



Lime and Blood. The art of the Elders (Ethnoarchaeology at Azul Pampa - Jujuy province)

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Abstract. *Azul Pampa region, Humahuaca Department, Jujuy Province, North West Argentina, is my archaeological and ethnoarchaeological investigation area. Several important rock art archaeological sites are found there, of different periods, dating from ca 10,000 years Bp. to the Spanish conquest. This art is considered by nowadays settlers as made by "ancient people". And some legends are related to those places. At Alto Sapagua (within this region), some inner walls of rooms at the present small village, show paintings. Offspring of the people who made them say alternatively that they were made by "ancient people", or by "the grandparents". This sub-present art, made some 60 years ago, is of great interest, as mythological studies have been made regarding their origin, and offspring still remember which rooms were painted, who did it, which was its purpose, the elements used, and how they prepared them. It seems that in this aspect too, as happens with archaeological and present ceramics (as well as with other ergological elements), there is a great technological continuity, which is recognized by present herders, even though they cannot or do not want to consciously register or say that they may have a common root.*

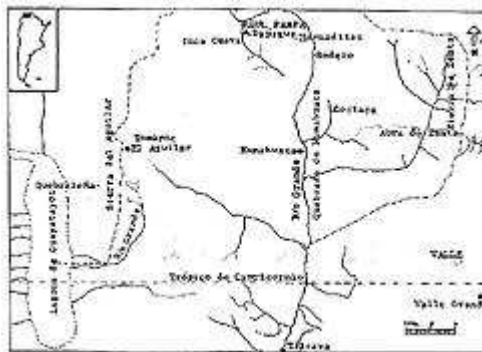


Fig. 1.

Introduction

My investigation (from a processual - regional perspective) focuses on the Azul Pampa microregion, Humahuaca Department, Jujuy Province, North-West Argentina, as an analytical spatial unit (Map 1). It is a Puna environment, defined after vegetation, fauna, climate and average altitude above sea level. According to the palaeoenvironmental studies, it has not changed during the last 4,000 years, even though since 2,000 and especially 500 years before the present, overexploitation could explain the decrease of certain vegetable species (Markgraf 1985). According to other analysis (Lupo m.s.), present conditions would

have been established locally around 5,200 years Bp., and human impact on the environment is registered since around 2,700 years. The first of these studies was made at Sierra del Aguilar, and the second one at Inca Cueva.

My main interest is the investigation of the Archaic-Formative transition, taking as a temporal block the 3,000 through 1,500 years Bp. in which the Formative settlement and subsistence system would have been functioning in that region. To work on this problem, I carry out two parallel investigation lines. The first one is Ethnoarchaeological. The microregion studied at present, with an archaeological perspective, gives the opportunity of considering different kinds of sites located in heterogeneous settings, with varied resources. For this purpose, I specially consider the activities observed and their material consequence. I pay special attention -as selected indicators- to the use of space (at all levels), each site's hierarchy within the region (using the permanence degree at each one of them within an annual cycle to make the classification), their economic function and artisan activity developed locally.

From an archaeological perspective, the investigations include surveys, test pits and systematic excavations at Tomayoc, Inca Cueva - Alto Sapagua - Hornaditas. The purpose is testing against the archaeological record, the model and hypothesis derived from Ethnoarchaeological investigation.

The archaeological rock art and related investigations

The superposition and morphological variation studies of images from Inca Cueva cave 1 (Icc1), allowed the establishment of a sequence for the archaeological locality, composed by a number of sites (Aschero 1979). Stylistic Group A (GEA) included the paintings attributed to preceramic occupations, mainly consisting of simple abstract geometric motives. The preceramic characterization was supported by the correlation with art motives of mobile artifacts recovered at the site Inca Cueva cueva 7 (Icc7) in a preceramic context dated as 4,080 +/- 80 Bp. (Aguerre *et al* 1975). At Inca Cueva cave 4 (Icc4) - where it is the only style present - paintings had been correlated with this group accepting the temporal depth of cave 7. When excavations were enlarged, new chronological elements were obtained, as well as on the paintings production process. The antiquity suggested by this new information, dated back the beginning of this stylistic group manifestations to 10,620 +/- 140 Bp., existing three more coincident dates (Aschero & Podestá 1986). Part of the wall with plaster prepared as support for the paintings had fallen on the occupation levels. The largeness of this period produced the necessary split of the GEA in three smaller groups: GEA1, GEA2 and GEA3 within the site Icc1, on the basis of the quantity and variety of motives and the presence of superpositions at this site, considered as "type" for the study of the local sequence.

Stylistic Group B (GEB) is characterized mainly by the presence of anthropomorphic motives and the absence of zoomorphic figures. The main features of the human figures are the long bodies, short extremities and representations of feathers' cephalic hairdresses. It was assigned by C. Aschero to a transitional moment between the Late Preceramic and an Early Ceramic Period. After this guide, I selected the sites to be excavated or tested (four for this gorge) in my project to find the early ceramic occupations. At Inca Cueva rockshelter 3 (one of the sites I tested), an atypical labyrinth can be seen, which was considered through stylistic technical analysis as dating back to 3,000 Bp. by Aschero (1973:268 and 272). I will refer to this motive later on. Inca Cueva rockshelter 1 (Ica1) gave the earliest dating for a ceramic occupation within the country at that moment (2,900 +/- 70 Bp.: García 1988/89) and the correlation of these rock art motives at a wider regional level with other contextual

evidences took us to make a specific paper (Aschero, Podestá & García 1991). Stylistic Group C (GEC) is characterized by the great variety of camelids figures that form different scenes, representations of human figures that participate in sexual acts, others carrying weapons, etc. GEC was assigned to the Late Agroceramic Period with a probable earlier beginning (Aschero & Podestá 1986).

Pintayoc hill (near Hornaditas) shows a great quantity of motives carved with percussion techniques. Some of them can be clearly assigned to the Spanish-Native "contact" (Cigliano & Calandra 1965; F. Distel 1974). The first authors classified them in two groups, based on the presence/absence of patina above them. Group "A" shows geometric pattern representations - broken lines, concentric circles, half moon shapes united by the middle - as well as human and animal shapes. Some of the human figures are so stylized that only the traditional "uncu" is represented, as well as a very schematic head. In certain figures the lower limbs are also marked. Zoomorphic figures are represented almost exclusively by camelids (¿llamas?), as the ostriches figures are few. Group "B" presents zoomorphic figures composed by camelids (¿llamas?) and ostriches, and a scene in which two human figures are represented fighting. One of them is on foot, with bow and arrow, and the other one on horseback, with a spear. Cigliano and Calandra consider this site related with Inca Cueva locality through some of the rock art motives.

Cerro Negro, to the East, near Coctaca, shows many rock carvings, among which we can find typical labyrinths (different from those of Inca Cueva GEB), in this case assigned to the later Agro-Ceramic Period (Aschero 1973:272). At Inca Cueva, Aschero considers representations are functionally linked to the caves and rock shelters occupations, that is to say they would be part of the activities made at domestic spaces (Aschero 1988:109). This includes the preceramic residential basic camps (Icc4: Yacobaccio 1990) as well as the ceramic herders' stalls (Ica1: García 1988/89).

At Inca Cueva cave 4, archaeological excavations could determine two main occupations. The upper one, in which the cave would have been used mainly to bury the dead (mummies recovered by a collector in the thirties) and the lower one, with the most ancient datings, in which an occupation floor with several structures could be discovered. Yacobaccio defines this occupation as an early hunter-gatherer residential basis (1990).

Diffraction analysis of samples of paintings adhered to a grinding slab from the upper occupation and an artifact of the lower one, as well as from fragments of prepared wall which had fallen in the lower occupation level, gave plaster and hematite as main components, even though a first sample had given calcite. The probable origin for the rest of pigments is Aguilar, where there is lead. The observation of the friction surface with red paint of a lithic artifact from the same level through binocular magnifying glass, indicates that there is no separation between the plaster and the pigment, so both must have been part of the same mixture. This kind of mixtures are also found at Cerro Casa de Piedra 5 and Cueva de las Manos, in Patagonia, and could have been used to adhere the paint to the rock. So, Aschero considers for this sample that it incorporates the plaster to the dilution, and is also used in the preparation of the basis. He also states for the manufacture process that after gathering the pigments and before the mixture preparation, there are evidences that a thermal treatment was used in order to intentionally alter the pigments' original colour. He also considers that the presence of hematite and plumbeous-jarosite in one of the samples, as well as the possible different dilutions suggest that later occupants to those of Inca Cueva cave 4, lower level, re-painted the motives. That the possible relation of the GEA paintings with Icc4 earliest level context does not nullify the lasting of these manifestations and their association with later occupations as those of the upper levels of the same site or those of ICc7 (Aschero 1983-85:301-302).



Fig. 2.

Ethnoarchaeological related information

The Lamas family have at present stalls with different permanency degree. From the disperse small village at Alto Sapagua, placed in front and now above the homonymous *antigal* (ancient people's site), to temporary high stalls at Inca Cueva and Peñas Blancas Hill. They are mainly herders. The environment offers the raw materials, such as clay, inclusions and sand to make ceramics, clay that is used to build the houses, and also the lime for the paint preparations for the houses internal walls.

We can find artifacts in use that have a long continuity. Grinding stones and slabs are similar, and the pits used as deposits and open air kilns. Sub- present ceramics exchanged with people from "the Andes", west of Laguna de Guayatayoc (*truequeadas*) and archaeological late Pre-Inca Period ones found at the *antigal*. From an emic point of view, "the living people" ceramics and "the ancients" (archaeological) are similar, the only difference is that the last ones have an air inside that can make people ill (with headache for example) and has to be freed. That is why they never touch the *antigal* ceramics, except with a twig, to uncover them. Regarding the rock art sites, they describe the animals painted or engraved (they always call them paintings) or tell us that the grandparents hunted the *cóndor* at Cerro Negro (near Coctaca, where it is engraved), but do not touch them nor get near. Within this environment, there are certain natural accidents and cultural related features, that have present mythological sense. That is the case of lagoons at the Chulín hill, above the Inca Cueva caves and rock shelters. Laureano Lamas told me during a visit in 1986 to arrange my stay, that at the rocks over there, above Inca Cueva, one could see Christmas trees that appeared from the lagoons. Enchantments were found, bells and silver coins and golden mummies. Everything disappeared when one tried to take them away. The gorge, where born, is named *katarioj* (where there are snakes, in quichua - deep symbolic sense is attributed to this animal). The whole place is called the "rocks area". Some tales registered from Paulina at Alto Sapagua refer to the "uco macho" (male), that kidnaps women and the "uco hembra" (female) the men, take them "to the rocks in the desert" (towards Inca Cueva). The personages give their victims raw meat and oranges. Oranges are very valuable, as they have to be brought from the forests in the east. The *abra del altar* (altar creek) communicates Alto Sapagua with Inca Cueva. It is a natural accident from which one can clearly see two different microenvironments. At one and the other side we find the "carts'road" (inkaic), which has steps to reach the *abra del altar* from the Inca Cueva side. In this place, we find an *apacheta* nearly two meters high, which continues growing as all the voyagers leave there a stone, the chewed coca leaves, or *acullico*, and if we carry something to drink (alcohol), we offer the *Pacha* before doing so with our companions or the circumstantial voyager we find there, and then drink. After the *Apacheta*'s height, we can deduce it is a very old one. The stone that is left there has been brought up by the peregrin. The sense of doing this is asking the mother earth to make easier the road to come, not to catch us, and to take away fatigue,

as well as illness, that stay with the rock one leaves there.

When during the journey between the different permanency degree sites in the region (Inca Cueva stall; Alto Sapagua small village) a storm breaks, herders take refuge at a rock shelter or protection site. But they do not get inside the caves for reasons that have to do with Andean religion (García 1991:206). As has been said, Icc4 had, in its possible late pre-ceramic levels, mummies seated that could be seen from below. Its walls show the most ancient geometrical art, even though motives could have been repainted. One of them is a stair in red. Practices of burying the dead in caves is very ancient in the Andean world, and descriptions of the Spanish conquest for the Andean area (Peru) coincide, describing they were placed seated and they were homaged, and offered meals. Many of the beliefs here referred seem to have a great antiquity, as well as a great dispersion within the Southern Andean Area (Anónimo 1613:184-185).

At Alto Sapagua and Hornaditas, I have also recovered information on practices related with dead people, the "All Saints" and "All Dead" celebrations, in November. I had the opportunity to observe the ritual breads being prepared for that occasions when having to wait at Hornaditas for three days while they looked for the flour and prepared the bread, before taking me to Inca Cueva. The breads consist in stairs, birds (cousilla and viracocha are the ones who guess who's coming) and little people with the appearance of the dead. They are offered together with all the food the dead person liked, by leaving them on a table with steps during the night. After the dead have eaten, "the living" may eat. They assure the taste is different from that of other kinds of bread.



Fig. 3.

The sub-present walls paintings

At an intermediate and central distance regarding Inca Cueva and Pintayoc, we find the Alto Sapagua small village. I visited the place in 1984 with C. Aschero, and in 1986 worked there in Ethnoarchaeology (García 1988a). During the first opportunity, we were offered a room, in which we could see paintings on the internal walls, and we were allowed to take photographs. The room had been of Don Carlos Lamas (1901-1982), father of Ema Lamas (see genealogical chart # 4). The paintings appeared on two of the walls and consisted in a possible dog, a train, a donkey and a labyrinth (photos 2 and 3). The dog motive has importance within the dead cult, as it is the *psicopompo* that takes the souls to the other world (Ibáñez-Novión 1970; Cipoletti 1982). Also, as will be said, it appears related to *Pachamama*, accompanying her.

And the labyrinth has a very ancient and long permanence as a motive in the world and in this microregion. Aschero tried to recover, within the American ethnographic cosmovision, the symbolic content of the labyrinth as a guiding-motive of the American rock-art and

proposed its hypothetical projection at prehistoric level. In general, it has to do with the passing of spirits to the dead world. The labyrinth *is* the Spirit, the way or pass to the posterior world. This is thought of as the world of the ancestors' spirits, and the ritual making of these figures should be considered as a way of meeting them (Aschero 73:273-274, citing Schuster in CIA XXXI 1954).

Once settled to live with the Lamas family, I asked for the paintings I had seen to Juan (Carlos nephew) and Paulina Culcui de Lamas, his wife. They told me those paintings were no longer made, that they were ancient people's doings. They informed that before, the people painted their walls in order to decorate them, with small llamas and other figures.

Asking again on the subject, Concepciona (Juan's sister) showed me her bedroom's inner wall paintings. Formerly, it had been Francisca's, her grandmother (According to C. Aschero's field notes, she had 100 years in 1973). Within the settlement system, there is a rotation in the rooms' functions along the generations, which is a thoroughly Andean practice (García 1988b), so this room's use may have been a different one. The image was composed of five donkeys in black on the wall at the back of the room. According to Juan, they had been painted by Mrs. Francisca. Concepciona said that before, there were woods and bags and therefore there were more paintings.

Juan Lamas told me that anyone could paint, but the children preferably not. They slaughtered a cow and they used the blood and lime from the hill that they melted and prepared. They always did it to decorate. Motives were animals only: roosters, flowers...they painted any room, not a special one. They did so till 1950 (Francisca - "*la mamita*" - was 77 years then). Walls were painted by the grandparents. Afterwards, this was not made any more. They mixed cattle blood with the lime at the fire, for it to last. The brush was the cow's tail with a little wood.

Andean herders at Alto Sapagua consider time as divided in two periods: that of the ancient people and that of the living ones. The last one is also divided in the time of the grandparents and that of ego. The time of the ancient people is placed before the biblical floods, when things talked. The time of the grandparents is that originated from Noe's ark, visible nowadays as the rainbow, which is more or less similar morphologically and in powers' content to that of the living people today. All the senses that do not match with the Christian horizon are assigned to the ancient people (Cipoletti 1975). The past and the present have a very subtle limit which is trespassed very frequently. For example, nowadays, a storm that is starting is explained to me as a fighting by two clouds full of intention. Sub-present art is alternatively assigned to the ancient people or the grandparents. In fact, it was made by my informer's grandmother (see genealogical chart # 4).



Fig. 4.

The Andean mythical world

In the search of a mythological contextual sense for the present wall representations and regarding Azul Pampa puna herders relationship with the environment and archaeological sites, I have revised ethnographic literature.

In the Andes, *Pachamama* - the mother earth - gives spatial and temporal meaning for each practice. It is an aymara name, incorporated later to the quichua, when the Incas homogenized the Tahuantinsuyo. It has other names, and means center, half, deity, fertile earth. Following Von Tschudi (cited by Mariscotti 1978), *Pacha* means time and space. The sense of space designs the world, the earth, the ground, the place; and that of time, the determined period or moment such as a day, year, etc. *Mama* means mother, but has an eternity dimension. She is feeded and honoured at the places where she appears. She is feared, and has to be calmed. Ceramists feed the *Pacha* at the place where they get the clay from, as the clay is *Pachamama*. They smoke ceremonially and give coca to the earth. This is the way people prevent the earth from catching them. They can be caught when drinking water from a brave spring source or lagoon, if virgin land is plugged or if one digs to find ancient people's things without feeding the *Pacha* before. She is imagined to live below the earth, at rich palaces, placed at the heart of the mountains. They can also find her at the geographical accidents such as the abras (creeks, gorges). One of the characteristics of the ancient Andean *huacas* is that they are placed where two microenvironments communicate. She carries permanently a spindle and wool, and she can be accompanied by a very brave black dog and a snake that sometimes serves as a bow or trap. She lives in the hills and the lagoons are her eyes. Certain mountains are considered as sacred.

Mariscotti says that at the inauguration ceremonies of a new house, there are elimination and purification rites, that change the new house into a liveable one, propitiatory sacrifice in the honour of *Pachamama* and other deities, and ceremonial banquet. Through the comparative study of many bibliographic sources, she concludes that *Pachamama* is the main, if not exclusive addressee of the sacrifice with which culminates a new house inauguration ceremony. She also refers that after depositing the offerings that include a llama's foetus in a pit, they end with the ritual slaughtering of a llama, whose blood is sprinkled, still hot, on the house's walls and roof. She says that as in other occasions in which bloody sacrifices are celebrated, the "*wasi pagaska*" ends with a collective banquet, in which the dishes prepared with the victim's flesh and viscera are eaten and great quantities of *chicha* and alcohol are

drank. In a story gathered by Hernández Príncipe (1923:42) and referred by Mariscotti for Huaylas (dep. Ancash), a ceremony called *Majachico* is mentioned, which consisted in keeping vigil over the new house and lighting fire through fire drills and hearths which they called *ujaca* (Mariscotti 1978:186).

The house' elimination and purification ceremonies consist in fumigations of coa and sprinkling of chicha and blood. Purification is also made with amulets of iron or forged tin representing llamas, birds, oxen, snakes, other animals and wood crosses. The practice seems to have traditional roots, as in a document of the XVII century it is said that at Chinchasuyu, people painted the first woods for the house's roof with snakes, lions, bears and some other things which natives themselves said were no good (Duviols 1974/6b:284 cited in Mariscotti 1978:185 and note 134). In some cases, the victim's blood is mixed with "*sanco*", the maize ceremonial drink, and distributed among the assistants.

At the august 1° feast for *Pachamama* referred by Mariscotti at El Aguilar (see map) at the corrals, the animals' tails are cut and offered as well as the ears to the mother earth. For this purpose, they are placed in a pit in the middle of the corral with the rest of the offerings of coca, alcohol, chicha, cigarettes, etc. This tails' cut is different from the one that takes place at the *señalada*, when cattle is marked and fertility is asked, even though it shares some aspects. The ritual sacrifice of a llama, goat or sheep, is sometimes cruel or bloody. The blood - in all the reports - has always the characteristic of a preferential offering.

The paintings on the walls are described by Cipoletti within the rituals related to the house as made once it has been built and before living in it. In that moment, it has to be "killed" so that it does not eat the people. For that purpose, the interior part of the roof is stricken with arrows. In this way, its power is annulled. If this was not made, the house could swallow its inhabitants. The arrows can be seen still in their place, many years after that, with red wool strings, the house's blood. In general, a sheep is sacrificed and with its blood different drawings are made on the house's walls (Cipoletti 1975:15).

The house's striking with arrows (*flechamiento*), and its ceremonial feeding or *challada* are celebrations that have similar intentions but differ in the ritual. They are described by Mariscotti for the Andes in general (1978), and are specifically related to the *Pachamama* cult. During those ceremonies, the mother earth is feeded with the blood, food, coca, chicha, and a non-birth llama of the preferential victim. They are made eventually for the inauguration of a house (Colatarci 1994:154).

Discussion and conclusions

After this revision, my hypothesis is that in this difficult environment which has not changed substantially during the last 4,000 years, successful human reaction to it became stable. An example of the long technological continuity in the region has to do with the archaeological evidence of fire production. The same kind of fire drills and hearths appear at Inca Cueva since 4,080 +/- 80 Bp. -Icc7- through 720 +/- 50 b.p. -Icc5- (García 1997 i.p.). These simple rotative friction instruments to produce fire show an ample dispersion within the South Central Andes and a great temporal depth. After contextual findings, they are present since 8,465, 4,410 and 1,870 b.p. in Morrillos, Mendoza, Argentina; 4,780 and 3,780 b.p. in Caleta Huelén 42, Loa river, north Chile; 3,150 b.p. Cãñamo 1, north Chile; 2,315 b.p. in Guitarrero Cave, Perú; 3,400 b.p. at Huachichocana cave III E2, Jujuy, up to the late Agro-Ceramic period represented by the Doncellas artifacts, Jujuy. This revision allowed me to sustain a great degree of conservatism and cohesion in the Andean pattern (García 1985). The great cultural continuity can be sustained then through many indicators: manufacture and exchange

of ceramics, production of fire, grinding of grains and minerals, deposits, and the use of puna, valley and forest resources through family and neighbours connections, as well as caravans. They could be indicators of a common sense backing a way of life that proved to be successful in this microregion of the South Central Andes.

Nowadays, and at historical times, mythical way of perceiving reality matches and backs every activity. Most of them have a precise moment and place and *Pachamama* and other mythological beings related to her are the main sense for all. The request for fertility, in all its dimensions, a great respect and homage towards ancestors, and a personal involvement in ritual which is centered in eating, are the basis. Even the moment in which we made ceramics may have had to do with this. The reasons I was given were related to the weather. Supposedly it was calmer then. But even though they accepted me, I was a foreigner. We manufactured ceramics in September, and the earth is specially feeded in august. The clay we had to gather is *Pachamama*, so she had to be fed first. And September is the most windy month of all. Deep senses are not told but lived.

Each one of the elements mentioned for the interior painting of the house's walls seem related to this cosmovision too. Once again, decoration was the reason I was given. It possibly had to do with the death of the house before living in it. Data on archaeological paints preparation and components could be seen from a different perspective after the ethnoarchaeological information. Paintings could be considered hypothetically related with ceremonies above mentioned, and this perspective may have a material correlate that could be tested. From a stylistic point of view, different kinds of labyrinths are found since 3,000 b.p. (Inca Cueva alero 3), at Cerro Negro (late Agro-Ceramic period), and nowadays (internal Alto Sapagua wall paintings). Hypothetically, a similar sense with different manufacture technology is the connection.

Aschero has considered that from the archaeological record, maintenance and recycling should be seen in the perspective of reuse or continuity in the use of domestic spaces and that of a functional context in which the site has a significant paper within the organization of the settlement systems. He says that the archaeological information on the elements used to make the paintings is still very poor and experimental work has not been developed yet in our country (Aschero 1988: 133-136). Continuing with this idea, I support that Ethnoarchaeology, as an actualistic study, can provide hypothesis to be tested through experimentation.

Art is also useful when linking the different kinds of sites at a regional level, as its presence "marks" a place that can be hypothetically related to others and compared from a stylistic or technological point of view. As an indicator, it has proved useful when choosing the archaeological sites to investigate for a certain period whose chronology has been coincident with the expected one, against the general opinions of the Formative beginnings. At least, significant places for nowadays settlers are linked between them through cultural manifestations that have a lasting symbolic sense. Even though meanings are difficult to assert, we can take ideas to be tested through the archaeological record from the present, specially in situations like this one, in which there is a very long technological and environmental continuity. Of course, in the specific case of rock art, the mythical cosmovision cannot be affirmed (nor the ideas people had for the rest of their activities) but there are some intentions we could possibly recover, think of, look for the corresponding indicators and test through the archaeological record if we learn how to ask reality and ourselves.

A last thought has to do with the old people (*antiguos*) and the grandparents (*abuelos*), as being part of a time and reality I have synthesized by saying "*the elder*". The people, nowadays, take distance from them orally, but many practices still persist and seem to be

showing a common root.

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