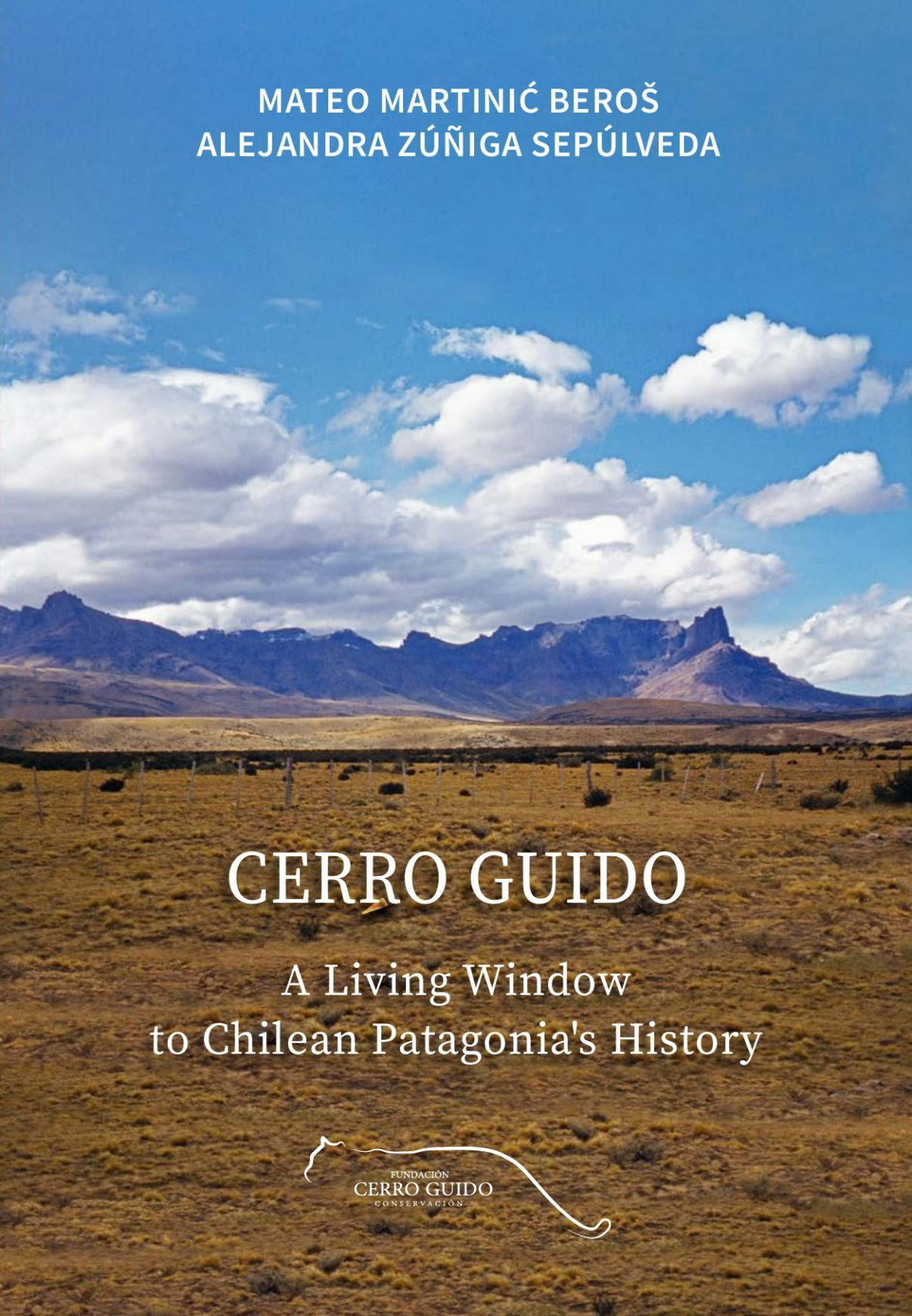
MATEO MARTINIĆ BEROŠ
ALEJANDRA ZÚÑIGA SEPÚLVEDA



CERRO GUIDO

A Living Window to Chilean Patagonia's History

FUNDACIÓN
CERRO GUIDO
CONSERVACIÓN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 7
Cerro Guido: Preserving the Spirit of Patagonia

Prologue 11
A Territory of Magical Attraction

Chapter 1 17
Sub-Andean District of Última Esperanza

Chapter 2 27
The Origin of the Territory and Natural Life

Chapter 3 45
The Original Human Settlement

Chapter 4 59
The Wild Horses

Chapter 5 73
Geographic Discovery and Early Explorations of the Territory

Chapter 6 93
Pastoral Colonization

Chapter 7 109
"Cerro Guido" Estancia

Chapter 8 129
Profound Transformations and New Perspectives

Chapter 9 151
Reestablishment and a New Perspective

Chapter 10 165
First Steps Towards Coexistence

Epilogue 195
The Beginning of a Long and Challenging Journey

Timeline 197
11,000 BP – 2024

Bibliography 205

Image and Illustration Credits 209

Acknowledgments 215

PRESENTATION

Cerro Guido: Preserving the Spirit of Patagonia

Between Torres del Paine and the Sierra Baguales, nestled in a landscape of vastness and wild beauty, "Cerro Guido" estancia enchants all who venture into the northern territory of the Province of Última Esperanza, in the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Region.

Today, combining livestock farming with tourism, this historic productive hub has captivated travelers, explorers, and scientists throughout its history, and continues to dazzle visitors while projecting itself into the future. Since mid-2019, by incorporating a new line of work focused on the conservation of its natural resources, the estancia has been developing new models to enable the coexistence of livestock farming, tourism, and native wildlife.

Gradually, this new focus has provided fresh perspectives, actively integrating the needs of the land and identifying the most urgent challenges for effective conservation. The combination of these concerns with the characteristic willpower of Magellanic pioneers led, in October 2021, to the creation of a foundation aimed at achieving these goals—a joint initiative of the Matetic Hartard and Simunovic Bahamonde families, both heirs to a long history tied to the land and the region.

The grandeur of this natural setting, combined with the emergence of a more recent cultural ecology, became powerful driving forces that, in January 2022, culminated in the official founding of Cerro

Guido Conservation Foundation, with the mission of preserving natural and cultural heritage through harmonious coexistence among its various actors, safeguarding this legacy for future generations and for humanity.

The Foundation's proposal is to move toward an innovative and integrated vision of heritage. To achieve this, it seeks to coordinate the efforts of stakeholders from various fields in developing projects that strengthen community development in a systemic way, combining the livestock and tourism activities carried out at "Cerro Guido" estancia with the broader recognition of its natural and cultural resources, while promoting the conservation of its biodiversity and unique everyday expressions.

Cerro Guido Conservation Foundation has also committed to generating new knowledge by supporting the work of national and regional institutions in areas such as the recovery of plant and animal fossils, archaeological excavations of early human settlements and rituals, and research into architectural heritage, including the Villa Cerro Guido and historic livestock posts.

In this context, the Foundation is proud to present and share this publication with the entire community—an outstanding work by renowned Magellanic historian and National History Award recipient Mateo Martinić Beroš, with the collaboration of journalist and writer Alejandra Zúñiga Sepúlveda. Together, they have compiled for the first time the history of an immensely attractive yet largely unknown geographical area of the region, an area with tremendous potential for sustainable economic development and growing scientific interest from researchers around the world who value its exceptional conditions for global study.

This work also reflects the concerns of the Cerro Guido team, who have begun to embrace a culture of necessary coexistence among livestock farming, tourism, and conservation, bringing to life an integrated vision of the territory and fostering a renewed relationship with its inhabitants, paving the way for harmonious development into the future.

We extend our heartfelt thanks for the enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment of all those who gathered historical documents and photographs that enrich the story we now share with our visitors, offered with the same spirit and will of the pioneering Magellanic settlers.

Board of Directors
Cerro Guido Conservation Foundation

Torres del Paine, May 2025

PROLOGUE

A Territory of Magical Attraction

In the early 1980s, *National Geographic* Magazine published an article about Chile in one of its monthly issues, which included a photograph taken by Kip Ross. The image featured a close-up of a herd of horses with the imposing silhouette of the Sierra Baguales in the background. Seeing it and becoming captivated by it was instantaneous, as it perfectly matched the image that my knowledge of local geography and history had combined to single out — a landscape of such austere and powerful appeal. I was so impressed that when preparing the second edition of my book *Última Esperanza en el Tiempo* (Last Hope in Time), I wanted to use it as the cover image. This led me to request and obtain the necessary authorization from the renowned magazine. Half a century later, a similar image graced the cover of another remarkable work about the interior territory of Última Esperanza, authored by the American Macduff Everton. This time, the photo featured a lone rider instead of a herd of horses but retained the same captivating backdrop of the Baguales, now even more spectacular due to the light enhancing their forms.

I have revisited both photographs repeatedly, especially now as I work on the task before me, and I wonder: What is it about that mountain range and its immediate physiographic surroundings that captivated two professionals separated by time, as well as a historian with a deep appreciation for its value? Adding to this, we could

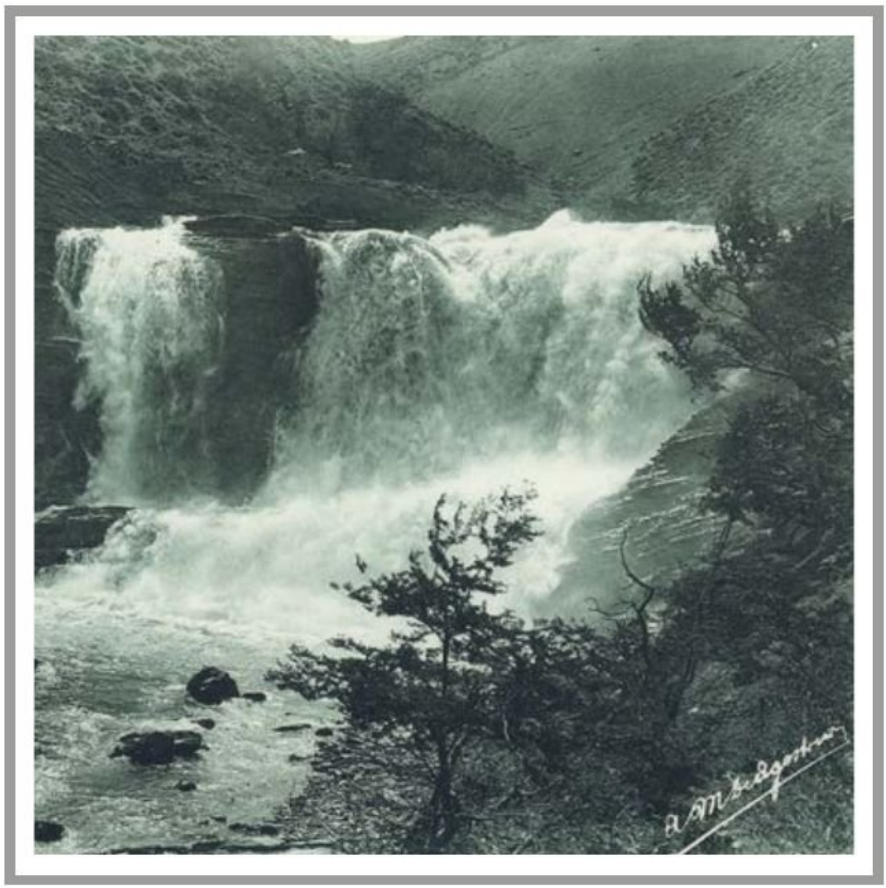
consider the image captured in 1877 by James Beerbohm during its historic discovery, later included by Florence Dixie in her renowned work *Across Patagonia*, along with others of his authorship.

The answer that comes to mind, unifying all these visions, is that we were all struck by the same profound impression of this unique and strange landscape, evoking a sort of magical charm. How could this be, one might ask, especially when this sub-Andean district is located near the western neighbor of the Paine massif, whose magnificence has attracted and will continue to draw travelers from around the world?

This landscape, with its distinct forms, has captivated not only modern observers over the past 150 years but also those who came before us; the Aónikenk (Tehuelches or Patagonians). From what is known through their own accounts to late 19th-century explorers, they spoke of their knowledge of the territory and the striking nature of its orographic and natural features, which inspired a reverential fear. They called it *Carhuern*, meaning "place of malevolent spirits that dwell there," seeing in its natural stone formations the remnants of an ancient settlement.

Traveling today from Cerro Castillo northward along Route 9, which follows the broad valley of the Las Chinas river, one traverses between the Sierra del Toro to the west and the Sierra del Cazador to the east. Advancing in this direction, the view opens into a vast panorama promising fascinating natural features. The first to draw attention is the typically dark silhouette of a jagged mountain range to the northeast: the Sierra Baguales. This range, preceded by a fore wall of hills and a rising plain, presents a stark, color-sparse landscape. Its hues range from the ochre yellow of steppe vegetation to browns and blacks, depending on the interplay of light and shadows. During a summer evening, the setting sun can illuminate the range, making it appear like glowing embers.

Can a landscape like the one described be captivating? Indeed, it can, if the traveler approaches it attuned to nature's cues. There is something magical in that allure, emanating from the sight of such a unique mountainous ensemble. It is not easy to explain why the first



Waterfall of the Las Chinas River

1

Sub-Andean District of Última Esperanza

The toponym *Última Esperanza* (Last Hope), which today identifies the namesake province in the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica Region, was originally and coincidentally used to designate the territory discovered in 1557 by navigator Juan Ladrillero during his search for the western entrance to the Strait of Magellan. After crossing the Andes through the area known as *Ancón Sin Salida* (Inlet Without Exit), Ladrillero came upon a previously unknown territory. Despite its novelty, the area did not captivate him, as its inland sea represented his "last hope" of achieving his objective. Thus, in full historical propriety, this space acquired its well-known and renowned name, which later extended from the coastal area toward the north.

Its unique geographic character derives precisely from being the district encompassing the diagonal course of the Última Esperanza Fjord northward, starting from the Señoret Channel, near Puerto Bories, and ending at the base of Mount Balmaceda. This diagonal trajectory forms a sort of geographic quadrilateral whose boundaries are: to the south, the described diagonal; to the north, the Sierra Baguales, stretching west to east from the Andes along the continental watershed divide; to the west, the Southern Patagonian Andes; and to the east, a line following the watershed divide southward, continuing along

one of the mountain range's branches, which reaches approximately 75°44' west longitude at Mount Tridente. From there, the Zanja Honda River flows until it diverges westward, continuing along the local meridian to the Vizcachas River. It then moves slightly westward along the same river and, once again following the meridian, reaches the local watershed divide in the Sierra del Cazador. From there, it runs along the heights of that range and the neighboring Rogers and Dorotea, reconnecting with the continental watershed divide at the 52° south parallel. This intricate international border was established in 1902 by the arbitral award of King Edward VII of Great Britain, resolving the dispute between Chile and Argentina in the Andean Patagonia region over differing interpretations of the 1881 boundary treaty.

Defined by these boundaries, the "quadrilateral of Última Esperanza" encloses, through the work of nature, a space of mountains, glaciers, lakes, and rivers, forming a large oro-hydrographic basin. Despite its eastern sub-Andean location, its waters flow toward the Pacific Ocean via the Última Esperanza Fjord through the Serrano River system. Within this area, the massif dominated by Mount Paine Grande and other remarkable peaks, surrounded by lakes and glaciers, stands out for its magnificent splendor, relegating other orographic features of the quadrilateral to a secondary level of admiration. This is particularly true for the northeastern sector, characterized orographically by the Sierra Baguales in its described course. Since its sighting by pioneers and early explorers, this range was named for the previously explained reason, a common designation for the range itself, the river, and its valley—essentially, the extended natural area where wild horses had established and multiplied.

Enclosed within this space is a group of mountains, valleys, and rivers forming the region known as the *País de los Baguales* (Country of the Baguales). Among the prominent features are Mounts Obelisco, Donoso, and Pilar, as well as the Sierra Con-



Quadrilateral of Última Esperanza (SIG Patagon)



Basaltic Walls in the upper sector of the Las Chinas River



Vizcacha of the Sierra Baguales (*Lagidium wolffsohni*)



Black-chested buzzard-eagle *(Geranoaetus melanoleucus)*



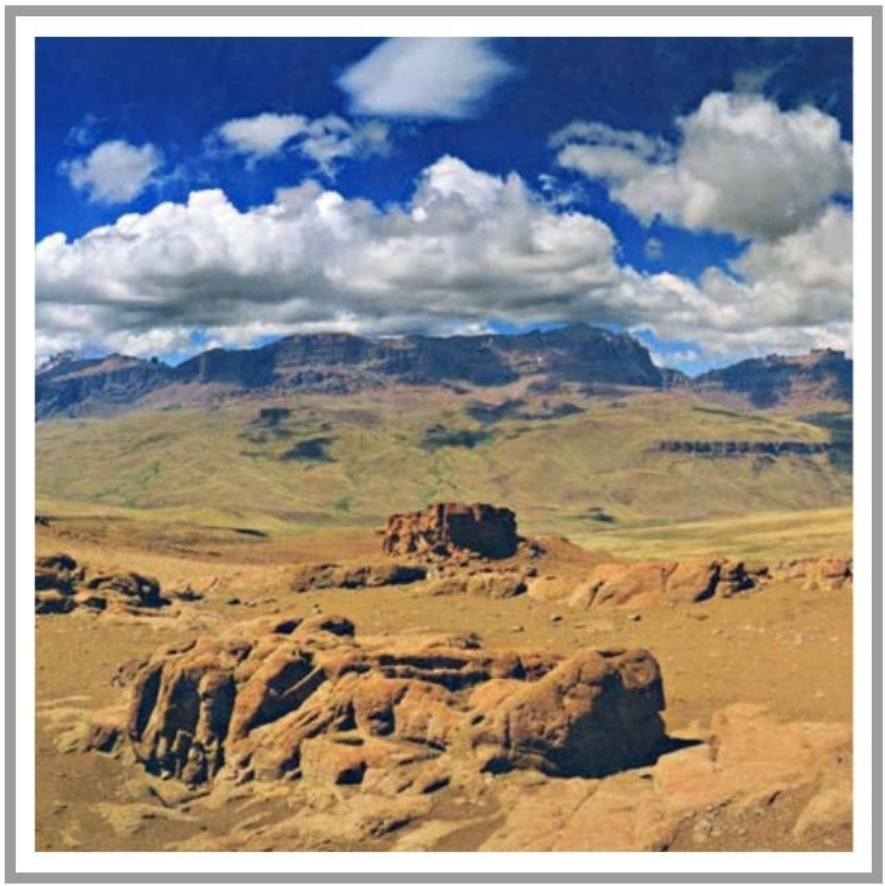
The guanaco *(Lama guanicoe)*, an inhabitant
of the Patagonian steppe since time immemorial.



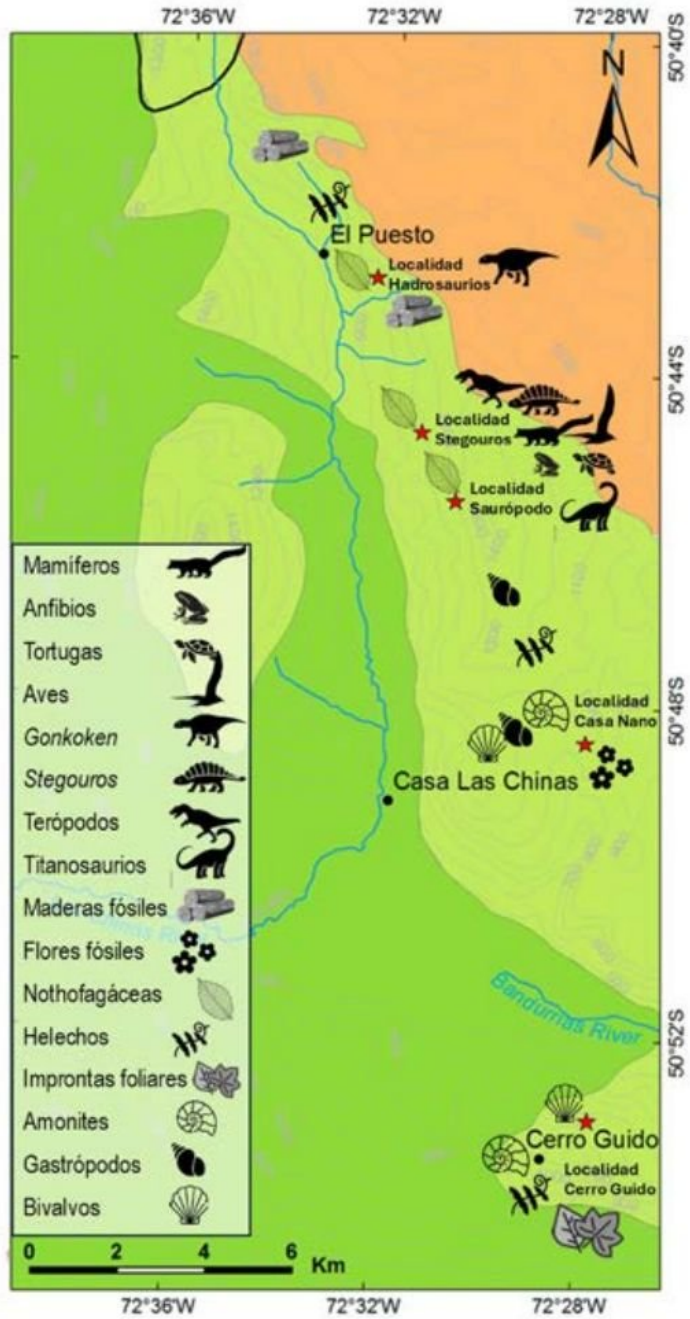
Lady's Slipper *(Calceolaria uniflora)*



Patagonian alstroemeria *(Alstroemeria patagonica)*, widely distributed across the "Cerro Guido" estancia.



View of the Interior of Sierra Baguales from the book *Patagonia La Última Esperanza*



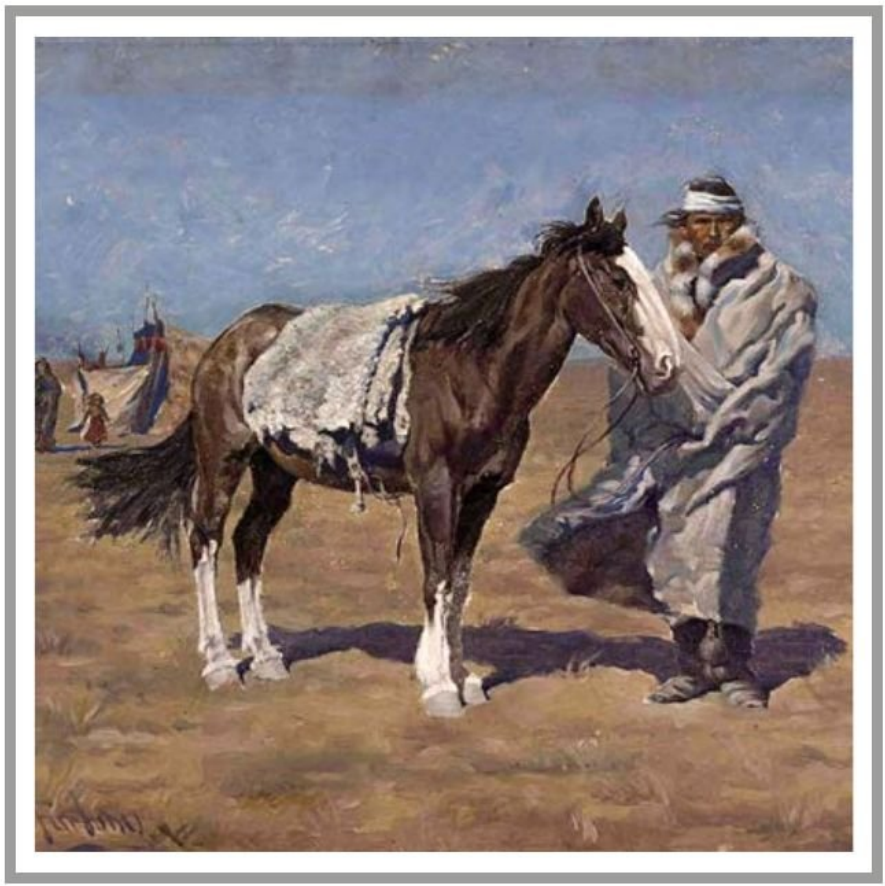
Area of Paleontological Studies, Cerro Guido and Las Chinas Sector.



Illustration of the *Ankylosaur Stegouros elengassen*



Alongside *Stegouros elengassen*, other primitive mammals, frogs, and turtles



Tent and Aónikenk family

3

The Original Human Settlement

In the hypothesis of the probable entry of the first bands of hunter-gatherers into the southern part of continental Patagonia through one of the passes of the Sierra Baguales, as suggested by historiography, it is also likely that they initially roamed areas that are now part of the territorial district under consideration. This was suggested by the French archaeologist Annette Laming during her exploration of the interior of Última Esperanza in 1954.

Her observations in the northern sector of the "Cerro Guido" estancia pointed to the eastern edge of the ancient paleolake that once inundated the vast interior watershed. On this probable lakeshore, located at a great height on the slopes of a mountain range, she found evidence of a very ancient human presence dating back approximately 11,000 years. This observation by the eminent archaeologist gained substantial support half a century later, during the 2000s, when Argentine specialists investigating the northern slopes of the Sierra Baguales discovered a site (Chorrillo Malo 2) near the Baguales I Pass (the first crossing through the range from west to east), rena-



Wild horse (Current)



Stallion fight (Current)



Herd of wild horses in the forest (Current)



Wild horses in the mountains (Current)



View of the eastern sector of Sierra Baguales with Cerro Tridente at its Southern end

5

The Geographical Discovery and Early Explorations of the Territory

For geographical science, the expedition of Juan Tomás Rogers was the first to provide the certain news of the discovery or revelation of a previously unknown territory. However, in 1877, it was merely a sighting, as will be explained. To understand this, it must be known that Rogers and his companion, the naturalist Enrique Ibar Sierra, under the guidance of their local guides, were traveling north through the most western part of the interior of southern Patagonia. Their destination was the area surrounding the waters of Lake Santa Cruz (now Lake Argentino), with the goal of familiarizing themselves with the territory that both Chile and Argentina claimed jurisdiction over. They were traveling in November of that year, with a vast mountain range (now the Sierra del Cazador) to their left, to the west. This range ends at the valley of the Vizcachas River (latitude 51°S), which separates this point from the southern end of the current Sierra Baguales, creating a wide-open space between them. The travelers then spotted a surprising and magnificent horizon of high mountains to the west, which the local guides claimed was the *Sierra Baguales*.

However, the sighting, despite the admiration it may have evoked in Rogers and Ibar, was misleading in terms of the reality we now know, offering a superimposition of planes. What



Sheep grazing in winter fields



Livestock drive to summer pastures



In Magallanes, sheep lambing, or the birth of lambs, usually occurs between October and November.



Colonization established extensive sheep farming in the interior area of Última Esperanza.



Original administration house of "Cerro Guido" estancia, later converted to the employees' dining hall.



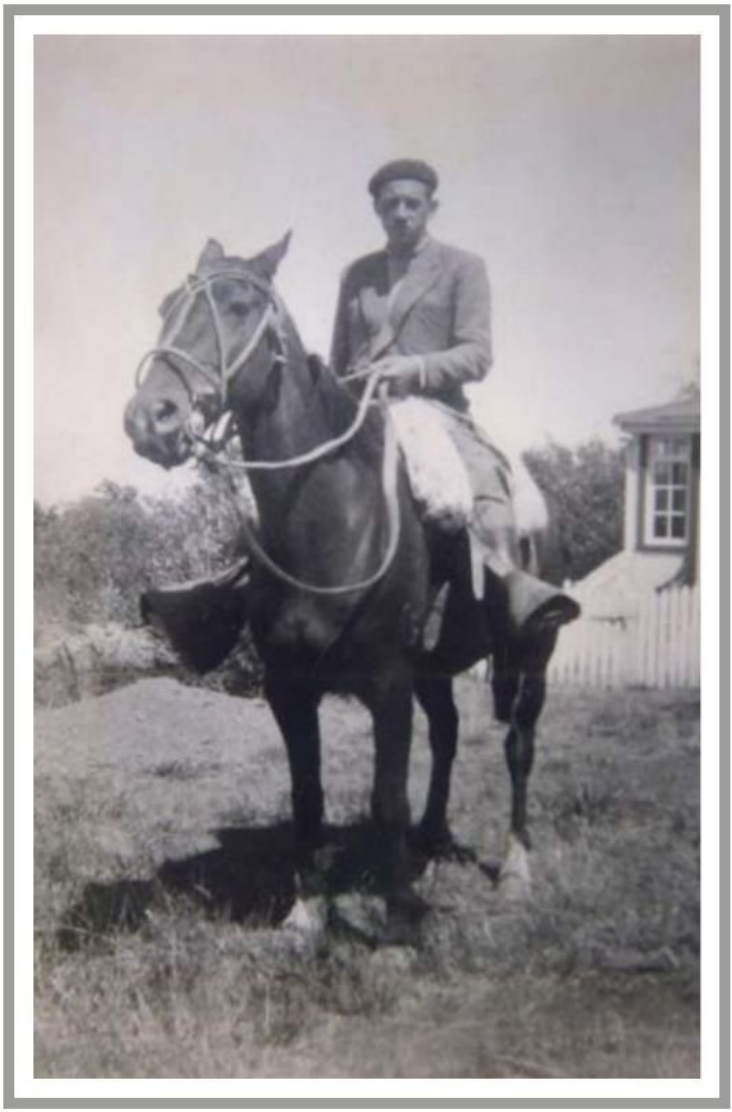
View of the Administration House of the "Cerro Guido" estancia. Both buildings currently house the Estancia Cerro Guido Hotel.



Families of Cerro Guido visiting the aviators' operations base (Plüschow and Dreblow)



Family of manager Alfred Neilson with British mountaineers (1963)



Roderick Smith at "Cerro Guido" estancia (1952)



The Conservation Area of "Cerro Guido" estancia spans 2,000 hectares, with wildlife-friendly fences 90 cm high



The Condorera is the site that concentrates direct sightings of numerous wildlife species within the Conservation Area of "Cerro Guido" estancia



Panoramic view from the summit of the Condorera



The Conservation Safari excursion allows guests from the Tourism Area of "Cerro Guido" estancia to accompany professional puma trackers during a day of field monitoring



Guardian dogs, combined with the evening roundup, have proven to be valuable allies for livestock activities



The old administrator's house at "Entre Lagos" estancia is currently being remodeled to become the new Puma House (reference image)

PREVIEW

End of the *preview*

These pages are a selection from Cerro Guido: A Living Window to Chilean Patagonia's History, by Mateo Martinić Beroš and Alejandra Zúñiga Sepúlveda.

The full book spans more than 200 pages on the natural and human history of the territory.

To find out how to get a copy, contact us through our website.

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Our purpose is to conserve natural and cultural heritage through a harmonious coexistence between its key players, safeguarding this legacy for future generations. We feel both the responsibility and the honor of projecting this legacy and treasure of humanity into the future, promoting a respectful relationship between human activity and the species that make up the region's ecosystems. We are inspired by the desire to preserve both the natural and cultural heritage of the area, which includes elements such as biodiversity, paleontology, traditions, architecture, and archaeology, among others.

It is through teamwork and collaboration
that we make dreams come true.