
A *vaqueano* in the Contestado: notes on the trajectory of Pedro Leão de Carvalho, aka “Pedro Ruivo”

Um *vaqueano* no Contestado: apontamentos sobre a trajetória de Pedro Leão de Carvalho, o “Pedro Ruivo”

Diego Gudas*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0097-0109>

Alexandre Assis Tomporoski**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3042-7844>

Abstract

The peasant movement called the Contestado Rebellion was a social conflict that broke out on the borders of Paraná and Santa Catarina between 1912 and 1916. The poor population of the region faced legal forces in battle (Brazilian Army, Public Forces of Paraná and Santa Catarina), supported by henchmen of the colonels of the region, the *vaqueanos*. One of the most important *vaqueano* leaders was Pedro Ruivo, whose patrol worked with the repression forces based in Canoinhas (SC). The purpose of this article is to analyze aspects of Pedro Ruivo’s trajectory, with emphasis on his participation as a *vaqueano* allied to the North Column, during the Contestado Rebellion and the violent social relationships developed as a result of his performance. The methodology employed is based on a qualitative approach, articulating three procedures: investigation, interpretation, analysis and production of results. To this end, a review of the available literature and analysis of sources were carried out, namely, criminal cases from the relevant period and records of payments to *vaqueanos* existing in the Historical Archive of the Army. As a result, the research identified the involvement of the character Pedro Ruivo in conflicting and violent social relations, at the time he served as a *vaqueano*, as well as in the post-Contestado period. We concluded that the *vaqueanos*’ performance during the Contestado Rebellion, and in particular Pedro Ruivo’s trajectory, was permeated by episodes of intense violence, which remained even after the end of the conflict.

Keywords: Contestado Rebellion. *Vaqueanos*. Pedro Ruivo.

*Student in the Regional Development PhD Program, University of Contestado. Email:diegogudas.estudo@gmail.com

**PhD in History, Federal University of Santa Catarina. Professor in the Regional Development Master’s and PhD Programs (PPGDR/UNC). Email: alexandre@unc.br

Resumo

O Movimento Sertanejo do Contestado consistiu em um conflito social deflagrado na região fronteira entre Paraná e Santa Catarina entre os anos de 1912 e 1916. A população pobre da região enfrentou em batalha as forças legais (Exército brasileiro, Forças Públicas do Paraná e de Santa Catarina), apoiadas por capangas dos coronéis da região, os vaqueanos. Um dos mais importantes chefes vaqueanos foi Pedro Ruivo, cujo piquete atuou junto às forças de repressão sediadas em Canoinhas (SC). O objetivo deste artigo consiste em analisar aspectos da trajetória de Pedro Ruivo, com destaque para sua participação como vaqueano aliado à Coluna Norte, durante a Guerra do Contestado, e as relações sociais violentas travadas em decorrência de sua atuação. Metodologicamente, foi adotada uma abordagem qualitativa, articulando três procedimentos: investigação, interpretação, análise e produção dos resultados. Para tal fim, foi realizada a revisão da literatura disponível e a análise de fontes, quais sejam, processos criminais do período em tela e listas de pagamento de vaqueanos existentes no Arquivo Histórico do Exército. Como resultado, a pesquisa identificou o envolvimento do personagem Pedro Ruivo em relações sociais conflituosas e violentas, na época em que serviu como vaqueano, bem como no período do pós-Contestado. Conclui-se que a atuação dos vaqueanos durante a Guerra do Contestado, e em especial a trajetória de Pedro Ruivo foi perpassada por episódios de intensa violência, relações que se mantiveram mesmo após o encerramento do conflito.

Palavras-Chave: Guerra do Contestado. Vaqueanos. Pedro Ruivo

Introduction

The peasant movement called the Contestado Rebellion started in the region of the north plateau of Santa Catarina and the south of Paraná, two states in southern Brazil, between 1912 and 1916. The Contestado was a complex and multifaceted social movement, in which the local population – represented by caboclos, who were Brazilians of mixed American Indian and European ancestry, and immigrants who lived in the same conditions as the caboclos – fought against half of the Brazilian army soldiers and the public forces of the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná. In addition to the official forces, thousands of henchmen that worked for the colonels of the region took part in the conflict. Those henchmen were called *vaqueanos* and were armed and paid by the federal government to serve as mercenaries in a fratricidal struggle that claimed the lives of tens of thousands of individuals. The main

reason of this movement was the caboclos' fight for their right to manage their own lives and keep their social, economic, and cultural relationships. The predominance of religious fanaticism was observed to guide the rebellious groups within the parameters they considered fair in their fight.

Simultaneous to the physical massacre triggered against the local population, a stigma was created against those groups, the territory, and the history of their movement to the point that its protagonists were called "fanatical" and "gunmen", and for many decades their alleged ignorance was blamed for the horrors of the conflict and, somehow, for the delay in the development of that region. Although there are many studies addressing that movement – it seems relevant to emphasize that the first interpretations of the events were published by the military members that fought in the rebellion –, for many decades its history was overlooked or described as an odyssey promoted by the uncultured people of the interior of the country. From the early 2000s onwards, the efforts to analyze and interpret the Contestado Rebellion were resumed and resulted in advances and new perspectives for the history of that social conflict. The sophistication of the theoretical methodological instrumentalization allied to a period of expansion of the graduate programs in Brazilian universities promoted the development of new research on the theme, which, in turn, helped to overcome old historiographic myths and related prejudice¹.

¹ MACHADO, Paulo Pinheiro. **Lideranças do Contestado**: a formação das chefias caboclas (1912-1916). Campinas, SP. Editora da Unicamp, 2004. WELTER, Tânia. O profeta São João Maria continua encantado no meio do povo. Um estudo sobre os discursos contemporâneos a respeito de João Maria em Santa Catarina (The prophet saint João Maria lives on among the people - A study on the contemporary discourses referring to Joao Maria in the state of Santa Catarina, southern Brazil). **Thesis** (Social Anthropology Doctoral Program). UFSC, Florianópolis, 2007. RODRIGUES, Rogério Rosa. Veredas de um grande sertão: a Guerra do Contestado e a modernização do Exército brasileiro (Contestado War and the modernization of the Brazilian Army). **Thesis** (History doctoral program). Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ/ IFCs, 2008. VALENTINI, Delmir José. Atividades da Brazil Railway Company no sul do Brasil: a instalação da Lumber e a Guerra na região do Contestado (Brazil Railway Company activities in Southern Brazil: the Lumber installation and the war in the Contestado region) (1906-1916). Porto Alegre. **Thesis** (History Doctoral Program). PUC/RS. Porto Alegre, 2009. CARVALHO, Miguel. Mundstock de. Uma grande empresa em meio à floresta: a história da devastação da floresta com araucária e a Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization (1870-1970) (A large company in the Middle of the forest. The history of the araucaria forest devastation and the Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization). **Thesis** (History Doctoral Program). UFSC. Florianópolis, 2012. ESPIG, Márcia Janete. Personagens do Contestado: os *turmeiros* da estrada de ferro São Paulo-Rio Grande (1909-1915) (Contestado characters: the *turmeiros* of the São Paulo-Rio Grande railway). **Thesis** (History Doctoral Program). UFRGS. Porto Alegre, 2008. KARSBURG, Alexandre de Oliveira. **O Eremita das Américas**: a odisseia de um peregrino italiano no século XIX. Editora da UFSM. Santa Maria, 2014. TOMPOROSKI, Alexandre Assis. O polvo e seus tentáculos: a Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization Company e as transformações impingidas ao planalto contestado (1910-1940) (The Octopus and its tentacles: the Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization Company and the forced changes in the contested plateau). **Thesis** (History Doctoral Program). UFSC. Florianópolis, 2013.

Even with the new perspective, an issue of crucial importance and that still lacks a consistent approach is the trajectory of certain characters that were extremely relevant to the events of that conflict and even for episodes occurring in the following years and decades throughout the region. In the last few years, some of those characters have received special and qualified attention from historians, as the European immigrants that were killed under Colonel Fabrício Vieira in the episode called “the slaughter of Iguaçu”² and the monk José Maria³, killed in the Battle of Irani, for example.

As a result of this process, the need for some analysis effort regarding one emblematic figure in that context: the *vaqueano* Pedro Leão de Carvalho, aka “Pedro Ruivo” was considered. This article proposes an investigation of the trajectory of the *vaqueano* Pedro Ruivo, his relation to the Contestado Movement, and his action in the years that followed the end of the conflict. It aims at unveiling this character’s trajectory and reflect upon the social relations woven at that time and the impact of his actions using the Judiciary branch as a parameter of analysis. Considering that, the text presents some notes on Pedro Leão de Carvalho’s trajectory, highlighting his participation as a *vaqueano* allied to the North Column during the Contestado Rebellion, and the violent social relationships imposed by that context, mainly, with the deputy public prosecutor, Hortêncio Baptista dos Santos, based on data found in legal proceedings.

To achieve this aim, the methodology adopted was the qualitative approach, articulating three procedures: investigation, interpretation and result analysis and production. The main procedure used was crossing the data found in the literature, mainly from legal sources of that time and the records of amounts paid to the *vaqueanos* found in the Historical Archive of the Army⁴. The legal sources are based on two criminal processes. In the first, Pedro Ruivo was the defendant, while the second judged the circumstances of his assassination by Hortêncio Baptista dos Santos. Both processes were judged in the Court of Canoinhas, in the state of Santa Catarina. The first

² POYER, Viviani. Fronteiras de uma guerra: diplomacia e política internacional em meio ao movimento social do Contestado, 1907-1918 (The borders of a war: diplomacy and international politics amidst the social movement of Contestado). **Thesis** (History Doctoral Program). UFSC. Florianópolis, 2018.

³ KUNRATH, Gabriel Carvalho. Não tivemos outro jeito: ou morríamos ou nos defendíamos, uma análise acerca da Batalha do Irani (1912) (We had no other way: We either died or defended ourselves). 2020. 172 f. **Dissertation** (History Master’s Program) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em História, Instituto de Ciências Humanas, Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Pelotas, 2020.

⁴ ARQUIVO HISTÓRICO DO EXÉRCITO. **Série: Revoluções Internas. Sub-série: Forças em operações no Contestado**. Folhas de pagamento dos *vaqueanos* – Caixa nº. 5542.

original document was lost and can only be surveyed because the historian Fernando Tokarski has a copy that was made available to the authors. The second process is part of the collection of the museum Orty de Magalhães Machado, in the municipality of Canoinhas/SC. The payrolls including the *vaqueanos* were explored from some basic data related to the patrols such as leaders, members, payments received and their period of work.

As the analysis context, the Contestado peasant movement, also known as Contestado Rebellion is the focus. It was an armed conflict (1912-1916) joining the Brazilian army and the public forces of the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná against the rebellious peasants. The space of analysis is the municipality of Canoinhas (SC) with the territory it owned at the time. It was the venue of several events linked to the conflict, mainly those referring to the so-called Great Expedition, the moment when the battle was commanded by the General Fernando Setembrino de Carvalho, and Canoinhas became the headquarter of the Brazilian Army North Column. The character investigated in this study, Pedro Ruivo, joined that column as a *vaqueano*.

This study is organized in five parts, as follows: 1. Introduction, 2. The Contestado Rebellion: contextualization, 3. *Vaqueanos* in the Contestado Rebellion, 4. The criminal process of 1915, 5. Pedro Ruivo's Death, and 6. Final Considerations.

The Contestado Rebellion: contextualization

The Contestado peasant movement, also known as the Contestado Rebellion, is portrayed in the literature as an armed conflict between peasants and the legal forces (Brazilian Army and public forces of the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná) which occurred between 1912 and 1916 and resulted in the death of thousands of people. The conflict stage was a region of approximately 28,000 square kilometers, which is currently known as the south of Paraná and the north plateau, highlands, and Midwest of Santa Catarina⁵.

To understand its particularities, it is necessary to go back in history to find the several causes that piled up resulting in the conflict. The first point to be taken into account is the territorial dispute for the borders of the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina. In 1853, the state of Paraná became politically

⁵ QUEIROZ, Maurício Vinhas de. **Messianismo e Conflito Social** (A Guerra Sertaneja do Contestado: 1912 – 1916). 2ª ed. São Paulo, Ática, 1977, p. 199.

autonomous after being separated from São Paulo. From then onwards, the area on the south banks of the Iguaçú River was disputed by both states. Being aware of that and mainly from 1881 onwards, Argentina also started to claim part of that territory, increasing the complexity of such dispute. Regarding Argentina's interest, the case was decided against that country and favoring Brazil by means of arbitration by the president of the United States, Grover Cleveland, in 1895. However, the two Federative Units of the South kept the dispute that lasted for many years.⁶

In the late 19th century, the region was mainly occupied by indigenous tribes and Brazilian peasants, the latter were pioneers that the cattle driving activity⁷ attracted to the territory. Those peasants acquired properties along the way, which resulted in a slow and gradual population of the contested area in a system called '*compadrio*', in which the landlord (large farmer) exercised some power over small farmers, tenant farmers, farm workers, and others⁸. The public vacant lands, which were quite abounding during the 19th century, were little by little assigned to larger farmers and colonels of the extinct National Guard⁹. Eventually, they became legal owners of those lands after the enactment of the Land Law of 1850, which made the land acquisition procedure rather complex and expensive. For this reason, the peasants were prevented from becoming proprietors and marginalized by the lack of access to the necessary means for their survival¹⁰.

Among the peasants, a quite recurrent activity was the extraction of yerba mate, for this reason, since the late 19th century "the yerba mate coming from the Serra-Acima (in the highlands) was already the main export product in Joinville, where the yerba mate mills provided the first local fortunes"¹¹.

⁶For a better understanding of the historical evolution of the causes of the conflict and the general context of the Contestado plateau, see: TOKARSKI, Fernando Luis. **Cronografia do Contestado**: Apontamentos Históricos da Região do Contestado e do Sul do Paraná. Florianópolis: Imprensa Oficial do Estado de Santa Catarina, 2002. 288 p. v. 1.

⁷The Troops Way, aka as Troops Road and South Way, was a land route that linked Rio Grande do Sul to São Paulo and on which supplies were transported on mule back to assist the miner workers in the current state of Minas Gerais, as well as animals to work in activities linked to coffee production.

⁸AURAS, Marli. **Guerra do Contestado**: A Organização da Irmandade Cabocla. 4ª ed., Florianópolis: Ed. UFSC, 2001, p. 32.

⁹The National Guard was a civilian institution with military features created by the Law of 18th August 1831 whose objective was to defend the Constitution, freedom, Independence, and integrity of the Empire; to keep obedience and public safety and help the army in the defense of borders and coasts.

¹⁰BUENO, Evelyn; TOMPOROSKI, Alexandre Assis. Terra contestada: as disputas fundiárias nos vales dos rios negro e Iguaçú e sua influência para a deflagração do movimento sertanejo do contestado, 1889-1917. **Revista de Estudos Vale do Iguaçú**. Jan./Jun. 2018, v.01, n° 31, p. 131-146, p. 137.

¹¹QUEIROZ, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

For being a highly relevant activity for the economy of the territory, yerba mate gained even more relevance after the Republic Proclamation, mainly for the fact that the Republic Constitution of 1891 provided for the states the right to charge taxes on exports, property, professions, and industries¹², which increased the hostility between the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina in relation to the contested territory. Both states were interested in the taxes coming from that activity, but were still prevented from exercising any rights in that region due to the indecision regarding its jurisdiction.

In this context, the construction of the São Paulo – Rio Grande railway started in 1907, in the stretch linking Porto União da Vitória to Marcelino Ramos, which was inaugurated in 1910. However, the railway construction affected more than the transport in the region since it generated a series of events that contributed to the outbreak of the conflict. In 1906, the railway was already controlled by the company *Brazil Railway Company*, owned by *Percival Farquhar*, who had received the construction concession “through Decree nº 10,432, of 09/11/1889, by D. Pedro II, which was confirmed by Decree nº 305, of 07/04/1890, by the Republic Provisional Government.”¹³

However, that company was not limited to building and exploring the railway.

Aiming to explore the vast potential for lumber production and promote the colonization of the lands on both sides of the railway, the Brazil Railway created its subsidiary Southern Brazil Lumber Company in 1909. This company was changed [...] and received a new name, Southern Brazil Lumber and Colonization Company. The Brazil Lumber provided the construction of two large sawmills [...] The largest was located in Três Barras [...] And the other was built in Calmon [...].¹⁴

This occurred because it was part of the concession contract that included the lands on both sides of the railway. It is very likely that the lands granted to the company *Farquhar*, were not uninhabited. Many people lived there but had to leave the lands that they already considered theirs for having lived there for generations, and consequently, also considered them as part of their lifestyle and their source of sustenance. The first settlers were

¹² VOLTOLINI, Anderson Francisco Floriani. A questão de limites de terras entre Santa Catarina e Paraná: uma análise das mensagens de governadores de 1900 a 1916. *Revista Santa Catarina em História*, Florianópolis, v. 1, n. 2, p. 31-38, 2009, p. 232.

¹³ AURAS, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.

evicted by the company *Percival Farquhar*, which besides having a private safety organization, was also supported by the lawyer Afonso Camargo, who was Vice-President of the Province of Paraná at the time.¹⁵

At the same time, the territory was usually visited by some monks, individuals that practiced a type of rustic Catholicism and gained great respect and admiration from the peasant population for their cures, prescription of medicines made of natural herbs, blessed water, and alleged link between the earthly and supernatural worlds. Throughout the 19th century, at least two monks called João Maria became very important among the Contestado peasants, but we cannot disregard that certainly there were others using the same name and characteristics¹⁶. Such context originated the São João Maria tradition as the man was considered a prophet that comforted the local population without getting anything in exchange, conquering the respect of the locals. However, there was a healer known as José Maria, who outstood and whose name was strongly linked to the conflict.

“In 1912 an herb healer, whose name was José Maria de Santo Agostinho, appeared in the municipality of Campos Novos”¹⁷. Behaving in the same way as his predecessors, José Maria presented a differential: he was able to face a fight if necessary. When arriving in Campos Novos, the local population soon started to follow him, and witnessed his cure of a farmer’s wife. Since the farmer was Francisco de Almeida, colonel of the National Guard and political opponent of the leader of Curitibanos, the colonel Francisco de Albuquerque, this fact gave José Maria great popularity, so that he was invited to the Senhor Bom-Jesus Fete, in the place called Taquaruçu, part of Curitibanos (nowadays belonging to the municipality of Fraiburgo), and a crowd came to see him. The number of followers surprised Albuquerque, who sent a telegram to the governor of Santa Catarina, Vidal Ramos, informing him about the gathering of followers and a supposed declaration of monarchy¹⁸.

The telegram sent by colonel Francisco de Albuquerque alarmed Florianópolis, called attention in Curitiba and even echoed in the Rio de Janeiro press. The governor of Santa Catarina insisted that the movement started in Taquaruçu was similar to that occurred in Canudos¹⁹.

¹⁵ QUEIROZ, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87/88.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Following Albuquerque's request, Vidal Ramos sent a number of police officers to rout the monk and his followers, who moved on reaching the place called Irani, which at the time belonged to the municipality of Palmas²⁰. The neighboring state, Paraná, understood that such riot in the contested territory could be part of some strategic action by the Santa Catarina state, seeking to establish their ownership of the place, and sent the Security Patrol, commanded by the colonel João Gualberto Gomes de Sá Filho, whose objective was to capture the monk and his followers and take them in shackles to Curitiba²¹. On October 22nd, 1912, the troops of the Security Patrol of Paraná found the monk and his followers in the place known as Banhado Grande (currently the municipality of Irani in Santa Catarina), where the first combat occurred, marking the beginning of what is known as the Contestado Rebellion. In this first combat both the monk José Maria and the colonel João Gualberto were killed.

From then onwards, between 1912 and 1916, a series of combats occurred between the peasants and the federal and state government troops, who were also helped by mercenaries specially hired to fight and guide the official soldiers, those were the *vaqueanos*, individuals that were linked to the Contestado Rebellion with quite peculiar characteristics.

***Vaqueanos* in the Contestado Rebellion (1912-1916)**

When analyzing the Contestado Rebellion, the existence of a series of very particular phenomena is observed and requires individual analysis to allow a richer reflection. In such context, the action of certain individuals that were nicknamed "*vaqueanos*" along with the legal forces (Brazilian Army and the Paraná and Santa Catarina Safety Patrols) is one of these phenomena.

The geographical space that in the turn from the 19th to the 20th century was disputed between Paraná and Santa Catarina was not well known by the government agencies. For a long time, that region was known as "Sertão de Curitiba":

²⁰ Irani, currently a municipality in the state of Santa Catarina, has political autonomy since 1963

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

That was the vast and unexplored “Sertão de Curitiba”, at the time that the current state of Paraná and that of Santa Catarina, up to Lages, where they ended, “Chapadas da Vacaria”, belonged to the Captaincy and later on to the Province of the current state of São Paulo²²

When the Contestato Rebellion started, despite the fact that many inhabitants had been living in that geographical space for generations, the Military Forces did not know the region and required local guides to show them the way during the military campaigns.

Those guides, many of whom received payment for the services rendered, became known as “*vaqueanos*”, as the people that performed such functions at that time in that territory were typically called. Apart from the guiding activity, the *vaqueanos* took part actively in the combats waged against the rebellious peasants. Due to these characteristics, the *vaqueanos* were seen to fulfill the function of mercenaries in the Contestado Rebellion. Considering that, “they were mercenaries in the literal meaning of the word since they acted or worked only with financial interest, they might want money, possessions, or anything that could represent material advantages.”²³

Although they served from the very first Contestado expeditions in 1912, the period with the most information about these individuals is related to the expedition commanded by General Fernando Setembrino de Carvalho, between 1914 and 1915. The *vaqueanos*’ action in the Contestado Rebellion is reported in Rodrigues²⁴. Among that author’s contributions, we verified the systematization of data about those characters, with special attention to the patrol formation, which was based on primary sources, mainly, the records of payments filed in the Army archives. That author summarizes the information and allows a specific reading of each of the patrols, among which, we found Pedro Ruivo’s. When analyzing the information, he explained:

According to the Contestado Rebellion official data, about thousand civilians were incorporated to the Brazilian Army. Such number regards only the military campaign commanded by General Fernando Setembrino de Carvalho, who was in the region between September 1914 and May 1915. For periods before and after that expedition, there is no complete reference.

²² EHLKE, Cyro. **A Conquista do Planalto Catarinense: bandeirantes e tropeiros do “sertão de Curitiba”**. Rio de Janeiro: Laudes, 1973.

²³ POYER, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

²⁴ RODRIGUES, *op. Cit.*

Although the information is dispersed, it points to a number above 1,500 civilians joining the repressive forces between 1912 and 1916.²⁵

The Great Expedition, as it is known, originated from a fundamental strategy of putting the rebellious individuals under siege. Setembrino de Carvalho divided the troop he commanded into four great columns:

Those were named according to the cardinal points where their command headquarter was located. Thus, the North Column was created and led by Colonel Manoel Onofre Ribeiro; the South Column commanded by Colonel Raul de Estilac Leal; the East Column under Colonel Júlio César Gomes da Silva, and Column West, led by colonel Arthur Sócrates²⁶.

Rodrigues²⁷ explained that during the Great Expedition, the North Column was joined by five groups of *vaqueanos*, namely, the one led by Pedro Ruivo, and the others by Leocádio Pacheco, Pedro Pacheco, Bonifácio Massaneiro, and Manoel Elias de Souza. Among those patrols, Ruivo's group was notorious, mainly, for the crimes he committed during the period he fought with the Forces.

This information made it possible to investigate biographical data related to that character. His personal data revealed that he was born in the municipality of Curitiba-SC, around 1864, and he was the son of José Francisco de Carvalho, local registrar, and Eufrásia Carvalho. Around 1909, he migrated to the district of Canoinhas-SC, for some unknown reason, even if there is some speculation that the reason was to give political support to Thomaz Vieira, who was growing as a local political leadership, and also a hypothetical scape from Curitiba for having allegedly planned a robbery in the offices of the São Paulo – Rio Grande railway²⁸.

When he was hired to command the civilians patrol, Pedro Ruivo fought along the said column in several combats, even taking part in the great assault of Santa Maria under the command of captain Tertuliano de Albuquerque

²⁵ *Ibidem.*, p. 310.

²⁶ POYER, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

²⁷ RODRIGUES, *op. cit.*, p. 319.

²⁸ GUDAS, Diego. A Trajetória do Vaqueano Pedro Leão de Carvalho, o Pedro Ruivo, e sua Relação com o Movimento Sertanejo do Contestado (The trajectory of the *vaqueano* Pedro Leão de Carvalho, aka Pedro Ruivo, and his relationship with the Contestado Peasant Movement). **Dissertation** (Regional Development Master's Program). Universidade do Contestado (UNC), Canoinhas/SC, 2021, p. 61/62.

Potiguara. Such change, by leaving Canoinhas-SC behind, was successful in the several combats that he fought while moving throughout the battlefield, peaking in April 1915, with the defeat of Santa Maria, the city occupied by the highest number of “*jagunços*”.

Despite accompanying the military forces in their expeditions, in the time intervals between them, the *vaqueanos* were accused of disturbing the already troubled area and practicing the most diverse crimes. Due to that, he was sued and became defendant in a criminal process in the District of Canoinhas. This document presents rich information about his trajectory and the conflicting social relationships he became involved in due to his action.

The criminal process 1915

In September 1915, replying a text signed by Ruivo and published in the newspaper *Diário da Tarde* (PR), in which he attacked several local authorities, the deputy public prosecutor of Canoinhas, Hortêncio Batista dos Santos, had an article published in the newspaper *O Estado* (SC), revealing a series of crimes that had been committed by Pedro Ruivo. Those facts occurred during the period in which he was serving as a *vaqueano* in the North Column.

Surely, that publication had great impact and repercussion, reaching the head of the state police, Ulysses Gerson Alves da Costa, who ordered the police delegate of Canoinhas to start a police enquiry. The facts revealed by the police enquiry resulted in the Criminal Process started on 23/12/1915²⁹.

In the process, there were three defendants, Pedro Leão de Carvalho (Pedro Ruivo), João Sizenando de Carvalho (João Ruivo), and Nero de Tal (Homero Brando dos Santos), the latter was never found to defend himself from the accusations. That document also presents many singularities. The first refers to the fact that the Public Prosecution stated that the sentences should not only be applied to the identified defendants, but also to the other components of the patrol, since the accusations directed to Ruivo also applied to his gang. However, due to the abnormal events occurring in the region at the time, it was not possible to identify the other members of that group.

The second particularity refers to the fact that Pedro and João Ruivo were judged four consecutive times by the jury court and acquitted every time. This occurred, because every time they were acquitted, except for the

²⁹ CANOINHAS (SC). Juízo de Direito da Comarca de Canoinhas. **Summario de Culpa de Pedro Leão de Carvalho, vulgo Pedro Ruivo, João Ruivo e Nero de tal.** Autuado em: 23 dez. 1915.

last time, the decision was challenged and the State Justice Court (at the time called State Justice Superior Court) reformulated it and determined a new jury. At that point, another curious fact occurred. Although the prosecutors appealed based on a decision contrary to the process evidence, the court decisions were based on arguments that discredited the legal process, for example, defects in the formulation of information presented to the jurors.

In the process, a high number of criminal facts were ascribed to the defendants: murder, theft, rape, arson fire, etc. Possibly the most impacting, also cited by Queiroz³⁰, reports the assault to a household where a small family used to live, including two couples. The couples were reported to share the same home, possibly, due to being relatives, since they were brother and sister with the respective wife and husband. In the early 1915, period that coincided with the military offensive to the concentrations of peasants in the interior of Canoinhas, the victims' home was invaded by Pedro Ruivo and the men under his command. After tying the men inside the house, the women were raped in front of their immobilized husbands, while the torturers teased the victims and João Ruivo told their father that he was lucky to have "taken the more beautiful".

Amidst the complexity of facts and testimonies reported in the process, the evidence given by Antônio Bonifácio Massaneiro outstands. After reporting that he also had been a *vaqueano* serving the North Column, he stated that he was aware of a variety of crimes ascribed to Pedro Ruivo and his gang. Among them, he cited the case reported above and the death of Manoel Pontes. His knowledge of those facts, according to him, resulted from the position he occupied at the time, namely, block inspector.

Bonifácio Massaneiro is an important character to be analyzed, since when Pedro Ruivo gave evidence in the process, he justified that the reason why Massaneiro accused him was the fact that he had been a "fanatic" before becoming a *vaqueano*. The literature reports, as pointed out by Queiroz³¹, that many "former fanatics" became *vaqueanos*. Regarding Massaneiro, the information seems to be confirmed since in addition to Pedro Ruivo's testimony, Demerval Peixoto, a military that fought in the Contestado Rebellion, also mentioned a "Massaneiro" who acted like this:

On March 26th, in Canoinhas, the troop was organized under captain Potiguara to attack the north side of Sta. Maria. [...] 110

³⁰ QUEIROZ, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

³¹ QUEIROZ, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

vaqueanos from Pedro Ruivo's, Leocádio's and Pedro Pacheco's, Elias de Souza's and **Bonifácio Massaneiro's patrols, the latter was the one who knew the itinerary best since he had come from the bandits side where he was until de January pacification**³² (our emphasis).

Due to the circumstances and characteristics, we can assume that is the same person, and that in fact, Massaneiro switched sides during the development of the conflict. Such context shows that the existing relationships, even among the *vaqueanos*, were not completely harmonious, mainly in the case of "former fanatics" who joined the regular forces. It also shows that besides individual disputes, the troops also became rivals, even if "officially" they were fighting for the same cause.

When examining the process, some social relationships developed among the characters can also be observed, even outside the legal environment. There were many cases in which the witnesses or jurors had to be considered "biased" because they had some relationship to the defendants; however, such bias was never pointed out or challenged. One example is the situation of Guilherme Weber. As already mentioned, when denouncing, the prosecutor emphasized that many other people had helped the defendants in their crimes. Nevertheless, due to the abnormal situation experienced in the region, it was not possible to identify them. This fact is extremely relevant since the other people referred to by the prosecutor obviously were *vaqueanos* that took part in the patrol. Guilherme Weber was one of the *vaqueanos* under Pedro Ruivo, according to the payroll, who in addition of not being sued, took part in the third jury. He was a member of the Sentence Council that acquitted the defendants on 07/03/1919, that is, Weber, who should also be a defendant in the process (since the facts were ascribed to the patrol in which he was a member), ended up as a juror, contributing to the acquittal of his former boss.

The same occurred with Nicolau Fernandes. He was a justification witness called by the defense. When crossing the data sources (criminal process and *vaqueanos'* payroll) we observed that Lau Fernandes, as he was known, was also a *vaqueano* who joined Pedro Ruivo's patrol. However, just like Guilherme Weber, he served in the process without facing any opposition.

Another name found in the process that presents some particularities is that of José Bonifácio da Cunha. He was also a justification witness called

³² PEIXOTO, Demerval. **A campanha do contestado**: episódios e impressões. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: 1920, p. 689.

by Ruivo's defense on 02/04/1917, he served as a juror, and was a member of the Sentence Council of the third jury that acquitted Ruivo on 07/03/1919.

Although each character described above is relevant, the one that outstands in the analysis of the *vaqueanos'* action during the Contestado Rebellion and the social developments that followed is Hortêncio Baptista dos Santos. He was the deputy prosecutor at the time the conflict involved Canoinhas, Hortêncio was the authority who publicized the accusations against Pedro Ruivo. The process indicates that the relationship between both men was not amicable, however, does not clarify the reasons for such animosity.

Many of these answers were only found when the research investigated Pedro Ruivo's last days. The *vaqueano* was killed in 1920 by Hortêncio Baptista. As a result of this crime, Hortêncio was also sued and subjected to a jury. His process produced a lot of information about the conflicting relationship between those men and filled several gaps.

Pedro Ruivo's Death

In the process against Hortêncio for having killed the *vaqueano*³³, we could notice that on 20/07/1920, thirteen days after Pedro Ruivo had been acquitted for the fourth time, around 11a.m., in front of Wagner hotel, in Canoinhas, Hortêncio Baptista assassinated Pedro Ruivo with a gunshot on the face.

Batista's defense argument was that Ruivo came to that place to attack him with an armadillo tail whip, and he shot the attacker to defend himself. After presenting his version, Hortêncio Baptista reported a series of events that had motivated the enmity between the two characters. At this point, the possible reasons leading both men to such hostility are unveiled, and somehow fill in some gaps of the process in which Ruivo had been a defendant.

Apparently, one of the reasons of such dispute resulted from a legal process started by João da Silva Trindade, requesting guardianship of one of his grandsons, whose mother, Trindade's daughter was Pedro Ruivo's lover. As the deputy prosecutor and orphans' general guardian, Hortêncio was involved with the process, which favored Trindade, therefore displeasing Ruivo. The latter, for being upset, published an article in the newspaper *Diário da Tarde*

³³ Canoinhas (SC). Juízo de Direito da Comarca de Canoinhas. **Summario de Culpa de Hortêncio Baptista dos Santos**. Autuado em: 30 jul. 1920.

(PR), in which he mentioned the process and insulted both Hortêncio and the judge Antônio Selistre de Campos, as well as the police delegate, José Joaquim dos Santos. In response to that, Hortêncio Baptista published the article that motivated the start of investigations against Ruivo.

However, this was not an isolated fact. The analysis of Hortêncio Baptista's process indicates that both men had already had other fights at least three times before. Hortêncio himself reported, when giving evidence on 27/09/1920, that on a certain occasion, during a ball held at José Pavão's home, he only scaped being killed or beaten by Pedro Ruivo, due to the intervention of lieutenant José Joaquim, who was a police delegate at the time.

On another occasion, at Maximiliano Julio Schindler's place, while Baptista had an argument with Vitor Soares de Carvalho, Ruivo tried to hit him with a walking stick, which he did not do only because Baptista drew his gun "to make himself respected".

On a third occasion, even a more serious one, on 25/07/1918, ten days after Pedro and João Ruivo were freed from the public jail due to the acquittal by the jury. In front of the Ritzmann hotel, in Canoinhas, Baptista and Ruivo met, and the latter started to insult the former and tried to attack Baptista with a walking stick, which resulted in a gunshot by Baptista, which did not hit the target. This case was investigated in a police enquiry and filed by the judge.

When analyzing the chronology of this process, we observed that it occurred between 1920 and 1921, at the Court of Canoinhas (SC). The defense presented the legitimate defense argument since the shot aimed at Ruivo was in response to the attempt of assault with an armadillo tail whip. Consequently, Hortêncio Baptista was subjected to a popular jury and acquitted on 15/04/1921. However, the acquittal was nulled by the Justice Court, which decided for a motion to dismiss due to the ineptitude of the accusation. As a result, a second jury was held on 12/11/1921, in which the defendant was acquitted for the second and last time, when the jury recognized the legitimate defense thesis.

Final considerations

When establishing the analysis of sources, we observed that the fact that Pedro Ruivo had served as a *vaqueano* hired by the legal forces might have given him certain social prestige, which may have made him comfortable to

attack public authorities in the press at the time. Among the authorities with whom he had the most serious disputes, the deputy prosecutor Hortêncio Baptista dos Santos outstands. The latter stated that for having served in a process whose object was the guardianship of a minor, which was unfavorable to Ruivo, they became enemies. In addition to the “legal” episode, we also evidenced that the dispute got to the point that there were at least three occasions on which the characters had a violent encounter, in one of them there was even a gunshot. All of this happened before the final meeting which peaked with Ruivo’s death.

The examination of the process against Pedro Ruivo and when crossing information with Hortêncio Baptista’s process, resulted in a relevant finding related to the context of the Contestado Rebellion. Although there was an initiative from the prosecution to expose the *vaqueano*’s ill acts, the justice was ineffective. A possible reason for that is the particularities linked to the characters. Many of those taking part in the process, for example, witnesses and jurors, kept social relationships in their everyday lives. One cannot ignore that this might have transported to the trial environment the relationships held in private life. Thus, we cannot disregard the influence of this fact in the decision making, mainly in the case of the Jury Court, in which lay citizens are summoned to serve as judges of the facts.

The information found in the two legal proceedings investigated, which worked as a type of “two sides of the same coin”, revealed conflicting and violent social relationships that Pedro Ruivo developed at the time he worked as a *vaqueano*, and in the period that followed the Rebellion. We can state that, mainly based on the analysis of his relationship to the deputy prosecutor Hortêncio Baptista dos Santos, who, in addition to have denounced the crimes committed by the *vaqueano*, kept several violent episodes with him, which ended with Ruivo’s assassination.

This context evidences the contribution of this research for unveiling that the consequences of the period formally ascribed to the Contestado Rebellion, that is 1912 to 1916, were not limited to that period since violent relationships remained after the end of the conflict and resulted in deaths in that territory. It also shed some light on biographical aspects related to a key character, adding information to that already found in the literature.

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