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Fuegian Dialogues: Constructive Interactions between Indigenous Communities from Karukinka/Usin (Tierra del Fuego) and an Archaeological Team

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Abstract

This paper is the first publication jointly co-authored by archaeologists and members of the Yagan and Selk'nam Indigenous Communities/peoples from Tierra del Fuego, based in Argentina and Chile. Its main aim is to present the results of a series of interactions which have included:

- The restitutions of early photographs of their Ancestors;
- The provision of archaeological and historical-ethnographic publications to support the Communities' processes of recognition as Indigenous Fuegian peoples;
- Compliance with the Prior, Free and Informed Consent Protocol prior to – and during – archaeological projects in Southern Tierra del Fuego, Argentina;
- Contributions to the legal recognition of their rights, including access to their ancestral material culture (whether located nationally or abroad), sites and territories;
- Formal letters of support by archaeologists during land claims by specific Communities;
- The production of co-authored presentations, projects and publications.

These actions have led to mutual learning processes, through which our team's archaeological practice has expanded and improved in terms of fulfilling its social responsibility, while the Fuegian Indigenous Communities have been able to engage with the archaeological team on their own terms and according to their values.

We thus highlight in this paper how these dialogues have enabled the establishment of new links between the present and the deep-time past revealed by archaeological research prompted the revision of the positive and negative connotations of terms such as 'hunter-gatherer' or 'descendant' and emphasized the importance for Community members of reaching consensus on acceptable vocabulary; brought attention to the continuities and discontinuities in material culture, such as the use of natural *versus* industrial raw materials and traditional *versus* contemporary techniques. The ontological implications of these processes are also discussed.

Keywords:
Tierra del Fuego, Selk'nam, Yagan, Indigenous communities, archaeology, collaboration, ontology

Resumen

Este trabajo es la primera publicación en coautoría conjunta por arqueólogas y miembros de las Comunidades/Pueblos Indígenas Yagan y Selk'nam de Tierra del Fuego de Argentina y Chile. Su objetivo principal es presentar los resultados de una serie de interacciones que incluyen:

- Restituciones de fotografías antiguas de sus Ancestros;
- Entrega de publicaciones arqueológicas e histórico-etnográficas para apoyar los procesos de reconocimiento de las Comunidades como Pueblos Originarios Fueguinos;
- Cumplimiento del Protocolo de Consentimiento Libre, Previo e Informado antes de –y durante– el desarrollo de Proyectos arqueológicos en el Sur de Tierra del Fuego, Argentina;
- Contribuciones al reconocimiento legal de sus derechos, incluyendo el acceso a su cultura material ancestral (localizada nacionalmente o en el extranjero), a sitios y a sus territorios;
- Apoyo formal por escrito de arqueólogos a Comunidades específicas durante reclamos territoriales;
- Producción de presentaciones, proyectos y publicaciones en coautoría.

Estas acciones han llevado a procesos de mutuo aprendizaje en los cuales la práctica arqueológica de nuestro equipo se expandió mientras mejoró el cumplimiento de su responsabilidad social, mientras que las Comunidades/Pueblos Originarios Fueguinos pudieron interactuar con el equipo de acuerdo a sus propios términos y valores. Enfatizamos en este trabajo cómo estos diálogos han permitido establecer nuevos vínculos entre el presente y el pasado milenario datado por la arqueología; la revisión de las connotaciones positivas y negativas de términos como "cazador-recolector" o "descendiente" y la importancia de lograr consensos en el uso de vocabulario aceptable para los miembros de las Comunidades; y las continuidades y discontinuidades en rasgos de la cultura material tales como el uso de materias primas naturales vs. industriales o de técnicas tradicionales vs. contemporáneas. Las implicaciones ontológicas de estos procesos se subrayan a lo largo del trabajo.

Parabras clave:
Tierra del Fuego, Selk'nam, Yagan, Comunidades Indígenas, arqueología, colaboración, ontología

Introduction: Building bridges in the Fuegian Archipelago

Tierra del Fuego is the southernmost archipelago of the American continent, currently divided between Chile and Argentina. This archipelago is home to the territories of three Fuegian Indigenous peoples: Kawésqar, Selk'nam and Yagan (Fig. 1). This paper constitutes a multivocal text that presents, for the first time, a series of experiences and results arising from interactions between two archaeologists and members of different Yagan and Selk'nam Indigenous Communities from Tierra del Fuego.

In archaeology, multivocality can be understood as a socially engaged and reflexive practice that goes beyond dialogue, introducing collaborative methods throughout the entire research process – from research design and fieldwork to writing and publishing – with special care given to how the past is represented when Indigenous communities are directly connected to their Ancestors, who lived in and shaped that past (Hodder 2004; Trigger 2006). In this way, archaeologists aim to respectfully incorporate Indigenous voices, experiences and epistemologies into archaeological practice, creating a multivocal and multicultural approach that involves all interested parties in the interpretation of the past, thereby showing society its true contemporary diversity (Atalay 2008).

It is for this reason that this paper is written in the plural, as its contents stem from the numerous dialogues two archaeologists have had with six members of different Fuegian Indigenous Communities, all of whom coauthor this paper.[1] This does not mean we have all agreed on every single interaction we had along the years; however, we have chosen to focus here on a number of issues that we have been involved in, that we have spoken about, that we have felt and shared, and that we all agree are suitable for our first multi-authored paper.

1 In some paragraphs, where the voice of a single person is presented, the text is written in the singular instead of the plural.

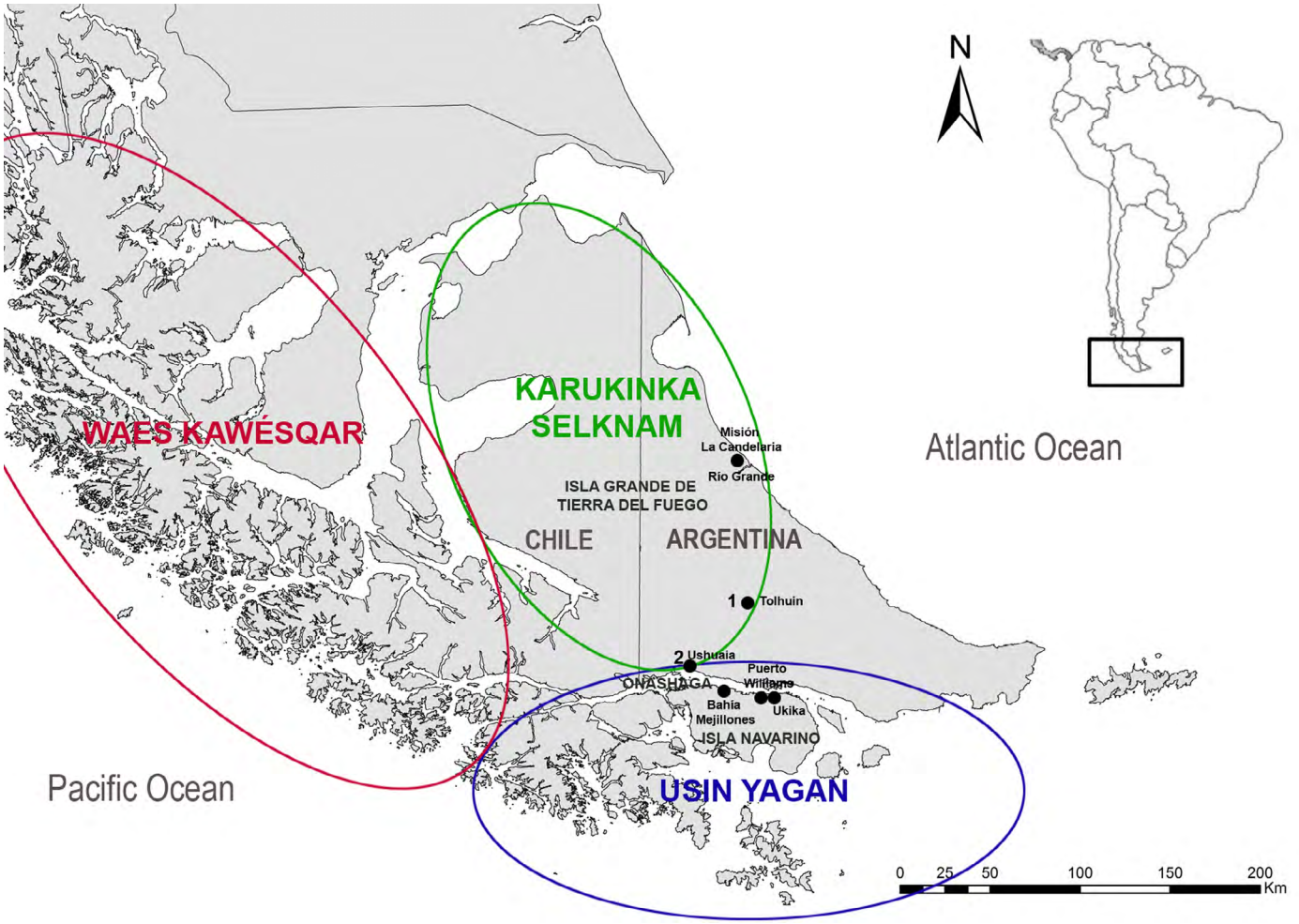

Figure 1: Tierra del Fuego with the location of the Selk'nam, Yagan and Kawesqar territories as well as cities and localities mentioned in the text (1: Location of Selk'nam communal territory in Argentina; 2: Location of Yagan communal territory in Argentina). Map: A. Butto.

This leads to the concept of ontology, which permeates this paper. There are several definitions and implications of this concept in archaeological theory that fall beyond the scope of this work (e.g., Fahlander 2017; Capek 2023), but it is clear that the ways in which we address and characterize reality, its beings and our own being within it differ due to our cultural backgrounds and are also shaped by our occupations and personal biographies. The way archaeologists engage with the past – and the present – is systematized through various theoretical and methodological practices that may not always be understood and agreed upon by members of Indigenous communities, as some of these practices may be critically opposed to Indigenous values (Endere 2014). However, we want to stress here that through our dialogues and interactions, we have found common ground in characterizing the past and present of Fuegian Indigenous societies as networks of human beings, other living beings (including animals, plants, fungi, etc.), objects (including human-made artefacts, non-human-made objects, such as rocks, and materials, such as pigments), landscapes (including earthscapes and seascapes) and Ancestors (including deceased Ancestors and their spirits). These networks between people and other entities of reality are constituted by a wide and complex set of relations, ranging from economic to political, symbolic and affective relations. Each of these relations does not have the same meaning, importance and emotional weight for each one of us, and not all of these elements have the same archaeological visibility in deep-time contexts. However, this ontological concept has helped reinforce the idea that traditional Western dichotomies – such as ecology/economy, natural/cultural heritage and past/present – may be useful as analytical tools to subdivide reality into manageable portions, but these subdivisions are only analytical, not ontological (Garcia Canclini 1986). Thus, to understand the network in its entirety – not just a portion of its components – we need to question such dichotomies and focus on the dialectical and relational links between these components (Fiore 2020; Porr 2020; Fiore et al. 2021 – see discussion below).

Theoretical concepts can become powerful tools when put into practice. A key socio-political consequence of an

ontology that attempts to break with limiting Western dichotomies and fosters broader engagement with other stakeholders in archaeological practice is, in our case, the building of bridges between academia and the Fuegian communities, ensuring their right to access information and paying tribute to the entangled being of community, Ancestors and territory. This paper is a product of such theory put into practice.

Histories of the Fuegian Communities and biographies of the co-authors of this paper

In this section, the Fuegian Communities are presented, and each of the paper's co-authors introduce themselves, allowing readers to recognize them more easily in the narratives that follow.

The Selk'nam society traditionally occupied the north and centre of the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego. Their ancestral territory was subdivided into different sub-territories called *harwen*. The term *karukinka*, meaning 'our land,' is often used to refer to their entire ancestral territory. *Karukinka* is now divided between Argentina and Chile; therefore, Selk'nam communities exist in both countries. The Argentinean Selk'nam Community, *Comunidad Indígena Rafaela Ishton* [*tr*. Rafaela Ishton Indigenous Community], was organized as early as 1924 and was legally recognized in 1995 by the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INAI). Its members mostly reside in the cities of Río Grande (northern Tierra del Fuego) and Tolhuin (central Tierra del Fuego, Argentina). Many Selk'nam people inhabit or regularly visit their communal territory near Tolhuin, which was legally recognized in 1998. In Chile, the Selk'nam nation was legally recognized as Indigenous people in 2023, although the formal recognition of individual communities is still ongoing. For this reason, the *Comunidad Indígena Selk'nam Aska Chogue* [*tr*. Aska Chogue Selk'nam Indigenous Community], the *Comunidad Covadonga Ona* [*tr*. Covadonga Ona Community] and *Asociación Telkacher* [*tr*. Telkacher Association] continue to press for official recognition as Selk'nam communities. Their members primarily live in Santiago de Chile (Chile), reflecting the diaspora resulting from the colonization of Tierra del Fuego and the genocidal practices, especially against the Selk'nam people (Nicoletti 2006; Casali 2017).

The Yagan society traditionally inhabited the southern portion of the Fuegian archipelago, from the northern shore of the Onashaga (Beagle Channel) to Cape Horn (Isla de Hornos). Their ancestral territory, called Usi, or Usin, is also divided between Argentina and Chile; thus, Yagan communities exist on both sides of the Onashaga. Unlike the Selk'nam case, legal recognition of the Yagan began earlier in Chile than in Argentina. In 1923, the Chilean government legally recognized Bahía Mejillones (Navarino Island, southern shore of the Onashaga – Región de Magallanes) as a communal Yagan territory. In 1973, the Chilean Army relocated Yagan families to Ukika, a small village also located on the shouthern shore of the Onashaga. The Yagan community continues to use Bahía Mejillones as their traditional territory. Later, in 1992, the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones* [*tr*. Bahía Mejillones Indigenous Yaghan Community] was legally recognized by the Chilean state, although it had been organized as an Indigenous Community since the early 20th century. On the Argentinean side of the border, Yagan families began reorganizing as an Indigenous Community in 2014. In 2021, the *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala de Tierra del Fuego* [*tr*. Yagan Paiakoala of Tierra del Fuego Indigenous Community] was legally recognized by INAI. Its members live in the city of Ushuaia (northern shore of the Onashaga, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina) and have a communal territory recognized by the Local Council of Ushuaia in 1983, when they were organized as the *Asociación Criolla Los Fueguinos* [*tr*. Fuegians' Creole Association], before recognizing themselves as Yagan. Legal proceedings are ongoing regarding the recognition of this territory as a communal land.

Victor Vargas Filgueira is the founder of the *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala*[2] *de Tierra del Fuego*, Ushuaia. He is an artisan, researcher, writer and promoter of the culture of the southernmost Indigenous people on the planet, working at the *Museo del Fin del Mundo* [*tr*. Museum of the End of the World] (Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego) (Fig. 2). Although Victor is not fond of short-term timelines – because his people lived for more than 7000 years on the shores of the Onashaga – he can say that he is the fourth generation since his great-grandfather Asenewensis [*tr*. man of the forest], was one of the last *yekamush* [*tr*. wise man, shaman] of the Yagan people and the last member of his lineage who lived traditionally until the end of his days.

2 The term is connected to the establishment of Anglican missions in different locations of Tierra del Fuego, including Ushuaia in Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, Argentina (1869–1907); Bayly Island in the Wollaston Archipelago, Chile (1888–1892); Tekenika in Hoste Island, Chile (1892–1907) and Douglas River, Navarino Island, Chile (1907–1916) (Cordova Quero 2021). The term '*paiakoala*' was chosen by Victor Vargas since it is a Yagan term that means 'people of the beach,' referring to Yagan groups who did not want to join the Anglican missions and continued to live on the beach (Fiore et. al 2021; Vargas Filgueira 2024).

Figure 2: Victor Vargas Filgueira holding his first book entitled *Mi Sangre Yagán* (in Spanish) / *Ahua Saapa Yagan* (in Hausikuta, Yagan language) [*tr*. My Yagan Blood] during a workshop with school students (2022).
Photo: V. V. Filgueira.

Figure 3: Margarita Maldonado (2017) and her great-grandmother Alkan
(a: Margarita Maldonado weaving *taiu* [*tr*. rush], b: Alkan). Photos: M. Maldonado (a), M. Gusinde (b).

Margarita Maldonado was born in 1956 in the city of Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. She is Selk'nam through her maternal lineage, descending from her great-grandmother Alkan, her grandmother Illiogen and her mother Herminia (Margarita is the eighth of ten children) (Fig. 3a). She has spent her entire life in Río Grande, where she raised three children and seven grandchildren with her husband, who is a key supporter of her Selk'nam identity and her cultural activities. She grew up being aware of her Selk'nam ancestral roots from the age of seven. From an early age, she worked as nanny, domestic worker, cosmetics saleswoman and hairdresser. For more than 36 years, she has been teaching her ancestral knowledge in schools and other educational institutions, from kindergarten level to adult education. Since 2005, she works as an 'ancestral educator' at the *Secretaría de Cultura de la Provincia de Tierra del Fuego* [*tr*. Culture Secretariat of Tierra del Fuego Province], sharing her legacy as a basket-weaver – a tradition passed down through her maternal line – and raising awareness that the Selk'nam are a pre-existing and living people who have inhabited Tierra del Fuego for more than 12,000 years.

José Luis Vásquez Chogue and his brother Héctor Vásquez Chogue are the children of Mrs. Orfa del Carmen Chogue Salazar and belong to the *Comunidad Selk'nam Aska Chogue* [*tr*. Aska Chogue Selk'nam Community] from Chile (Fig. 4). Members of this Community are direct descendants of their Selk'nam grandfather, Carmelo Chogue Garcia (R.I.P.), a survivor of the San Rafael Salesian Mission on Dawson Island.[3] After many years of self-recognition and advocacy, the Selk'nam were legally recognized by the Chilean state in 2023. With this, the members of the Community continue the process of official recognition as Indigenous persons, which the Chilean state requires, even though they self-identify as Selk'nam by lineage and family history. In the same year, the *Corporación Comunidad Indígena Selk'nam Aska Chogue* [*tr*. Aska Chogue Selk'nam Community Indigenous Corporation] was founded, a broader organization that includes both the Chogue Family and non-Selk'nam supporters of Selk'nam culture on behalf of the Community.

Patricio German Pantoja Asencio was born in 1979 in Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego. He is of Selk'nam descent through his father, Juan Carlos Pantoja Oyarzún (Fig. 5). His grandfather, Bernardino Pantoja Imperial, was the son of María Rosario Imperial (Patricio's great-grandmother), whose mother was Paulina Shesces, Patricio's great-great-grandmother. He is currently studying Sociology at the *Universidad Nacional de Tierra del Fuego* [*tr*. National university of Tierra del Fuego], where he also participates in the *Cátedra Libre de Pueblos Originarios* [*tr*. Independent course on First Nations]. Patricio currently works at the Cultural Center Leandro N. Alem. In this role, he has had the opportunity to share his and

3 The Salesian Mission on Dawson Island (Chile) operated between 1889 and 1911 (Aliaga Rojas 2000; Martinic 2011). There, a great number of Kawésqar and Selk'nam people were concentrated in order to be converted to Catholicism, with highly detrimental impact on their sociocultural practices and health, resulting in a great number of deaths (Nicoletti 2006; Fiore 2016b; Nacach/Odone 2016; Casali 2017).

Figure 4: Members of the *Comunidad Selk'nam Aska Vasquez Chogue* (2023). From left to right: Lorena, José Luis, Angelica, Orfa, Karla, Maria Margarita, Hector and Marcela. Photo: J. L. Vasquez Chogue.

Figure 5: Patricio Pantoja with a group of school students during one of his workshops (2022). Photo: P. Pantoja.

others' ideas as well as group experiences that Patricio carries with him. While Patricio always knew his family history and his Selk'nam lineage, since 1995 he took a path that could be summarized as biographical and historical deconstruction and construction. Although his public presence has been intermittent, Patricio is always reflecting, investigating, writing and questioning within his intimate space. With all the wealth of his lived experiences, Patricio believes that it is now possible for him to express and transform such intermittency into a 'presence' – the intermittency or discontinuity of his 'appearance' in the public arena helps build a presence in time. Although he does not yet know how to name such public presence, he says that it is not so... 'infrequent.'

Verónica Balfor[4] Clemente is Yagan, born in Puerto Williams, Chile. She belongs to the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones,*[5] where she held various roles on its board between 2009 and 2022 (Fig. 6). In 2011, she collaborated with other Community members on a research project at the Yagan Usi Territorial Museum, identifying individuals portrayed by Martin Gusinde between 1918 and 1924. This work deepened Verónica's knowledge of her genealogy and led her to explore additional bibliographic sources, through which she confirmed her Yagan, Selk'nam and Haush ancestry. This knowledge has helped her to strengthen her Indigenous identity and to feel pride in her roots, despite having experienced discrimination during her childhood and youth. She is also a co-author, along with Alberto Serrano Fillol, of a chapter in the book

4 Verónica Balfor Clemente is a descendant of Augusto Balfour. Augusto was registered in Argentina by the Anglican missionaries with the surname Balfour, while his descendants were registered with the surname Balfor (omitting the original 'u') by the *Registro Civil* [*tr.* civil registry office] in Chile.

5 The *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones* writes their name as 'Yaghan' and the *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala de Tierra del Fuego* writes their name as 'Yagan.' Throughout this article, we will spell the ethnonym as Yagan, except in cases where we refer to the Bahia Mejillones Community. This will help to maintain coherency throughout the text.

Figure 6: Verónica Balfor Clemente next to Chile's president, Gabriel Boric (2022). Photo: V. Balfor.

Figure 7: Mirtha Salamanca standing next to a portrait photograph of her grandmother Kiepja (taken by A. Chapman), 2019. Photo: M. Salamanca.

El regreso de los ancestros. Movimientos indígenas de repatriación y redignificación de los cuerpos [*tr*. The Return of the Ancestors. Indigenous Movements of Repatriation and Redignification of Bodies] (Balfor/Serrano 2020)

Mirtha Salamanca is a Selk'nam woman and a defender of ancestral knowledge. She is the granddaughter of Kiepja (usually referred to as Lola Kiepja, although Mirtha states that the Selk'nam traditionally had only one name), a prominent Selk'nam figure and the last female *xo'on* [*tr*. shaman], who sang for her people as a form of healing. Mirtha is part of the *Grupo Khol Hol Naa* [*tr*. Return Woman], a collective of women of Selk'nam descent formed to protect and honour the memory of Kiepja and all Selk'nam women (Fig. 7). Through this group, she shares accurate and truthful information about the Selk'nam people by giving talks and workshops in the community, with the goal of preserving and promoting the culture of her people.

Danae Fiore is an Argentinean archaeologist who began her work in Tierra del Fuego with an internship at the *Centro Austral de Investigaciones Científicas* (CADIC-CONICET, Ushuaia) [*tr*. Austral Centre of Scientific Research, National Council of Scientific and Technological Research] in 1996. Since then, Danae has dedicated herself to researching the Fuegian Indigenous peoples, specializing in an aspect of their cultures which was little-known at that time: their diverse artistic expressions. These include forms found in the archaeological record (portable art, pigments and paint residues, body ornaments), in the ethnographic record (body paintings recorded in antique/early photographs, ethnographic art and ornaments) and in contemporary art and visual culture.

She has also carried out a 'visual archaeology' project based on a collection of more than 1,300 early photographs, analyzing the material culture created and used by the photographed individuals to infer cultural and socioeconomic trends within each Indigenous society (Fiore/Varela 2009). Handling these images led her to feel the need to initiate restitution processes, returning these photographs to the present-day Indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego. This, in turn, helped her realize the importance of researching and making visible the connections between the deep-time past and the present, in order to support the legal and social rights of these communities and to foster mutual learning.

Ana Butto is an Argentinean archaeologist who began her research on ethnographic photographs of Patagonian and Fuegian Indigenous peoples in 2005, under the guidance of Danae Fiore. Her interest in photographs as a form of representation of Indigenous otherness led her to specialize in this topic during her doctoral research (Butto 2019). Throughout her studies, she made several trips to Tierra del Fuego – where she settled in 2020 – and came into contact with the Yagan communities, which sparked her interest in collaborative work with these groups. Combining these two interests, she focused her research on the representation of the archaeological, ethnographic and contemporary cultural heritage of the Indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego. Ana's aim is to trace and recover the continuities between past and present contributing to a more complex and complete narrative of the Fuegian Indigenous communities.

A new path with old roots: Background information on the archaeological research in Southern Tierra del Fuego and the collaboration with the Fuegian communities

Context and background: First archaeological-Indigenous collaboration projects in Tierra del Fuego

The first publication that involves collaborative work with Fuegian Indigenous communities is an article about the site Alero Martín González Calderón – the first rock art site identified in the Fuegian Archipelago, named after its Yagan discoverer. This publication had a twofold relevance:

a. It contributed to the archaeological and anthropological record of a region where no rock art had previously been documented;
b. It acknowledged and highlighted Yagan knowledge of their *Usin* (ancestral territory), as the site was identified by Martín González Calderón, a member of the Yaghan Community of Bahía Mejillones. Mr. González Calderón, who had visited the area during his childhood, recognized the overhang with paintings and brought it to public attention, thus confirming the ancestral practice of rock paintings in the Fuegian Archipelago (González Calderón et al. 2014).

Other interactions between archaeologists and Indigenous communities include the work of Ricardo A. Guichon and his team, who excavated the cemetery at the Salesian Mission '*Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria*' [*tr*. Our Lady of Candelaria] in Río Grande.[6] Their aim was to analyze 'human remains from members of the Selk'nam community, also "early settlers of the region" and Sisters of Maria Auxiliadora' (Guichón et al. 2015, 29), to assess health changes resulting from contact between Indigenous peoples and Europeans. Guichon and co-authors reported that the research team consulted members of the *Comunidad Selk'nam Rafaela Ishton* [*tr*. Rafaela Ishton Selk'nam Community] (Río Grande and Tohuin) before starting excavations and planned 'the return of the remains, along with the documentation and information obtained for each individual, by 2016' (Guichón et al. 2015, 4, our translation from Spanish to English). However, the inability to meet this timeline led to growing conflict with the Selk'nam community. Although this conflict is not the central topic of the publication, the paper offers a reflection on the benefits and challenges of collaborative research (Guichón et al. 2022).

A separate team of archaeologists also focused on the study of ancestral remains through reaching consensus with members of the *Corporación Selk'nam Covadonga Ona* [*tr*. Covadonga Ona Selk'nam Corporation] (Porvenir, Chile). Their research involved osteobiographical analysis of the remains of fourteen Selk'nam ancestral individuals excavated and collected by Martin Gusinde and Robert Lehmann-Nitsche in Tierra del Fuego and currently housed at the Natural History Museum in Vienna (Schattke et al. 2023). Collaboration with Indigenous co-authors led to the development of respectful working protocols aligned with Indigenous values. This resulted in a decision to re-individualize the remains 'in order to reconstruct (part of) their identity,' including 'provenance research' (Schattke et al. 2023, 30), thus bringing each of the 'human remains' closer to his/her original identity and to the present-day Selk'nam community (Olivares et al. 2023; Schattke et al. 2023).

The importance of creating spaces for exchange – across ways of doing, thinking and feeling – has been emphasized in several studies. These efforts aim to deconstruct traditional frameworks of regional archaeological research by acknowledging the presence of Indigenous communities and incorporating Indigenous perspectives into educational institutions such as the *Universidad Nacional de Tierra del Fuego – UNTDF* [*tr*. National University of Tierra del Fuego] (Cátedra libre de pueblos originarios UNTDF 2020). In another important educational space, the *Museo del Fin el Mundo* (Ushuaia, Argentina), a workshop aimed at school students and the general public bridges 'scientific and ancestral knowledges' and shows the complementary roles of archaeological and Yagan ancestral knowledge. Organized by Victor Vargas Filgueiras (Vargas Filgueiras et al. 2023), one of the co-authors of this paper, in this workshop, the archaeologists and the Yagan museum guide acknowledge the continuities and changes in the Yagan material culture, linking these transformations to the historical processes experienced in Tierra del Fuego and honouring the bonds of the Yagan with their material and cultural heritage.

All these researchers and their Indigenous co-authors agree on the importance of establishing respectful agreements to foster genuine dialogue. While we share this goal, we also think that archaeologists need to foster the

6 The La Candelaria mission was founded in 1893 near what is now the city of Río Grande. After a fire, the mission was relocated and rebuilt in 1896. It operated until 1946, when it was closed and converted into an agrotechnic school (Salerno/Rigone 2022).

involvement of the Indigenous members in all stages of archaeological practice, honouring their right to free, prior and informed consent (Fiore/Vasquez Chogue 2022). This principle guides the efforts of all co-authors of this paper. In the following sections, we will describe the dialogues and practices we have developed in pursuit of that goal.

Archaeological research on the Onashaga (Beagle Channel): From early excavations to collaborative work with Indigenous communities

The archaeology of Southern Tierra del Fuego has a long history, including pioneering work by Milcíades Alejo Vignati (1927), Samuel Kirkland Lothrop (1928), Junius Bird (1938), Oswald Menghin (1956) and Nicolás Sanchez Albornoz (1958). These early investigations were followed by the development of the '*Proyecto Arqueológico Canal Beagle*' [*tr*. Beagle Channel Archaeological Project], which began in 1975 and generated more than 40 years of continuous research (Orquera/Piana 1999; 2009). These detailed investigations allowed for the refutation of the idea that the Indigenous populations of the Onashaga region (Beagle Channel) – a region that is part of the Usin Yagan, or Yagan Usi,[7] – had been 'cornered' at the 'end of the world' by other populations. Instead, the researchers re-evaluated Indigenous environmental knowledge and technological practices, demonstrating that the Indigenous hunter-gatherer way of life led to 'adaptation' to the challenging environment of Southern Tierra del Fuego (*ibid*.).

Within the framework of this project, various lines of research were carried out by multiple archaeologists, leading to a substantial increase in knowledge about the Indigenous peoples of the Onashaga region. This includes research on bone tools (Scheinsohn 1997); lithic tools (Álvarez 2004); fish consumption (Zangrando 2003); bird consumption and bird bone technology (Tivoli 2010); portable art (Fiore 2011), body paintings (Fiore 2014), archaeological pigments/paints (Fiore et al. 2008); guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) consumption (Vásquez 2015; Alunni 2018); pinniped (*Arctocephalus australis* and *Otaria flavescens*) consumption (Martinoli 2017) and the analysis of ethnographic photographs as artefacts that provide relevant information for visual archaeology of the socio-economic practices of the Fuegian Indigenous peoples (Fiore/Varela 2009; Butto 2019; Fiore 2019), among others. Archaeological research has also expanded east of Onashaga, covering the Moat area (Zangrando et al. 2013; Alunni et al. 2020), the Mitre Peninsula (Zangrando et al. 2011) and even Isla de los Estados (initially explored by Anne Chapman (1987) and Victoria D. Horwitz (1993); Zangrando et al. 2011).

The 'visual archaeology' line of research initially involved the collection and systematic analysis of 1333 photographs of individuals from the Selk'nam (Fig. 8), Yagan (Fig. 9) and Kawésqar societies, taken by 47 photographers between the 1880s and 1970s, sourced from 25 archives and 75 publications. These visual artefacts were treated as products of the combined agency of both the photographers and the photographed subjects (Fiore/Varela 2009; Butto 2022).

These analyses included the study of the formation processes of the photographic record and the material culture and socioeconomic practices of each society (Fiore/Varela 2009); their comparison with the archaeological record to assess the visibility of specific material culture items and to investigate the agency of the photographed subjects (Fiore 2019). Other lines of inquiry addressed changes in the photographed material culture of the Patagonian-Fuegian societies during the formation and expansion of the Argentinean nation-state (Butto 2019); the role of Selk'nam and Yagan body painting in the construction of gender identities (Fiore 2007); the relation of gender to body adornments (Butto/Fiore 2017) and the differing rhythms of adoption of European clothing and/or adornments (Butto/Fiore 2020).

Through the handling of this photographic corpus, DF and AB identified the need to implement and coordinate a process of image restitution to each Fuegian community, recognizing the socio-cultural, historical and familial value that these antique/early photographs hold for community members today. This is how the archaeologists co-authoring this paper began their engagement with the Indigenous communities.

7 The *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala de Tierra del Fuego* (Ushuaia, Argentina) names its ancestral territory as Usin Yagan; the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones* (Isla Navarino, Chile) names its ancestral territory as Yagan Usi. In order to show respect for both visions, we will use alternatively both terms throughout the text.

Figure 8: Selk'nam group photographed in 1902 at Harberton Estancia, Tierra del Fuego. Note the guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) cloaks, facial paintings (characteristic Selk'nam designs), anklets and moccasins worn by some individuals. Bows are held only by men and boys. Copy held at the Photographic Archive of the *Asociación de Investigaciones Antropológicas* [*tr.* Anthropological Research Association]. Photo: J. Ojeda and/or W. Barclay.

Figure 9: Yagan group photographed in 1881–1882 at Hoste Island, Tierra del Fuego. Note the necklaces (some made of Western materials), the use of cloth for clothing and the bracelets and anklets worn by some individuals. Copy held at the Photographic Archive of the *Asociación de Investigaciones Antropológicas*. Photo: J. L. Doze and E. Payen.

Dialogues in the Usin, Yagan territory

Fuegian dialogues in Bahía Mejillones and Ukika (Navarino Island, Chile): On ethnonyms, artefacts and significant places

In 2013, AB and DF travelled to Navarino Island[8] (Chile), part of Yagan Usi and home to the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones*, to make contact with the Community, learn more about the photographs and carry out a restitution of the photographic corpus and database gathered up to that moment. In successive meetings at the Community's headquarters and in the *Kipa-Akař* (the Community house built by the *Comunidad Indígena*), both located in Villa Ukika,[9] a fluid dialogue developed. AB and DF learned that Community's chosen ethnonym was 'Yagan,' while the term '*yamana*' – widely used in the literature and by DF and AB until then – referred specifically to men or people in general. The *kuluana*[10] Cristina Calderón Harban, a highly respected Elder of the Community, explained to DF and AB that a man once told her, 'You are Yamana,' to which she replied, 'No, I am Yagan, but you are *yamana*.' Out of respect for the Communities, DF and AB began the practice of using the term 'Yagan' in their subsequent publications.

They also had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Martín González Calderón in the *Kipa-Akař*. Initially, this space was intended for women – its name combining '*kipa*' [*tr*. woman] and '*akar*' [*tr*. house] – but over time it began to be used by all the Community members. Mr. Martín, an expert bone harpoon maker, continued the designs of artefacts recorded in archaeological and ethnographic collections. Many of these artefacts, admired for their beauty and cultural significance, were acquired by collectors. Through several encounters, DF and AB were able to learn about the stages of production: from sourcing raw materials from marine mammal skeletons – which Mr. Martín skillfully located in the Yagan Usi landscape, because he sailed in the waters of the archipelago – to the techniques he used to shape each type of harpoon. Their questions, guided by archaeological inquiry, led to a profound reflection by this Yagan craftsman, who clarified that while he was reproducing the designs of the ancient harpoons made by his Ancestors, he made them with modern – and Western – techniques and tools. For this reason, he said, the residues that could result from his work – such as splinters or shavings – and the marks left by the tools on the bone artefacts would not necessarily match those found on archaeological ones. DF and AB thus had the experience of speaking with not only a Yagan expert in bone harpoons, but also a brilliant teacher.

Along their stay on Navarino Island, several significant moments occurred. Among them, DF and AB highlight the visit to Bahía Mejillones, the place where the Yagan families originally settled prior to their relocation to Villa Ukika. There, together with Mr. José Germán González Calderón and anthropologist Francisca Luna Marticorena Galleguillos, DF and AB were able to identify locations in the landscape captured in antique/early photographs. This activity bridged past and present of the territory, as they were able to verify, for example, the changes that had occurred in the old constructions, while corroborating that the visible forest growth line in the contemporary landscape still maintained its distinguishable curves from the historical photos.

During these fieldwork activities, DF and AB were invited to visit the *Chiajaus akař*, a ceremonial site built by members of the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones*. The building's internal design and ornamentation continue ceremonial traditions recorded in photographs by German ethnographer and priest Martin Gusinde, who completed four fieldwork trips in Tierra del Fuego between 1918 and 1924 (Gusinde 1986 [1937 German version, 1986 Spanish version]). Mr. Germán honoured and trusted DF and AB by allowing them to enter this ceremonial space – the most emotional moment of their 2013 trip. To keep this sacred space private, we complied with the request not to take photographs or publish any detailed information, and this paper maintains that commitment.

Later, during a visit with Mrs. Julia González Calderón, an expert in Yagan basketry, she showed us the use of bone awls for this craft. The awl used by Mrs. Julia looked as a hollow awl produced from a bird bone, resembling those typically found in the archaeological record of Southern Tierra del Fuego (Tivoli 2010).[11] A highly notable moment from the perspective of two archaeologists was when Mrs. Julia explained that one of the awls came from an archaeological shell midden. This allowed DF and AB to witness

8 There is no certainty about the Yagan name for Isla Navarino: it could be Uceniaka (according to Victor Vargas) or Wala (according to Verónica Balfor).

9 Villa Ukika is located about 2 km east of Puerto Williams and is where Yagan families were relocated from Bahía Mejillones by the Chilean navy beginning in 1973.

10 *Kuluana* means 'grandmother' in the Yagan language and is a respectful term to refer to Elder women in Yagan communities.

11 Further details on this artefact, such as the bird species or type of bone used to make this awl, are unavailable as no further observations were carried out on it.

a process that in archaeological terminology is called 'reuse' or 'reclamation' of artefacts. Reclamation is often identified in the archaeological record by the detection of an artefact which shows signs of use during two different periods in the past within the same 'systemic context' (*sensu* Schiffer 1971). This case is different in that Mrs. Julia's reclamation of the awl established an ontological link between the past systemic context – via the archaeological context – and the present one (Schiffer 1971), with Yagan ancestry serving as the connecting thread. Rather than thinking that the site could have been 'disturbed' at the time of taking this artefact, DF and AB were struck by the deep familiarity with which this artisan engaged with her Ancestors and Yagan technological knowledge – not only through the continuity of techniques but through the use of the same ancient artefact once held in other hands. A true instance of material culture reactivation across time.

On photo restitutions and building a Community library

During the dialogues about the photographs restituted to the Indigenous Yaghan Community of Bahía Mejillones,[12] some participants recognized relatives – or even themselves as children. This led us to schedule a restitution of printed and enlarged copies of the photographs, which were delivered to those portrayed and/or to their relatives.

Alongside the restitution of photographs to the Indigenous Yaghan Community of Bahía Mejillones, several publications in Spanish on the study of these photos and the archaeology of the Onashaga region were handed to the Community. Subsequently, Mrs. Verónica Balfor Clemente formally requested that DF and AB continue providing bibliographic contributions to the Community library. In response, DF and AB added their own publications and those of other authors on archaeological, historical and anthropological topics. Their dialogue with Mrs. Balfor continues to this day; her co-authorship in this paper is a reflection of that.

During the 2013 trip to the Yagan Usi sector of Navarino Island, DF and AB consulted members of the Community about the use of pigments and paints. Some of this knowledge related to their use was revealed to DF and AB in the aforementioned *Chiajaus akař* ceremonial site, which will not be detailed here as we have committed to maintaining the privacy of this ceremonial space and practices. In addition, *kuluana* Cristina Calderón indicated that she did not remember seeing the use of facial or body paints, although we must take into account the brief nature of contact with her – there is also the possibility that she was not interested in revealing this type of information. On the other hand, members of the Community explained that the use of facial paintings was being reintroduced for specific events, such as the recreation of some traditional dances by Yagan girls. They showed DF and AB a photograph of such a performance, printed in a brochure, it shows the first performance of the Yagan *Apernij hito* [*tr.* Southern Star] performing for the Dance Day in Puerto Williams. In recent years, the use of facial painting has been resumed in some contexts by various members of the Indigenous Yaghan Community of Bahía Mejillones. For example, during the demonstrations against the installation of salmon farms in the Onashaga, which the Community strongly opposed. The designs show a clear continuity with the facial paintings used by the Yagan Ancestors as recorded in the antique/early photographs: the basic elements of the designs are straight lines interpolated with dotted lines. Most frequently, these lines are vertically arranged on the face, especially on the cheeks, although in some cases a horizontal line is drawn across the brow and temples (Fiore 2002). As Mr. David Alday Chiguay mentioned in an email to DF: 'Painting within our culture has importance and connection to what is happening, it is not just an ornament or just lines, it communicates' (message from 8 April 2022, quote authorized by Mr. Alday on 20 April 2023, translation: D. Fiore). Thus, this practice reinstates the use of Yagan facial painting in the 21st century as a powerful act of contemporary sociopolitical expression embedded in a long-term Indigenous cultural tradition. This use of facial painting clearly breaks away from the dichotomy between aesthetics and communication, instead advocating an ontology that combines the two.

Body and facial paintings have very low visibility in the archaeological record – only pigment residues remain, attesting to the use of pigment/paint for at least six millennia in the region (Fiore et al. 2008). Photographs, by contrast, are visual artefacts that document these ephemeral yet highly symbolic forms of art in the 19th and 20th centuries, demonstrating the continuity of some Yagan designs into the 21st century. Thus, the link between past and present is not only maintained through more enduring material

12 A process of reconnection between the Yagan families of the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones* and the photographs of their Ancestors was also being carried out by anthropologists Francisca Luna Marticorena Galleguillos and Alberto Serrano Fillol, director of the *Museo Territorial Yagan Usi* [*tr.* Yagan Usi Territorial Museum] (formerly *Museo Antropológico Martin Gusinde* [*tr.* Martin Gusinde Anthropological Museum]), Isla Navarino, Chile.

culture items, such as harpoons and awls, but also through fading images on the skin that remain imprinted on modern visual artefacts and help to build collective memory.

As a board member of the Indigenous Yaghan Community of Bahía Mejillones, Verónica Balfor Clemente – alongside Alberto Serrano Fillol, director of the *Museo Territorial Yagan Usi* (MTYU)[13] – was an active participant in the process of requesting the return of items from the Gusinde Collection to the Yagan Usi, collected by him during his visits to the territory. This process involved visits to the National Museum of Natural History (MNHN)[14] in Santiago and a series of institutional procedures, which led to three permanent loans of items from the MNHN to the MTYU in Puerto Williams and partial return of the collection to the Yagan Usi. This has allowed members of the Community to see, study and connect with artefacts that were made by their direct Ancestors. This process is described in greater detail in the book chapter by Balfor/Serrano (2020).

Fuegian dialogues in Ushuaia (Tierra del Fuego, Argentina): On breaking invisibility and building cultural resilience

Following the 2014 formation of the Yagan Paiakoala Indigenous Community of Tierra del Fuego, based in Ushuaia (Tierra del Fuego, Argentina), DF and AB initiated contact with its members, including Mr. Víctor Vargas Filgueira (First Counsellor of the Community), Mr. Roberto González (Second Counsellor), Mr. Teodosio González (Coordinator),[15] *kuluana* Catalina Filgueira Yagan – a respected Elder of the Community and mother of Víctor, Roberto and Teodosio – as well as younger Community members. During their first visit, DF and AB restituted antique/early photographs (with relevant information) as well as publications in Spanish by members of the archaeological team related to the photos and the archaeology of Onashaga. Mr. Vargas shared with DF and AB the Yagan genealogy of his family with great dedication and patience, illustrating the whole story with the graphic material they provided to the National Institute of Indigenous Affairs (INAI) during the Community's formal recognition process in the Argentinean state. As archaeologists, DF and AB were deeply moved when Mr. Vargas showed them photos of Asenewensis, his great-grandfather – renamed Thomas Yagan in the literature[16] – whose face they had come to know very well through their research of the antique photos. As in the case of harpoons and awls, these interviews demonstrated the connections between the past and the present.

These interactions reinforced the notion that although the Yagan people were decimated as a result of the violent Western invasion and occupation of their territory, strong connections endure between their past and present. The connections between Ancestors and contemporary Yagans still exist, even though their traditional and current modes of life are fundamentally different. We write 'contemporary Yagans' because one of the lessons we learnt from Mr. Vargas is that the use of the word 'descendants' (*descendientes* in Spanish) – which for AB and DF was only indicative of the existence of a link between people of the present with Ancestors of the past – is interpreted by many members of the Yagan Paiakoala Community as an offensive term, undermining present Yagan identity and implying that current Yagans are merely derivatives of an original pristine identity. In contrast, current Yagans have deep connections with their Ancestors, but simultaneously they are Yagans themselves. DF and AB later learned that members from the Selk'nam people share this interpretation (see below).

After our first stay with the Yagan Paiakoala Community, Mr. Vargas gave DF and AB a deeply meaningful present: a miniature canoe, such as the ones made by his Ancestors and recorded in ethnographic photographs from the early 20th century as well as found in numerous museum worldwide (e.g., *Weltmuseum Wien* [*tr*. Vienna World Museum] and *Missionshaus St. Gabriel* [*tr*. St. Gabriel Mission House], Mödling, Vienna, Austria; *Museo Colle Don Bosco* [*tr*. Museum Colle Don Bosco], Castelnuovo, Italy; British Museum, London, United Kingdom; *Museo Nacional de Historia Natural* [*tr*. National Museum of Natural History], Santiago, Chile, among others). He also told us how he had resumed the making of *mapi* [*tr*. rush] baskets – traditionally a women's craft in the Yagan community (Fiore/Varela 2009; Orquera/Piana 2015), which he was able to easily resume due to his knowledge of *criollo* [*tr*. creole] rope-making. It was revealing to see how

13 The institution was originally named the *Museo Antropológico Martin Gusinde* after the German ethnographer and missionary who carried out seminal research among the Fuegian societies.

14 Both museums are part of the National Service of Cultural Heritage, under the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage of Chile.

15 These were the roles played by these members of the *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala* at the time; they have since changed as part of the regular functioning of the Community.

16 Asenewensis, or Thomas Yagan, is also the maternal great-grandfather of Verónica Balfor Clemente, co-author of this publication. This connection shows the enduring family ties between the current members of the *Comunidad Indígena Yaghan de Bahía Mejillones* in Chile and the *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala de Tierra del Fuego* in Argentina.

knowledge and skills from a non-Fuegian technique could support the revitalization of an ancestral Fuegian one.

In 2017, Mr. Vargas published the book *Ahua Saapa Yagan* (Vargas Filgueira 2017; *Mi Sangre Yagán* in Spanish, published in 2021), becoming the first Yagan author from the Argentinean side of the Usin[17] to publish a book about the history of his people, the traditional way of life of his Yagan Ancestors and the profound injustices and transformations they endured since Western invasion of the Usin Yagan, marked by the first arrival of European travelers in the 17th century. These events are recounted from the perspective of Asenewensis, the author's great-grandfather and the main character of the book. This strengthens the impact of the events, as the protagonist is not imaginary but one of the writer's Ancestor.

The first edition of this book was presented by Víctor at the International Book Fair in Buenos Aires, Argentina – the largest event of this kind in South America, which attracts thousands of readers. The presence of several archaeologists at this presentation implied explicit support for Mr. Vargas as an author and for the Yagan Paiakoala Community as Indigenous people living in Argentina. This book is now used as educational source in all schools of Tierra del Fuego Province as well as in Puerto Madryn (Chubut Province), Bariloche (Rio Negro Province) and some schools in Buenos Aires and Santa Fe Provinces. It is also held in ethnology libraries in Germany, including the Ibero-American Institute (Berlin), the Anthropos Institute (Sankt Augustin), the University of Jena and the University of Göttingen, where copies were brought by AB. The wide distribution and interest in this book demonstrate its relevance and suggest that it resonates with the experiences of many Indigenous peoples around the world.

Co-authoring as a means of mutual learning

As a result of these deep and meaningful interactions, DF and AB proposed the creation of co-authored texts with members of the Yagan Paiakoala Community, breaking away from the anthropological tradition in which Indigenous persons were considered only as informants and instead aiming to prioritize their knowledge and valuing each individual as a co-author. We started with a dissemination article, published on the website of the Malvinas Museum (Fiore et al. 2016). This piece combines archaeological and ethnographic information – with a particular focus on photographs as sources – with current testimonies of oral memory and practices of the Yagan people, to offer an overview of this southernmost Indigenous society on Earth. The text presents a range of material culture – harpoons, baskets, miniature canoes – showing both their ancient production, evidenced at archaeological sites and in antique photographs, and their ingoing production, as seen in the creations of members of the Yaghan Indigenous Community of Bahía Mejillones and the Yagan Paiakoala Indigenous Community of Tierra del Fuego. The article also presents photographs of Ancestors of great importance to the Yagan people, such as Mrs. Catalina Yagán,[18] grandmother of our co-author Víctor. In that publication, Mr. Vargas chose not to sign with his individual name but speak on behalf of the whole Community.

Subsequently, at the invitation of colleagues from Australia and New Zealand, we co-authored a paper centered on intercultural dialogues about human relationships with the sea. The project involved members of several Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous scientists and artists from countries surrounding the Southern Ocean (Roberts et al. 2021). The paper draws on the knowledge of these diverse social agents to build bridges between Indigenous knowledge and Western science, aiming to create multicultural knowledge systems capable of addressing the disruptions caused by the Anthropocene to cultural-environmental connections. The paper stresses how Indigenous peoples can help to distinguish between natural historical phenomena, i.e., Indigenous historical ecology, and human-driven disruptions of ecosystems. The paper also presents a website with numerous visual and written works – both artistic and scientific – designed to increase the visibility of the diverse backgrounds, knowledge systems and values involved in these intercultural dialogues.

Mr. Vargas's contribution to that paper is based on the notion that Indigenous peoples have a deeper vision of the environment. From this point of view, the author urges the readers to look at the traditional mode of life of the Yagan people in the past and to revive certain aspects of it in the present, arguing that these practices enabled his Ancestors to live for millennia in their Fuegian Usin. In this way, the author combines synthetically two crucial elements of his contention: the practices and knowledges of his people, supporting the theme of ecological balance, and

17 While Victor Vargas is the first Yagan author from the Argentinean sector of the Yagan Usin to publish a book on Yagan society, since 2005, Cristina Zárraga Riquelme – a member of the Yagan Community based in Chile – has published several books which preserve and share stories, beliefs and knowledge about the Yagan language (Zárraga 2005a; 2005b; 2010; 2016; Zárraga et al. 2023).

18 Note the use of the Yagan ethnonym as a surname – this was a common practice used to rename individuals from this Fuegian society, who originally did not have surnames.

archaeological data, underscoring the deep-time continuity of the hunter-gatherer-fisher mode of life developed in the Yagan Usin. The result is a seamless integration of Indigenous and Western knowledge.

Because Mr. Vargas gives public talks as part of his role at the *Museo del Fin del Mundo* [*tr*. the End of the World Museum] (MFM, Ushuaia), we co-authored a paper focused on the tangible and intangible heritage exhibited in that institution. The paper is regularly presented during Victor's talks (Fiore et al. 2021). The publication shows how these talks offer a critical view of Fuegian history, challenging views that confine the Yagan people to the past, the exotic, the inferior or the extinct, and instead creating meaningful links between past and present. One of the points that Mr. Vargas emphasizes in his talks is that '*there is only one origin of humanity – we are all descendants of hunter-gatherers.*' Therefore, he argues, there is no justification for prejudiced or racist views against him for being Yagan: '*They cannot see me as inferior for being a Yagan Indigenous person,*' since we all have hunter-gatherer Ancestors. In this vision, the concept of the hunter-gatherer holds a positive and empowering ontological connotation.

The paper also addresses the importance of having a Yagan person employed at the MFM, emphasizing it as an effective and affordable means of achieving some of the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – objectives that are otherwise difficult to achieve in developing countries. The paper argues that the role played by Mr. Vargas in the MFM foregrounds his position as a valued member of society and bearer of ancestral Yagan knowledge, contributing to shift the museum's framing of Indigenous people as a 'theme' or 'subject' of display to active agents within both the institution and society. Our choice to publish that paper in English and in an international journal was precisely to give greater visibility to our Yagan co-author as an active agent across various scales – from the museum and Yagan Community to Fuegian, Argentinian and South American societies – and to demonstrate the powerful outcomes that can be achieved through mutually respectful dialogues between Indigenous people and archaeologists.

On putting respect into practice: When legal matters really matter

Not all collaborations with the Yagan Paiakoala Community focus on cultural and academic outcomes. Our team of archaeologists has also taken the initiative to support the territorial claims by this Community to the provincial government of Tierra del Fuego and the city government of Ushuaia. For example, in 2018, members of the archaeological team signed a letter of support to the Community for their claim on lands in the Pipo River Valley (lot 1000, plot 95), near the Tierra del Fuego National Park. These lands had been granted in 1983 by the Mayor of Ushuaia to the *Asociación Criolla Los Fueguinos* [*tr*. The Fuegians Creole Association] (then composed of 80% Yagan paople, who in 2014 self-identified as a Fuegian Indigenous people and formally organized as the Yagan Paiakoala Community). In 2018, the land became part of real estate negotiations, with a promise of keeping one hectare for communal use by the Yagan Paiakoala Community. Although Article 75, Section 17 of the Argentinean National Constitution clearly states the rights of Indigenous peoples, these rights are very difficult to enforce. Moreover, law degrees taught at Argentinean universities do not include courses on essential legislations, such as:

- Law 26.160 on Indigenous land rights;
- Law 25.517 on the restitution of human remains to Communities;
- Law 24.071, which ratifies the International Labour Organization Convention Number 169 on Indigenous and Tribal peoples in Independent Countries that establishes the right of Indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) – a protocol that is often disregarded in the name of 'progress.'

In the words of Mr. Vargas: 'Currently, we continue to occupy the land, but according to the Mayor of Ushuaia, we are squatters.'

Other dialogues have taken place during visits by members of the *Comunidad Yagan Paiakoala* to archaeological excavations, such as one conducted in the *Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego* [*tr*. Tierra del Fuego National Park] (PNTDF) in 2021 (Fig. 10). Before starting the rescue excavations at a site intended for the future construction of the *Subcentral de Incendios, Comunicaciones y Emergencias* [*tr*. Fires, Communications and Emergencies Subcentral], a joint meeting was held involving the National Park's authorities (Superintendent Marcelo Ochoa, Chief Ranger Gabriel Willink and Conservation Manager Guillermina Massaccesi), CONICET archaeologists from the *Centro Austral de Investigaciones Científicas* in charge of the excavation (Francisco Zangrando, Angélica Tivoli, Ana

Figure 10: Members of the *Comunidad Indígena Yagan Paiakoala de Tierra del Fuego* visiting the archaeological team at the *Parque Nacional de Tierra del Fuego* (2021). Photo: R. Carpinetti.

Butto and María Paz Martinoli) and the representatives of the *Comunidad Yagan Paiakoala* (Victor Vargas Filgueira, Roberto González Filgueiras and Teodosio González Filgueiras). During this meeting, the planned work was presented, and joint efforts were proposed for the exhibition of the findings and the dissemination of information to the general public. As a result, the representatives of the Yagan Community authorized the project through the signing of a PFIC protocol with the PNTDF. Once excavation began, the Community representatives visited the archaeological site, viewed the artefacts and remains and received preliminary information about the site's stratigraphy. For the Community, it was the first opportunity to witness an archaeological site in the process of excavation, which led Victor Vargas to reflect that these 'archaeological vestiges are the villages of our people.'

As part of this collaboration with the PNTDF, we also worked together on public outreach materials. A project directed by Dr. Angelica Tivoli developed a series of informative posters displayed on pedestal signs at the Bahía Ensenada and Bahía Lapataia trails. For the first time, these materials were co-created by archaeologists and Yagan people. They reflect elements of their past (reflected in quoted archaeological data and antique black-and-white photos) and their present as a Community (reflected in text, colour photos and the clear inclusion of a Yagan co-author, representing the Yagan Community) (Fig. 11).

Dialogues in Karukinka, Selk'nam territory

Fuegian dialogues with a Selk'nam ancestral educator: On traditional painting techniques, Ancestors' photographs and travelling baskets

Based on the experiences DF and AB had with the Yagan Communities, they decided that although their team does not carry out archaeological fieldwork in Karukinka, Selk'nam ancestral territory, it was necessary to engage in a dialogue with the Selk'nam Communities in order to develop processes of restitution of their photographs and accompanying information. Thus, since 2018, they have been in contact with members of the *Comunidad Indígena Rafaela Ishton*[19] (Tierra del Fuego, Argentina) as well as other Selk'nam persons who are not part of that Community but are active Selk'nam representatives and teachers of ancestral knowledge.

First, DF was able to meet Mrs. Margarita Maldonado, who presented her book *Entre dos mundos. Pasado y presente de la cultura Selk'nam-Haus de Tierra del Fuego* [*tr*. Between two worlds. Past and present of Selk'nam-Haus culture of Tierra del Fuego] at the International Book Fair in Buenos Aires.

In this book, Mrs. Maldonado provides abundant information about Selk'nam life in the past, including data on their ancestral way of life and worldview, such as those displayed during the male initiation ceremony known as *Hain*. She also brings a wealth of knowledge put into prac-

19 The *Comunidad Indígena Rafaela Ishton* of the Selk'nam people, named after a prominent Selk'nam female representative, was the first Indigenous Community of Argentina. It was founded in 1924. The Community was granted legal status by the Argentinean state in 1995.

Figure 11: Informative poster on a pedestal sign displayed in the *Parque Nacional de Tierra del Fuego*. Photo: A. Butto.

tice by the author herself, showing the use of traditional and contemporary raw materials for the creation of ceremonial masks; body ornaments (e.g., a *kochel*, a male headdress made of *yowen* (guanaco, *Lama guanicoe*) leather; a *aspr kochrel*, a feather diadem; a *kelcher,* a shell necklace), paints and facial paintings. Traditional Selk'nam masks were created on *Nothofagus* bark, so Mrs. Maldonado first experimented with mask-making using bark found in the woods, but without cutting the tree, because, in her own words, 'we greatly respect nature.' From that research onward, Margarita decided to make 'mask recreations' using another material – she chose cardboard. She decorates the cardboard masks with lines, points, colours, just like those used by her Ancestors, carrying deep spiritual meaning.

Mrs. Maldonado has also adopted several motifs from Selk'nam facial paintings recorded in antique/early photographs and has used them on various occasions, both private and public. Her facial paintings reflect a deep appreciation for the combination of design and technique as key ontological elements in the visual expression of her Selk'nam identity. Her testimony reveals that, initially, many members of her family were indifferent to the use of facial paintings, but they gradually became enthusiastic about this practice, asking to be painted and photographed. Thus, across the different editions of her book, there are photographs of more Selk'nam people painted in the 21st century (Maldonado 2021).

Mrs. Maldonado's book also contains valuable information about her family's genealogy, which clearly attests the impact of Western society on the Selk'nam and, at the same time, the resilience of this Indigenous Fuegian people. The book also includes a key chapter on basketry techniques, presenting a step-by-step production sequence – from the gathering of raw materials to the technical gestures required for *taiu* weaving – as well as the various uses of the baskets once completed (Maldonado 2021). Margarita's activity as a basketry teacher is highly regarded in Tierra del Fuego; she has taught workshops for many years at the *Centro Cultural Yaganes* [*tr*. Yaganes Cultural Centre] in Río Grande and has already trained thousands of students.

After meeting with Mrs. Maldonado, DF and AB initiated the process of restituting digital photographs, which, in her case, had an unexpected and deeply emotional outcome. This restitution enabled her to obtain a higher-quality copy with a much wider framing of a photograph of her great-grandmother Alkan, taken around 1920 (Fig. 3b). Furthermore, given her experience in handling pigments and producing paints, Margarita was invited to formally participate in a research project on the analysis of archaeological, ethnographic and contemporary painting

techniques and uses in Karukinka and Usin (Tierra del Fuego).[20] During this collaboration, Mrs. Maldonado showed DF and AB, in her own home, the natural pigments she had collected to produce white paints (with burnt guanaco bones and crushed shells), to produce: white/grey paints (from grey clay), red paints (from raw earth and heated earth) and black paints (from charcoal).

Mrs. Maldonado has achieved expert handling of different natural colouring materials and *yowen* fat – to which, as a member of the Selk'nam people, she has access – for the production of paints following ancestral techniques. She has access to the use of *yowen* for this and other purposes, as one of the rights that she holds as a member of the Selk'nam people. Thirty-eight years ago, Mrs. Maldonado began travelling across the island in search of the 'white clay,' the 'ochre clay' and the 'black earth.' This led her to put into practice what her Selk'nam ancestors once did. She was able to locate, in certain parts of the island, the same clays that were traditionally used for the *Hain* ceremony, in particular.

The white paint is called *shool*. *Shool* is made from white clay found in one area of the island and is mixed with water to paint the body. It can also be produced by grinding shells and mixing them with water and saliva to hydrate the pigment and to paint, or by 'cooking' (burning) guanaco leg bones to obtain a medium bright white paint. This latter version was used especially for wedding ceremonies and other important events within Selk'nam ceremonial life.

Ochre paint, called *akel* in the Selk'nam language, is a clay which can have a range of hues, from reddish, orange or yellow to a brownish hue, depending on the parts of the island where it was/is collected. *Akel* is 'cooked' (burnt) to achieve a darker tone. It was also traditionally used daily by Selk'nam people to reflect personal moods: women would paint their cheekbones with lines and dots, corresponding to their emotional state. This was an everyday practice comparable to how we paint our lips today. Traditionally, this clay was mixed with sea lion or whale fat; however, to demonstrate this practice to children in schools, Mrs. Maldonado now mixes *akel* with *yowen* fat, which is less pungent than sea lion or whale fat. In fact, sea lion and whale fat are very difficult to remove from human skin. Margarita emphasizes this point, because many historical and ethnographic sources claimed that the Selk'nam had a nauseating odor that made others reluctant to be around them. She asserts that this smell came specifically from sea lion and whale fat – something Mrs. Maldonado confirmed through her own experiments

She also mixes clay with guanaco fat so that children could safely paint themselves, confirming that the fat indeed provides warmth, functioning as a 'thermal insulator.' This is a common notion mentioned in several sources but had never been tested until Mrs. Maldonado's experimentation.

The colour black was obtained from vegetal charcoal, that can also be ground into a very fine powder. This pigment was also used for ceremonies – at Selk'nam weddings and other special occasions – carrying deep spiritual meanings developed during the ceremony. There is also a black earth found in some parts of the island that can be used for dyeing and painting.

Hair, '*al*' in Selk'nam language, was also treated with grease and earth pigments to protect the scalp and head from the cold. That is why there are many antique/early photographs showing the Selk'nam with tangled hair: it was covered with grease and earth, a practical way to protect themselves from the cold.

Throughout the survey of Fuegian ethnographic collections conducted in different countries, in 2021 one of us (AB) was able to study a small yet significant collection of Selk'nam and Kawésqar artefacts gathered by German zoologist Otto Bürger and housed at the Institute of Ethnology of the Georg-August University of Göttingen (Germany). During the dialogue with Michael Krauss, curator of the ethnological collection, AB noted that Selk'nam baskets were still being produced by Selk'nam ancestral educator Mrs. Maldonado, who continues this practice and teaches it in her basketry workshops (mentioned above). This led to the joint idea that it would be important to include a contemporary basket – along with a text and image of its author – in the forthcoming exhibition of Fuegian materials at the institution. This would highlight the cultural continuity of basketry practices and demonstrate that the Selk'nam people, contrary to what is claimed in many museums, are not extinct.

Upon hearing the proposal, Mrs. Maldonado immediately and enthusiastically accepted, beginning to plan the size of the basket, the estimated hours of work required and the date by which it should be ready to travel to Germany. Over the following months, Mrs. Maldonado shared photographs documenting the basket-making process, and we exchanged ideas with her and other colleagues on how to determine the fair price for the basket – an important gesture recognizing the value of this Selk'nam artisan's work and knowledge.

20 Mr. Vargas Filgueira from the Yagan Community also participates in this project.

In July 2022, one of us (AB) served as a custodian of this *tayka* [*tr*. basket] for thousands of kilometers until it reached the Institute of Ethnology, where it was received and will be preserved until its future exhibition, accompanied by a text we will co-author with Mrs. Maldonado (Butto/Maldonado 2023; 2024). All these processes of joint collaboration continue to this day.

Fuegian dialogues with the Selk'nam people in Chile: Working together towards their legal recognition by the state

In 2021, DF also began establishing remote connections – via digital communication – with members of the Selk'nam people of Chile, who at that time were still legally unrecognized in their country, in a society where discourses of extinction remain pervasive. Aware of the negotiations these communities were undertaking, DF sent bibliographical information on Selk'nam photographs and historical-ethnographic written sources published by our team and others. These publications underscore the Selk'nam preexistence prior to the establishment of Chile as a state, highlight numerous aspects of their cultural richness and emphasize that Selk'nam genocide survivors continue to live in Argentina and Chile, thereby contradicting extinction narratives.

These publications were initially shared with the *Corporación Indígena Selk'nam Covadonga Ona* [*tr*. Covadonga Ona Selk'nam Indigenous Corporation]. Through this process, DF established a connection with Mr. José Luis Vasquez Chogue, with whom we co-developed a presentation at the 13th Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS-13; Fiore/Vasquez Chogue 2022). This presentation became the foundation for the present article, to which more co-authors were invited later with the aim of reflecting the voices of members of different Communities. In that initial presentation, Danae and José Luis synthesized the various actions that Danae's team had been undertaking with the Fuegian communities to build bridges of dialogue and collaborative practice, while emphasizing the importance of creating spaces to listen to Selk'nam voices from Chile, thereby supporting their visibility and recognition as an Indigenous people in that country.

Currently, Mr. José Luis serves as the Secretary of the *Comunidad Indígena Selk'nam Aska Chogue*, and we continue to collaborate with him.

On September 4, 2023, the bill that modifies Chile's Law 19.253 ('Indigenous Law') was approved, legally accepting the Selk'nam people as one of the Indigenous ethnicities recognized by the Chilean state. The current members of the *Comunidad Indígena Selk'nam Aska Chogue*, under the leadership of Héctor Vásquez Chogue (President of the Community), have overcome obstacles in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, together with another Selk'nam Community, ultimately achieving the approval of the bill and its promulgation by the Chilean state. This milestone opens new steps in the ongoing struggle to shift the paradigm and discourse on Selk'nam 'extinction,' recognizing their status as a living and contemporary people.

Throughout the formation of the *Comunidad Indígena Selk'nam Aska Chogue* and the struggle for the approval of the law, several members of the Community began appearing in public wearing facial paintings, often featuring a motif consisting of a horizontal line with a dot above it on each cheek, along with a dot on the nose. Typically, the dots are painted white, and the lines are red. Systematic analysis of numerous antique/early photographs of Selk'nam people indicates that this motif was worn often, making it a characteristic 'icon' of this society; facial paintings with this type of motif were either monochrome (all white) or bichrome (white dot and black or red line) (Fiore 2016b).

When Jose Luis Vásquez Chogue was asked about the materials currently used for painting, he explained to DF that cosmetic paints are employed, but that in the future they plan to learn how to produce paints using the traditional materials and techniques of their Selk'nam Ancestors. Here, the traditional motif retains sufficient ontological power to signify Selk'nam identity, even when produced with non-traditional materials. In addition, some men in the Community also wear the aforementioned *kochel*, an iconic and diacritic element of Selk'nam clothing/ornamentation.

There are other practices that the members of the *Comunidad Indígena Selk'nam Aska Chogue* carry out in order to keep a connection with their roots and with Karukinka (Tierra del Fuego). They possess a set of *boleadoras* [*tr*. bolas], traditionally used by the Selk'nam for hunting; by handling these *boleadoras*, they connect with their Ancestors. Those are moments of profound spiritual significance and deep identification with their people. They have also gathered feathers from autochthonous birds of Tierra del Fuego, as well as bivalve shells from the coastal areas of Porvenir and Timaukel. These elements form part of ritual headbands, which are being prepared to get closer to their traditional ceremonies. One member of the family also uses sheep wool in her crafts. Significant changes have occurred in their lives, and many things have been taken away from them due to the colonization of Tierra del Fuego.

Mr. Hector Vásquez of the Community Aska Chogue (and brother of one of the coauthors of this paper) has also been carrying out investigative work, through which he developed what he calls 'a new internal thesis.' During his walks across different points of Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego, he observed linear marks and dotted lines on rocks, which are similar to the body painting designs worn by men during the *Hain* male initiation ceremony. He compared these marks with the designs of the Matan, Kulan, Ulen and Koschménk spirits, and he proposes that these marks reflect techniques used by their ancestors, who painted similar designs on their bodies during such ceremonies. Otherwise, he considers it 'difficult and incredible' to know how these designs could have been generated.

Protecting the Selk'nam's ancestral legacies and challenging the notion of extinction

Back on the Argentinean side of Selk'nam territory, during fieldwork carried out in 2022 in the city of Río Grande, Tierra del Fuego (Karukinka, northern Isla Grande), AB and DF visited the Municipal Museum Virginia Choquintel, named after an important female representative of the Selk'nam community. The main objective was to record the exhibition in order to analyze the discourses and museographic devices used to represent the Indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego in general and the Selk'nam people in particular. During this fieldwork, they met Mr. Patricio Pantoja, a member of the Selk'nam people who worked at the museum. Conversations with Mr. Pantoja highlighted how he perceives the biases affecting him as a Selk'nam person: for example, some people assume that because the Selk'nam historically had a hunter-gatherer way of life, there are no living Selk'nam today simply because that lifestyle is no longer practiced. Instead of being a concept illuminating the Selk'nam past, the notion of 'hunter-gatherer' becomes a stereotype that erases Selk'nam visibility in the present. Here, the concept carries a negative ontological connotation.

Likewise, Mr. Pantoja shared his experience of how the discourse of extinction continues to operate, casting him in the role of 'descendant,' as if the only 'pure' Selk'nam were those who lived in the past and corresponded to the stereotype of the Indigenous hunter-gatherer. This discourse is also nourished by another persistent and damaging metaphor: that 'the last' Selk'nam has died. If that person is deemed 'the last one,' then extinction is verified. This notion has been reproduced in newspaper articles, online sources and numerous oral accounts of people unfamiliar with the subject (Fiore 2016a). Yet, extinction has evidently not occurred, as it is clearly expressed by Mr. Pantoja in a text of his own authorship: 'In the face of the imaginary of extinction, which has deeply permeated society, I am an apparition in the mist of history' (Pantoja 2023). Recognizing the link with ancestral history, and understanding that no people remain 'pristine' and unchanged – especially if they have endured genocide – are key elements for supporting the Selk'nam preexistence prior to the Chilean and Argentine states and their continued presence in both countries.

As part of the actions undertaken to (re)construct a Selk'nam identity linked to the past yet grounded in the present, in 2016 or 2017, Patricio participated in an activity in Cabo Domingo (on the Atlantic coast of Isla Grande, north of the city of Río Grande, Karukinka). During this event, he and other participants painted their faces with the typical Selk'nam motif mentioned above – consisting of a horizontal line with a dot above it on each cheek. While Patricio does not recall the materials used to make the paints, he does remember that the dot was white, and the line was black. As noted above, the use of this motif is documented in several antique/early photographs of Selk'nam people (Fiore 2016b). It is particularly significant to note the similarity of this motif type and the one used by members of the Selk'nam Aska Chogue Community, the only difference being the presence or absence of the third dot on the nose. The participants of the aforementioned activity returned to Río Grande with the paint still on their faces, thereby creating a visible act of presence that marked one of the early moments of this Selk'nam cultural reactivation process.

As part of the information and consultation processes regarding the research on the ethnographic museum collections, DF and AB came into contact with Mirtha Salamanca, guardian of Kiepja's songs and transmitter of true history. Ms. Salamanca indicated that the correct name is 'just Kiepja, because the colonizer named her Lola, but she is not Lola, since Selk'nam Ancestors had no surnames, only names.' Ms. Salamanca reinforces her commitment to protecting the songs of the *xo'ons*, the 'shamans' or 'medicine men' and 'medicine women.' She explains that Kiepja has been mistakenly labeled a 'singer,' when in fact her grandmother was not a singer but a *medicine woman* who sang to heal. Ms. Salamanca explained that there are more than 300 songs of Kiepja, poorly disseminated and interpreted, and that misinfirmation continues to be published about her grandmother – for example, that she

was 'the last Selk'nam,' or that 'the Selk'nam no longer exist.' She asserts that the French-American anthropologist Anne Chapman was responsible for calling Kiepja 'the last,' which she was not – otherwise, as Ms. Salamanca emphasizes, she herself, her mother and all the women in her family would not exist.

Ms. Salamanca regards Kiepja, Loij, Choquintel and Don Segundo Arteaga as survivors of a genocide from which few remained, and she continues to fight to uncover and share the truth about her people. In seminars and talks, she often encounters misinformation and always urges audiences to turn to the primary sources – to the families and community members who hold these stories, the true stories. She considers herself fortunate to have been told the complete, true history, though it was far from pleasant: 'it was never pleasant to be Selk'nam.'[21] It is, she says, a very painful and tragic story, simply for being a woman or for remembering her grandmother, who was stoned or spat upon just for being Indigenous.

Ms. Salamanca recalls that when Kiepja died in October 1966, people came knocking on her mother's door after Kiepja passed away in the hospital as an elderly woman (around 96 years old), saying that the 'dirty Indian' was lying on the hospital floor. Ms. Salamanca reflects that her Selk'nam grandmother was on the floor because she did not use a bed, she chose to be on the floor and felt content there. She thinks that Kiepja's personal and cultural habits should have been respected, but they were not. While many texts claim that Kiepja died in dire poverty, Ms. Salamanca disputes this, noting that Kiepja was well cared for by her siblings, who lived in Laguna Pescado, and that she also supporting herself by selling knitted socks and woven baskets made by her. She did not die in poverty; she died in her familiar surroundings, where she could wear her guanaco fur, which was what she longed for.

Ms. Salamanca learned about the recent past of the Selk'nam from her mother, who told her about the time when all the men were killed and all the women were gathered and taken to the La Candelaria Salesian Mission, loaded onto wagons when her mother was still a child. Her great-great-grandmother Eli, her great-grandmother Kiepja, her grandmother Adela, her mother, her aunts and her cousins were taken to the Salesian Mission, where they lived in what Ms. Salamanca describes as 'a total hell.' It was a hell marked by mistreatment and the prohibition of speaking the Selk'nam language, as they were not allowed to use their original tongue. Her mother carried painful memories and experiences from the Salesian Mission, she tried twice to escape and reach Río Grande; there, she was eventually found by the missionaries, brought back and beaten for running away. Ms. Salamanca proudly interprets these actions as 'acts of resistance' and states that these stories remain with her, embedded in her heart.

She recalls meeting Anne Chapman when the anthropologist presented her last book. Chapman patted her on the shoulder and said, 'I have already worked with the pure ones.' Ms. Salamanca turned around and left, knowing there was nothing she could do. She believes that Chapman used her grandmother – making her sing and recording her songs. Her mother, however, took a different stance and never opened the door to the anthropologist, saying, 'She won't profit from me.' That is why Ms. Salamanca remains determined to protect and continue fighting for the archives, the photographs and the songs, to accomplish their return to the family.

Finally, as part of the information and consultation processes that AB and DF have been conducting regarding Selk'nam archaeological and ethnographic collections held in international institutions, both in-person and virtual meetings have been carried out with Mrs. Maldonado, Mr. Vasquez Chogue, Mr. Pantoja and the *Comunidad Selk'nam Rafaela Ishton*. The latter group includes members with a long history of work dedicated to promoting the visibility of, and respect for, the past and present of the Selk'nam people – among them, Mrs. Mirtha Salamanca – as well as young people who have inquired to be periodically informed and who have been enthusiastically engaging in these discussions.

On the Fuegian material culture diaspora: Making the invisible visible

One of DF and AB's ongoing projects is the search for archaeological and ethnographic collections originally gathered in Tierra del Fuego and dispersed to institutions around the world. The goal is to create an 'international map of Fuegian collections' that documents this diaspora. This endeavour aims to understand the processes through which these collections were formed by analyzing the historical, political and sociocultural contexts in which they were assembled, moved, accessioned, displayed and archived – thus separating them from their places of origin: the Yagan Usin, the Selk'nam Karukinka and the Kawésqar Waes (Butto/Fiore 2021). Naming these Indigenous Fue-

21 Ms. Salamanca refers here to the historical period of interaction with Western persons who invaded Selk'nam territory.

gian territories in their respective Indigenous languages is an acknowledgement practice adopted by DF and AB in their written publications and presentations. This practice stemmed from numerous interactions that both archaeologists had with Fuegian communities, which led them to realize: no matter how much respect DF and AB have for these people, if such respect is not publicly shown, it remains only an abstract concept.

Work with the collections begins with an initial approach to the institutions that house them, to verify their origin. This is followed by the creation of inventories, catalogues and databases. Each Indigenous Fuegian Community is then contacted to provide a preliminary overview of the findings. Finally, the compiled information is provided to members of each Community.

The aims of this process are:

a. to help Fuegian Communities have access to information about their heritage;
b. to collaboratively define future steps regarding interactions with these collections (e.g., research topics, handling procedures, support for formulating restitution requests, etc.).

Figure 12 shows a map reflecting the current state of these investigations (Fig. 12).

Through ongoing interactions between archaeologists and Communities, it became evident that popular non-academic discourses equating genocide with extinction are not only historically inaccurate – they also uphold the Chilean-Argentinean *status quo* that makes the Fuegian peoples socially invisible. Moreover, these narratives are deeply hurtful to Selk'nam, Yagan and Kawésqar individuals of the 21st century. To help deconstruct these invisibilities, DF and AB have implemented two practices.

Firstly, in public talks and academic presentations, DF and AB do not merely explain that genocide does not mean extinction but also display a visual sign summarizing this notion, with the aim of sending a clear and strong message that can emotionally resonate with the audience (Fig. 13).

Figure 12: Fuegian archaeological and ethnographic collections found and researched in Europe and South America.
Austria: *Kloster St Gabriel*, *Weltmuseum*. Germany: *Ethnologisches Museum Berlin* [*tr*. Ethnological Museum of Berlin], *Ethnologische Sammlung der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen* [*tr*. Georg-August University of Göttingen Ethnological Collection]. England: British Museum, Horniman Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum. Scotland: National Museum Scotland. Italy: *Museo Colle Don Bosco* [*tr*. Colle Don Bosco Museum]. Argentina: *Museo Etnográfico Juan Bautista Ambrosetti, Universidad de Buenos Aires* [*tr*. Ethnographic Museum Juan Bautista Ambrosetti, University of Buenos Aires], *Museo de Ciencias Naturales de la Plata* [*tr*. Natural Sciences Museum of La Plata], *Museo del Fin del Mundo*, *Museo Marítimo y del Presidio* [*tr*. Maritime Museum and Prison Museum], *Museo Virginia Choquintel* [*tr*. Virginia Choquintel Museum]. Chile: *Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino* [*tr*. Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art], *Museo Histórico Nacional* [*tr*. National History Museum], *Museo Nacional de Historia Natural* [*tr*. National Museum of Natural History], *Museo Marítimo Nacional* [*tr*. National Maritime Museum], *Museo Arqueológico de La Serena* [*tr*. Archaeological Museum of La Serena], *Museo de Historia Natural de Concepción* [*tr*. Natural History Museum of Concepción], *Museo Regional de Magallanes* [*tr*. Regional Museum of Magallanes]. Map: A. Butto.

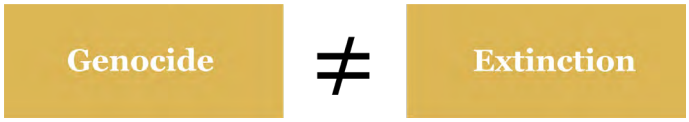

Figure 13: 'Genocide does not equal extinction.' Visual sign used in presentations. Figure: D. Fiore.

Secondly, whenever disseminating information about ethnographic or archaeological collections – or reporting on new archaeological findings – DF and AB make it a priority to name the relevant Indigenous Communities as key stakeholders in the research. They explain that the Indigenous Fuegians are the rightful inheritors to their Ancestors' territories, material culture and knowledge and that some of their traditional cultural practices continue to this day. In planned TV and radio interviews, they also request that journalists include Community representatives. Although this latter request does not always receive a positive response from the media, it has, in some cases, led to excellent results (e.g., Televisión Pública 2022).

Lessons we are learning together

Based on the experiences presented in this multivocal text, we can point out a series of lessons that we are learning together.

First, it is well known that language is not neutral; it carries powerful connotative implications beyond its denotative meaning (Barthes 1986). We saw how terms such as 'hunter-gatherer' or 'descendant,' even when used by archaeologists without any intention to offend, have socially negative implications for Indigenous Communities. DF and AB have learned to be more attentive in their choice of vocabulary, aiming to use language that is acceptable to Community members. For example, we found that when referring to people who have passed away, whose bodies have been found in archaeological contexts – or more disturbingly, held in museum 'collections' – the term 'human remains' is experienced as objectifying and offensive. This posed the challenge to find respectful alternatives. In dialogue with Selk'nam members, the term 'deceased Ancestors' was proposed, and this terminology has since been agreed upon with members of the Selk'nam Rafaela Ishton Community.

We also know that the perception of time is relative, and that the practices of archaeologists and Indigenous communities involve different rhythms and durations (Martínez Sarasola 2010; Tuhiwai Smith 2016). Current archaeological practice in Argentina follows national and international standards, which involve long research processes but simultaneously requires rapid production and publication of results (Bourdieu 2012). This contrasts with the rhythms of Indigenous communities, which often require more time to engage in dialogue, process alternatives that arise from interactions with academia and make collective decisions (Atalay 2006).

We have also learned that despite the genocide and oppression suffered by the Indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego, communities' members continue to hold valuable ancestral knowledge – and are in some cases willing to share it, provided that their interlocutors listen respectfully. The cases presented in this paper demonstrate this. From the Yagan knowledge of basketry and harpoon-making, the importance of challenging Western dichotomies, such as ecology vs. economy, natural heritage vs. cultural heritage (Fiore et al. 2021), to the Selk'nam knowledge of basketry and paintings, ceremonial worldviews and the avoidance of pejorative terms – all these experiences teach us about sustainability, the deconstruction of stereotypes and the profound connection between humans, other living beings, items, landscapes and Ancestors. Certainly, all this knowledge has a direct relevance for contemporary approaches to thinking, doing and writing archaeology.

It has also become clear that even though archaeologists are deeply critical of the genocide and injustices suffered by the Fuegian Indigenous people – and even when their research has clearly established that these peoples pre-existed to the formations of the Argentinean and Chilean states – it is crucial that such criticism of genocide and deep-time Indigenous pre-existence are not taken for granted and remain explicitly mentioned in archaeological discourses, insofar as members of the general public are not aware of these notions. This also constitutes a form of explicit support for Indigenous Communities.

Another positive outcome of this process is that archaeology has provided content that is positively taken up by members of the Fuegian Communities. For instance, some of the co-authors of this paper have incorporated deep-time archaeological dates into their personal biographies.

Finally, we consider it crucial that the Fuegian Communities are not merely consulted to comply with the FPIC Protocol before conducting archaeological research, but the Communities should also be involved in the process – proposing research objectives and questions that are relevant to them and contributing with their knowledge, ideas and interpretations.

All of this allows for the expansion of the theoretical and empirical frameworks in which contemporary archaeology operates, thus expanding and enriching archaeolo-

gy's approaches and practices. Given that FPIC is part of Argentinean[22] and international (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007) legislation, the state should provide trained agents to facilitate this process – a crucial praxis that is currently not being done. In the meantime, we have learnt that a genuine ontological turn in archaeology can be built through these multivocal dialogues.

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