’s approval and recognition of the Guaraní in the reductions as militias of the king, assigning them the protection of the border against the Portuguese enemy (1647). Thus, the armed Indians in the missions became the militiamen of the Spanish king and accordingly Guaraní and Jesuits had to develop suitable military training, in which firearms would play a leading role.

From then on, weapons for the Jesuit reductions were obtained in three ways. The first was through legal or illegal trade in the region, but no longer using the connections between São Paulo, the Guairá region and the cities of Villa Rica and Asunción, as had been the case in the first decades of the seventeenth century (Viladaga 2017); this was mainly

concentrated on the Paraguay–Paraná–Río de la Plata waterways linking the capital with Corrientes, Santa Fe and the port of Buenos Aires, and in all these cities the procurators of the Jesuit colleges played a key role in commercial transactions. The second way was via the seizure of weapons abandoned by the Portuguese enemy on the battlefields; while the third, less documented by historians, was via the manufacture of this type of weaponry by the Guaraní in their villages.²⁹ In this regard, Brother Simón Méndes mentioned in 1641 that 600 firearms had been made in the reductions under the tutorship of a priest, an endeavor initiated by Brother Domingo de Torres.³⁰ Later reports highlighted the learning capacity of the Guaraní and their ability to produce this type of weaponry.³¹

Sources from subsequent years provide us with more precise details regarding the organization of the armed defense of the reductions. The Jesuits decreed that each village should have the necessary weapons to fight the enemy in the case of invasion and determined that it was unworkable for firearms to be concentrated in just one or two reductions.³² Such an arrangement would have posed a serious risk, because if their enemies were to attack the particular locations where arms were stored, they could easily capture all available weapons. Furthermore, from a practical point of view, it would make for a very slow system because the weapons could not be relocated quickly to protect a settlement under attack.

For his part, the Franciscan friar Gabriel de Valencia, who was a Jesuit for some fifteen years, decided to inform the governor of Tucumán about the firearms in the Jesuit reductions in Paraguay. His report gives us a different perspective and a more critical view of the presence of these weapons in these towns. Valencia affirms that during the confrontation with the Portuguese, the Jesuits had some 4,000 firearms in their possession and that there were four forges in the reductions constantly producing muskets. According to the Franciscan friar, this was a task initiated twenty years previously by Brother Domingo de Torres and therefore, by 1657 the number of firearms in the reductions amounted to 14,000, with fourteen medium-sized pieces of artillery.³³ These numbers are quite possibly exaggerated, especially if we compare them with the figures recorded at the time of the governor’s visits to the reductions in 1647 and 1657. Nevertheless, this report provides us with interesting clues as to the possible strategies used by the Jesuits to increase armaments in their villages. Valencia affirms that the reductions managed to capture firearms through trade or illegal methods, and he cites the case of the reduction of San Ignacio Guazú. This town was located in a commercial enclave near the *camino real de las vacas*, which connected the cities of Corrientes and Asunción. According to him, the inhabitants of the reduction took advantage of their geographical location to steal the merchants’ boats. Natives of the Jesuit settlements captured merchandise, including firearms, and then blamed the Guaicurú Indians for these activities.³⁴

Friar Valencia raised an interesting question in his report: the inhabitants of the reductions, with or without the consent of the Jesuit fathers, stole firearms from merchants travelling along that road and accused the native Chaco of these crimes. This demonstrates how the natives (or the Jesuits themselves) took advantage of the prevailing border relations, or the categories of “friendly Indians” and “enemy Indians,” for their own benefit.

The Importance of *Pertrechos* (Military equipment) and the Fears of an Indian Rebellion

Jesuit writings indicate two fundamental questions that arose once firearms were allowed in the reductions: the need for trade in munitions that would guarantee the reliable functioning of these weapons, and a growing fear among the inhabitants and authorities of the region of a possible armed Guaraní rebellion. However, the Jesuits themselves were not slow in linking these two aspects in order to protect themselves from criticism leveled against them. They argued that “there are no materials to make gunpowder or bullets, so it is necessary that these be brought from Peru or Buenos Aires; there is never any danger as it is easy to remove what they have, either by throwing them in the river or onto the fire, so the blunderbusses would be of no use to them”.³⁵

In other words, the shortage of munitions in the reductions and the need to acquire them through commercial channels provided a guarantee against armed uprisings on the part of the natives.

However, aside from the Jesuit arguments in defense of providing arms to the Guaraní, the supply of ammunition was an essential consideration for the operation of this weaponry. Understanding how bullets, gunpowder and other equipment came to the reductions gives us a more complete picture of how the defense of that border was developed.

One of the scarcest and most difficult-to-produce elements in the region was gunpowder. In 1639 the Jesuits stated that the Indians “do not know how to make gunpowder and even if they did, they lack the [requisite] materials, because they do not have salt or sulphur or lead.”³⁶ For this reason, references to requests from the reductions and purchases of the product in other territories are constant. In 1644 the dispatch of twenty *botijas* (jars) of gunpowder to the reductions was approved in Chuquisaca, which the Jesuits would pay over eight months, at three pesos per pound plus the value of the jugs.³⁷ Later, Father Diego de Boroa reaffirmed that the Indians in the reductions had no materials with which they could manufacture the product.³⁸

The most complete records of firearms in the reductions date from around the mid-seventeenth century and refer not only to their number but also to their distribution. These records lead us to surmise, therefore, that the Jesuits and Guaraní in the missions had managed by then to

guarantee the provision of the requisite supplies of ammunition, enabling them to use their weaponry. For instance, a wooden box with a lock and key containing ammunition consisting of gunpowder, match-rope and bullets is mentioned in most of the reductions visited during Governor Blásquez de Valverde’s tour in 1657.³⁹ Figure 11.1 includes the information drawn from two visits to the reductions recording the number, growth and distribution of the armaments encountered.

The greatest number of arms was concentrated in the reductions close to the border with Portuguese territory; meaning that there were still fears within the reductions of further attacks from the Portuguese. However, according to these visits, there was a striking absence of weapons in the reduction of San Ignacio Guazú, which was visited on both occasions, yet its inhabitants were actively involved in border defense.⁴¹

Changes in Crown policy on the matter led to the disappearance of weapons counts in the reductions in the second half of the seventeenth century. A Royal decree in 1661 prohibited the use of these weapons in the missions. According to the ruling, these had to be stored in Asunción and could be used by the Indians in the reductions only in the case of attack.⁴² This type of defense was clearly unfeasible because of the considerable distance between the city of Asunción and the Jesuit reductions, preventing any rapid distribution of these arms. Despite this, the members of the Society of Jesus maintained the semblance of compliance with this royal norm and handed over the weapons they possessed.

Nevertheless, we note that Vice-Provincial Andrés de Rada visited the reductions and sanctioned an order (13 April 1664) to continue with the defensive organization of the reductions, which would appear to

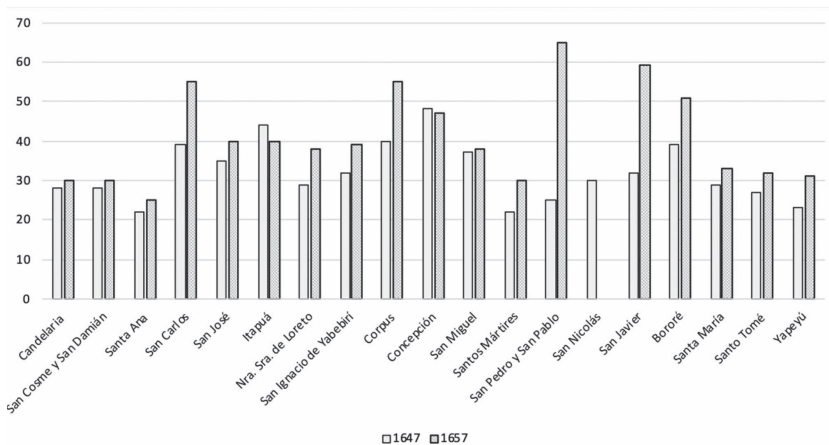


Figure 11.1 Firearms in the Jesuit Reductions As Detailed in the Visits of 1647 and 1657.⁴⁰

demonstrate that at least part of the weapons remained in the hands of the natives in the reductions.⁴³ This regulation also advocated the handling, composition and cleaning of weapons, and established that each mission be supplied with gunpowder.⁴⁴

Later, Rada was appointed Provincial Superior, and he issued the first ruling dealing entirely with the organization and training of the militias in the reductions (17 November 1666). This provision was consistent with the royal ruling and focused on the handling of “traditional” Guaraní weapons such as spears, stones, bows and arrows.⁴⁵ This regulation may well have been only a front, given that the Guaraní militias continued to use this type of weaponry during their activities, which demonstrates that not all the firearms had been sent to Asunción.⁴⁶

Later in the seventeenth century, the crown once again permitted the use of firearms. A Royal decree of 25 July 1679 forced the authorities in Asunción to return the arms and ammunition that had been brought from the villages. The governor of Paraguay, Alonso Fernández Montiel, wrote to the king on 29 October 1685 indicating the quantities involved: 836 muskets were brought, forty-three *arrobas* of lead and 229 *arrobas* of gunpowder.⁴⁷

On the basis of the above, we cannot state with any degree of accuracy whether the Jesuits had delivered all the firearms available after the 1661 provision, or only a part of them. We do know, however, that during that decade the reductions had at least 836 guns, which gives us an indication of the armaments that they came to possess in the reductions.

Subsequent regulations decreed by the Jesuit authorities continued to adapt to the reality of the prevailing border war, some of which even contradicted the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. On 19 November 1693 the Provincial Superior Lauro Nuñez ordered that firearms could be held in the schools of Tucumán, Santiago del Estero, Asunción and Corrientes, that is, in all those schools located on lands near the Chaco border.⁴⁸ In this way, the rules of the society were adapted to suit local needs and their schools no longer served solely as training centers for future missionaries, but also became product redistribution centers, where firearms were very much in evidence.

However, the incorporation of firearms also gave rise to major difficulties within the reductions. On several occasions, there were fears of indigenous uprisings using such weapons, especially in adverse situations (attacks by the Portuguese or other Indians, plagues, droughts and/or food shortages), circumstances that frequently affected the missions and that could spark an uprising or cause part of the population to take flight. This is illustrated by events in 1661, with the return of six unit captains after serving the Crown in Buenos Aires. One of them, Pedro Mbayuguá, attempted to assume civil, political and economic power in the settlements, leaving only ecclesiastic rule in the hands of the Jesuits. The conflict dragged on for two months and five reductions joined the movement.

Eventually, an alliance formed between the Jesuits and the former *cacicazgos* in each reduction prevailed over the young militiamen, who became isolated and finally laid down their arms (Susnik 1983, 19–21). However, the incident served as a warning to the Jesuits of the dangers of leaving this type of weaponry in the hands of the Guaraní. It is possible that the previously described arrangements put in place by Father Rada were devised to ensure a greater control of such weaponry, and by doing so to prevent the recurrence of confrontations similar to the uprising of Pedro Mbayuguá and his allies.

Conclusion

What has been said thus far allows us to reflect on the complex process by which European products such as firearms prompted significant mutations in Native American societies, in this case among the Guaraní natives of the Jesuit reductions in Paraguay during the seventeenth century. Meanwhile, ongoing complex negotiations between the monarchy, the regional authorities and the inhabitants of the border area were conducted concurrently, leading to their defense within the framework of the Spanish empire. The peculiarities of those territories with different population groups participating in the trade and exchange of products made it difficult to establish a route for these weapons to the reductions. Most probably these armaments reached the settlements through (legal or illegal) trade established by the Jesuits with various cities and towns in the region. In the first three decades of the seventeenth century, it is likely that, as Vilardaga (2017) states, this type of armament reached the reductions via the inland waterways linked to the Brazilian Atlantic coast, with the cities of the Guairá region acting as the necessary intermediaries in such exchanges. However, establishing exact figures for the trade and number of weapons that reached the reductions is challenging, not least on account of the Jesuits’ indecisive response during those years.

Bandeira raids and the resulting loss of Indian towns and reductions across the region caused the Guaraní to relocate in safer and protected places. Consequently, the main exchanges to and from the Jesuit reductions took place thereafter through the Paraguay–Paraná–Río de la Plata waterways. For this reason, the Jesuits set up schools in the nearby cities (Asunción, Corrientes, Santa Fe and Buenos Aires) and inaugurated the figure of the procurator in charge of trade in commodities, which included the firearms destined for the reductions of Paraguay. Victory on the battlefields against the Portuguese provided a sizeable number of captured firearms and the support of the Spanish monarchy for the training of the Guaraní in European military techniques and tactics. Thus, the so-called Guaraní militias came into being. In addition, we have references to the effect that, after 1637 at least, the temporary coadjutors managed to manufacture firearms in the reductions, an activity that substantially

increased the number of these weapons in subsequent years, as indicated in some reports.

From the second half of the seventeenth century we have more precise references to the firearms in the reductions, with reports from visiting governors in 1647 and 1657 providing details regarding their number and distribution. Primarily, however, the incorporation of firearms brought about a whole series of changes to the cultural norms of the Guaraní in the reductions. A system of military organization along Castilian lines was introduced, whereby natives were distinguished with military ranks. The Guaraní became specialized in certain types of weapons, which had their corresponding military units. Thus, leaderships were consolidated according to the type of weapons carried by the natives in their military activities. As a result, the use of firearms strengthened certain *cacicazgos* against others. This process is very significant because during the second half of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits chose to “create” new *cacicazgos* in order to “balance” power within the reductions. The honorary title of *Don*, primarily based on performance in certain military mobilizations, was granted to natives who did not come from the traditional lineages of the town.

On the basis of the above, it is clear that the arrival of this type of armament to the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay not only brought about mutations in the Guaraní practice of warfare and performance on the battlefields of the New World, but also implied a whole series of socio-cultural changes that influenced (and at the same time explain) the way in which the Spanish monarchy was defended in these border areas throughout the seventeenth century.

This type of sociocultural transformation also can be found on other frontiers of the Hispanic empire. For example, Boccara’s studies of the Kingdom of Chile have revealed important changes within the Mapuches’ society due to their interaction with the Spanish. However, the complexity of their border relations often led these “auxiliary or friendly Indians” to await the outcome of the battle and intervene toward its end on behalf of the winner (Salas 1986, 240). Similar relationships occurred on the Chichimeca border of New Spain, as Philip Powell (1977) has demonstrated.

Although this phenomenon was not exclusive to the Spanish empire, as demonstrated by, Chase (2003), Headrick (2011) and Black (2013), among others, we consider that it achieved its own specific characteristics among the Guaraní natives and promoted a “process of globalization of war technology” that we must continue to analyze to understand how it occurred in American border lands throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Notes

1. This research has been carried out within the framework of the project HAR2014–53797-P “Globalización Ibérica: Redes entre Asia y Europa y

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2. Cortesao 1951, 272–73, note no. 1. Magnus Mörner considers the interpretation of this sound as the noise of firearms to be exaggerated (Mörner 2008, 48–49, note no. 32, 229–30).
3. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Society of Jesus produced a collection of writings whereby its members justified the use of violence to these ends. For example, the work *Imago primi saeculi* (1640) by the Jesuit Jan Bolland formulated the notion of *amica violentia*, or “benign violence”. Girolamo Imbruglia refers to this notion as advancing the type of empire adopted by the Jesuits, for whom, according to Imbruglia, the goal of civilizing and converting these peoples justified the use of coercion and violence (Imbruglia 2014, 24).
4. Authors like Roberts 1967, Cipolla 1967 and Parker 1988, illustrated how the expansion of the European empires was triggered by a whole range of technological developments in the military field (“Military Revolution”).
5. Some of the American cases of technology transfer analyzed were those of the native Americans and their negotiations with the English and French (Lee 2011, 49–79); exchanges between Miskitos, Zambos and English colonists (Ibarra Rojas 2011); and the case of the Tupis and their alliances with the Dutch on the coast of present-day Brazil (Meuwese 2009, 2012).
6. We will confine ourselves here to the circulation of weapons within the Spanish empire, but we should not lose sight of the importance of understanding how this empire was financed in order to ensure, among other aspects, the defense of its borders. Yun-Casalilla 2004; Ramos Palencia and Yun-Casalilla 2012; Sánchez Santiró 2015.
7. Bibliography cited in Note no. 4.
8. In recent years, archaeological studies of different groups of natives that integrated this linguistic family have made considerable progress from the ceramics they made, especially with regard to their distribution and expansion during the pre-Spanish period. Noelli 2004; Bonomo et al. 2015.
9. Garavalia and Marchena, vol. 1, 2005, 87. Indigenous navigation was one of the main disseminators of Guaraní culture, creating a Guaraní cultural ambience or pan-Guaraní culture.
10. The Guaraní, like other native American groups, practiced ritual cannibalism, whereby they believed the warrior strength of the vanquished was absorbed if consumed in this way.
11. Wilde 2009, 137–44. The indigenous *cacicazgo* (chieftaincy) in the reductions can be qualified in two ways: first, as a control device entrusting the *cacique* with the management of space and the mission records; but, secondly, the *cacicazgo* could generate (and did on several occasions) certain autonomous forms of governance in defiance of Jesuit political rule that led to demonstrations and constant acts of indigenous resistance. Wilde 2009, 131.

12. Spears were introduced to the Guaraní following the incorporation of the horse as a result of contact with the Spanish in the first stages of colonization.
13. According to the Jesuits Francisco Jarque and Diego Altamirano, “[I]n every hamlet there are companies of infantry and cavalry, made up of all the men capable of taking up arms each with its own captain, lieutenant, sergeant, corporal and other officers, as is customary in the military, with their insignias, drums, bugles and flags . . . in the same way as at home in Spain, better cared for in the campaigns and frontiers”. Jarque and Altamirano 2008 [1687], 59. An analysis of the implementation of European military ideas within the reductions is in Takeda 2016b.
14. Cf. Takeda 2012, 67, 2016a, 93. The transcription of these documents is in Salinas 2006.
15. Cortesao 1951, 160–62 Commercial transactions in the region of Paraguay at the time were made with the so-called currency of the land (Romano 1998, 175 and note 96). Therefore, a purely monetary system, imposed by the Crown, and a purely natural system of self-sufficiency and barter coexisted in the Río de la Plata during the colonial period. However, the divide was unclear and there were infiltrations between the two systems (Romano 1998, 202).
16. Cortesao 1951, 160.
17. The affected reductions developed certain defence systems to protect themselves against attacks, such as trenches, outer walls and fences. Given the rustic nature of these defences, they were singularly ineffective in preventing the destruction of these villages (Gutiérrez 1977, 29–30).
18. Cortesao 1951, 425.
19. Cortesao 1951, 426 y 428.
20. Cortesao 1951, 429–30.
21. This period coincides with the union of the Iberian monarchies under the same king. Furthermore, Vilardaga describes the trading route and its considerable commercial activity (Vilardaga 2017, 132–33). The governor of Paraguay, Luis Céspedes de Jería, who travelled from São Paulo to take office, drew up a map (dated 8 November 1628) in which he indicates the route between the two jurisdictions, which was probably the one undertaken during this enterprise. Archivo General de Indias (henceforth AGI), *Mapas y Planos*, Buenos Aires, 17.
22. The majority of these reductions were destroyed by the *bandeirantes*, which forced the Jesuits to move the remaining reductions to new territories. However, Vilardaga indicates the complex and diverse nature of the incursions carried out by the *bandeirantes*. They were not solely targeted at capturing natives and looking for gold; the expeditionaries also engaged in commercial exchanges using various products (Vilardaga 2017, 135–36).
23. This military aid from the governor of Paraguay came in the wake of a refusal from the governor of Buenos Aires to provide assistance. Lugo issued seven muskets and mobilized seventy Spaniards to protect the reductions. Artigas 2016, 277–77.
24. We know that in the defense of the Jesus Maria reduction, Fathers Pedro Romero, Pedro de Mola, as well as brothers Antonio Bernal and Juan de Cárdenas had fired muskets at the *bandeirantes*, according to the report written by the Provincial Superior P. Diego of Boroa (4 March 1637), with all four suffering gunshot wounds in the clash. Cortesao 1969, 143–44.
25. Morales 2005, 581–82; note “g”.
26. This coadjutor brother is mentioned as the first to have introduced firearms into the reductions on his arrival in Paraguay in 1636. His biography is in Storni 1980, 286–87.

27. Morales 2005, 556.
28. Hernández, Vol. 1, 1913, 73; Pastells 1915, 49–51. Ruiz de Montoya had already prepared the 1633 report, and at the age of nineteen, before becoming a member of the Society of Jesus, he had participated as a soldier in the campaigns against the Mapuche Indians of Chile. Thus, he had experience in this type of border area and understood the importance of the use of firearms in these regions. Ganson 2016, 199.
29. For example, following the battle of Mbororé in 1641, the Portuguese “were stripped of more than 400 muskets and 300 canoes” (Avellaneda 2005, 23).
30. Pastells 1915, 59–61, note no. 1.
31. The testimony of Brother Gabriel de Valencia, an ex-Jesuit, recounts that Brother Torres had begun the work of building firearms in the reductions twenty years previously and taught this to Father Francisco de Molina. Friar Valencia affirms that, at the time of writing his report, there would have been Indian officials in the reductions who had made the grade of teachers in this activity. Cortesao 1952, 259–60.
32. Cortesao 1952, 71.
33. *Ibid.*, 259.
34. *Ibid.*, 256. According to Valencia, the inhabitants of the reductions in Itatin employed similar strategies to capture firearms and blamed the Payaguá Indians. Cortesao 1952, 257.
35. Cortesao 1952, 72.
36. Cortesao 1969, 310. The Jesuits followed this stance in subsequent years, and this is the very same line of argument that was presented to the King by Antonio Ruiz de Montoya in 1643. (Artigas 2016, 289)
37. Cortesao 1970, 400.
38. Cortesao 1952, 111.
39. AGI, *Audiencia de Charcas*, leg. 120. f.374v; f.410v; f.446v; f.479v; f.508v; f.550v; f.599v; f.633v; f.678v; f.755v; f.818; f.866; f.898v; f.939v; f.990v; f.1025; and f.1104.
40. Prepared by the author. Source: Cortesao 1970, 437–39; y AGI, *Audiencia de Charcas*, leg. 120. f.374v; f.410v; f.446v; f.479v; f.508v; f.550v; f.599v; f.633v; f.678v; f.755v; f.818; f.866; f.898v; f.939v; f.990v; f.1025; f.1104. During the visit in 1657, the weapons held in the reductions of Apóstoles and San Nicolás were counted together. The first visit recorded a total of 609 firearms and the second about 738; however, the number of weapons recorded on the first visit was increased soon after, with the shipment of 150 weapons sent by the Viceroy of Peru (Álvarez Kern 1982, 172–73; Note 78.)
41. A series of orders from the governors of Paraguay state that at least 1,873 natives were mobilized for essentially military purposes (to defend Asunción, to escort a governor or build/repair forts) from San Ignacio Guazú to Asunción between 1662 and 1680. AGN, Room IX, Society of Jesus (1595–1675) 06 09 03 Society of Jesus (1676–1702) 06 09 04; ANA, History Section, Vol. 2, No.27–30; 32–36; 39–40; 44; and Vol. 45. No.4. AGI, Charcas, 92, No 9.
42. This provision was based on the aforementioned visit of Governor Juan Blázquez de Valverde, see Royal decree in Hernández, vol. 2 1913, 533–35.
43. Vice-Provincial Rada appointed as war superintendents Diego Suárez (Uruguay River upstream), Juan de Porras (Uruguay River downstream) and Luis Ernote (Paraná River); as war consultants Diego Suárez and Alejandro Valaguer (Uruguay River) and Francisco Clavijo and Antonio Palermo (Paraná River). *Cartas Provinciales Jesuitas*, BNM. Manuscripts. No. 6.976. Madrid. f.32.
44. *Cartas Provinciales Jesuitas*, BNM. Manuscripts. No 6976. Madrid. f.32. On the subject of gunpowder, Father Rada mentions in this provision that

- the old explosives should be used up and the fresh powder from the port be reserved for *las veras*, which not only points to a different quality of gunpowder but also indicates that the purchase of gunpowder in the port of Buenos Aires continued despite the prohibitions.
45. *Cartas Provinciales Jesuitas*. BNM. Manuscripts. No. 6976. Madrid: 36–39.
 46. In 1660, 220 armed Indians were mobilized from the Jesuit reductions to stifle the rebellion in Arecayá, where the governor of Paraguay, Alonso Sarmiento de Figueroa, was in danger. The following year an unspecified number of these troops carried out a raid on the Gran Chaco in reprisal for the attacks on Itatine and Spanish towns. In 1662 about one hundred armed San Ignacio Indians participated in a fresh assault on the Chaco that lasted four months. “Información del padre Jaime de Aguilar” [1735] AGN. Colección Andrés Lamas. Sección Documentos Varios. f.41–43vta.
 47. AGI. Charcas, 15. f.1. One *arroba* equals twenty-five pounds or 11.3398 kilograms. Thus, 1,075 pounds or 487.6 kilograms of lead and 5,725 pounds or 2,596.81 kilograms of gunpowder had been taken from the reductions. This gives us an idea of the approximate volume of lead and gunpowder stored in the reductions in those years.
 48. *Cartas Provinciales Jesuitas*, BNM. Manuscripts No. 6.976. f.163-f.164. This contradicts the constitutions of the order, which stated, “Arms should not be kept in the house nor instruments for vain purposes”, *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús*, Part 3:266, 14. In: www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1491-1556,_Ignatius_Loyola,_Constituciones_de_la_Compania_de_Jesus,_ES.pdf (20/02/18).

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